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DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Executive
Date: Monday 5 October 2026
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

**Councillor Lesley McLean
(Chair)**

Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Dr Lisa Smith

Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Vice-Chair)

Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Alisa Russell

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chair to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

Addresses may be presented by:

- A Local Government elector for the area
- A person who is wholly or mainly resident in the area
- A Council Taxpayer or National Non-Domestic Ratepayer for the area

Addresses must be on an item on the Agenda before the meeting and not exceed 5 minutes. No person may address more than one meeting on any particular issue.

Requests to address the meeting (including the agenda item and reason for the address) should be submitted to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk The deadline for requests to address this meeting is noon on Friday 2 October 2026.

The deadline to present a petition to this meeting has passed.

Full details of public participation at meetings is available in the [Constitution](#).

4. Minutes (Pages 9 - 26)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2026.

5. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

6. Urgent Business

The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

7. Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction (Pages 27 - 38)

Report of Assistant Director Planning

Purpose of report

To extend the delegated authority powers required in order to make an Article 4 Direction restricting temporary use permitted development rights at Wroxton Motocross (as may be amended). This is necessary following representations received subsequent to the Executive resolution on 16 June 2026.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves to:

- 1.1. Note the extent of the delegated powers in respect of the proposed non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 1.2. Agree to extend the delegated powers in order to facilitate the process of securing the making of the non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 1.3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement and the Monitoring Officer:-
 - (a) to finalise the wording of the Article 4 Direction, including by amending the terms of the direction which has previously resolved upon by the

Council Executive, following further legal review and/or following a review of representations which have or may in future be received and/or in light of additional or new evidence.

- (b) to give effect to and to undertake all necessary procedural steps to give effect to the Direction (including following amendments made in accordance with recommendation 1.3 above), including by issuing the Direction, undertaking statutory consultation and notifying the Secretary of State.

8. Making (Adoption) of the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 39 - 92)

Report of Assistant Director Planning

Purpose of report

To propose that the Executive recommends to Full Council that it 'makes' the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan following the successful referendum held in Bloxham Parish on 27 August 2026.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the referendum result of 27 August 2026 where 85% of those who voted were in favour of the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan which is above the required 50%.
- 1.2 To recommend to Full Council that it 'makes' the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan so that it continues to have effect as part of the statutory Development Plan for the District.
- 1.3 To recommend to Full Council that it authorises the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement to issue and publicise a decision statement.

9. Implementation of the Building Safety Levy (Pages 93 - 100)

Report of Assistant Director Planning

Purpose of report

To advise the Executive of the risks and proposed mitigation for and request the approval of the proposed implementation of the Building Safety Levy on 1 October 2026.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the proposed implementation in accordance with the summary contained within this report of the Building Safety Levy, which comes into force on 1 October 2026.

10. Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28 (Pages 101 - 140)

Report of Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the reviewed Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the reviewed Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28.

11. Cherwell Futures Reserve Draw Down 2026/2027 (Pages 141 - 158)

Report of Cherwell Futures Director

Purpose of report

This paper seeks approval and allocation of the draw down of £1.1million of Cherwell Futures Reserves approved by the Executive in October 2025. It sets out the full costs of the Cherwell Futures Programme and how additional requirements are being funded.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves to:

- 1.1 Approve the draw down and allocation of £1.1million of Reserves to be used as set out within this paper.
- 1.2 Approve the use of in year savings of £0.330million from the Customer Front Door Programme to fund additional investment required in new systems and capacity building as set out within this paper.

12. Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/2027 (Pages 159 - 174)

Report of Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Purpose of report

To update and seek agreement on the proposed policy for applying the Council Tax empty homes premium and second home premium.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the reviewed policy for Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/27.
- 1.2 To approve the Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/27.

13. Finance Monitoring Report August 2026 (Pages 175 - 200)

Report of Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Purpose of report

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the August 2026. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of August 2026.
- 1.2 To note the S151 approval, as permitted under the Reserves Policy, of £0.005m use of the Community Initiatives Grant reserve for Hanwell Fields Community Centre works (Appendix 4).
- 1.3 To note and approve the proposed landlord capital works at Castle Quay, as detailed in exempt Appendix 5, are added to the capital programme.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following items contain exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members are reminded that whilst the following items have been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider them in private or in public. In making the decision, Members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that these items be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make decisions in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“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.”

15. Finance Monitoring Report August 2026 - Exempt Appendix (Pages 201 - 202)

16. Website Contract Renewal and Funding (Pages 203 - 208)

**** Please note the exempt appendix to this report will follow ****

Exempt report of Head of Digital and Innovation

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members' Lounge before or at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

This agenda constitutes the 5-day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

Evacuation Procedure

If you hear the fire alarm, please leave the building via the nearest available exit. The fire assembly point is outside the Premier Inn, adjacent to the canal.

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If you have any special requirements, such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities to view a meeting online or attend a meeting in person, please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

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Webcasting and Broadcasting Notice

The meeting will be recorded by the council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the council's website. The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except when confidential or exempt items are being considered. The webcast will be retained on the website for 6 months.

If you make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed by the council to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or joining virtually, you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

The council is obliged, by law, to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, and report on proceedings. The council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Friday 25 September 2026

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 7 September 2026 at 4.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets
Councillor Dr Lisa Smith, Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Apologies for absence:

Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Alisa Russell, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Also Present:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys, Leader of Reform UK Group

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor David Rogers, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Les Sibley

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Economy
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Steve Brown, Programme Manager – Environmental Services
Richard Smith, Head of Housing

36 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair advised that Councillor Sibley had requested to address the Executive on item 7, Local Area Development Funds – Proposal for Allocation.

38 **Minutes**

Subject to an amendment on exempt Minute 31 regarding shared funding, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair made the following announcements:

1. Information had been received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Local Plan, which was continuing through the process and which would move forward in due course. The Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement thanked officers for their hard work to date.
2. The consultation period for Site A – Bicester Garrison was between 7 and 17 September and it was important all parishes were aware.
3. The Parish Liaison Meeting scheduled for 10 September would be cancelled in light of the Government announcement to pause Local Government Reorganisation.
4. There was a CEO sleepover at the beginning of October, which members of the Executive would be taking part in. More information would be provided in due course.
5. The Monitoring Officer and members of the legal team would be representing Cherwell District Council taking part on the Local Government Challenge on Friday 11 September raising money for the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research.

6. The Government had earlier in the day announced its decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Leader explained that she had communication from the BBC at lunchtime in relation to this and communication from the Government at 4pm. It was disappointing the Government had advised the media before local authorities. There was still no clarity on what the decision meant beyond local elections taking place in May 2027 as they would have done without LGR.

40 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

41 Local Area Development Funds - Proposal for Allocation

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which set out the next tranche of projects that had been discussed and recommended by Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) for Local Area Development Funding. This funding was agreed as part of the annual budget setting process by Council on 23 February 2026. The report also provided an update on projects previously approved for funding by the Executive in July 2026.

In introducing the report, the Leader thanked the Head of Regeneration and Growth and council officers supporting the work for their comprehensive work and detailed updates.

Councillor Sibley addressed Executive expressing support for the projects in Bicester. In response to a question if the funds could be used to further extend the opening of public convenience at Manorsfield Road from March 2027 to March 2028., the Leader confirmed that the Bicester business case set out the longer-term funding arrangements would be considered by the Bicester AOG in due course.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed to allocate £524k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects for the 2026/27 financial year as discussed and recommended at the respective Area Oversight Group and to agree to add the capital projects to the capital programme:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)		AOG
	RDEL	CDEL	
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation – Look and Feel Phase 2		£100k	Banbury
Pioneer Square Conveniences (Manorsfield Road)	£26k		Bicester
Langford Village Park Improvements		£100k	
Dangerfield Nature Reserve Boardwalk		£60k	
Sports Pavilion – RIBA Stages 2-4	£33k		Kidlington

*Green Spaces Improvements – Yarnton		£110k	
Town Centre Improvements	£30k		
*Oxford-Banbury Road Corridor Options Appraisal	£45k		
Community Insight Fund	£20k		
Total Revenue / Capital Funding	£154k	£370k	
Total Funding Requested	£524,000		
<i>* The allocations for these two projects are for match funding to support delivery of a wider initiative</i>			

- (2) That the use of £47,281 of S106 funds to top up the proposed allocation for Green Spaces Improvements for Yarnton (Appendix 3) be approved to create a total scheme budget of £157,281 in the capital programme.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration and the Assistant Director Finance, to agree final cost plans for the above projects subject to the maximum cost envelope outlined in Figure 1 above.
- (4) That the progress of previously approved projects be noted and it be agreed to receive further updates as project delivery progresses.

Reasons

This report seeks to agree an allocation of £524k of Local Area Development Funds for delivery of specific projects in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.

The proposed projects are supported by the respective AOG and support the council's priorities around delivering economic prosperity and community leadership.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not proceed with projects proposed - Funds have already been allocated as set out in Section 4 and priorities have been agreed by Area Oversight Groups. This report is intended to utilise some of this funding for enhancements identified by ward councillors as representatives of our communities. Doing nothing means that identified priorities will not be funded and commitments made to the district as part of the budget setting process will not be fulfilled.

Additional Temporary Accommodation Purchases

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval to add additional funds from grants received to the capital budget for purchases of property for temporary accommodation.

In response to Executive member comments, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Services explained that the additional funding would focus on providing homes suitable for larger households. As it was funded from resettlement grant, the properties must be targeted at assisting families that were intended to benefit from this grant. Using the grant funding in this way is within grant conditions

Resolved

- (1) That the increase to the Council's capital programme of £1,000,000 for additional temporary accommodation purchases, using grant funding from resettlement, be approved.

Reasons

The report will enable more suitable temporary accommodation options within the district. The increase in capacity within the portfolio will also reduce revenue pressures that would otherwise arise.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to use the grant money in this way. The Council could seek to use the grant money in other ways that would be of benefit to the Afghan Resettlement households. However, it is unclear whether other means would be able to prevent their homelessness, as these are the steps we are currently taking. When the households do become homeless, temporary accommodation costs are likely to be incurred and are likely to be significant. Not spending this grant on increasing stock size would create revenue pressure. This is rejected.

Option 2: Spend further grant on nightly charged temporary accommodation. This is an option and the grant would cover the costs of this. However, nightly charge offers no income and no return on investment, which the proposed option does. The income received from property would be Council revenue and would not require repayment. Additionally, families would be in nightly charged accommodation, such as hotels, for periods of over 6 weeks, due to the lack of availability of alternative accommodation. It is not permitted by government for any household with children to be in hotel accommodation for longer than 6 weeks. This is rejected.

43 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report to seek Executive approval for the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, providing a consistent corporate framework for the occupation, leasing, subsidised use and transfer of Council-owned property assets to voluntary, community and charitable organisations. The Policy also established the Council's approach to Community Asset Transfers

and subsidised occupation whilst protecting the Council's strategic property interests.

Resolved

- (1) That the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy be approved.
- (2) That the introduction of a standard subsidy framework whereby occupation of Council assets by eligible voluntary and community organisations will normally be offered at up to a 50% discount to independently assessed market rent, for a maximum period of five years, subject to the requirements of the Policy, be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property & Assets, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to enter into property dispositions and occupation agreements under the VCS and CAT policy and in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation under Part 3 of the Constitution.

Reasons

The Council's community centres provide an important resource for local communities, supporting a wide range of voluntary and community organisations that deliver significant social, health and wellbeing benefits across the district. However, the current arrangements have evolved over many years without a consistent corporate framework, resulting in varying lease arrangements, undocumented occupation, inconsistent subsidy levels and differing approaches to statutory compliance and asset management.

The proposed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy establishes a consistent, transparent and proportionate framework for the occupation, leasing and transfer of community assets. It supports the Council's Corporate Landlord approach by introducing clear governance arrangements, standardising subsidy, strengthening statutory compliance and providing a structured process for Community Asset Transfers where these deliver sustainable long-term community benefit.

The Policy balances the Council's responsibility to safeguard public assets with its commitment to supporting the voluntary and community sector. It does not seek to reduce community provision or remove existing organisations from Council-owned buildings. Instead, it establishes a sustainable funding model that enables the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities as landlord, maintain safe and compliant community buildings, and maximise community benefit whilst continuing to provide significant financial support to community organisations.

Approval of the Policy will enable the Council to progressively regularise existing occupation arrangements, prioritise those assets presenting the greatest compliance and governance risks, improve the utilisation of

community assets and ensure future decisions relating to community occupation are made consistently, transparently and in accordance with an approved corporate policy framework.

Alternative options

Option 1: Continue with existing arrangements

This option has been rejected. The current arrangements have evolved over many years without a consistent corporate policy and have resulted in varying lease structures, undocumented occupation, inconsistent subsidy arrangements and differing responsibilities for repairs, maintenance and statutory compliance. The Council cannot currently demonstrate consistent compliance across its community centre portfolio and continuing with the existing arrangements would expose the Council to ongoing health and safety, governance and financial risks.

Option 2: Require all community organisations to pay full market rent and assume responsibility for statutory compliance

This option has also been rejected. Whilst this approach would reduce the Council's financial liabilities, it would place significant additional financial and operational pressures on voluntary and community organisations and could undermine the valuable services they provide to local communities. The Council also considers that retaining responsibility for key statutory compliance activities provides greater assurance that community buildings remain safe and compliant.

Option 3: Approve the proposed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy

This is the recommended option. The Policy establishes a consistent and transparent corporate framework for community occupation, subsidy and Community Asset Transfers. It enables the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities as corporate landlord, supports sustainable community provision, introduces appropriate governance arrangements and creates a long-term funding model that will enable community buildings to remain safe, compliant and well maintained whilst continuing to provide significant financial support to the voluntary and community sector.

44

Budget Process 2027/28

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Executive of the proposed approach to the 2027/28 Budget Process and provides context and background information on the existing Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and information on latest government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget Process for 2027/28 be approved.

- (2) That the base assumptions to be used for the 2027/28 budget as set out below be approved.

The proposed planning assumptions for the updated MTFS period will include provision for inflation on pay, contracts, and fees and charges and council tax. It will assume 3.5 percent pay awards over the MTFS period. Contract inflation will be provided for at 3 percent in all years of the MTFS. Fees and charges will be reviewed and increased by a minimum of 3 percent for in all years of the MTFS (where the fee is set by the council) to reflect cost recovery. Council tax increases will be assumed at the maximum allowable (£5 or 2.99%) without a referendum.

- (3) That a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2031/32 and five-year period for the Capital Programme to 2031/32 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

There are no alternative options to consider. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals to meet its legal obligations.

45 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026-2027

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) and Head of Chief Executive's Office submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial, performance, and risk position as of the end of Q1 of the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's finance, performance, and risk management report as at the end of Q1 for the financial year 2026/27 be noted.
- (2) That the reprofiling of projects in the capital programme and the subsequent update to the programme budget for this financial year be approved.
- (3) That the (exempt) debt write offs be approved.
- (4) That the £0.655m treasury savings to be vired to Policy Contingency and made available as general contingency be approved.

- (5) That the release of £0.030m from Policy Contingency for a performance post within Place & Regeneration be approved.
- (6) That the change to the final transfer to reserves reported in the 2025/26 Outturn report as per the Reserves Policy be noted.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the financial, performance, and risk position of the council for the end of Q1 2026-27. 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 financial, performance, and risk position up to the end of Q1 2026-27, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

46 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.

47 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026/2027 - Exempt Appendix 5

The exempt appendix had been agreed as part of agenda item 11, Minute 45 refers.

48 A New Arts Centre for Banbury

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted an exempt report in respect of a new Arts Centre for Banbury.

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.

49 **Utility Contract Procurement - Property Services**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the procurement of a utility contract, property services.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.
- (3) As set out in the exempt Minutes.
- (4) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

50 **Cherwell Futures Programme: Environmental Services Operational Improvement Programme – Full Business Case**

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted an exempt report in respect of the Cherwell Futures Programme: Environmental Services Operational Improvement Programme – Full Business Case.

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.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

Chair:

Date:

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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This report is public	
Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	23 September 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Planning, David Peckford

Purpose of report

To extend the delegated authority powers required in order to make an Article 4 Direction restricting temporary use permitted development rights at Wroxton Motocross (as may be amended). This is necessary following representations received subsequent to the Executive resolution on 16 June 2026.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves to:

- 1.1. Note the extent of the delegated powers in respect of the proposed non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 1.2. Agree to extend the delegated powers in order to facilitate the process of securing the making of the non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 1.3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement and the Monitoring Officer:-
 - (a) to finalise the wording of the Article 4 Direction, including by amending the terms of the direction which has previously resolved upon by the Council Executive, following further legal review and/or following a review of representations which have or may in future be received and/or in light of additional or new evidence.
 - (b) to give effect to and to undertake all necessary procedural steps to give effect to the Direction (including following amendments made in accordance with recommendation 1.3 above), including by issuing the

Direction, undertaking statutory consultation and notifying the Secretary of State.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Following the Executive resolution of 16 June 2026 to make a non-immediate Article 4 Direction at Wroxton Motocross, representations were received on behalf of the landowners and operators raising concerns regarding the scope, evidence base and procedural approach associated with the proposed Direction.
- 2.2. It is considered that some amendments are necessary to address these representations.
- 2.3. This report briefly explains the representations and sets out the extended delegated authority powers required in order to enable the officers to make amendments to the Direction. The Assistant Director for Planning and Development in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder, and the Monitoring Officer will confirm the Article 4 Direction.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	The non-immediate Article 4 direction did not result in any financial implications, unlike an immediate direction could have done. The implementation, possible defence of any legal challenge and future enforcement of the direction (if confirmed) will have to be met from existing budgets. Approving the recommendations included in this report will help to minimise these risks. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 23 September 2026
Legal	The Article 4 direction should be limited to that which is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area and should in all cases be supported by a robust evidence basis and apply to the smallest area required to mitigate the evidenced harm. Kim Maher, Planning Lawyer, 23 September 2026
Risk Management	There is a potential risk of legal challenge and associated financial, reputational and resource implications. These risks will be mitigated through appropriate legal advice, a robust evidence base, statutory consultation and clear decision-making. Risks will continue to be monitored through the service operational risk and escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 22 September 2026

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		☒		There are no implications arising from these decisions. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 22 September 2026
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		☒		Not applicable
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		☒		Not applicable
Climate & Environmental Impact		☒		Environmental considerations form part of the planning assessment set out in this report.
ICT & Digital Impact		☒		Not applicable
Data Impact		☒		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		☒		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Business plan priorities for 2025-2026: • Housing that meets your needs • Supporting environmental sustainability • An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres • Healthy, resilient and engaged communities			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	Cllr C Aramini-Brant, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1. On 16 June 2026, the Council Executive voted to introduce a non-immediate Article 4 Direction at the Wroxton motocross track, a planning tool used to remove certain permitted development rights.
- 3.2. Without an Article 4 Direction, some temporary motocross events can take place as permitted development without the need for an express grant of planning permission. Subject to confirmation, the Direction would give the council greater control of future events at the site and help manage impacts on local communities and the environment.
- 3.3. Representations were received on behalf of the landowners and operators shortly ahead of the June Executive Meeting, challenging several aspects of the Council's approach (Appendix 1). Additional representations were received on 7 September 2026 (Appendix 2).
- 3.4. Following review of these representations, it is recommended that the Executive agree to extend the delegation to enable officers to make amendments to the Article 4 Direction where necessary, including to address matters raised in the representations which have been received. Such amendment may involve changes to the terms of the direction resolved upon by the Executive on 16 June 2026. It is considered that for officers to be given this wider authority represents the most efficient way to address the representations received as well as other matters and to efficiently progress the direction through its statutory processes.

4. Details

Summary of material landowner/operator representations

- 4.1. Representations were received on behalf of the landowners and operators challenging several aspects of the proposed Article 4 Direction. These included representations as to the lawfulness of the proposed Event Management Plan mechanism, the adequacy of the evidence base supporting the 120-rider threshold, the Council's approach to paragraph 54 of the National Planning Policy Framework, allegations of procedural unfairness and disproportionality, and concerns regarding potential compensation and costs arising from the proposed Direction.
- 4.2. Further representations were received on 7 September 2026. These reiterated concerns regarding the proposed use of an Event Management Plan and questioned whether Article 4 powers can lawfully be used to regulate the manner in which permitted development rights are exercised, rather than simply removing those rights. The representations contend that the proposed approach would amount to the imposition of planning conditions outside the planning application process and therefore falls outside the scope of the Council's powers under Article 4. The correspondence also requested confirmation that appropriate legal advice

had been obtained. Separately, it was asserted that the requirements of the extant Enforcement Notice have been satisfied and a request was made for the Notice to be withdrawn.

- 4.3. The legal and evidential points raised in the representations have been reviewed. As a result, officers consider that, before the Direction is made, it is appropriate to amend the terms of the Direction which was resolved upon by the Executive on 16 June 2026 in respect of the requirement for an Event Management Plan.
- 4.4 It is considered that, moving forward, the currently proposed amendments (and any further such amends as may be found to be required before the Direction is made and while consultation is undertaken) are most efficiently made by officers acting under delegated powers. This report seeks, in the interests of expediency, to extend and confirm powers of delegation to ensure officers have the necessary powers to enable the Article 4 process to progress effectively.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1. The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to grant the extended delegated authority to officer's as recommended in this report.

This option would not be advisable because it would mean that each time there is a representation which has impactions it will need to be brought to the executive and that would not be in the interests of expediency.

6. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1. It is proposed that the Executive resolves to extend the delegated powers in accordance with paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above in order to enable officers to make the targeted, non-immediate Article 4 Direction.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes
Subject to Call in	N/A – This report seeks extensions to the delegated authority and decisions made under that delegated authority can be called in.
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	Wroxton, Hornton, Shenington with Alkerton

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Representation Letter 16 June 2026
Appendix 2	Representation Letter 7 September 2026
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Sean Tilbury, Planning Enforcement Team Leader
Report Author contact details	Sean.tilbury@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221503
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration 22 September 2026

URGENT REPRESENTATION – FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION TO PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

16th June 2026

Dear Members of the Planning Committee,

Wroxton Motocross - Proposed Article 4 Direction
Schedule 2, Part 4, Class B (Temporary Use of Land for Motor Racing Events)

We write on behalf of the landowner and occupier in respect of the Officer's report proposing the making of a non-immediate qualified Article 4 Direction at tonight's meeting. The occupier remains entirely committed to the responsible and collaborative management of events on this land. However, the Direction as drafted contains fundamental legal, procedural and evidential deficiencies that render it unworkable and if made, vulnerable to Modification or Cancellation by the Secretary of State.

Members should be aware of the following deficiencies:

1. The EMP Mechanism

The Direction purports to condition permitted development rights upon the prior written approval of an Event Management Plan (EMP) by the Local Planning Authority. This mechanism has no statutory basis and is legally unfounded:

- The GPDO 2015 contains no provision, processing framework, fee structure or appeal route for the standalone LPA approval of an EMP outside a full planning application.
- No binding timescales are imposed on the LPA for determining a submitted EMP. Without a deemed-consent provision, for example, automatic approval if not determined within 28 days, the landowner faces open-ended commercial uncertainty, making forward booking of events and the securing of insurance practically impossible.
- There is no basis for independent appeal if an officer unreasonably withholds, delays or conditions approval of an EMP.

As drafted, the Direction would allow officers to veto lawful permitted development, with no statutory safeguard for the landowner.

2. The 120-Rider Threshold

Under paragraph 54 of the NPPF, an Article 4 Direction must be based on robust evidence that the exercise of permitted development rights would cause wholly unacceptable harm to local amenity.

The 120-Rider threshold is arbitrary and no evidence in terms of acoustic, transport or

technical assessments has been produced to demonstrate why an event of 121 riders crosses the threshold of wholly unacceptable harm while an event of 120 riders does not.

The impact of an event is a function of management quality, not participant numbers. A poorly managed 80-rider event may produce greater impacts than a rigorously controlled 150-rider event. The threshold therefore fails to address the harm it purports to control.

The proposed Direction would therefore clearly not withstand scrutiny from an Inspector or the Secretary of State.

3. Procedural Unfairness and Disproportionality

The landowner was notified of this committee item on 10th June, fewer than five working days before tonight's meeting. This is wholly insufficient notice given that the Direction would fundamentally and permanently restrict the economic viability of a lawfully operating facility.

There needs to be a particularly strong justification for the withdrawal of permitted development rights and the Council has also made no attempt to explore less restrictive alternatives, such as a negotiated Service Level Agreement or Operational Management Protocol, before resorting to an Article 4 Direction.

Conclusion

If the Committee resolves to make the Direction in its current form, the landowner will have no alternative but to:

- Engage fully in the mandatory statutory consultation window;
- Instruct legal advisers and technical specialists (acoustic, transport and planning) to submit a comprehensive formal objection;
- Apply to the Secretary of State for immediate Modification or Cancellation of the Direction; and
- Seek a costs award against the Council on the grounds that the Direction is both procedurally unfair and evidentially deficient.

To avoid the Committee making a Direction that is indefensible, we respectfully urge Members to defer this item tonight to allow officers to engage in meaningful dialogue with the landowner with a view to arriving at a lawful, proportionate and workable solution.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Tilbury
Planning Enforcement Team Leader
Place and Regeneration Directorate
Cherwell District Council
39 Castle Quay
Banbury OX16 5ED

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

By email only – Sean.Tilbury@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

7 September 2026

Dear Mr Tilbury

Wroxton Motocross Track, Stratford Road, Banbury OX15 6HH (“the Site”)

I am a planning lawyer and am instructed by Clinton Putnam (who acts as agent to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]).

The purpose of this letter is to address two separate but related matters, namely, (i) the proposed direction removing permitted development rights for the use of the Site for motorcross events, and (ii) the extant enforcement notice (19/00316/ENF) relating to the unauthorised use of the Site as a mixed-use comprising agriculture, a motorcross track and camping site (“the EN”).

1. Issue (i)

In relation to issue (i), I understand that on 5 October 2026 the Council will be considering at its Executive Meeting the making of a Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (“the 2015 Order”) (“the Article 4 Direction”). This follows the Executive Meeting on 16 June 2026, at which the Executive resolved to make a non-immediate Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

At this stage, it is unclear how the Report to the Executive Meeting on 5 October 2026 will address the various matters raised in the representation submitted by Artland Limited on 16 June 2026 (“the Representation”). As explained in the Representation, the proposed Article 4 Direction raises a number of discrete matters of planning law which need to be addressed by the Executive. Accordingly, it is likely that following the publication of this

Report, I will be writing again to the Council setting out any those matters of law which will be relevant to the Council's decision.

In advance of the preparation of the Report, however, the Council is asked to consider carefully the following important principles of planning law in relation to the removal of permitted development rights.

Article 3(1) grants planning permission for "the classes of development described as permitted development in Schedule 2". Under Article 3(2), "any permission granted by paragraph (1) is subject to any relevant exception, limitation or condition specified in Schedule 2". Article 4(1) enables a local planning authority to remove permitted development rights for "(a) all or any development of the Part, Class or paragraph in question in an area specified in the direction, or (b) any particular development falling within that part, Class or paragraph, which is specified in the direction".

The effect of the above provisions is that planning permission is granted for development set out in Schedule 2, subject to any restrictions, conditions or limitations applicable to such development as set out in Schedule 2. Article 4 provides a mechanism for a local planning authority to remove those rights, but not to add conditions or modify how those rights operate.

The use of the Site for motorcross (for up to 14 days in any calendar year) is permitted under Part 4, Class B, paragraph (b) of the 2015 Order. Under Article 4(1), the statutory powers may only be exercised in relation to removing either "all or any of the development" permitted under Part 4, Class B, paragraph (b), or "any particular development falling within [Part 4, Class B, paragraph (b)]".

The resolution at the Executive Meeting on 16 June 2026 seeks to permit the use of the Site for motorcross but limit the dates on which it can be used and requires the approval of an Events Management Plan. However, the permitted development rights granted under Part 4, Class B, paragraph (b) do not include any conditions, limitations or restrictions which relate to the dates on which the motorcycling racing may occur or the manner in which the motorcycling use may operate.

Accordingly, as a matter of law, it is unclear why the local planning authority considers it has the statutory power to make the Article 4 Direction in the manner proposed under the resolution. The Court explained the scope of Article 4 in *Thanet District Council v Ninedrive Ltd* [1978] 1 All ER 703:

"all that art4(1) is saying is that the planning authority may either ban all or any development or ban a specific development, that is to say, it can either sweep the board clean or be as extremely selective as it chooses."

As the Court noted, the statutory powers under Article 4 are limited to "development" which would otherwise be permitted under Article 4. The proposed Article 4 Direction does not fulfil that requirement. For example, there is nothing in Part 4, Class B, paragraph (a) which prevents the permitted development occurring on a Bank Holiday, or on 11 November. The only limitation under this Class is that the use of the land for motorcycling does not exceed 14 days in any calendar year. In other words, the statutory power available under Article 4 in relation to permitted development rights for the use of land for motorcycling is in relation to the scope of those permitted development rights, namely, whether they can include "trials of speed" and "practising for these activities", as well as "the provision on the land of any moveable structure for the purpose of the permitted use".

The 'restrictions' proposed in the resolution are akin to planning conditions. However, under s72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ("the 1990 Act"), planning conditions may only be imposed "on

the grant of planning permission under that section [ie section 70]”. Under s70(1)(a), planning conditions may be imposed “when an application is made to a local planning authority”. Permitted development rights granted under Article 3 are not granted pursuant to a planning application. They are granted by operation of Article 3(1). This is another reason why the proposed resolution is wrong in law, as it seeks to impose conditions on permitted development rights without lawful authority to do so (ie ultra vires).

The reason why the proposed restrictions in the resolution fail in law can also be seen in the wording of Article 4(1) itself. This states that a direction under Article 4 (if made) will require any development described in the Article 4 direction to “not be carried out unless permission is granted for it on an application”. In this way, Article 4 ‘squares the legislative circle’ by moving planning control for what would otherwise be permitted development to the planning application process. In those circumstances, planning conditions can then be imposed on the planning application for such development.

For all the above reasons, the Council is respectfully requested to obtain legal advice prior to proceeding with its proposed Article 4 resolution.

2. Issue (ii)

In relation to issue (ii), my client has confirmed that all the works required under paragraph 5 of the EN have been carried out to the satisfaction of the LPA.

My client understands that the LPA has said it will withdraw the EN once its terms have been satisfied. Such a withdrawal would make sense, given that the use of the Site would in any event be controlled by existing permitted development rights under Part 4, Class B, paragraph (b) of the 2015 Order.

Accordingly, my client would be grateful if the EN could be withdrawn given that the works have been carried out in full.

Yours sincerely


KHIFT LTD

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This report is public	
Making (Adoption) of the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Deputy Leader - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Aramini-Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	21 September 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Planning, David Peckford

Purpose of report

To propose that the Executive recommends to Full Council that it ‘makes’ the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan following the successful referendum held in Bloxham Parish on 27 August 2026.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the referendum result of 27 August 2026 where 85% of those who voted were in favour of the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan which is above the required 50%.
- 1.2 To recommend to Full Council that it ‘makes’ the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan so that it continues to have effect as part of the statutory Development Plan for the District.
- 1.3 To recommend to Full Council that it authorises the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement to issue and publicise a decision statement.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At its meeting on 16 June 2026, the Executive resolved, following the completion of its examination, that the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.
- 2.2 The referendum for the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan took place in Bloxham on 27 August 2026 in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Referendum Regulations. More than 50% of those who voted, voted in favour of the Plan.

- 2.3 The Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan is now part of the statutory Development Plan, and the Executive is asked to recommend to the Council that the Plan be formally 'made'. The Plan proposed to be made is at Appendix 1 to this report.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work required by the District Council to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is met within existing budgets. In addition to this Cherwell District Council can claim up to £20,000 of MHCLG grant for Neighbourhood Development Plan which also includes costs for the examiner and the referendum meaning no additional costs for the council. Kimberley Digweed – Finance Business Partner, 4 September 2026
Legal	The Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (all as amended). Following the referendum on 27 August 2026, in which more than 50% of those voting, voted in favour of the Plan, section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to make the Plan unless doing so would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, Convention rights or other applicable legal requirements. Officers are not aware of any such incompatibility. Failure to make the Plan could therefore expose the Council to legal challenge. Following the Council's decision to make the Plan, statutory publication and notification requirements must also be complied with. The legal risks associated with the recommendation are therefore considered to be low. Denzil Turbevill, Head of Legal Services, 2 September 2026
Risk Management	There is no foreseeable risk to the Council beyond the legal risk identified and the identified legal risks associated with the making of the Plan are considered to be low. This, and any further arising risks will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated to the Corporate Risk Register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 1 September 2026

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by the local community and has been subject to extensive collaboration and consultation, culminating in the local referendum on 27 August 2026. All sections of the community, including all socio-economic and minority groups have therefore had the opportunity to influence the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan. The plan has no direct impact on residents as it is a policy-based document.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			As above
Climate & Environmental Impact				Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact				Not applicable
Data Impact				Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy				Not applicable - the Council is not procuring any goods or services so there is no procurement impact
Council Priorities	1) Economic prosperity by contributing to the creation of vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages. An inclusive and green economy can also be supported. 2) Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities 3) Quality housing and placemaking including the provision of community facilities.			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	The Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to two rounds of consultation and a local referendum. The statutory consultation requirements have been fulfilled.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 On 3 June 2013, the Executive designated Bloxham Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2 On 19 December 2016, following a favourable referendum, the Council formally 'made' the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan part of the District's Development Plan, to be used in the determination of decisions on planning applications in Bloxham Parish.
- 3.3 Following engagement with the local community, Bloxham Parish Council subsequently submitted a Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan to the Council in October 2025.
- 3.4 The Council conducted a consultation on the submission draft (Regulation 16) between 8 December 2025 and 1 February 2026.
- 3.5 In agreement with the Parish Council, the Council appointed an independent examiner to undertake examination of the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan in March 2026.
- 3.6 On 11 May 2026, the Examiner issued his report, recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should, subject to recommended modifications, proceed to referendum.
- 3.7 On 16 June 2026, the Council's Executive resolved that the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

4. Details

- 4.1 The referendum for the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan took place in Bloxham on 27 August 2026 in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Referendum Regulations.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan and other required information were made available for public viewing on the Council's website and at the Council's Offices at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, before and during the referendum. The following documents were made available:
 - An Information Statement which provides general information about neighbourhood planning, the referendum and a map of the referendum area;
 - The Draft Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan (the referendum version);
 - The report of the independent examiner into the Neighbourhood Plan;

- Summaries of the written representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- A Decision Statement of the Local Planning Authority following consideration of the recommended modifications made by the Examiner;
- A General Statement containing background information.

4.3 The question (as specified by the regulations) posed for the referendum was:

‘Do you want Cherwell District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Bloxham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’

- 4.4 More than 50% of those who voted, voted ‘Yes’ in response to this question. The declaration of poll results is attached at Appendix 2 to this report. 753 people voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, with 125 against, providing a majority vote of 85%. The result of the referendum has been published on the Council’s website.
- 4.5 As a result of legislative changes made in 2017, a neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory Development Plan once it has received majority support at a referendum. The Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan therefore now has this status.
- 4.6 Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the Council to ‘make’ the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting in the applicable referendum have voted in favour of the Plan.
- 4.7 The Council is not subject to this duty if the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU (or human rights) obligations. There is no known breach or incompatibility. Officers consider that the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan can be formally ‘made’. If the Council decided not to formally ‘make’ the Plan, it would cease to have effect as part of the Development Plan.
- 4.8 As soon as possible following the decision to make a Neighbourhood Plan, the Council must publish a decision statement stating that the Plan has been made and the reasons. A copy of the Council’s decision statement must be sent to the qualifying body (Bloxham Parish Council) and anyone who asked to be notified of the decision. The Council must publish where and when the decision statement can be inspected.
- 4.9 The Council is also required to publish the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan on its website and notify any person who has asked to be notified of the making of the Plan that it has been made and where and when it may be inspected.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 Where a referendum poll results in more than half of those eligible to vote voting in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, the local planning authority must ‘make’ the Plan. The Council is not subject to this duty if the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations. There is no known breach of incompatibility. Consequently, there are no other options.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 A referendum was held on the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan on 27 August 2026. Of those eligible to vote, 753 voted in favour of the Plan with 125 against. The vote of 85% in favour meets the requisite majority, and the Plan is now part of the statutory Development Plan. The Council is still required to formally 'make' the Plan and there is no known breach or incompatibility with EU or human rights obligations which prevents this. The Executive is therefore requested to recommend the 'making' of the Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Plan to the Council on 19 October 2026 which would be within the prescribed eight-week period for making the decision following the referendum.

Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	Adderbury, Bloxham & Bodicote

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan
Appendix 2	Result of 27 August 2026 Referendum
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Report to 16 June 2026 Executive, Item 7 – Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan
Report Author	Eve Austin Planning Policy Officer
Report Author contact details	Eve.austin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Executive Director Approval (unless report of Executive Director of Statutory Officer)	Executive Director for Place & Regeneration, 2 September 2026

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BLOXHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2024 – 2042

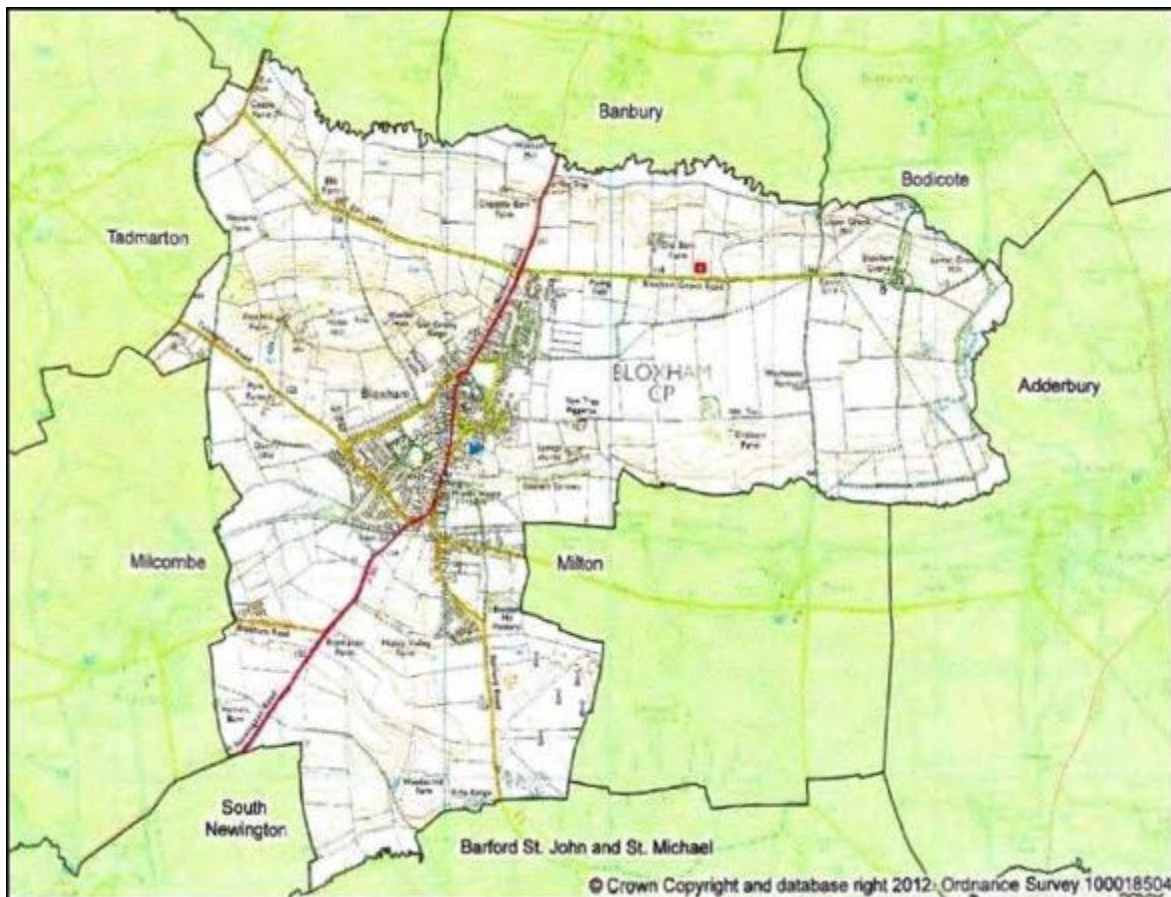
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (NP2) produced by Bloxham Parish Council (BPC) to cover the plan period 2024 to 2042. It modifies and rolls forward the plan period of the made Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (NP1) of December 2016. The local planning authority, Cherwell District Council (CDC), designated the neighbourhood area in 2013 – the area coincides with the Parish boundary (see Plan A below).



Plan A: Designated Bloxham Neighbourhood Area

1.2 NP2 comprises 15 land use and development policies to be used by CDC in determining planning applications in the Parish alongside other policies of the development plan and other ‘material considerations’.

1.3 Many of the NP1 policies have been retained with some modified wording. Some have been deleted, some have been merged with others and there are some new policies – see Appendix C for the full Modification Statement that summarises these changes and concludes that they change the nature of NP1 and therefore NP2 was put to a referendum.

1.4 NP2 has been prepared during a challenging time for the village. Many new homes have been built around its edges over the last decade, with many more to come following approvals in the last year. With more applications being submitted and in the pipeline, BPC has sought to bring forward NP2 to renew the currency of the development plan for Bloxham and to better manage change over the next decade or more.

1.5 It considers that NP2 met the basic conditions required by the Regulations for the reasons set out in the separate Basic Conditions Statement. It also published a Consultation Statement and Environmental Report Addendum alongside NP2, together with some additional evidence reports, which were submitted to CDC to arrange its independent examination.

1.6 NP2 is structured by summarising (in Section 2) the key features of the village and its surroundings and the national and local planning policies that provide the essential context for its proposals. The main objectives and policies are set out in Section 3 together with the Policies Map and Insets. There are then a number of appendices providing additional background information on the policies and their evidence.

2. BACKGROUND

Historical Context

2.1 Bloxham is a village steeped in history. Incomplete excavations in 1929-35 opposite the current primary school unearthed evidence of a Romano-British settlement. The village name, however, derives from the 6th century Anglo-Saxon “Blocces Ham” (the home of the Bloccs). By 1316, the name had evolved to Bloxham.

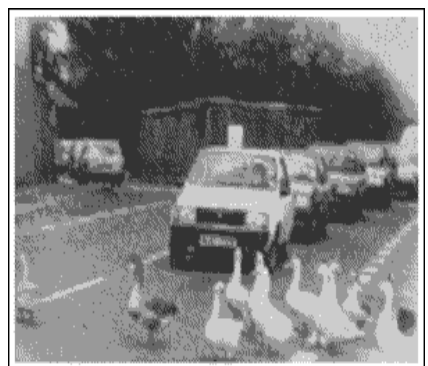
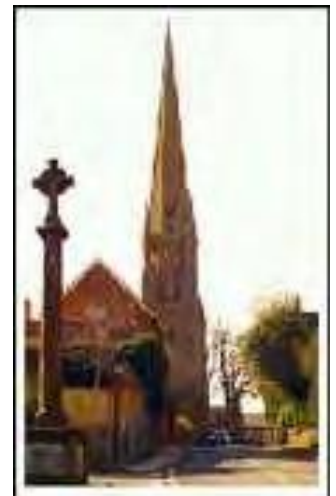
2.2 The dominant building, situated in the older ironstone part of the village is St Mary’s Church, rated by Pevsner and by Jenkins as one of the top 100 churches in the country. The site dates back to Saxon times and is mentioned in a charter of 1067, but the present church building dates to the 12th century. In addition to its 198 feet (60m) steeple, it contains important and unique art, carvings and windows all by renowned craftsmen including a 15th century screen said to have been a gift from Cardinal Wolsey. The splendour of the church is largely a consequence of Bloxham being a royal manor, which received the patronage of nobles. This was augmented by wealth derived from the wool trade.

2.3 Since early times, the village has been based upon agriculture. Corn grew well and the good grasslands and plentiful water supply allowed successful sheep rearing,

contributing to the above-mentioned prosperity. In the 1950s there were still 13 working farms employing much of a largely self-sustaining village population. Anyone over 20 will recall traffic grinding to a halt as geese crossed the main road back to their farm in the heart of the village itself.

2.4 The winding medieval streets and alleyways are still apparent in the conservation area of the village, where many of the village’s 45 listed buildings can be found.

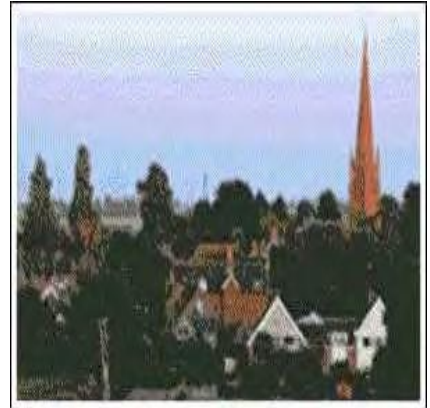
Most are built of ironstone quarried within the village and many have their origins in the 16th and 17th centuries when the wool trade was at its peak. Weaving became, quite literally, a cottage industry in Bloxham in houses that still exist.



2.5 The mid-19th century saw the foundation of Bloxham School: a public school, which became a major landowner and significant employer within the village. The main school buildings still impart a striking visual impact that plays a significant role in defining the 'sense of place' of Bloxham.

2.6 Creation of the A361 circa 1815 led to loss of the village green and the protection of the few remaining larger green areas in the heart of the village, such as the Red Lion garden, forms a part of this plan. The growth of industry in Banbury in the mid-19th century saw the opening of the now defunct railway. This, along with improvements to the roads, increasingly allowed people to work away from the village.

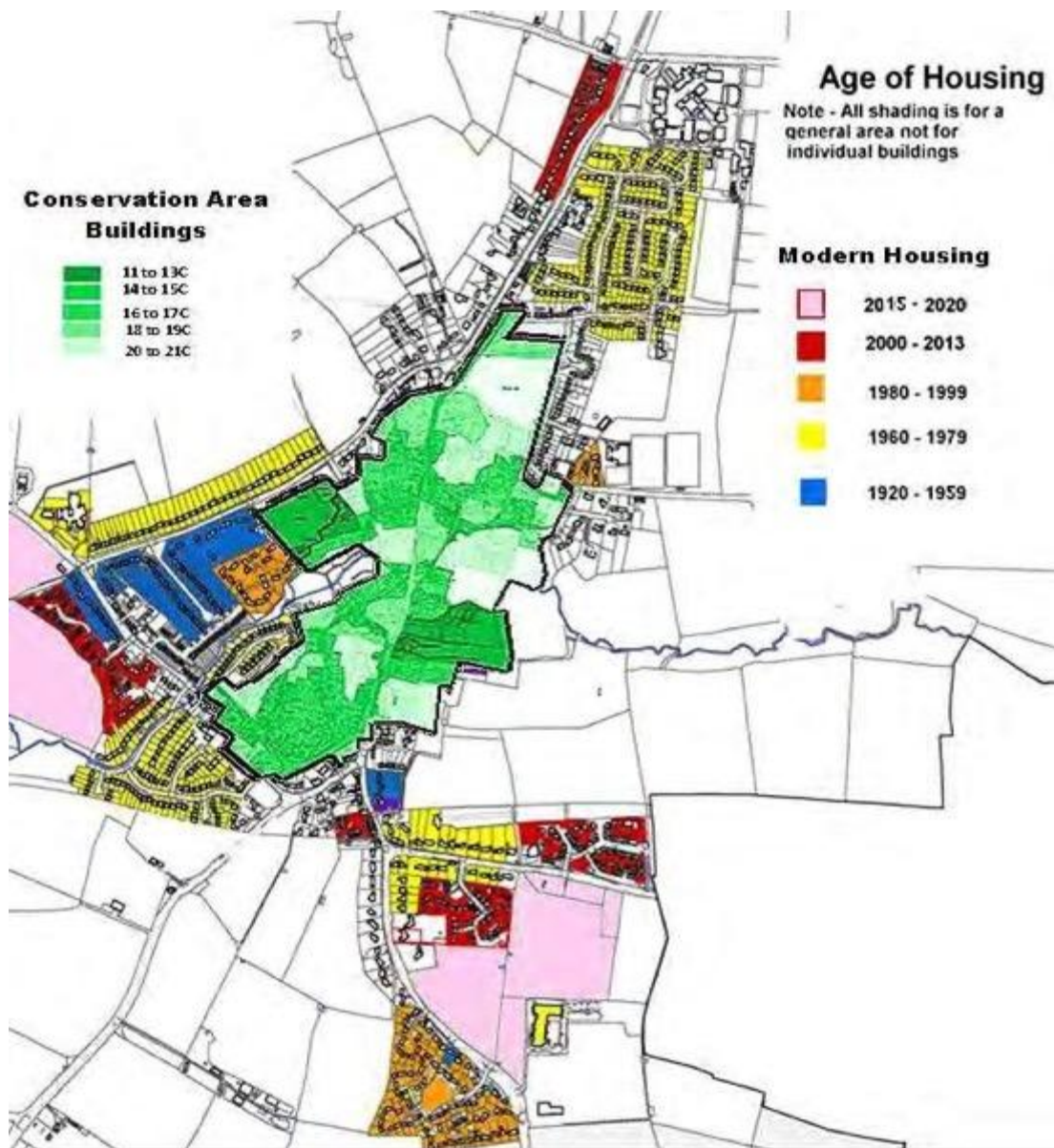
2.7 Bloxham retains a proud affinity with its heritage and rural roots, and the church and the museum (which is run by volunteers) both receive a regular flow of UK and international visitors, seeking to explore this heritage. An ironstone village on the edge of the Cotswolds, Bloxham has a large medieval conservation area, one of the finest churches in the country and many attractive landscape views from the major gateways, from certain public rights of way and within the village itself. Despite on-going expansion, it remains a largely cohesive community with a 'rural sense of place', the preservation of which features highly in this plan.



2.8 Bloxham had little growth until the late 19th to early 20th century other than some building along the main Banbury Road. Around 1940 came development of The



Avenue followed in the 1960s through to the 1980s by estates at Chipperfield Park, Brookside (shown alongside), Winters Way and Bloxham Park. (See map below to track village development) Although of more modern designs, the judicious use of space, trees and materials mostly helped avoid developments with a hard urban feel to them.



Profile of Bloxham Today

2.9 Bloxham is a Category A village in the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire. The village is less than 4km from Banbury, and less than 6km from the nearest urban centre, Banbury town centre.¹ The population is approximately 3,700 people residing in 1,400 households.²

¹ Banbury LCWIP 2023

² Office of National Statistics, built up area profile, census 2021 data:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/#E63003917> (last accessed 7/7/25)

2.10 Existing cycling connectivity is poor. A shared footpath/cycleway connecting Bloxham to Banbury has been completed but does not go to central areas, starting and ending on the outskirts of each settlement. Public transport is limited to an hourly bus service connecting Bloxham with Banbury and Chipping Norton. Bloxham residents are typically car users. 93% of residents have access to a car or van in the household; for those travelling to work, 89.7% either drive to work, or work from home.³

2.11 Bloxham village has a higher-than-average number of children. 28.8% of residents in the village were aged 19 years and under during the 2021 census, comparatively, the 2023 national average for England is 23.1%.⁴ The number of older people, aged 65 years and older, was broadly in line with the national average. Bloxham also enjoys a high employment rate, with less than 2% of people aged 16 or over unemployed during the 2021 census.

2.12 The village has a mix of public facilities, including: Jubilee Park Hall, church, pubs, shops, bed & breakfast, playgrounds, museum, nursery, primary school, secondary school. The village has recently opened a new free school for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Bloxham Grove Academy.

Educational Context

2.13 There are five educational settings within Bloxham:

- Bloxham C of E Primary School (Voluntary controlled school)
Age 4 – 11. Student capacity: 420, Current: 373
- The Bloxham Grove Academy (Free Schools: SEND)
Age 7 – 18. Student capacity: 100, Current: 84
- The Warriner School and Sixth Form (Academy)
Age 11 – 18. Student capacity: 1,468, Current: 1,555
- The Warriner School: (Resourced Provision: SEND)
Age 11 – 18. Student capacity: 12, Current: 12
- The Bloxham School (Independent)
Age 11 – 18. Student capacity: 600, Current: 560

2.14 Additionally there are two nurseries, Bloxham Pre-School and Rainbow Village Nursery. At the time of writing the previous Neighbourhood Plan the Primary School was above capacity for student numbers. Due to a dip in birth rates county wide, primary school numbers are now lower than maximum capacity. However, the high percentage of young people in the village, and high numbers of students at the secondary schools, means that preserving the opportunity for expansion of both primary and secondary schools sites remains a key priority.

³ Census 2021, car or van availability and travel to work data

⁴ Statista, Percentage of children (aged 0-15) in the overall population of the United Kingdom from 1971 to 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/478558/children-population-percentage-of-total-united-kingdom-uk/> last accessed 22/5/2025

The Village Economy

2.15 The village has a thriving business environment. A mixed retail area in the centre of the village at the high street contains: hair and beauty therapy, groceries, hot food takeaway, and medical. Three pubs: the Joiners Arms, Red Lion and Elephant & Castle occupy a central position in the village.

2.16 A newer edition, Bloxham Mill, converted from a former carpet factory in 2000, lies to the south of the village and is home to around 70 businesses, including a mix of permanent offices, offering professional and financial services, research and development, training and services. Additional meeting, co-working and office workspace is also available for short term hire.

2.17 The surrounding countryside is home to a number of working farms, a nursery and tea room and an additional industrial estate at Yew Tree Farm.

National Planning Policy

2.18 The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard for national planning policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of December 2024. The Basic Conditions Statement contains further details but the key policies are:

- 8 principles of sustainable development
- 13 neighbourhood plans supporting the delivery of strategic policy
- 16 positive plan-making
- 18, §29-§31 scope of neighbourhood plans
- 61 etc delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 98 meeting community needs
- 103 etc open space and recreation
- 113 parking standards
- 131 etc achieving well-designed places
- 187 conserving the natural environment
- 203 conserving the historic environment

Strategic Planning Policy

2.19 The Parish Council has had regard to the strategic policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, notably policies:

- BSC4 Housing Mix
- BSC7 Meeting Education Needs
- BSC10 Open Space
- BSC12 Community Facilities
- ESD7 Sustainable Drainage Systems

- ESD13 Local Landscape Protection
- ESD15 Built and Historic Environment
- ESD17 Green Infrastructure
- VILLAGES1 Village Categorisation
- INF1 Infrastructure

2.20 CDC submitted a new Local Plan 2042 in July 2025, which will therefore be examined under the 2023 version of the NPPF. Although that plan will not be adopted until after the examination of NP2, the Parish Council has sought to ensure the two plans will complement each other in decision making when adopted. For that reason and having explored alternative plan periods, it has determined that aligning NP2 with the emerging Local Plan period makes the most sense.

2.21 It has paid special attention to two of the Local Plan policies. Firstly, the proposed spatial strategy of Policy SP1, which is similar to the adopted plan in respect of the distribution of housing growth for 'Category A' villages like Bloxham. Secondly, its Policy RUR1 provides an indicative housing figure (per NPPF 69) of 75 homes for Bloxham. It is also noted its Policy COM13 proposes a 'Settlement Gap' between the village and Banbury.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Our vision of Bloxham is ...

“Over the next few years the village will have successfully accommodated its new population into village life with a larger, outstanding primary school and new community facilities and public open spaces. In managing this growth the village will have maintained its essential historic, rural character by preserving its special countryside setting and heritage assets. Its village centre will have thrived, there will still be a range of public and private sector jobs and the new developments will have been designed to help reduce flood risks.”

3.2 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To plan for a scale of housing growth that can be accommodated within the constraints of the village infrastructure
- To use new development to improve the village infrastructure and to reduce flood risk
- To conserve and enhance the special historic character of the village and its countryside setting
- To manage development so that fits well with existing residential amenity
- To support economic development to provide local job opportunities

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan contains 15 policies, each of which is intended to contribute to one or more of these objectives. Each policy has a code number and title and the policy wording is in bold text. Below each policy is some supporting text to explain the intent of the policy and how it should be understood by applicants and applied by CDC to planning applications. The justification of each policy is contained in the Basic Conditions Statement. Where a policy applies to specific land or sites in Bloxham this is shown on the Policies Map.

Policy BL1: Spatial Plan for Bloxham

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Bloxham Settlement Boundary, as shown on the Policies Map. Proposals for development within the Settlement Boundary will be supported in principle. Development proposals will not be supported outside a Settlement Boundary unless their use and scale are specifically suited to, or require, a countryside location.**
- B. Beyond the Settlement Boundary as shown on the Policies Map, the Neighbourhood Plan provides for the delivery of approx. 340 homes comprising land at:**
 - i. North of Ells Lane (30 homes - consented)**
 - ii. South of Hartshill Close (130 homes - consented)**
 - iii. West of Tadmarton Road (55 homes – consented)**
 - iv. East of Tadmarton Road (125 homes - allocated)**
- C. Additional homes may be delivered through windfall schemes on suitable sites within the Settlement Boundary.**

3.4 This new policy defines a Settlement Boundary on the Policies Map that reflects the present extent of the built-up area boundary of Bloxham village. This brings essential clarity for the local planning authority, the local community and applicants as to how the location of a development proposal will lead to its consideration as either part of the village or its surrounding countryside. In that sense it forms an essential basis for planned, development management.

3.5 The boundary does not incorporate those housing schemes listed in clause B that have either been approved since April 2024 or allocated by NP2 as they have not yet been built out. It will be modified in a future version of the development plan to reflect the new built-up area once schemes have been completed.

3.6 Proposals for development suited to a village location inside the Boundary – infill residential, commercial and community facilities for example – are considered appropriate in principle but subject to the application of all other relevant planning policies. The policy requires that proposals outside the Boundary must be suited to, or must necessarily have, a countryside location. This could include agriculture, and some forms of horticulture, equestrian, sports and recreation uses, the scale and nature of which would not have the inevitable, harmful urbanising or traffic effects of new housing schemes.

3.7 The policy makes provision in the plan period to 2042 for four major housing schemes: three already consented but not yet implemented at Ells Lane, South of Hartshill Close and West of Tadmarton Road; and the Painters Farm site allocated in Policy BL2. There may also be some additional supply from windfall schemes approved inside the Boundary.

3.8 BPC acknowledges that the provision made in the policy exceeds the indicative housing figure of 75 homes provided by CDC to inform how NP2 should contribute to meeting local housing need. However, it wishes to use NP2 to plan for important village infrastructure improvements – flooding resilience and future school expansion for example – and to secure the provisions of NPPF 14 in determining major housing development proposals.

3.9 In the consultation draft NP2 BPC sought to argue it was also looking beyond that figure to anticipate a higher housing need than that provided by the submitted Local Plan. It no longer seeks to make that case as it has to assume the Local Plan will be found sound in respect of Bloxham's housing figure. Should the adopted version of the Local Plan prompt a different approach to be taken, the Parish Council will consider undertaking a timely review of NP2. Appendix A explains this in more detail.

Policy BL2: Land East of Tadmarton Road ('Painters Farm')

A. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land East of Tadmarton Road ('Painters Farm'), as shown on the Policies Map, for a residential-led, mixed development scheme comprising land for residential, education, burial ground, community uses and public open space.

B. Proposals will be supported, provided, in respect of the use of the land:

- I. The arrangement of all the land uses and development features follow the principles shown on the Concept Masterplan (Plan C on Page 16);**
- II. The residential scheme is for approx. 125 homes. Subject to viability, at least 10% of the homes shall be bungalows suitable for occupation by older person households;**
- III. Sufficient land is allocated adjoining the existing primary school for education use to be used for additional school parking and for the longer term potential expansion of the school;**
- IV. Sufficient land is made available for a new burial ground;**
- V. The existing barn on the western edge of the site is made available and safeguarded for conversion for a flexible community use (Class F1 or F2); and**
- VI. A public open space is created as part of a landscape mitigation scheme with a new viewing platform and picnic area at Hobb Hil.**

C. Proposals will be supported, provided, in respect of their design and implementation:

- I. A sustainable drainage scheme shall be provided that manages surface and ground water in accordance with all the recommendations of the submitted flood risk assessment and drainage strategy to address any potential effects arising from the scheme itself and to improve the**

- management of surface water flooding in the proximity of the site and avoids any worsening of sewer flooding beyond the site;**
- II. The site is accessed by vehicles and pedestrians from Tadmarton Road and by pedestrians via public footpaths onto Courtington Lane;**
 - III. The site layout is formed of development parcels that retain and bolster as much of the existing site hedgerows and trees as possible;**
 - IV. The location and orientation of homes in the vicinity of the Primary School avoid creating the potential for overlooking of the school buildings and playground and for harm to the future amenity of those homes arising from noise from the school; and**
 - V. A green infrastructure scheme shall be implemented, based on the principles shown in Plan C, that incorporates the sustainable drainage scheme and includes the provision of a new woodland belt to connect existing assets on Hobb Hill with those on the remainder of the site.**

3.10 This replacement policy (of former BL1) allocates the land on the north-western edge of the village for a housing scheme (including much sought after bungalows for local downsizers). In doing so it establishes the key land use principles in clause B and design and development principles in clause C.

3.11 The site assessment work concluded the location of the site adjoining primary school is such that it uniquely creates the opportunity to address an existing school traffic problem and the longer term likelihood of the need for the school to expand as the population of local children increases over the next few years. It also creates the opportunity to improve the resilience of the western side of the village to the effects of climate change in the form of surface water flooding events. With those two infrastructure benefits secured, the scheme will also deliver a major new public open space on Hobb Hill and make available land for a new burial ground. Finally the policy safeguards the possible later conversion of a barn for a new community facility once its current agricultural use has ended.

3.12 The policy references a Concept Masterplan (shown in Plan C, page 16) as the basis for the arrangement of land uses. Although it will be for a later planning application to propose the details of the scheme, the policy makes clear the key principles that have formed an important part of the community engagement and site assessment process.

3.13 Similarly, the precise design and development principles will be set out in that application. However, the technical evidence submitted by the land interest to inform the assessment, is of a depth which provides a high degree of confidence that these principles can be met by a feasible and viable scheme. In particular, it is acknowledged that an applicant cannot be required through a condition or obligation to make good an existing, offsite development or infrastructure problem. Here, the land interest has confirmed during the assessment and policy drafting process that he is willing to meet all the policy requirements and he has validated that a policy-compliant scheme will be viable

1. Key views largely retained from and towards Hobb Hill as identified in the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031, with the proposed development edge set back to the west to preserve the tranquillity of PRoW Footpath 136/6/20. The open views from Hobb Hill of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and the wider village setting to be enhanced with a new viewing platform via a new permissive footpath on Hobb Hill.
2. Available views towards the Site from Bloxham Conservation Area to the east to be sensitively considered as part of the development so as to remain largely unaffected by the proposals.
3. Existing vegetation including hedgerows and hedgerow trees to be retained and reinforced where possible with mixed native hedgerows comprising locally prominent species including Hawthorn as per the landscape strategy for Landscape Character Type (LCT) 16 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' of the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS, 2004) and the guidelines for new development within the CDS. Minimum 5 metre buffers to be established between existing vegetation and developable areas
4. New structural and buffer planting along existing boundaries to integrate the proposed built form into its setting and to ensure a landscape buffer is established between this and the existing properties to the south. Existing abrupt northern settlement edge along Courtington Lane to be softened as part of the proposals.

5. Proposed public access onto Hobb Hill.
6. Proposed developable area to be situated away from the eastern extents of the Site, which displays an open character, with dwellings to complement the existing style and character of the Bloxham village built form. Proposed development to maintain the nucleated settlement pattern of Bloxham and to be of an appropriate scale as per the landscape strategy and guidelines for LCT16 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' of the OWLS and the guidelines for new development within the CDS, with dwellings to front onto public open space (P.O.S) areas where possible to create a positive development edge.
7. A new, large area of P.O.S in the eastern extents of the Site to respect the open character of this area, complemented by linear areas of P.O.S running along the development edges of the Site to maximise connectivity and to comply with the guidelines for new development within the CDS.
8. Opportunities created between links for access from the existing PRoW into the development.
9. Potential location of a play area by the development edge so as to provide sufficient surveillance and in close proximity to Bloxham Church of England Primary School.

10. Potential location of SuDS features within new P.O.S areas in the southern extents of the Site where the ground is at its lowest.
11. View Platform and Picnic Area overlooking Bloxham from Hobb Hill.
12. Potential land to be reserved for the future expansion of the adjacent Bloxham Church of England Primary School.
13. Vehicular access off Tadmarton Road in the south-western extents of the Site, with a potential access road positioned sensitively in order to minimise the impact of development on existing vegetation as per the guidelines for new development within the CDS.
14. Existing overhead cables to be re-routed to accommodate the proposed developable area.
15. Proposed Permissive Footpath on client-owned land to encourage public access onto Hobb Hill.
16. Proposed pedestrian and cycle access with Courtington Lane and wider village particularly for elderly walkers and users of mobility scooters.



NOTES:
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Key:

- Application Site Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Existing/Retained Vegetation
- Dwellings to Front onto POS Areas
- Views of Site from Bloxham Conservation Area
- Existing Open Views into Site from PRoW
- Potential Site Access
- Proposed 15m Woodland Belt
- Proposed Landscape Buffer
- Overhead Cables
- Land for Future Expansion of Bloxham Church of England Primary School
- New Mixed Native Hedgerow
- Proposed Developable Area
- Proposed Connectivity with Existing PRoW
- Potential Location of SuDS Features
- Key Views from Hobb Hill
- Potential Access Road
- Potential Pedestrian Access with Wider Village
- Potential Cutting through Boundary Vegetation for Access
- Potential Location of Play Space
- Road
- Public Open Space
- Proposed Permissive Footpath
- Potential Viewing Area from Hobb Hill
- Proposed Bungalow Area
- Potential Conversion of Existing Barn
- Potential Cemetery

REVISIONS

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHKD
1	11.03.23	Updated to client requirements	AL	AL
2	11.03.23	Updated to client requirements	AL	AL

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Bloxham
Opportunity & Constraints Plan

CLIENT
Frampton

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHKD
N/A @ A3	JULY 2023	EL	IC

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
8234 / ASP3 / OCP	C

Plan C. Concept
Masterplan for Land East
of Tadmarton Road

Policy BL3: Connectivity

- A. All new development shall be required, wherever appropriate, to promote and improve low-carbon connectivity via new or existing networks of pedestrian paths and cycle routes such that new residents, including those of school age and the mobility impaired, have safe pedestrian, cycle or wheelchair/mobility scooter access to village services.**
- B. The public footpaths as shown on the Policies Map will be protected and routes through green landscaped or open space areas will be kept free from nearby vehicular traffic as far as practicable.**
- C. Proposals that will lead to improvements to the frequency and routes of bus services serving the village will be supported.**

3.14 This modified policy (of former BL3 and part of former BL17) continues to complement adopted Local Plan Policy SLE4 in reflecting residents' safety concerns about walking Bloxham's narrow streets and medieval pavements to reach local services and facilities. Their frustrations are amplified by parking on pavements, the ever-increasing traffic on the A361, and particularly by HGVs, which often overhang the narrow pavements.

3.15 The Sustrans report that informed the made plan is still relevant. It confirmed most of Bloxham's pavements are not fit for purpose, e.g. a parent cannot safely walk along the main village corridors with a buggy and another child. This issue, coupled with high traffic levels, results increasingly in residents travelling by car even within the village. We are keen that developers pay proper regard to low-carbon connectivity, improving it wherever practicable.

3.16 The importance of public rights of way from a connectivity perspective has already been highlighted but they are also important from a health and recreation perspective. Paths that still meander through green village fields offer residents of all ages quick access to healthy traffic-free exercise. As a guide, where pedestrian paths and cycle routes are being upgraded, widths should be maximised to three metres alongside primary roads, and a minimum of two metres elsewhere. New footpath and cycleways should consider safety of users in their design, they should be overlooked and routes should avoid secluded locations. Where possible, they should also be well lit. Improvements to cycle infrastructure including appropriate crossings, signage and cycle storage would also be supported.

Policy BL4: Parking

- A. Residential development proposals resulting in a net-additional number of dwellings must make provision within the development site for up to:**
 - one parking space (for dwellings of one bedrooms);

- two parking spaces (for dwellings of two, three or four bedrooms); or
 - three parking spaces (for dwellings of five or more bedrooms).
- B. In addition, proposals must provide either within the site or at another convenient location to the site a minimum of 0.5 parking spaces per net-additional dwelling for shared visitor parking, as well as provision for cycle parking.**
- C. Where garages are proposed they must be physically well related to the properties they serve and be of an appropriate size to accommodate modern vehicles. Parking courts will not normally be considered an appropriate alternative to provision on the plot.**
- D. Proposals to alter or extend a dwelling that will lead to the loss of existing off-street parking capacity will not be supported.**
- E. Proposals to improve parking that serves the village centre and at schools or other key locations that attract trips will be supported.**
- F. Wherever possible, new and refurbished parking spaces must use only permeable surfacing and their design should incorporate sustainable drainage to successfully manage surface water flooding.**

3.17 This modified policy (of former BL4 and BL5) refines adopted Local Plan Policy ESD15 by maintaining the approach to managing car parking in the village of the made plan. There is extensive data upon levels of car ownership in Bloxham and all point to the proportion of households with multiple vehicles being around twice the Cherwell and UK average. The provision matches that advised by the County Council in its latest Parking Standards (see Table 4(b): Car Parking Standards for the rest of Oxfordshire (Villages & Hamlets)).

3.18 Unsurprisingly on-street (or all too often on-pavement) parking presents a further major impediment to the safe flow of both traffic and pedestrians. Although maximum parking standards cannot be imposed, a sensible approach needs to be taken to manage its effects on local amenity, the streetscene and safety. This plan seeks that new developments offer on-plot parking that is commensurate with the evidenced levels of car ownership.

Policy BL5: Housing Mix

- A. Proposals for major residential development schemes should comprise the following proportion of open market and affordable housing types unless it can be demonstrated it will lead to a scheme that will be either unviable or will be out of character with the local area:**
- 30% 1-2 bedroom homes

- 60% 3 bedroom homes
- 10% 4+ bedroom homes

B. Where it is proposed to deliver First Homes as an affordable route to home ownership, this must be at a minimum discount of 40% below full market value.

3.19 This new policy refines adopted Local Plan Policy BSC4 by establishing the proportion of new home types in Bloxham that will best match the balance of its existing housing stock to maintain a sustainable community. It also sets the minimum discount level for any proposed First Homes to be delivered as part of the 30% affordable home ownership requirement of the adopted Local Plan.

3.20 The policy is evidenced by the Housing Needs Assessment report produced for the evidence base by experts, AECOM, in December 2024. In respect of housing types, the report drew no distinction between open market and affordable homes in maintaining a balanced housing stock in Bloxham. Given this is the latest local evidence, the policy articulates the District-wide provisions of the emerging Local Plan (Policy COM2).

3.21 The policy also allows for an applicant to show that the desired blend of housing types cannot be achieved without harming the character of the local streetscene by way of its existing dominant house type or scheme viability. However, in the latter case, applicants will only be able to justify a scheme is unviable on the basis of abnormal development costs. Land values are relatively high in this area and developers should take account of the provisions of the development plan when acquiring an interest in land (per NPPF 59).

3.22 Neither the adopted or emerging Local Plans make specific provision for the First Home affordable home product and the NPPF no longer makes it a requirement for the product to form part of the affordable mix. However, it is possible that a developer may consider delivering them on a Bloxham scheme, in which case the evidence indicates that the default 30% discount will not be enough to make a difference, hence the 40% minimum requirement here.

Policy BL6: Adapting Homes to meet Demographic Change

Where practical, housing development proposals should comprise at least 10% of the total number of dwellings as bungalows that are designed specifically to meet the needs of households with older person and those with disabilities, including providing a layout and landscape scheme that confers a sense of space and privacy. Practical access from these dwellings to local facilities should be considered as part of plot layout for the overall site.

3.23 This modified policy (of former BL8) complements adopted Local Plan Policy BSC4 by maintaining the provisions of the made plan on encouraging the delivery of housing that meets the needs of older person households. It recognises that not every site is

suited by way of its location and/or size/shape to delivering this form of lower density home but will give special weight to proposals that can deliver them.

3.24 In common with the rest of the UK Bloxham has an ageing population where mobility issues will become increasingly common. Sustainable communities enable older members of the community, and those with disabilities, to remain in 'mobility-friendly' homes for as long as practicable and the most economical way of achieving this is by designing it in at the outset

Policy BL7: Residential Amenity

Development proposals must not harm the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by way of their noise and light effects.

3.25 This modified policy (of part of former BL9) complements adopted Local Plan Policy ESD15 by restating the importance of planning decisions taking proper account of a village that comprises many small, narrow streets and higher densities of buildings in different uses.

3.26 The potential for amenity harm is therefore greater in Bloxham than in more modern villages and the matter needs to be addressed sensitively. Noise from traffic accessing and parking at non-residential uses in the village can have an especially harmful effect.

Policy BL8: Local Infrastructure

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from development proposals. In particular:

- I. The design of new development schemes must include on site natural flood management measures in demonstrating that no additional harm will arise from surface water flooding in the adjoining area and must include a commitment to properly maintain those management measures in perpetuity;
- II. Measures that will reduce the risk of surface water flooding beyond the site boundary will be attributed additional weight in decision-making;
- III. They must be able to demonstrate that there is adequate wastewater and water supply capacity to serve the new development and that existing capacity problems will not be worsened; and
- IV. Proposals for major housing development must demonstrate there is a sufficient capacity at Bloxham CE Primary School and at local early years and secondary schools in the local area to meet the needs of the assessed number of early years, primary and secondary school-aged children living in the completed scheme.

3.27 This modified policy (of part of former BL9) refines adopted Local Plan Policy BSC9 by reflecting past and ongoing problems faced by the local community with the capacity and performance of the village's infrastructure. Although the Painters Farm allocation (in BL2) will deliver the majority of new homes and infrastructure improvements in the plan period there may be unplanned, 'windfall' schemes that must also understand and address local capacity issues.

3.28 The policy refers to very important local issues that have not been directly addressed in recent years by unplanned schemes, including surface water drainage, wastewater and water supply infrastructure. It also anticipates longer term capacity constraints at the primary school in years to come as the many homes already committed and planned for are occupied.

3.29 It is not expected that any such windfall schemes will be large enough to deliver on-site infrastructure, so other development plan policies will require financial contributions to the delivery of offsite improvements. The allocation of land in Policy BL2 for the expansion of the primary school does, however, provide a medium term solution that will shape the phasing of development. Buildings houses and forcing village children to access school places well beyond the village is not a desirable or sustainable alternative outcome.

3.30 The policy accepts that developers of new schemes cannot be compelled to make good current deficiencies, but new proposals should be expected not to make matters worse. It is not easy to control the timing and scale of water infrastructure improvements, but the policy is intended to send a strong signal to the utility providers to plan ahead, rather than waiting for the problem to become acute before acting.

Policy BL9: General Design Guidance

The appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and design of development proposals must:

- i. Relate in scale, massing and layout to neighbouring properties and the density of new housing development should be consistent and compatible with the existing and prevailing density and reflect the locally distinctive character of the locality in which the new development is proposed and should not usually exceed 30 dwellings per hectare;**
- ii. Be in keeping with local distinctiveness and characteristics of the historic form of the village;**
- iii. Make a positive contribution to the character of Bloxham and its rural feel;**
- iv. Use materials in keeping with the distinctive character of our local brick or ironstone;**

- v. **Make good use of trees, garden space, hedgerows and green space to soften the street scene;**
- vi. **Preserve existing areas of open space and take every available opportunity to create new open space to help retain rural character;**
- vii. **Use smart, energy efficient lighting of public areas that accords with the recommendations of the Institute of Lighting Engineers recommendations on reduction of obtrusive light (or its successors) so as to convey a rural feel and avoid light pollution wherever possible;**
- viii. **Take account of the scale of any harm or loss that it might impose upon any non-designated historic assets; and**
- ix. **Take opportunities to protect and wherever possible enhance biodiversity and habitats.**

3.31 This modified policy (of former BL11) refines adopted Local Plan Policy ESD15 by retaining the key principles of ‘rural character’ of the made plan but with some minor modifications to improve their clarity. They are derived from community feedback over the last decade on what makes the village special, as well as the first and most recent Conservation Area Appraisals.

Policy BL10: Design in the Conservation Area

The siting, scale, massing, detailing, design, materials and landscaping of development proposals in the Bloxham Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map, and which affect its setting and those of its many other designated and non-designated heritage assets, must conserve and enhance their significance as defined in the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.32 This modified policy (of former BL10) complements adopted Local Plan Policy ESD15 to give the full weight of the development plan to the statement of significance of the heritage value of the Conservation Area, within which a significant part of the village is located. It operates alongside the general design principles of Policy BL9, which apply anywhere in the Parish.

3.33 The Conservation Area Appraisal has been updated and adopted by CDC in April 2025. It therefore provides an up-to-date and clearer definition of the character and appearance of each of the ten ‘character areas’ of the Conservation Area. Rather than attempt to extract and repeat the many components that make up the significance of each area, as well as the Conservation Area as a whole in the policy itself, it requires applicants to make clear (in their planning, heritage and design and access statements as relevant) how they have understood and responded to the Appraisal in their proposals. In that sense, the Appraisal is not simply another material consideration in the planning balance but instead forms a fundamental part of the neighbourhood plan and should be given the requisite weight.

Policy BL11: Key Streetscenes & Views

A. Under the policy, Key Street Scenes are identified as shown on the Proposals Map and described in Appendix B as well as Key Views as described in Appendix B. The Key Street Scenes are:

- The area fronting the Bloxham School main buildings;
- The Triangle of Pubs Character Zone; and
- St Mary's Church (see Clause B)

The Key Views are from Hobbs Hill and from Courtington Lane towards Hobbs Hill.

Development proposals must ensure that key features of the identified street scenes and views can continue to be enjoyed and that any development has an acceptable impact in relation to the visual qualities that can be observed from public vantage points.

B. The location, height and massing of new buildings must not obstruct or silhouette the spire of St. Mary's Church from any existing view from a public vantage point within the village or elsewhere in the Parish.

3.34 This modified policy (of former BL12) refines adopted Local Plan policies ESD13 and ESD15 by identifying on the Policies Map the key streetscene and views described (but not mapped) in the made plan. It does not seek to prevent development in the location of a streetscene or view but does require the design of the proposals to understand how they may have the potential to harm a view and to respond accordingly. A description of each view is included in Appendix B. It is acknowledged that the Key Views from Hobbs Hill will be affected by the development at Painters Farm.

3.35 The policy now draws special attention to the role played by the almost 60 metres church spire in defining the identity of Bloxham. Not only is it one of the tallest in the country, it is also "one of the grandest in the country" (Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, Pevsner). The spire can be seen in views from roads, footpaths and public spaces throughout the village and at points well before the village is entered from the main roads.



Image courtesy of 'St. Mary's Church, Bloxham: A Guide & History of the Church' by Yvonne Huntriss MBE, 2007

Policy BL12: Employment Land

- A. Development proposals that will result in the loss of land or buildings with an established commercial, business or service use (Class E) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that, in addition to meeting the marketing requirements set out in Policy SLE1 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2032 Part 1:**
- i. there is no realistic prospect of the land or buildings serving another Class E or Local Community or Learning use (Classes F1 or F2) within five years; and
 - ii. to take account of any new demand for employment land later in the plan period there are alternative locations elsewhere within the Settlement Boundary that would be suitable in principle for a Class E use.
- B. Proposals for new live-work development combining living and small-scale employment space within the Bloxham Settlement Boundary will be supported, provided they will not:**
- i. result in the loss of a retail unit (Class E(a)) or Classes F1 and F2 use;
 - ii. adversely affect the amenity of any adjoining residential properties; and

- iii. **have a severe adverse impact on the local highway network by way of additional traffic movements to and from the site and of additional parking**

C. Proposals for a type of business or office use (Class E(g)) within the defined Settlement Boundary will be supported, provided they are in a location and are of a use and scale that will not significantly adversely affect the character of the local area or the amenity of any adjoining residential property.

3.36 This modified policy (of former BL13 and BL14) complements adopted Local Plan SLE1 in seeking to protect precious employment land in this growing village. It makes reference to specific types of use that form part of the commercial, business and service use class and community and learning use categories as set out in the Use Class Order 2020. There is no specifically designated unused employment land in Bloxham although Banbury, some four miles away, has land available. In the interests of sustainability, we should at least seek to protect what little land there is associated with employment.

3.37 Bloxham has a dynamic and successful mix of micro-businesses mostly operating from homes or from Bloxham Mill Business Centre. In the interest of sustainability, we will encourage spaces that foster start-up and expansion of such businesses provided these do not negatively impact neighbouring residential dwellings. The Business Centre is an especially important source of local, high value-added commercial activity whose location on the edge of the village creates few amenity issues. The revised Settlement Boundary of Policy BL1 to accommodate the full extent of the Centre's operational area will enable it to plan positively for the future.

Policy BL13: Village Centre

Within the Bloxham Village Centre as shown on the Policies Map, proposals for new commercial, business and service uses (Classes E(a), (b) and (c)) will be supported, provided:

- I. **that they accord with national and local policies to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting; and**
- II. **the impact of any additional traffic generated and parking has been satisfactorily mitigated and will not adversely affect the highway network and pedestrian safety.**

3.38 This modified policy (of former BL16) supplements adopted Local Plan Policy SLE2 by highlighting the importance of the village centre in serving the needs of the village and surrounding smaller rural settlements. The centre is focused on the combination of shops, cafe and local services clustered either side of the High Street (A361) as a

critical mass of activity serving not just residents but also passing trade travelling through the village.

3.39 'Village centres' are not defined in the adopted Local Plan as a policy entity but its future is vital to the sustainability of the village, especially as its population continues to grow. Although there are now permitted development rights and changes of use that no longer require planning permission, some of the buildings in the village centre are listed (in which case that permitted development right does not apply). In addition, in determining a 'prior approval' application for a change of use of a ground floor use, CDC can take into account the evidence and rationale of this Neighbourhood Plan in measuring the impact on the character or sustainability of the Conservation Area within which the whole of the village centre lies.

3.40 Village expansion has placed the High Street and Church Street shops and services out of walking range for much of the village. Increasingly customers arrive by car where their attempts to park contribute to village traffic congestion. In consequence, many drive on into Banbury where they can park near the shops with relative safety. An additional retail hub(s) near the village periphery is advocated by some but others fear it would prompt High Street closures, reducing overall sustainability and detracting from the rural aspect. No agreement has been forthcoming upon this other than that any expansion plans for businesses in the High Street or Church Street should demonstrate how they would avoid or mitigate increased traffic congestion and pedestrian safety issues.

Policy BL14: Broadband & Mobile Communications

- A. Where it is practicable to do so, broadband connections should be made by way of suitable ducting to enable one or more service providers to provide a fibre connection to individual properties from a connection chamber or chambers located on the public highway, or else from an alternative connection point available to different service providers.**
- B. Proposals for new or improved mobile phone infrastructure will be supported, providing that the proposals do not adversely affect the surrounding built or natural environment (including without limitation the setting of heritage assets and key views). Overhead wires should not be used in the Conservation Area and its setting.**

3.41 This retained policy (of former BL15) complements adopted Local Plan Policy BSC9 in continuing to address the quality of mobile networks coverage and the speed and variability of broadband, which remain an impediment to business.

Policy BL15: Local Green Spaces & Other Amenity Spaces

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan designates Jubilee Park, the David Tyrrell Recreation Ground and Slade Nature Reserve, as shown on the Policies Map, as Local Green Spaces. New development on land designated as Local Green Space shall be consistent with national Green Belt policy.**
- B. Development on other open spaces and sports and recreational land including those areas designated for amenity use through planning permissions, as shown on the Policies Map, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location.**

3.42 This modified policy (of former BL17) refines adopted Local Plan Policy ESD17 in retaining the Local Green Spaces designated in the made plan. Some preceding policies seek to protect certain spaces with the aim of preserving important views or landscapes or to recognise the important contribution space makes to the rural character of Bloxham. This policy focuses upon additional areas that should be protected specifically because they have traditionally offered residents access to land important for village recreation or nature conservation.

3.43 The contribution of garden space to the overall visual impact should not be ignored and to prevent a potential cumulative loss of openness proposed development of gardens will not in general be supported.

Jubilee Park and The David Tyrrell Recreation Ground

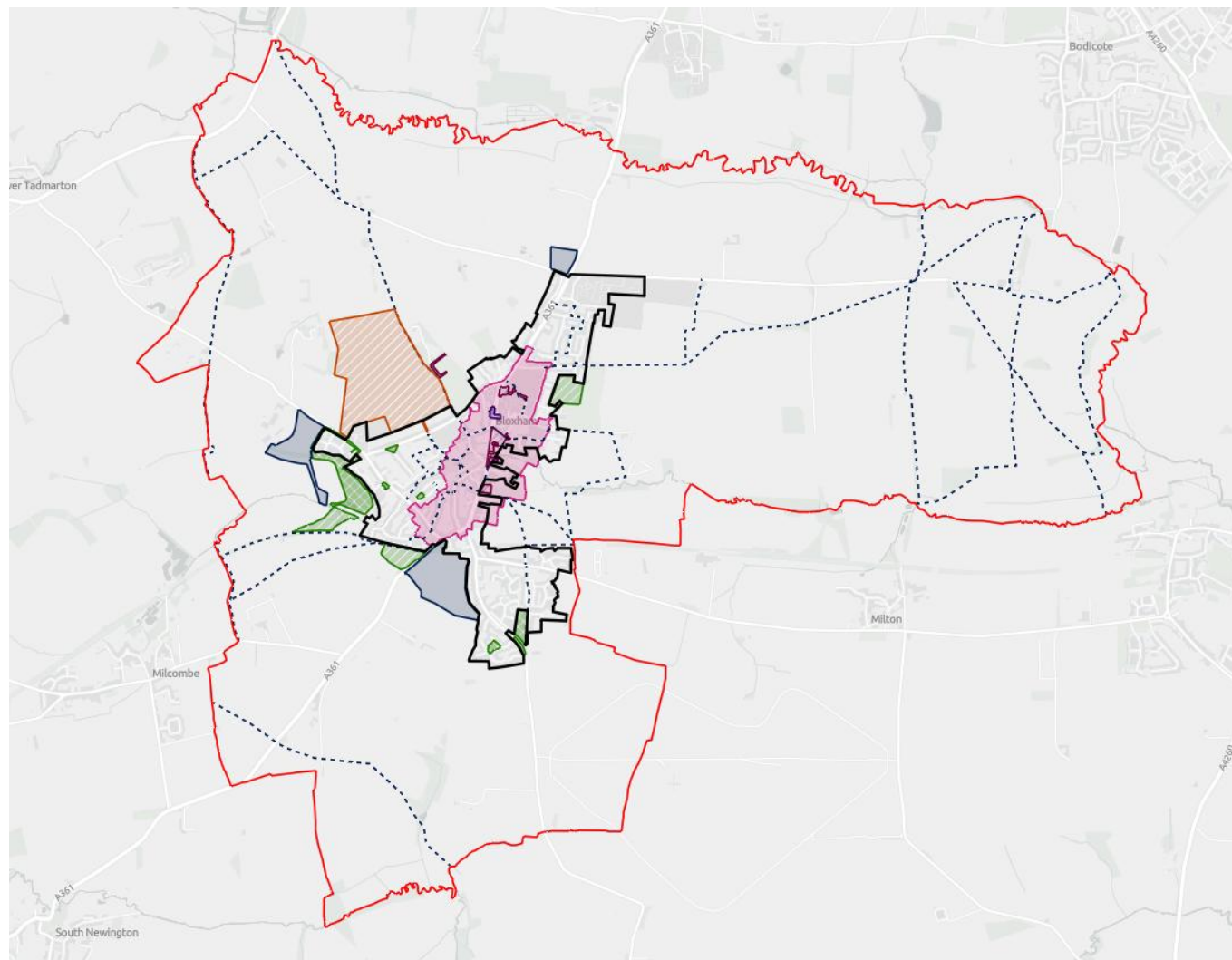
3.44 The village has two recreation areas, one at either end of the village: The David Tyrrell Recreation Ground and the Jubilee Park. They are close to the community they serve and are demonstrably special in terms of their recreational value. Both are run by Trustees that are currently actively working with the Parish Council to improve the overall quality of recreational provision in the village. They provide children with play areas along with the only publicly accessible village sports pitches. The David Tyrrell Recreation Ground also confers a welcome soft-edge to the southern village gateway.

The Slade

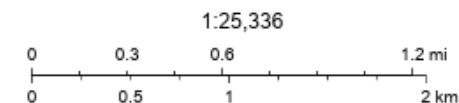
3.45 This is a longstanding nature conservation area that the Parish Council acquired in July 2015. It is used by naturalists, schools and families and is demonstrably special for its tranquillity and wildlife: 96% of residents are in favour of protecting this area from any development and we propose Local Green Space status.

Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map

Bloxham: Designated Neighbourhood Area



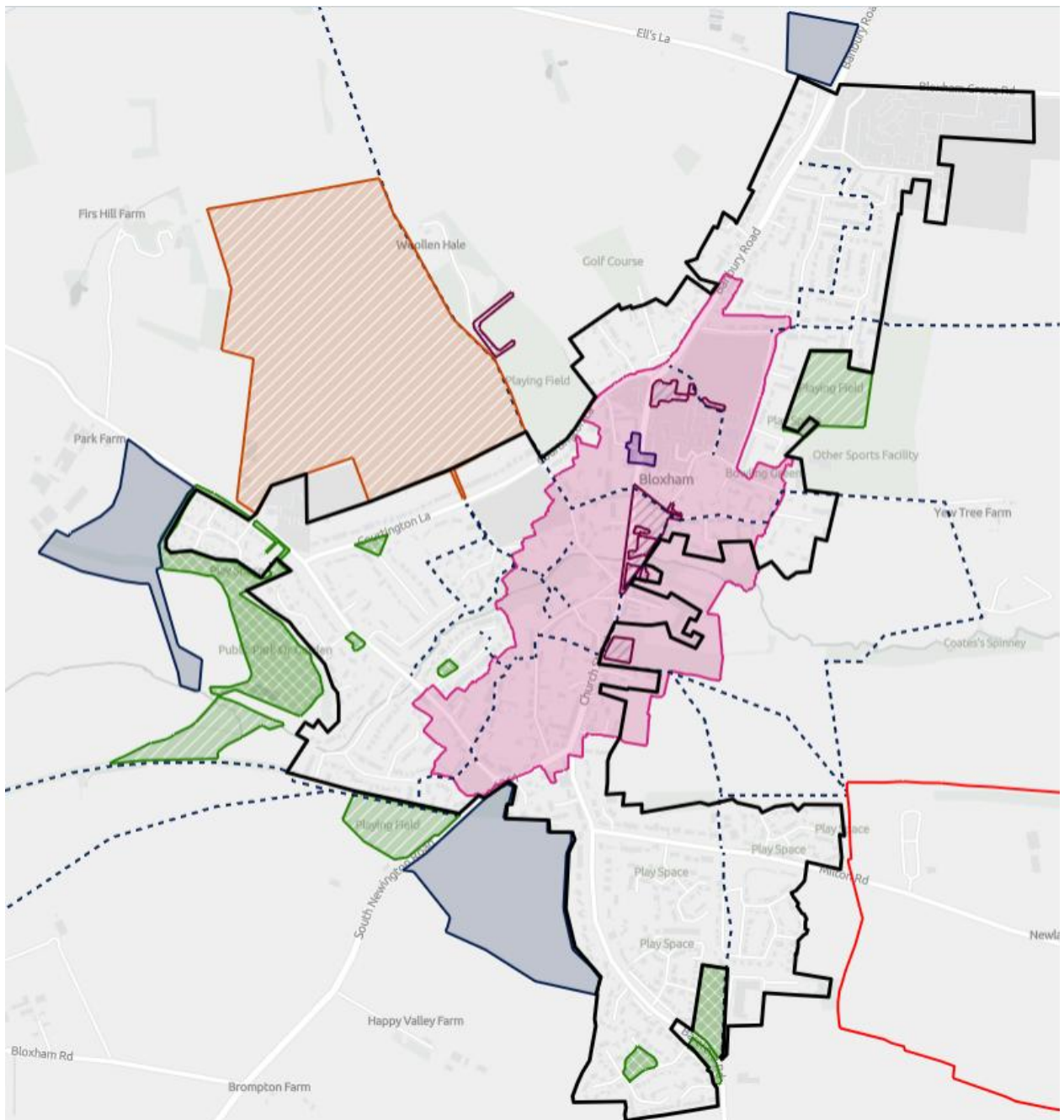
- Designated Neighbourhood Area
- BL1 Settlement Boundary
- BL1 Consented sites
- BL2 Land East of Tadmarton Road ("Painters Farm")
- BL3 Footpaths
- BL11 Key Street Scenes
- BL13 Village centre
- BL15 Local Green Spaces
- BL15 Amenity Green Spaces
- BL10 Conservation Area



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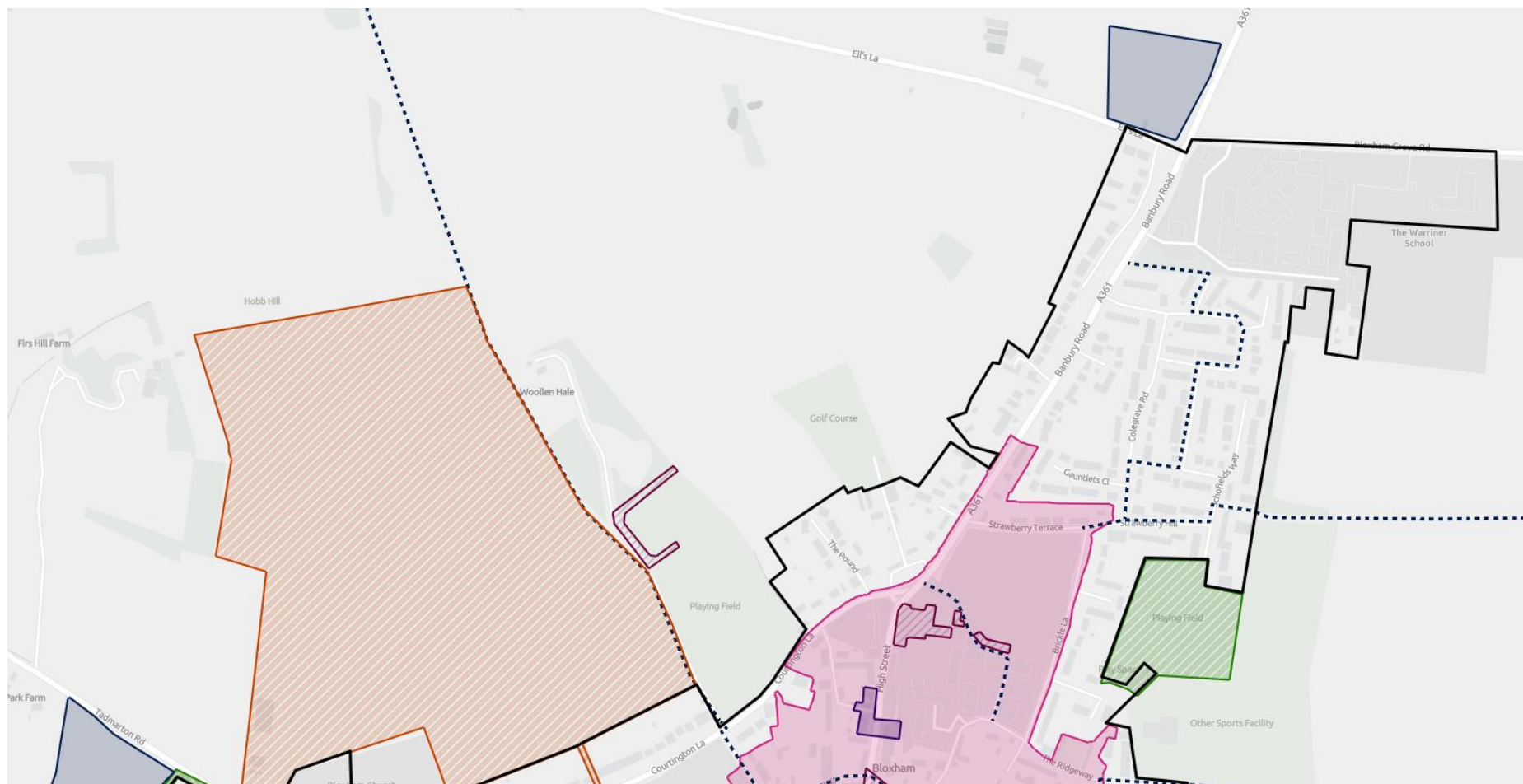
Bloxham Parish Council
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Inset One: Site Settlement Boundary



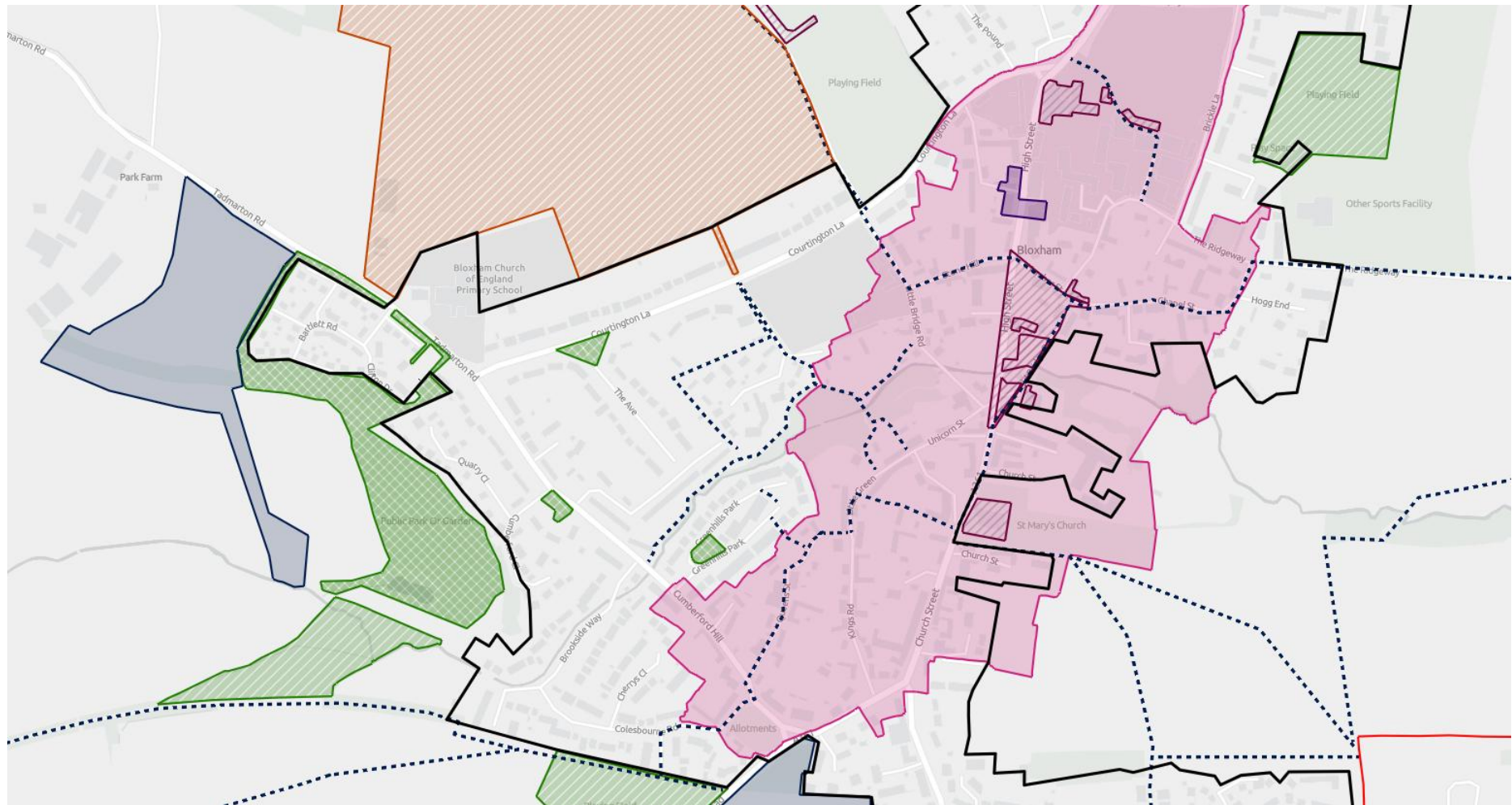
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Inset Two: North Bloxham



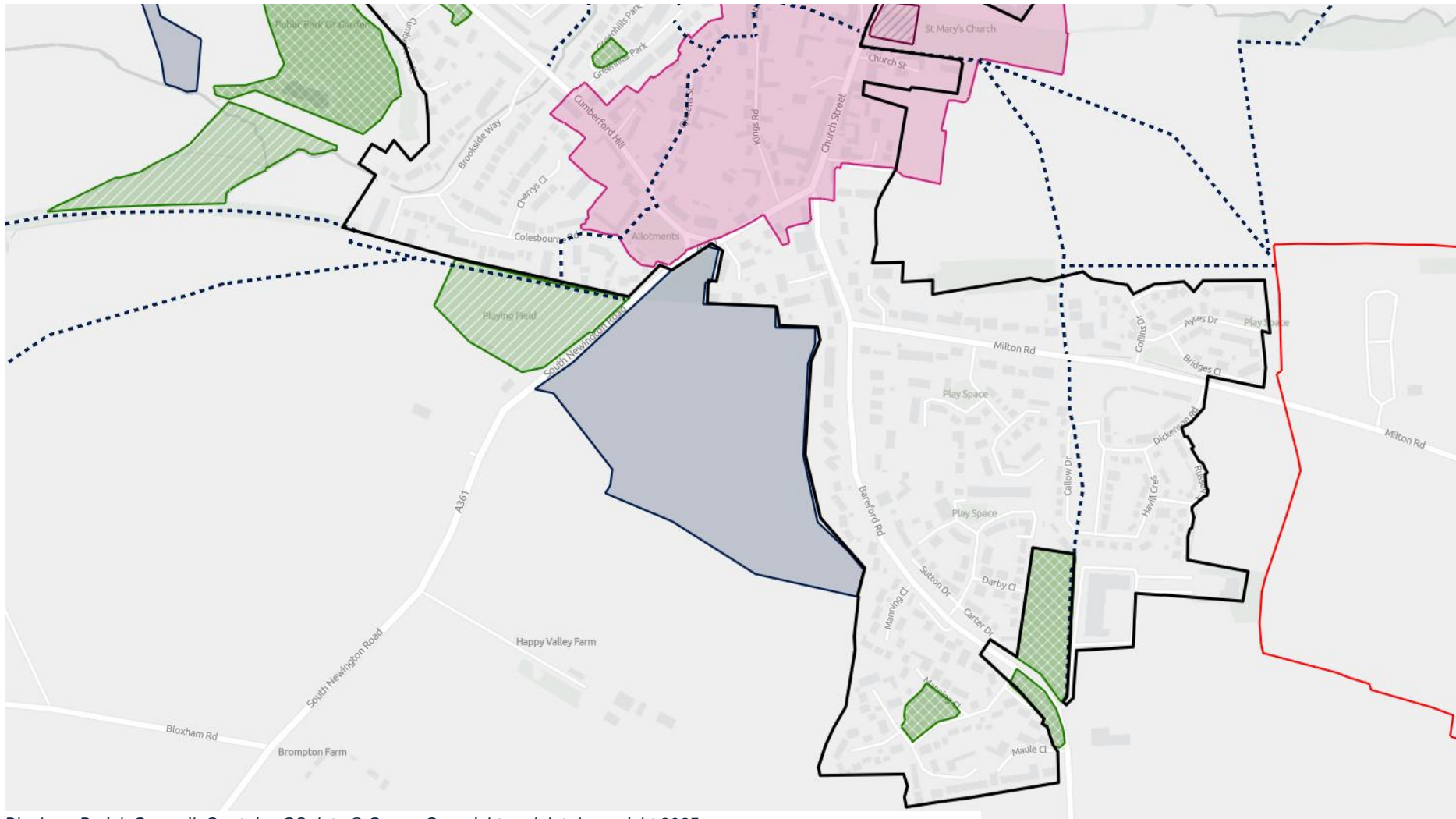
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Inset Three: Mid Bloxham



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Inset Four: South Bloxham



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5. INFORMATION

Bloxham Parish Council has referred to the following documents as its evidence to support the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Community Engagement Report
- Strategic Environmental Site Assessment (SEA) Report
- Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Report

The policies of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented by Cherwell District Council in its determination of planning applications in Bloxham and by Bloxham Parish Council.

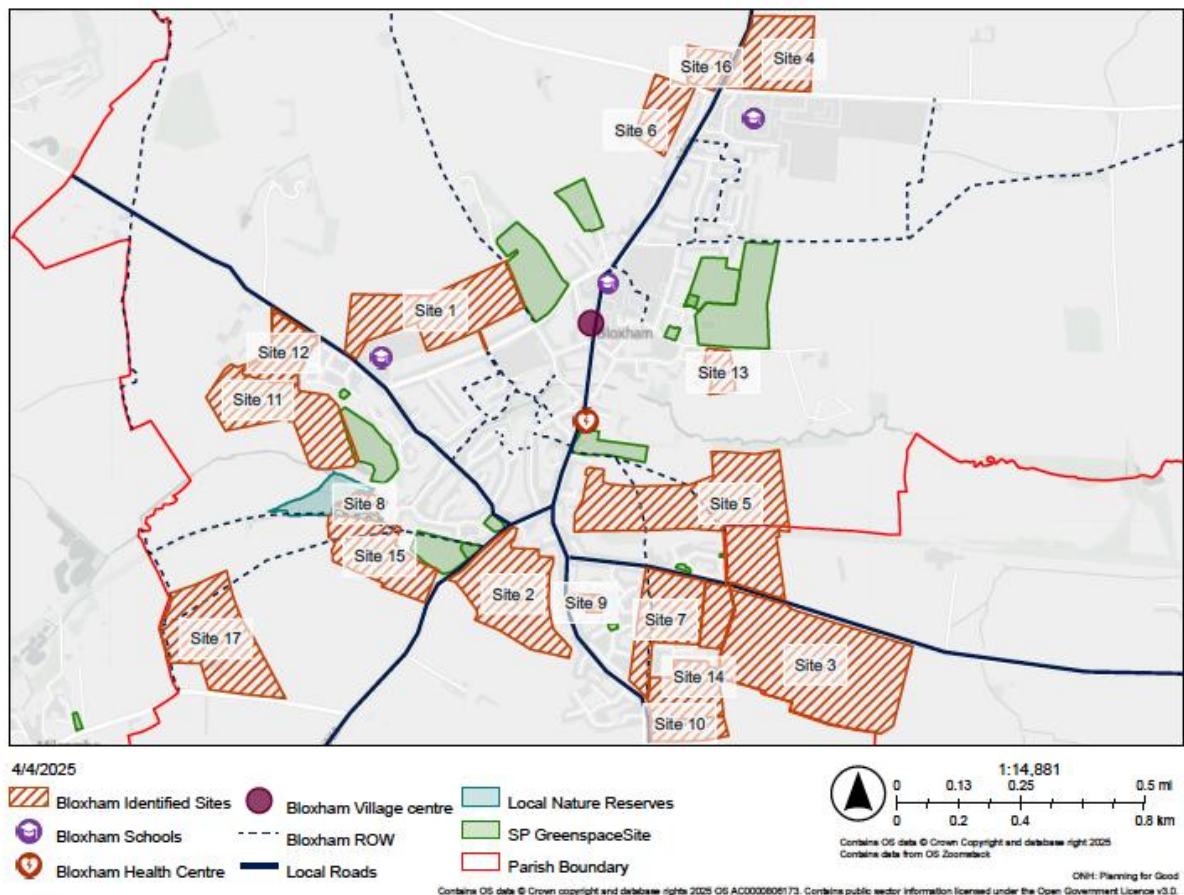
APPENDIX A: SITE ASSESSMENT & SELECTION

Introduction

1. This note summarises the process adopted by the Parish Council in assessing and selecting sites for allocation in the Modified Neighbourhood Plan (NP2), and its integration with the parallel Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process.

Site Assessment

2. The assessment process began in February 2025 and comprised firstly using the 2024 HELAA output from CDC to generate a long list of 17 potential sites in the Parish, which included one site adjoining the village but in neighbouring Milton Parish (Site 3; HELAA096). The sites are shown on Plan A below with their NP site numbers. There was no need for a new 'call for sites' as the CDC data was considered sufficiently up to date and comprehensive in its coverage. Where some HELAA site boundaries overlapped they have been simplified into a single site.



Plan A: Long List of Sites for Assessment

No.	HELAA No.	Site Name
1	094	E of Tadmarton Road
2	467	E of South Newington Road
4	097	N of Bloxham
5	518	N/S of Milton Road
6	099	S of Ells Lane
8	291	Brookside Way
9	357	Orchard House
10	464	E of Barford Road 1
11	474	W of Tadmarton Road 1
12	475	W of Tadmarton Road 2
13	503	Ridgeway House
14	504	E of Barford Road 2
15	534	W of South Newington Road
17	188	Oak View Milcombe

3. The long list was then filtered to delete sites that had secured planning permission since then (Sites 7 and 16) as they will be counted by the NP as existing commitments in the plan period and would not require an allocation.

4. The filtered list of 14 sites was sent to AECOM in April 2025 to carry out a 'site options assessment'. Site 3 was not included as it lies outside the plan boundary for this purpose, but the Parish Council remains mindful that its scale and location could have affected its site selection decision later in the process.

5. The site options assessment concluded that ten sites were potentially suitable for allocation. The four sites AECOM considered unsuitable were sites 8, 11, 13 and 17 and the Parish Council had no evidence to dispute that assessment and of those 10 sites, one site (Site 2) has since secured planning consent for 130 homes and so has also been discounted from further consideration.

6. The focus was then on understanding the basis of the AECOM assessment and recommendations by correcting any assumptions and by supplementing them with additional information. This information comprised the Parish Council's published 'Community Benefits List' of 2023, its initiative to anticipate the effect of new housing development on the village's social and transport infrastructure. Six of those benefits could be delivered as legitimate planning policy requirements (by allocating land and/or using S106 financial contributions):

- Future expansion of Bloxham Primary School on Tadmarton Road (including access to additional parking land in the interim)
- Traffic management works along High Street
- Improvements to school parking at Grove Road
- Provision of a new library
- Additional burial ground and allotments land
- Additional public sports pitches land

7. At that time, it was not considered important to prioritise these benefits. But, with events in the last year meaning that the village has to accommodate another significant increase in new homes and population, the Parish Council has judged that increasing the capacity of the village primary school was its most important priority.

8. The Parish Council also invited the land interests of the nine sites to submit any further information on their site development ideas or proposals, so that it could also take that into consideration for delivering these benefits, as well as to deliver mitigation measures.

9. This additional information has qualified and supplemented the AECOM report in the following ways:

- Site 1 – importantly, two adverse effects it identified can be corrected: the land interest has committed to providing land for the future expansion of the school so there will be no prejudicing of that potential, and to connecting the site with the adjoining PRow, which will mean all the developable land will lie within a safe and convenient 400m walking distance of the village centre. The land interest has also offered land for a burial ground and for a potential future community use of the existing barn (once its established agricultural use has ended), as well as the creation of a new public vantage point at Hobb Hill with significant woodland and other planting to manage the sensitive landscape transition and to re-route the overhead power cables.
- Site 4 – the land interest has not proposed any additional benefits to the 100 homes proposed and the means of containing the harmful locational and landscape effects appear difficult to overcome. It has not indicated if it would be willing to provide a new public car park for the schools opposite.
- Site 5 – the land interest has submitted additional information that addresses a number of the effects identified by AECOM and proposes a total of approx. 230 homes, perhaps with a first phase of 90 homes. Importantly, it also proposes the delivery of three listed benefits on site – land for a burial ground, allotments/orchard and a new community facility (e.g library).
- Site 6 – there has been no additional information provided by the land interest to show if and how landscape and access mitigation measures will be delivered.
- Site 9 – this is a small PDL site within the settlement boundary and so can come forward without an allocation in the plan
- Site 10 – there has been no additional information provided and it is noted the site is not part of the planning application submitted for Site 14, on which the report considers it depends as a coherent extension to the village.
- Site 12 – the planning application for 55 homes has now been approved.
- Site 14 – the planning application for 100 homes has been submitted. It makes provision for attenuation land to address flood risk and some boundary landscaping but is neither large enough nor well located to deliver a community benefit.
- Site 15 – the land interest has proposed 100 homes for the site but no other community benefit. Whilst it may be possible to address the flood, landscape and

access issues, the site has only the most tenuous visual connection to the village form (on the opposite side of the recreation ground) and is likely neither large enough nor well located to deliver a community benefit.

10. The AECOM report assumed that the capacity of the larger sites should be lowered in order to fall within the Local Plan 75 homes indicative figure. For the reasons outlined below, this assumption has been disregarded in the site selection process and the fact that some sites have been made available for a larger number has not put them at a disadvantage. However, the Parish Council has assessed the extent to which a proposal can deliver benefits directly on site as opposed to making financial contributions to the delivery of the benefit elsewhere.

Site Selection

11. The Parish Council has been placed in a difficult position by the number of major housing proposals that have been, and continue to be, made on land around the village over the last two years, prompted by CDC's struggle to maintain an up to date Local Plan and five year housing land supply position. It has also had to be mindful that the housing requirement figure (HRF) per NPPF 69 proposed for the village in the emerging Local Plan (75 homes) had already been overtaken by events and is yet to be examined.

12. It therefore needs to exert its planning judgement in a way that plans positively for future housing growth in the village over the next decade or more on the one hand, but on the other that reflects the village status in the settlement hierarchy; its location very close to the largest town in CDC – Banbury; its infrastructure capacity limitations; and its essential, special historic and rural character. Importantly, the Parish Council wished to stay in step with the spatial strategy and housing supply proposals of the emerging Local Plan.

13. At the draft NP2 stage, the Parish Council was mindful of the impact of the new Standard Method for calculating housing supply at the CDC level. It did not seek to propose using the Method to counter the emerging Local Plan HRF but did look to show how allocating a site for housing development would give NP2 longevity over the next decade. This approach confused many stakeholders and so is no longer cited here.

14. From the assessment work summarised above the sites can be divided into three types: those that will directly deliver one or more community benefits; those that cannot by way of their size and/or location; and those that are relatively inconsequential and only worthy of further consideration if their housing capacity is needed to achieve the indicative figure.

15. The first type comprises Site 1 and Site 5. Both would enable the village to grow and at the same time deliver the kind of step change in infrastructure capacity that this growth (and recent growth) will require to maintain a sustainable village that is not exporting students, patients and those seeking community facilities to access local services.

16. Site 1 would enable an important social infrastructure issue to be addressed – the expansion of the school, for which S106 funds are already being collected from approved schemes. Delivering a new primary school in Bloxham would only be necessary if the village were to double in size, which is neither appropriate nor planned for the foreseeable future. Land has been made available for a new burial ground and for another community use once the barn is no longer needed for its agricultural use. A well-designed scheme at the foot of Hobb Hill that assimilates the scheme into the village fabric and connects to the PRoW network and village centre nearby will deliver these benefits and 125 homes.

17. Site 5 would also deliver some benefits on the list – a new community facility, allotments and burial space – and would continue the eastern expansion of the village along Milton Road. However, it will ultimately need to supply 230 homes in return for those benefits, using some development parcels well beyond a 400m walk from the village centre. And again, the scheme could help fund primary school expansion but could not deliver it and would place greater pressure on catchment area places. Its homes would enable the plan period to be extended to 2042.

18. The second type of site comprises Sites 4, 12 and 14. It is possible that each could deliver new homes and some mitigation to meet the immediate needs of the schemes themselves and provide financial contributions to other infrastructure improvements. With the indicative housing figure already met by approved schemes, the Parish Council has instead prioritised local infrastructure improvement. None of the sites offer on-site solutions to improving that infrastructure, only financial contributions to off-site improvements.

19. The third type of site comprises Sites 6, 9, 10 and 15. Their location and their size means that they have the least to contribute to a sustainable vision of Bloxham. None would be required to meet the indicative figure if one or two of any of the first or second type of sites are selected.

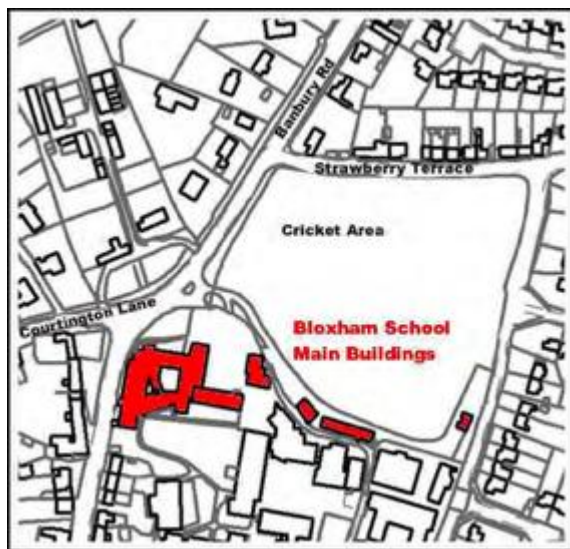
20. It was therefore concluded that only Sites 1 and 5 could be considered reasonable alternatives and they were assessed as such by the separate SEA, also carried out by AECOM as part of the wider assessment of the draft policies. The SEA indicated both sites have the potential for positive and adverse effects that could be mitigated through allocation policy requirements.

21. The Parish Council chose to allocate Site 1 as it judged it would deliver important benefits and important range of community benefits.

APPENDIX B: KEY STREETSCENES AND VIEWS

Key views 1: The area fronting the Bloxham School main buildings

The CPRE Consultation comment states, 'Few other villages have such a statement of arrival.' It has dominated the northern approach for around 150 years and regularly appears on school marketing materials. It is an area significant for its beauty and holds an important place in the history of the village. With the possible exception of the parish church, its visual impact is unsurpassed. We would expect any future development would show great sensitivity to preserving the overall visual impact.

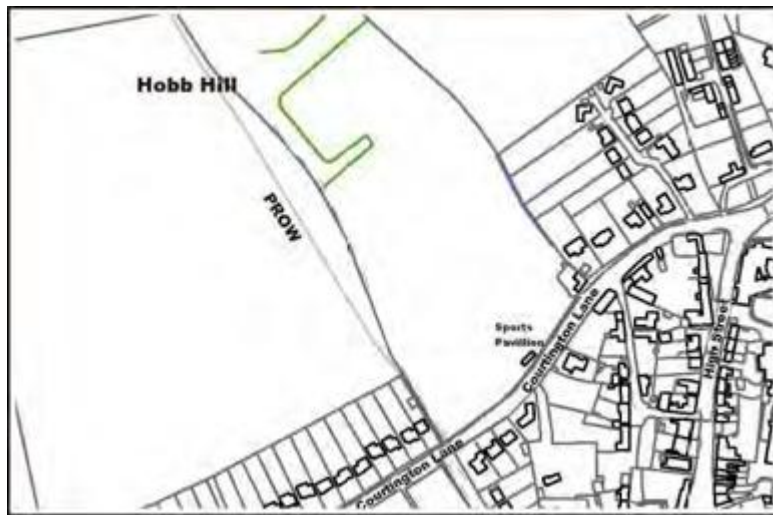


Key views 2: Hobb Hill

From Courtington Lane, within the very heart of the village, are views across Bloxham School rugby grounds to open countryside up onto Hobb Hill. Again, we would expect any future development to show great sensitivity to preserving the overall visual impact.

From the public footpath a public right of way runs along the far side of the hedge shown in the left of the previous panoramic view. It is regularly used because of its convenient

central location and because the footpath is the only place offering such stunning panoramic views of the village in its verdant setting. We seek to preserve these views for present and future residents.



Key views and street scenes 3: The Triangle of Pubs Character Zone

The construction of the A361 circa 1815 led to loss of the village green. The area remaining consisted of a piece of land hosting the war memorial and what became the

current Red Lion garden which has long been used for open-air community activities such as outdoor plays, village fetes and festivals.

The pub is already registered as a community asset and the pub garden is the subject of a current heritage status bid. This whole compact triangle between the Red Lion pub, the 17th century Elephant and Castle coaching inn and the 16th century Joiners Arms is an area of highly distinctive character. We do not seek to inhibit appropriate improvements to the Pub or its outbuildings but will not support development on the Red Lion garden.



APPENDIX C: MODIFICATION STATEMENT

The Parish Council considers that its proposed modifications change the nature of the made Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan. Those modifications can be summarised as:

Made Policy	Draft Modified Policy	Subject	Modification Type & Outcome
BL1	BL2	Painters Farm	Type: Deleted and replaced with new housing site allocation. Outcome: changes the nature of the plan.
BL2	BL1	Sustainable Development	Type: Deleted and content moved to new BL1 and modified. Outcome: changes the nature of the plan.
BL3	BL3	Connectivity	Type: Modified and with inclusion of BL17 text on public rights of way. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL4	BL4	Parking	Type: Modified and with inclusion of BL5 text. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL5	BL4	Parking	Type: Deleted and moved to new BL4. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL6	-	Adaptation to Climate Change	Type: Deleted. Covered by Local Plan/NPPF. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL7	-	Adaptation to Climate Change	Type: Deleted. Covered by Local Plan/NPPF. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL8	BL6	Adaptable Housing	Type: Modified to improve clarity. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL9	BL7	Residential Amenity	Type: Modified and part moved to new BL8 on local infrastructure for clarity. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL10	BL10	Conservation Area	Type: Modified to improve clarity. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.

BL11	BL9	Rural Character/General Design Guidance	Type: Retained but retitled. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL12	BL11	Streetscenes & Views	Type: Modified with text on open spaces moved to BL15. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL13	BL12	Employment Land	Type: Modified to improve clarity and to include text on new businesses from former BL14. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL14	BL12	New Businesses	Type: Deleted and text moved to BL12. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL15	BL14	Digital Communication	Type: Retained. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL16	BL13	Retail/Village Centre	Type: Modified to improve clarity and to define a Village Centre on High Street. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL17	BL15	Recreation Spaces/Local Green Spaces	Type: Modified with public rights of way provision moved to BL3 and text on open spaces added from former BL12. No new spaces. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
BL18	-	Jubilee Village Hall	Type: Deleted. Completed. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan.
-	BL1	Spatial Plan	Type: New. Defines settlement boundary and sets out how proposals inside and outside the boundary should be considered. Also establishes a housing supply position. Outcome: changes the nature of the plan.
-	BL5	Housing Mix	Type: New. Proposes default mix of housing type and affordable tenure. Outcome: changes the nature of the plan.
-	BL8	Local Infrastructure	Type: New but comprises modified text from former BL9 for clarity. Outcome: does not change the nature of the plan

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DECLARATION OF RESULT OF POLL

Cherwell District Council

Bloxham Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

on Thursday 27 August 2026

I, Natasha Clark, being the Deputy Counting Officer at the above referendum held on Thursday 27 August 2026, do hereby give notice that the results of votes cast is as follows:

Question	
Do you want Cherwell District Council to use the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan to help decide planning applications in the Bloxham neighbourhood area?	
	Votes Recorded
Number cast in favour of a YES	753
Number cast in favour of a NO	125

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more answers than required	0
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	3
Total Rejected	3

Electorate: 3002

Ballot Papers Issued: 881

Turnout: 29.35%

And I do hereby declare that more than half of those voting have voted **YES** in response to the question: "Do you want Cherwell District Council to use the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan to help decide planning applications in the Bloxham neighbourhood area?"

Dated 27 August 2026

Natasha Clark
Deputy Counting Officer

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This report is public	
Implementation of the Building Safety Levy	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	24 September 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Planning, David Peckford

Purpose of report

To advise the Executive of the risks and proposed mitigation for and request the approval of the proposed implementation of the Building Safety Levy on 1 October 2026.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the proposed implementation in accordance with the summary contained within this report of the Building Safety Levy, which comes into force on 1 October 2026.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The statutory Building Safety Levy is a tax on new residential buildings. The levy is collected by local authorities. The income raised from the levy will contribute to fixing building safety defects across England. The Building Safety Levy was introduced to help raise funds for the remediation of historical building safety defects, including the replacement of unsafe cladding on high-rise residential buildings, and to ensure that the residential development industry contributes towards the costs of making affected buildings safe.
- 2.2 The Building Safety Levy (England) Regulations 2025 legislate how the Building Safety Levy is required to operate. This report draws upon guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-levy-guidance>.
- 2.3 Over the past year a cross-service project team has prepared for implementation. The Council's system came into effect as required on 1 October 2026. This report briefly explains the operation of the levy and confirms its introduction in Cherwell district.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report. The administration and collection of the Building Safety Levy (BSL) will be delivered within existing resources. The implementation of the new BSL module will incur upfront implementation and maintenance costs of £7,140 in 2026/27. These costs will be fully funded through the BSL New Burdens Grant. From 2027/28 onwards, only ongoing maintenance costs will be incurred, amounting to £2,500 per annum. These costs will be recoverable through the BSL charge-out rate. Kimberley Digweed, Finance Business Partner, 3 September 2026.
Legal	The Council has a statutory duty to administer and collect the Building Safety Levy in accordance with the Building Safety Levy (England) Regulations 2025. Whilst the implementation of a levy collection system supports compliance with those duties, there remains a risk of challenge arising from incorrect levy calculations, disputes regarding exemptions and reliefs, procedural errors, delayed invoicing, or the unlawful issue of completion/final certificates before levy liabilities have been discharged. The Council must also ensure proper handling of personal and financial data and compliance with public law principles when exercising its functions. These risks are mitigated through staff training, documented procedures, system controls within DEF Mastergov, financial audit processes, legal support where required, and ongoing review of government guidance and operational practice. Specific legal risks to be aware of: <i>Affordable housing exemption disputes</i> Paragraph 4.3 correctly identifies that social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership exemptions may become relevant in viability and planning negotiations. There is a risk that developers seek to structure schemes to maximise exemption eligibility or challenge the Council's interpretation of exemption criteria. Clear separation should be maintained between planning negotiations and levy administration. <i>Recovery and enforcement risk</i>

	As the levy must be paid before a final/completion certificate is issued, if there is any administrative error resulting in occupation or certification before collection of levy liabilities, the Council's recovery position may be weakened and there may be financial consequences. <i>Delegated/shared service governance</i> The report notes that the collecting authority responsibility rests with the local authority even where shared services exist. Governance arrangements should therefore make clear who is responsible for calculation, invoicing, debt management, accounting and remittance. <i>Resource assumptions</i> The report currently states that administration can be absorbed within existing resources. That may be correct initially, but the levy regime is new and the number of assessments, disputes and appeals is uncertain, resource requirements should therefore be monitored and reviewed after implementation to ensure adequate resourcing is in place. Kim Maher, Solicitor, 4 September 2026
Risk Management	The Council has commenced fulfilling its statutory duties as a Building Safety Levy collection authority. As with any new statutory regime, number of operational risks remain. These include: • incorrect assessment of levy liability, exemptions or reduced rates; • failure to collect, recover or account for levy payments; • challenge from developers regarding levy calculation or eligibility for reliefs; • failure to maintain adequate audit trails and evidence supporting decisions; • insufficient staffing capacity if development activity exceeds current assumptions; • system failures affecting levy administration; and • reputational and financial consequences arising from non-compliance with statutory requirements or delays in remitting levy receipts to MHCLG. Mitigation measures include dedicated processes, staff training, documented procedures, system controls, audit arrangements, management oversight and ongoing monitoring of operational performance. The residual risk is considered manageable and proportionate to the Council's statutory responsibilities and will be managed accordingly as per our policy within the service operational risk and escalated to the Corporate Risk Register as and when deemed necessary.

	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 4 September 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		N/A
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact		X		N/A
ICT & Digital Impact		X		The introduction of the new Building Safety Levy module in the DEF Mastergov system has been overseen by the ICT team.
Data Impact		X		N/A
Procurement & subsidy		X		N/A
Council Priorities	A Vision For Lasting Change 2025-2030 Priority 4: Quality housing and place making			
Human Resources	None anticipated as at present it is believed that the administration of the Levy can be undertaken without additional resource.			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The levy is a charge that developers must pay on qualifying building control applications / notices before completion of the building work or occupation of the building (whichever is earlier).
- 3.2 The levy is to be charged on certain applications for works that result in new dwellings and/or new bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) and change of use to residential purposes.
- 3.3 The government has set the levy rates for each local authority area in legislation. The rates have been weighted using average house prices in local authority areas so that areas with the highest average house prices have the highest levy rates and those with the lowest average house prices have the lowest levy rates. The amount payable varies depending on the building's size, use and location.
- 3.4 The levy rates are set per square metre, and the charge is calculated on the floorspace of the development. There are exemptions from the levy for certain uses of buildings and a discounted rate for developments that meet the definition of "previously developed" as set out in the regulations.
- 3.5 The Government has designated local authorities as the collecting authorities for the levy, not just for applications they receive themselves but also for qualifying applications made to the Building Safety Regulator and those dealt with by private Registered Building Control Approvers (who provide 'initial notices' to local authorities).
- 3.6 The local authority in which the development is situated has the legal responsibility for levy administration, even where there is a shared building control service across several areas. Local authorities will transfer levy revenues (net of administration costs) to central government. Levy revenue must be spent on building safety.

4. Details

- 4.1. When a Building Regulations application is made for a new residential build development, either directly to a Local Authority or to a private Regulator (now known as a Registered Building Control Approver – RBCA – formerly known as an Approved Inspector) the Local Authority has to determine whether the Levy is payable and if so calculate the payable amount. The developer/applicant is informed of the amount which he then has to pay before the first Final/Completion Certificate on the development can be issued. It is only when the Final/Completion Certificate is issued for a dwelling that it can be lawfully occupied.
- 4.2 MHCLG has set down a prescribed Levy rate (in £ per square metre of internal floor area) for each Local Authority. The Cherwell rate has been set at £33.56 per square metre for the first three years after implementation. Trial calculations suggest that the levy approximately equates to £3,000 per new dwelling.

- 4.3 The Levy will apply to all chargeable major residential developments (generally 10 or more net new dwellings, or 30+ units of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation. Some developments fall outside the scope of the levy and others comprise chargeable developments where some floorspace is exempt. The floorspace for social and affordable rented housing and for shared ownership housing can be exempt subject to prescribed criteria. Whether or not proposed 'social housing' would be exempt may therefore feature in planning negotiations, particularly where there are circumstances of marginal viability. There is a 50% rate reduction for developments which are substantively built (greater than 75%) on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- 4.4 The Council collects the Levy by issuing invoices at the appropriate times. What is collected is then remitted to MHCLG at the end of each quarter but with the Council's reasonable administration and collection costs having been deducted. It is intended that this will be cost-neutral.
- 4.5 At present officers consider that these tasks can be absorbed by its existing resource. However, this will need to be kept under review.
- 4.6 Preparation for the introduction of the levy has included the installation of a new module to the Building Control and Development Management database (DEF Mastergov) and associated testing; preparation of templates for communication with and the invoicing of developers; financial system readiness; the preparation of an internal user-guide for clarity, efficiency and business continuity; and, staff readiness.
- 4.7 Hourly charge rates have been agreed with the Finance team for each officer likely to be involved in the BSL process. The DEF Mastergov system will be used for robust monitoring and auditing in conjunction with the Council's Finance system.
- 4.7 MHCLG has provided Cherwell with a payment of £146,700 to cover its set-up costs. This is divided into £81,100 revenue + £65,600 capital. To date only a modest amount of expenditure has been incurred to install the DEF Mastergov module.
- 4.8 Preparation has been supported by the Building Control, Development Management, ICT, Finance and Programme Management Teams. Regular reports have been made to the Place and Regeneration Directorate Portfolio Board. An internal user guide. Testing of the system was undertaken prior to implementation and the user guide provides manual system contingency.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 It is mandatory for the Council to undertake its Building Safety Levy duties as a collecting authority, the only alternative or reason for rejection of this recommendation would be to the details of the proposed implementation if the considered unsatisfactory.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The statutory requirement for the Council to undertake its duties as a Building Safety Levy collecting authority commenced on 1 October 2026. The Council's system is now live. There will be on-going monitoring by the Building Control and Finance teams. The Council is obliged to accurately and reliably collect the levies owing and ensure the timely transfer of funds to MHCLG. An indication the levy that could be generated in a year is the estimate that housing delivery of 1,000 homes per year could generate in the order of £3,000,000. However, due to the absence of affected high rise buildings, none of the funds raised would be utilised for improvements to developments within Cherwell.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Tony Brummell, Building Control and Flood Risk Manager / David Peckford, Assistant Director - Planning
Report Author contact details	Tony.brummell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk David.peckford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Executive Director Approval (unless report of Executive Director or Statutory Officer)	Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, 24 September 2026

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This report is public	
Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities – Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	27 August 2026
Report of	Assistant Director, Wellbeing and Housing – Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the reviewed Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the reviewed Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Homelessness Strategy was implemented in 2021 for a five-year period, following a feasibility study led by Crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was signed by all Oxfordshire local authorities (Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, and West Oxfordshire District Councils) together with the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.
- 2.2 The strategy has come to the end of its cycle, and a reviewed strategy has been produced and was consulted upon earlier this year. The strategy supports the current joint commissioning of countywide homelessness services through “The Alliance”. Each of the organisations in 2.1 make financial contributions to the homeless pathway every year to enable supported accommodation, prevention and outreach services for rough sleepers. A similar report is being taken through each Councils governance processes to approve the updated strategy.
- 2.3 The purpose of the report is to agree the reviewed and extended strategy, given the Local Government Regorganisation context. Discussions are ongoing regarding the commissioned contract, and a further update will be provided to the Executive when the position is finalised by Oxfordshire County Council as the lead commissioner.

Extending the current approach will ensure the services provided to vulnerable people are not affected by and continue whilst the wider structural local government changes are ongoing.

- 2.4 The Oxfordshire Homelessness Strategy is overseen by the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG). This group has representatives from all the commissioning organisations and those within the wider statutory system. The PHDG and progress on the strategy reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		The costs associated with the reviewed and extended strategy, will be met from existing budget, funded via CDC's Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 1 September 2026.		
Legal		There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report. This is an Oxfordshire wide strategy and does not directly intersect with the Council's statutory duties. It is still important for the Council to regularly review and update its policies to ensure that it is aligned with the other authorities which it works with in this area, particularly in the context of local government reform as the report highlights. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 2 September 2026		
Risk Management		As the strategy does not directly relate to the statutory services provided by the housing team, there are limited risk impacts. Continuation of services received by vulnerable people that are accessed by the Council in order to support them, whilst the Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing, would seem prudent. Celia Prado Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 1 September 2026		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Commentary
Equality Impact			x	The policy has a neutral impact on group within the protected characteristics and has been developed in line with the council's Equality,

				Diversity and Inclusion framework, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Quality housing and place making			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Consultation on the draft strategy has taken place, as outlined within the report.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The Oxfordshire Homelessness Strategy was implemented in 2021 for a five-year period, following a feasibility study led by Crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was signed by all Oxfordshire local authorities (Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, and West Oxfordshire District Councils) together with the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.

- 3.2 The strategy introduced a shared vision and five key priorities focused on prevention, rapid response, person-centred support, timely move-on, and securing the right home in the right place. Furthermore, it responded to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's Thematic Review of Homelessness (2019), which examined the deaths of nine individuals experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness in 2018–19. This review underscored the need for a system-wide shift in how homelessness is prevented and addressed. The Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG) was established to support the delivery of Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. CHSG provides direction and coordination for joint work across partners, ensuring that actions and activities undertaken by the system contribute meaningfully to the countywide strategy.
- 3.3 In October 2025, the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG), which provides oversight through senior representatives from organisations within the health, housing and social care system, requested a refresh of the Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026. The PHDG is chaired by Caroline Green, Chief Executive of Oxford City Council and reports into the Health and Wellbeing Board. The aim of the refresh was to ensure it reflected the current priorities and responded to the evolving local homelessness landscape.
- 3.4 In December 2025, the government launched a new strategy, A National Plan to End Homelessness, which sets out a clear national vision focused on prevention, earlier intervention, and improved coordination across housing, health, and support services. The priorities within this plan closely align with Oxfordshire's own approach, particularly around partnership working, reducing rough sleeping, and delivering person-centred, sustainable housing solutions. This shows that the approach that we are taking and have taken is the right approach.
- 3.5 In August 2026, the government announced a new rough sleeping programme and accompanying funding. The new programme has the ambition to end rough sleeping. The District and City Councils have all received revenue funding based on a central government formula. The refreshed countywide strategy is compatible with the new directive from government, but local approaches will be taken by individual Councils to meet the demands and pressures within their individual areas rather than solely being reliant on the existing pathways and commissioned services.
- 3.6 A draft strategy was developed in partnership with key stakeholders. A public consultation was subsequently undertaken to ensure that voluntary sector partners, people with lived experience, and residents had the opportunity to inform and shape the final priorities. The consultation, coordinated by Oxford City Council, was launched on 27 March and ran for 10 weeks, closing on 6 June. Over 100 responses were received. Feedback has been analysed and is informing the final iteration of the strategy.
- 3.7 The countywide strategy is not a statutory document. The requirement for District Councils, like Cherwell, to produce their own strategy remains. This is part of our statutory duties.

4. Details

- 4.1 The strategy sets out a renewed two-year plan to tackle rising homelessness, strengthen the prevention of homelessness, and accelerate the shift to a modern,

housing-led system. Building on progress since 2021, it responds to a far more challenging housing environment, rising demand across Oxfordshire, and a national direction that aligns with Oxfordshire's increasingly person-led approach.

- 4.2 The strategy reinforces a commitment to services built around people's individual needs, prioritising prevention, rapid and sustainable re-housing, and joined-up support. Its aim is to make homelessness rarer, briefer, and less likely to recur, while improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across Oxfordshire.
- 4.3 The strategy is being considered by each Council individually for approval. Post Local Government Reorganisation, future homelessness and rough sleeping strategies will need to be developed for delivering services across the new unitary Council area, as at present, this remains a statutory duty.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not bring forward a reviewed strategy. As it not statutory document, this could be considered. However, Cherwell is located in the area covered by the existing strategy and accesses services within the wider partnership. This enables essential support for vulnerable people. To exit this arrangement without an alternative in place would put services at vulnerable people potentially at risk or harm. This is rejected.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Approving the strategy and the continuation of the principles of the current service delivery approach will ensure continuity for service users and ensure that services continue through the period of change brought about by Local Government Reorganisation.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes Community threshold met
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	Not applicable
Ward(s) Affected	All wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28
Appendix 2	ECIA – Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing
Report Author contact details	richard.smith@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221640
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director – Neighbourhood Services, 2 September 2026

Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2028

A glossary is included at the end of this document to explain technical or specialist terms.

Summary

Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was agreed in 2021 and ran to 2026. Following a review of progress and with the continued support of partners across the county, a strategy for 2026–2028 has been adopted, setting out the county's shared priorities for the next two years.

The strategy sets out a renewed two-year plan to tackle rising homelessness, strengthen the prevention of homelessness, and accelerate the shift to a modern, housing-led system. Building on progress since 2021, it responds to a far more challenging housing environment, rising demand across Oxfordshire, and a national direction that aligns with Oxfordshire's increasingly person-led, trauma-informed approach.

The strategy reinforces a commitment to services built around people's individual needs, prioritising prevention, rapid and sustainable re-housing, and joined-up support. Its aim is to make homelessness rarer, briefer, and less likely to recur, while improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across Oxfordshire.

Background and purpose

Oxfordshire's homelessness strategy 2021-2026

Published in 2021, Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021–2026 represented the county's first unified approach to addressing homelessness, grounded in a housing-led feasibility study conducted by Crisis and informed by insights from 40 people using Oxfordshire homelessness services. The strategy was also shaped by lessons from the government's *Everyone In* initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic and informed by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's Thematic Review of Homelessness (2019), which examined the deaths of nine individuals experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness. This review highlighted systemic failings and the urgent need for a joined-up and person-centred approach to tackling homelessness.

A countywide partnership was established to drive the strategy, bringing together the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB-ICB), Oxfordshire County Council, the four district councils and Oxford City Council. This partnership has provided shared leadership and accountability, ensuring a consistent countywide approach and enabling services to work together more effectively.

The strategy set out a shared vision: *to prevent and resolve homelessness so that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire and sustainable housing solutions are found to reduce its impact on people's lives*. It focused on five priorities:

1. Proactively prevent homelessness
2. Provide a rapid response to rough sleeping
3. Focus on the person, not the problem
4. Ensure timely move-on from services
5. Secure the right home in the right place

Improved outcomes and partnership working

Significant progress has been delivered in prevention, rapid response, and partnership working. Innovations such as the creation of the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance, implementation of the Somewhere Safe to Stay model that rapidly resolves rough sleeping by helping people who are new to rough sleeping move off the streets, assisting rapid move-on to private accommodation, and the expansion of housing-led (including Housing First) accommodation offers, have led to improved outcomes for individuals, and progressed the transformation of homeless services across Oxfordshire.

Joint accountability for services

Homelessness support services for single adults in Oxfordshire are jointly commissioned through a partnership between the four district councils and Oxford City Council, who hold statutory responsibility for homelessness and housing advice; and the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (formerly BOB-ICB) and Oxfordshire County Council, who are responsible for meeting the social care and health needs of people experiencing homelessness.

This partnership operates under a pooled funding arrangement and oversees a delivery network of agencies, which make up Oxfordshire's Homelessness Alliance, providing non-statutory homelessness support services, including prevention, outreach, and supported accommodation. Alliance services are only one part of a much wider system in which statutory partners also play a significant role in delivering this strategy. However, it remains an important element, as it is the main commissioned service from the partnership.

Meeting demand and preparing for the future

The countywide strategy positions Oxfordshire to manage short-term pressures while preparing for long-term structural change, ensuring that the approach to homelessness prevention and response remains resilient throughout the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- **Renew commitment and clarity of purpose** across all partners for 2026–2028.
- **Set new priorities and an updated action plan** that responds to current pressures and future opportunities.
- **Introduce countywide key performance indicators (KPIs)** to measure prevention, rough sleeping reduction, accommodation pathways, and tenancy sustainment.
- **Outline governance and accountability**, ensuring consistent delivery and monitoring across the system.
- **Lay the groundwork for a future evidence-based strategy post-reorganisation**

This strategy provides the most effective balance of continuity and adaptability, maintaining momentum, tackling urgent challenges, and positioning Oxfordshire for a more integrated approach to ending homelessness.

A rise in homelessness, housing and support needs

Despite progress and achievements, homelessness remains a major and complex issue in Oxfordshire. Rising homelessness across the UK, driven by the cost-of-living crisis and severe housing affordability pressures in Oxfordshire, has led to growing demand for temporary accommodation. At the same time, there is a critical shortage of affordable private and social housing, making it harder for households to secure longer-term, stable homes. Demand for housing and support for people with multiple and complex needs remains high, but there are too few suitable options for people to move out of supported accommodation. Combined with persistently high levels of rough sleeping, this underlines the need to rethink how we approach these challenges.

Insights and learnings from Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board reviews, which take place following the death of someone who was homeless, underscore the imperative for systemwide improvement, including strengthened joint commissioning and delivery, more integrated and coordinated service models, and a consistently applied multidisciplinary approach.

Changes to local government

LGR adds a new dynamic to this strategy. The current strategy is due to expire in 2026, two years before the planned reorganisation of local government in Oxfordshire. On 16 July 2026, the Government announced its preferred option of three unitary authorities for Oxfordshire. While significant structural change lies ahead, it is essential that momentum and transformation continue over the next two years and that collaborative efforts to prevent and tackle homelessness across Oxfordshire are not disrupted by changes to local government arrangements.

The transition period presents a critical opportunity to strengthen partnership working, align services and systems, and develop a more cohesive, integrated approach to preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping. This will put Oxfordshire in a strong position, as future decisions are made about arrangements post local government reorganisation.

Interactions with other strategies

In December 2025, the Government launched *A National Plan to End Homelessness*, setting out a national vision and priorities that closely align with Oxfordshire's ambitions. Many of the objectives and actions within this strategy directly support the aims of the National Plan, providing a strong foundation for continued progress during the transition to new local government arrangements. In addition, the new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has reaffirmed the commitment to tackling homelessness under his new government.

In addition, this strategy interacts with a number of other homelessness strategies across Oxfordshire, including those of the district councils and Oxford City Council. It also aligns with a range of developing plans and priorities, including the emerging Supported Accommodation Strategy for Oxfordshire.

Strategic context and evidence base: What we have learned from the 2021-2026 Strategy

Over recent years, significant risks and challenges have emerged within the homelessness system in Oxfordshire. The changing picture of rising homelessness and increasing complexity poses new challenges to implementing the current strategy and requires the partnership to adapt and prioritise effectively. The following challenges highlight the key contextual factors shaping our approach to the strategy.

Numbers of people that are at risk of homelessness

Homelessness levels have increased across Oxfordshire over the past few years, with the City and districts reporting high volumes of homelessness prevention and relief duties accepted under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017. While trends vary by area, Oxford City has seen the greatest rise, followed by Cherwell, with West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse experiencing smaller but notable increases.

The drivers of this rise are mixed and difficult to attribute to a single cause, but several factors stand out:

- Private rented sector (PRS) evictions have risen significantly, driven by escalating rents, affordability challenges, and cost-of-living pressures.
- Evictions by family and friends have also increased, reflecting the inability of new households to form due to lack of affordable accommodation to move in to, eventually leading to homelessness due to overcrowding and family members being asked to leave (for example, when adult children leave the family home to start their own family).
- Eviction from Home Office accommodation has become a major factor, linked to increased numbers of asylum seekers being housed in Oxfordshire, and faster processing speeds for asylum applications.
- Domestic abuse presentations are rising, influenced by greater awareness and legislative changes that remove local connection restrictions for survivors seeking safety.

This strategy recognises that homelessness extends beyond rough sleeping and temporary accommodation and includes hidden forms of homelessness such as sofa surfing, overcrowded housing and other forms of insecure accommodation.

Temporary accommodation

The number of individuals and families living in temporary accommodation (TA) across Oxfordshire has risen sharply in recent years. Since 2021/22, the total temporary accommodation caseload has grown quarter-on-quarter, rising from around 150 households in early 2021/22 to levels of over 580 during 2025/26. This represents a nearly fourfold increase in just five years. Growth is visible across almost all districts — Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire — with each contributing to the steady upward trajectory.

Data show a particularly steep increase in the number of single people requiring accommodation, especially those with multiple and complex needs. This has grown from 90 people in early 2021/22 to over 250 during 2025/26, indicating sustained and significant pressure on accommodation options for individuals. This cohort often

require longer stays and more tailored support, which current temporary accommodation options, especially hotel rooms, are poorly suited to provide.

As demand continues to rise, many councils have had to rely heavily on hotel and B&B accommodation and, increasingly, out-of-area placements, because existing temporary accommodation stock cannot be expanded quickly enough. This has added millions to local authority costs and placed additional pressures on people in temporary accommodation, who often face isolation, lack of facilities, and limited access to support when placed in hotels.

In response, councils are currently expanding self-contained units and purpose-built TA accommodation – those with their own or shared bathroom and kitchen facilities, rather than increasing dependence on hotels. These units are more suitable for all household types, including singles with complex needs, because they offer greater stability, privacy, access to basic facilities, and a more appropriate environment for delivering support.

Rough sleeping

Nationally, rough sleeping has increased in recent years, establishing an upward trend following the reductions seen during the pandemic. Rough sleeping has risen by 171% since records began in 2010, and in 2025 reached a new peak, with 4,793 people recorded nationally sleeping on the streets on a single night — a further annual increase and the highest figure ever reported.

Against this national trend of rising rough sleeping, rough sleeping in Oxfordshire has remained relatively stable, though levels remain unacceptably high.

Between 2021 and 2025, the number of individuals estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night across the county has fluctuated, with numbers as low as 19 and as high as 86. Across the County, the number of individuals sleeping rough over a month has also fluctuated and has often been well over 100.

Understanding the profile of rough sleeping is essential. Long-term rough sleepers remain the largest group in the city, and the number of people new to rough sleeping is also growing, with increasingly high levels seen across the county. This makes it vital to have a broad range of support and accommodation options for people who are new to rough sleeping, those returning to it, and those experiencing it long-term.

While Oxford City continues to account for the highest numbers, rough sleeping occurs in all districts. In the context of a highly pressured housing market and against a backdrop of increasing rough sleeping nationally, the fact that the number of rough sleepers across the county has remained broadly stable reflects the impact of coordinated countywide prevention, outreach, and accommodation responses as set out in the 2021-2026 Strategy.

Expansion of outreach services

Oxfordshire's Homelessness Alliance has maintained a strong outreach offer focused on areas with the highest levels of rough sleeping. This includes specialist support for people with complex needs experiencing long-term or repeat rough sleeping. This capacity has been broadened to areas in the county, most notably

Cherwell, that have seen an increase in rough sleeping and a growing recognition of the complexity and needs of individuals sleeping rough. This enhanced outreach offer is designed to improve engagement with people least likely to access services, reduce repeat rough sleeping, and support sustained moves away from the streets through coordinated, multi-agency interventions.

Demand for supported accommodation services

There are a high number of supported accommodation units across the county for single adults who are experiencing homelessness, and those sleeping rough who need housing-related support. Demand continues to be high and combined with challenges in finding affordable and suitable accommodation for individuals who no longer need this level of support, waiting lists remain.

The following data demonstrates this:

- Referrals for supported accommodation remain consistently high, averaging 20–30 per month.
- Waiting lists have fluctuated significantly, ranging between 67 and 80 through mid-2025.
- Demand for higher-support accommodation (hostel-type, 24-hour services) remains acute. As of November 2025, 27 individuals were waiting for this type of accommodation.

A recent review of supported accommodation showed that despite demand being high, the number of beds spaces available is sufficient for the number of people across the county who require it. One of the main issues is the lack of suitable options for people to leave supported accommodation, driven by a shortage of affordable private and social housing. There is sufficient provision of 'generic'/low support accommodation, but more investment in specialist provision is needed. Through countywide investment, more support is now being provided to help individuals access private rented accommodation.

Increasing countywide Housing First accommodation

The expansion of Housing First (HF) across Oxfordshire has to date been concentrated predominantly within Oxford, due to Oxford City Council's investment. This has significantly enhanced the City's capacity to support people with high and multiple needs; however, growth of this provision across the wider county has been more limited. South Oxfordshire's recent development of its own Housing First provision represents an important step toward broader geographic coverage. This emerging activity highlights both the appetite and the opportunity for more consistent, coordinated countywide expansion.

Housing affordability and supply

Consultation respondents consistently identified the shortage of affordable housing as the single greatest barrier to preventing and resolving homelessness in Oxfordshire. High private rents, insufficient social housing supply, shortages of one-bedroom accommodation, and restricted move-on opportunities from temporary and supported accommodation were highlighted as key issues. For the duration of this strategy, partners will work to better meet the housing needs of formerly homeless

households, through maximising opportunities for new affordable housing, including meeting one-bedroom housing need, while also working to help access into affordable forms of private accommodation and explore other innovative ways to maximise and speed up the delivery of accommodation to move more people off the street.

Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance's transformation plan

The Alliance is currently implementing a plan to strengthen service delivery, which aligns with the strategy. This is centred on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, and moving away from a traditional supported accommodation offer to a housing-led approach, centred on housing people into homes as quickly as possible and then providing support to prevent repeat homelessness.

The Alliance's plans are informed by:

- Review work undertaken in 2024/25
- Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026
- Learnings from Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Reviews of deaths of people who are homeless
- Service contract monitoring

The plan focuses on developing a housing-led model, with changes to services developed collaboratively through review groups throughout 2025.

- **Prevention:** Re-model services to deliver tenancy sustainment in line with housing-led principles, targeting resources toward priority groups.
- **Outreach:** Maintain a more consistent, high-quality outreach offer across the county, responsive to diverse client needs.
- **Somewhere safe to stay:** Expand provision to ensure rapid intervention for people at risk of rough sleeping, and those new to rough sleeping.
- **Housing-led support offer:** Reduce generic supported housing units and redirect resources toward specialist accommodation, as well as the provision of a housing-led support offer to enable more people who previously slept rough to sustain a general needs home and prevent repeat homelessness.
- **Move-on and PRS access:** Shorten stays in supported housing, diversify move-on options, and upskill staff to support transitions into the private rented sector.
- **Housing First:** Embed a high-fidelity Housing First model and increase property availability countywide.
- **Specialist supported accommodation:** Develop provision tailored to complex needs, reducing reliance on generic models.

Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Between March and June 2026, the strategy was subject to public consultation. Feedback was received from 136 respondents, including people with lived experience of homelessness, residents, voluntary and community organisations, housing providers, health partners, local authorities and other stakeholders across Oxfordshire. The consultation showed strong support for the overall direction of the strategy, particularly its focus on prevention, housing-led approaches, person-centred support and partnership working. Respondents also highlighted the importance of housing affordability, mental health support, trauma-informed practice, lived experience, effective coordination between services and ongoing support for

people moving on from supported accommodation. The priorities and actions within this new strategy have been refined to reflect this feedback.

In addition, the consultation on the strategy highlighted a strong expectation that people with lived experience should play a greater role in shaping homelessness services. The partnership therefore commits to strengthening co-production opportunities throughout the life of this strategy.

Action plan: What do we plan to do in 2026-2028, and how will we know that we are making a difference?

Progress has been achieved under the current strategy, but rising homelessness and a rapidly changing context require a renewed focus. The new two-year strategy will drive progress from 2026 through to 1st April 2028, when the new unitary structure(s) will be established and decisions made on how homelessness is addressed across Oxfordshire's future governance landscape.

Our cross-cutting principles

The delivery of this strategy will be guided by a set of principles that apply across all priorities, services and partner organisations. These principles describe how we will work and make decisions, while the priorities that follow describe where we will focus our efforts.

Prevention

Prevention will be the foundation of our approach. We will seek to identify risks early, intervene before crisis occurs, and address the causes of homelessness rather than simply responding to its consequences. Preventing homelessness is a shared responsibility across the whole system and will be embedded throughout delivery of this strategy.

Trauma-informed practice

We recognise that many people experiencing homelessness have experienced trauma, adversity, abuse, loss, discrimination and exclusion. We will deliver services that promote safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment, ensuring people are treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

Equity and inclusion

We are committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to diverse needs. We will seek to remove barriers to support, challenge stigma and ensure people can access services that reflect their individual circumstances and experiences.

Partnership working

Homelessness cannot be prevented or resolved by any one organisation acting alone. We will promote shared responsibility, accountability and collaboration across housing, health, social care, criminal justice agencies, voluntary organisations and housing providers.

Lived experience and co-production

People with lived experience of homelessness bring valuable expertise that should inform how services are designed, delivered and evaluated. We will strengthen opportunities for meaningful involvement and co-production, ensuring services are developed with people rather than for people.

Those at greatest risk of homelessness

Some groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness and face greater risks of rough sleeping, exclusion from services and poorer outcomes. Throughout the delivery of this strategy, partners will pay particular attention to the needs of:

- People with multiple and complex needs
- Care leavers
- People leaving prison, hospital and other institutional settings
- Survivors of domestic abuse
- Young people
- Women experiencing homelessness, including hidden homelessness
- Families with children
- Refugees and people with No Recourse to Public Funds
- People with learning disabilities, neurodivergence, mental ill-health or substance use support needs.

The focus on the five priorities of the current strategy has enabled improvements to services over the past five years. However, the strategy must respond to new challenges, emerging evidence, and lessons learned. To achieve this, four new priorities are proposed for 2026–2028:

1. **Prevention first** – Strengthen early intervention and tailored prevention to stop homelessness and rough sleeping before it occurs.
2. **Housing-led approach** – Increase access to settled housing by reducing reliance on traditional supported accommodation, accelerating move-on from temporary and supported accommodation, and providing flexible support to help people sustain long-term homes.
3. **Person-centred approach** – Embed trauma-informed, strengths-based practice and ensure services are tailored to individual needs, with a particular focus on long term rough sleepers.
4. **Strong partnerships and system change** – Deepen collaboration across housing, health, social care, and voluntary sectors to deliver integrated solutions for individuals.

Priority One: Prevention first

Preventing homelessness before it occurs is the most effective way to reduce harm and pressure on busy housing, health and social care systems. This priority focuses on continuing to build a comprehensive prevention offer across Oxfordshire that enables early identification of risk and rapid intervention, with a particular focus on single adults who may not reach the necessary statutory homelessness thresholds to receive support. Rising homelessness, driven by factors such as private rented sector (PRS) evictions, family breakdown, and cost-of-living pressures, mean more households are vulnerable than ever. Without strong prevention services, individuals often enter crisis situations that are costly and traumatic to resolve.

Fundamental to this will be continuing to develop and refine our prevention offer for single individuals experiencing homelessness, who often struggle to engage with statutory services. This support is crucial to avoiding the trauma of rough sleeping. Particular attention will be given to groups at heightened risk of homelessness, including survivors of domestic abuse, young people, care leavers and people leaving institutions.

We need tailored services across Oxfordshire, targeted at the individuals most likely to become homeless and rough sleep, informed by data and joined-up public services sharing information. Statutory services working with both single individuals and families need to provide effective early assistance and prevention support, focusing on sustaining tenancies wherever possible and helping people move before they become homeless. Collaboration across Oxfordshire councils is crucial to this, enabling partners to share best practice and learn from each other's local approaches.

Sustainable routes out of homelessness often depend upon access to employment, training, education and financial stability. Partners will continue to strengthen links with these services as part of a preventative approach.

What we will do to improve services

- Share prevention practice and learning across councils and third sector organisations across Oxfordshire.
- Revise and implement the Alliance prevention service, refocusing prevention activity on single adults most at risk of becoming homeless.
- Improve accessibility of services through triage and trusted assessment forms, ensuring trauma-informed practice.
- Strengthen links with PRS landlords to prevent evictions and expand tenancy sustainment support.
- Use the opportunities presented by the Renters' Rights Act to decrease private evictions that lead to homelessness
- Improve the accessibility and visibility of homelessness services, ensuring people can find, understand and access help at the earliest opportunity.

Priority Two: Housing-led approach

Access to a settled home is the foundation for preventing and ending homelessness. Oxfordshire will continue to shift away from reliance on traditional supported accommodation models towards a housing-led approach that helps people access and sustain permanent homes as quickly as possible.

Temporary accommodation is intended as a short-term response to homelessness, not a long-term solution. For people with multiple and complex needs, prolonged stays in temporary accommodation can contribute to poorer outcomes, increase instability and make it harder to access the support required to sustain a settled home. Supported accommodation continues to play an important role for people who require specialist support, but the system is constrained by a lack of suitable move-on options into settled housing.

A housing-led approach seeks to ensure that people are supported into settled homes at the earliest appropriate opportunity, with flexible and person-centred support provided around them. This includes access to social housing, private rented accommodation, Housing First, and specialist accommodation where required. By increasing the availability of housing-led options, improving access to move-on opportunities, and providing ongoing tenancy sustainment support, we can reduce repeat homelessness and help people build stable, independent lives.

This approach recognises that successful move-on is not simply about moving people through services more quickly, but about helping people access housing that is suitable, sustainable and supported when required. Achieving this will require increased housing supply, stronger partnerships with registered providers and private landlords, and a continued focus on removing systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing settled homes.

Feedback from the Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF) highlighted that moving into settled accommodation is often only the beginning of the journey. The period immediately following move-on can be particularly challenging, and ongoing support is often needed to help people settle into their new home, build confidence, maintain their tenancy, and avoid repeat homelessness.

What we will do to improve services:

- Implement the Alliance transformation plan, reducing generic supported housing provision and increasing housing-led options alongside specialist accommodation where needed.
- Continue to develop a scalable housing-led offer that supports people to move from rough sleeping, temporary accommodation and supported accommodation into settled housing in both the social and private rented sectors.
- Expand Housing First provision by working with registered providers to increase supply and ensure a consistent, high-fidelity model across Oxfordshire.
- Establish a move-on panel to rehouse people who have been unable to progress through accommodation pathways and ensure timely access to housing-led support.
- Expand private rented sector access schemes, including landlord engagement, tenancy sustainment support and incentives.

- Upskill frontline staff to support move-on planning, tenancy sustainment and access to private rented accommodation.
- Ensure local authority allocations schemes are regularly reviewed and do not create unnecessary barriers to settled housing for people with support needs who can live independently.
- Strengthen partnership working and commissioning arrangements across housing, health and social care to ensure appropriate accommodation is available for people with multiple and complex needs.
- Work with registered providers through the Registered Provider Forum to increase housing opportunities and support shared priorities across Oxfordshire.
- Monitor housing pathway outcomes, including length of stay in temporary and supported accommodation, move-on rates and tenancy sustainment outcomes
- Ensure that people moving on from supported accommodation can access flexible, ongoing support that reflects their individual needs and helps prevent repeat homelessness.

Priority Three: A person-centred approach

Services should be designed around individual needs, embedding trauma-informed and strengths-based practice across all interventions. People experiencing homelessness often have complex needs and histories of trauma, and do not neatly fall into categories that reflect the responsibilities or legal duties of different public sector bodies. Collaboration, joint working and commissioning across the public sector are required to meet the needs of these people.

People with lived experience of homelessness, rough sleeping, temporary accommodation and housing insecurity bring expertise that is essential to designing effective services. Throughout the life of this strategy, partners will adopt a co-production approach, ensuring that people with lived experience help design, shape, challenge and monitor services. This includes representation within governance structures, service reviews, policy development and performance monitoring.

A person-centred approach improves engagement and outcomes, and ultimately, by meeting people's needs and enabling them to avoid repeat homelessness, saves costs for the whole public sector. Many people experiencing homelessness have unmet health needs, including physical ill-health, mental health needs, substance use support needs, learning disabilities and the effects of trauma. Services should recognise the relationship between homelessness and health inequalities and work together to ensure people receive flexible and coordinated support that addresses both their housing needs and wider wellbeing.

What we will do to improve services:

- Audit services against trauma-informed standards and implement staff training requirements.
- Develop a skills matrix for commissioned providers and embed reflective practice across services.
- Through our deepening partnership, explore further opportunities for alignment and joint commissioning across services to meet multiple needs (linked to strong partnerships priority).
- Implement the trusted assessment form to reduce duplication and ensure psychologically informed assessments.
- Roll out Built for Zero and by-name list approaches countywide, supported by a new database for real-time case management.
- Embed lived experience in the design, review and improvement of homelessness services through the development of co-production networks
- Ensure people with lived experience are represented within governance and decision-making structures
- Strengthen discharge protocols for health and probation to ensure seamless transitions, while further developing our understanding of the most entrenched cohort to design tailored, effective solutions.

Priority Four: Strong partnerships and system change

Homelessness is a complex, cross-system issue that cannot be solved by housing services alone. It intersects with health, mental health, social care, criminal justice,

and the voluntary sector. Historically, fragmented decision-making and siloed approaches have slowed progress and created gaps in support for individuals with complex needs.

This priority focuses on deepening collaboration across all sectors to deliver integrated solutions and shared accountability. Strong partnerships mean aligning commissioning strategies, pooling resources, and creating joint protocols that ensure individuals receive holistic, coordinated support. It also includes bringing the right professionals together around each person to agree the most effective way forward, improving data sharing through a countywide database, and enhancing governance through the Prevention of Homeless Directors' Group and Countywide Homeless Steering Group structures.

Effective partnership working requires more than information sharing and attendance at multi-agency meetings. Partners must work towards shared outcomes for individuals, with clearly defined responsibilities, joint ownership of actions, and accountability for delivery. Success will be measured not only by the strength of partnerships, but by demonstrable improvements in housing stability, health, wellbeing and independence for people experiencing homelessness. This reflects consultation feedback calling for clearer accountability and stronger coordination between services. By working together, partners can remove systemic barriers, share best practices, and respond collectively to emerging challenges. Integration is essential for sustainability and for delivering person-centred, efficient, and effective outcomes.

What we will do to improve working in partnership:

- Continue to develop governance structures for Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group and Countywide Homelessness Steering Group, ensuring system-wide representation and accountability.
- Prepare the homelessness system for Local Government Reorganisation to minimise system disruption and help ensure the opportunities for the system from reorganisation are delivered at pace.
- Further align commissioning across housing, health, mental health, and social care, including the development of the Better Care Fund and future neighbourhood health and integrated care funding models.
- Implement multi-disciplinary approaches for high-risk individuals and complex cases, with a clearly identified lead agency, agreed actions, named responsibilities and regular review of outcomes.
- Deliver a countywide database to enable data-driven decision-making and integrated case management.
- Amplify lived experience voices through co-production networks and feedback loops.
- Develop and implement a shared outcomes framework across housing, health, social care and homelessness services, with clear responsibilities, accountability and measures of success for all partners. Multi-agency working will focus on delivering measurable improvements for individuals rather than information sharing alone.

Measuring the impact of the 2026-2028 strategy

Objectives, deliverables, actions and shared accountability

Each theme includes clear objectives, deliverables, and actions to ensure progress. Some actions support long-term ambitions, such as reducing rough sleeping and temporary accommodation use, while others address short-term priorities, such as funding. Each action has an appointed owner to ensure accountability, with clear timelines and milestones to track success.

In 2025, the Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group introduced countywide key performance indicators (KPIs) to create a transparent, consistent framework for measuring progress against the Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The aim is to track outcomes across housing, health, and social care, ensuring accountability and enabling partners to identify trends, address gaps, and improve service integration. KPIs provide a shared evidence base for decision-making, support continuous improvement, and demonstrate the impact of collaborative efforts on reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The KPIs are designed to reflect the strategy's priorities and measure success in key areas. The following represent the core measures, with KPIs to be determined and approved by the Prevention of Homelessness Directors' Group annually.

Housing and homelessness

- Number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Number of individuals sleeping rough across the county; number of individuals experiencing long-term rough sleeping across the county.
- Number of people moving on from Alliance supported accommodation and into independent or settled housing.
- Supply of affordable one-bedroom homes delivered annually.
- Number of people in housing-led (including Housing First) accommodation.
- Number of people in supported accommodation.

Health and inclusion

- Hospital discharge outcomes (preventing discharge to rough sleeping).
- Reduction in delayed discharges and bed days saved.
- GP registration rates for people experiencing homelessness.
- Prevention of non-elective admissions and mental health re-admissions.

Future development

- Adult Social Care measures (e.g. care plan completion, safeguarding outcomes).

Oversight of the 2026-2028 plan: responsibility for making it happen

Strong governance is essential to ensure the successful delivery of the Oxfordshire Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and maintain accountability across the system. The governance framework is structured around two core groups with distinct but complementary roles:

Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG)

PHDG is the formal governance body responsible for the overall delivery of the strategy. It provides strategic leadership, sets priorities, and ensures alignment with the countywide vision to prevent and resolve homelessness. PHDG is ultimately accountable to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board for achieving the strategy's objectives and monitors progress through regular reporting at quarterly meetings.

Key responsibilities:

- Oversee the delivery of the Oxfordshire Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, ensuring progress against agreed objectives.
- Monitor countywide KPIs to track impact on prevention, reductions in rough sleeping, accommodation pathways, and tenancy sustainment.
- Unblock system barriers by escalating and resolving cross-agency challenges that impede progress, including commissioning gaps and integration issues.
- Influence commissioning and resource allocation across housing, health, and social care to ensure services are joined-up and responsive to people's needs.
- PHDG acts as the strategic decision-making forum, providing leadership and direction and accountability across the partnership.
- Provide leadership, direction and challenge on cross-system issues, including housing supply, health integration, and commissioning priorities.
- Ensure governance alignment with Local Government Reorganisation and prepare for future structures post-2028.

Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG)

CHSG is the operational oversight group that meets every two months and focuses on accountability for the action plan and the delivery of the strategy's practical components. It plays a central role in coordinating implementation, monitoring progress against agreed actions, and identifying barriers to delivery. CHSG acts as a feeder group into PHDG, escalating issues that require strategic resolution while fostering collaboration across housing, health, and social care.

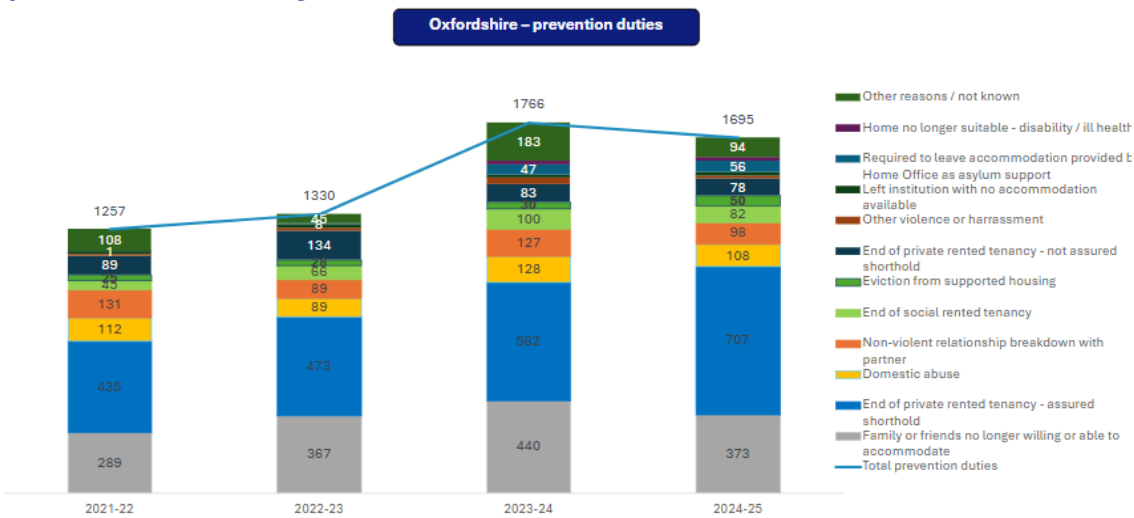
Key responsibilities:

- Provide system-wide oversight of the action plan and ensure operational progress.
- Identify and unblock barriers to delivery, including commissioning gaps and service integration challenges.
- Facilitate collaboration between statutory, commissioned, and voluntary partners to ensure joined-up working.
- Oversee initiatives such as Built for Zero and Inclusion Health developments, which are integral to achieving the strategy's aims.
- Ensure representation from housing authorities, health, social care, and key partners to support effective decision-making and accountability.

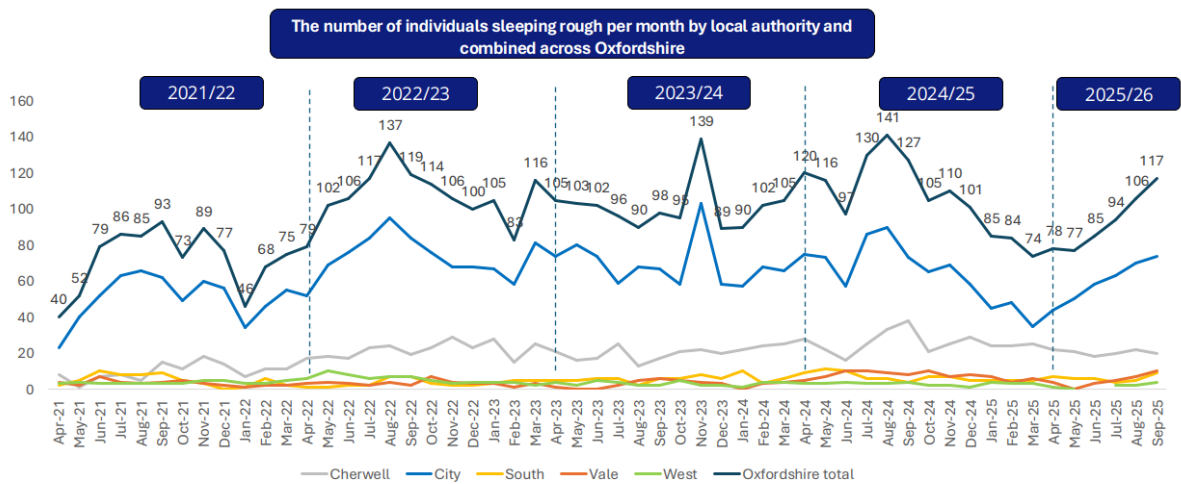
Appendices

i.

Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a prevention duty

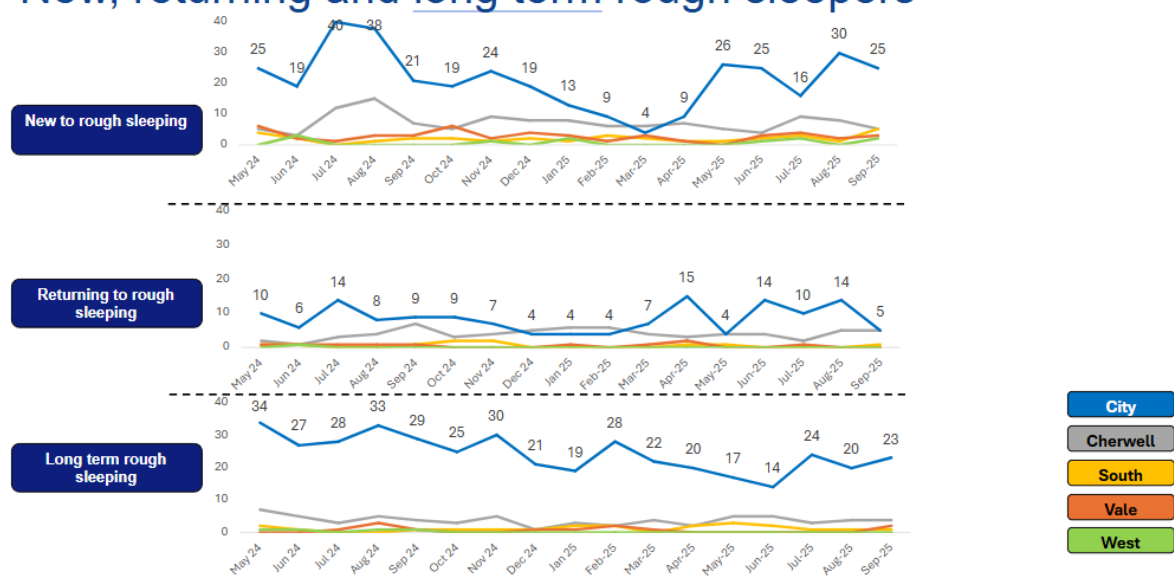


ii.

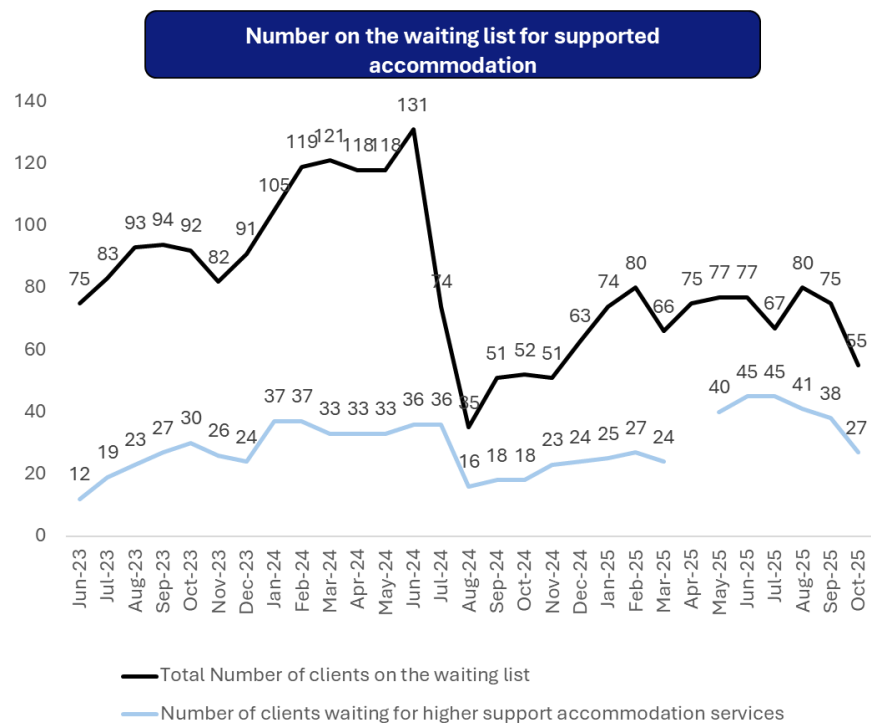


iii.

New, returning and long term rough sleepers



iv.



Glossary

Homeless Mortality Reviews: Reviews carried out after someone who was homeless dies. They look at what support was involved, what went wrong, and what services could do better to keep people safe in the future.

Housing allocation policy: The rules a council uses to decide who can join the housing register and how social housing is offered. It explains who gets priority and how homes are allocated.

Long-term rough sleeping: Long-term rough sleeping means someone has been seen rough sleeping recently and has also been seen on at least three separate months over the past year.

Move-on: When someone leaves supported or temporary accommodation and moves into a more permanent home, such as social housing or private rented housing.

Multidisciplinary approach: Different services work together to support one person; for example, housing teams, health staff, mental health workers, drug and alcohol services, and social care. The aim is to give joined-up support that meets the individual's needs in one coordinated way.

Multiple and complex needs: Individuals experiencing a combination of three or more severe, overlapping issues, typically homelessness, substance misuse, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse, and offending, resulting in poverty, stigma, discrimination, becoming ill earlier in life and dying sooner than expected.

Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance: A group of homelessness organisations in Oxfordshire that work together to provide outreach, support, accommodation, and prevention services. The Alliance is jointly commissioned by Oxford City Council, the four district councils, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), and Oxfordshire County Council.

Alliance providers include:

- A2Dominion
- Aspire Oxfordshire
- Connection Support
- Elmore Community Services
- Homeless Oxfordshire
- St Mungo's

Outreach: Workers who go out into the community and meet people sleeping rough, offering support, advice, and help with housing.

Person-centred approach: A way of providing care, support, or services that places the individual at the heart of all decision-making. It focuses on treating people with

dignity, compassion, and respect while tailoring support to their specific needs, values, and preferences.

Prevention: The homelessness prevention duty requires UK local authorities to take reasonable steps for 56 days to help eligible households avoid becoming homeless when they are at risk within that time.

Registered provider: A person, partnership, or organisation officially registered to carry out regulated activities or provide social housing, accountable for compliance, quality, and management of services. Being registered means they are legally allowed to provide these services and must meet certain standards to keep people safe and well supported.

Rough sleeping: The most visible form of homelessness, where someone sleeps outside or in places not designed for living—such as streets, parks, tents, stairwells, sheds, or cars.

Somewhere safe to stay: Somewhere Safe to Stay (SStS) hubs provide immediate, short-term emergency accommodation for people sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness.

Strengths-based approach: A way of working that explores an individual's strengths, abilities and their circumstances rather than their deficits, illnesses, or disabilities (or in other words, what they can't do).

Supported accommodation: A place to live with help from staff. For people experiencing homelessness, this might be a hostel or short-term shared housing.

Temporary accommodation: Short-term housing provided by councils or organisations to individuals or families who are homeless or at risk. This can include hostels, B&Bs, privately rented homes, or refuge accommodation, while they wait for a longer-term home.

Trauma-informed: Being trauma-informed means understanding that people's traumatic experiences can have an impact on their behaviour, their ability to cope with life, and their mental health and wellbeing. It means enabling an environment of healing and recovery that promotes a sense of safety.

Trusted Assessment Form: A form used to gather information on the individual's housing and support needs, among other important details.

Cherwell District Council
Equality and Climate Impact Assessment

Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-28

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Wellbeing and Housing – Housing Services
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing functions
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The strategy covers the partnership services provided across Oxfordshire that are commissioned by the district, city and county councils and the ICB that relate to homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy is an extension of the existing strategy in place from 2021-26 and takes the strategy through the LGR period. Statutory homelessness services are not within the scope of the strategy and are covered by separate strategy and legislation. It therefore does not directly impact on assessments of individual circumstances.
Completed By	Richard Smith
Authorised By	Nicola Riley
Date of Assessment	August 2026

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	The Oxfordshire Homelessness Strategy was implemented in 2021 for a five-year period, following a feasibility study led by Crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was signed by all Oxfordshire local authorities (Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, and West Oxfordshire District Councils) together with the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board. The strategy introduced a shared vision and five key priorities focused on prevention, rapid response, person-centred support, timely move-on, and securing the right home in the right place. Furthermore, it responded to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's Thematic Review of Homelessness (2019), which examined the deaths of nine individuals experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness in 2018–19. This review underscored the need for a system-wide shift in how homelessness is prevented and addressed. The Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG) was established to support the delivery of Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. CHSG provides direction and coordination for joint work across partners, ensuring that actions and activities undertaken by the system contribute meaningfully to the countywide strategy. The strategy has come to the end of its cycle, and a reviewed strategy has been produced and was consulted upon earlier this year. The strategy supports the current joint commissioning of countywide homelessness services through "The Alliance". Each organisation makes a financial contribution to the homeless pathway every year to enable supported accommodation, prevention and outreach services for rough sleepers.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	Extending the current approach will ensure the services provided to vulnerable people are not affected by and continue whilst the wider structural local government changes are ongoing through Local Government Regorganisation.

Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	A 6 week consultation took place earlier in 2026. The original strategy was in response to a number of rough sleeper deaths in Oxfordshire and emphasis the value in the shift to the current approach. This approach is now well established following the establishment of the Alliance. It is also compatible with the National Plan to End Homelessness, which is new government policy directive.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below. Option 1: Not bring forward a reviewed strategy. As it not statutory document, this could be considered. However, Cherwell is located in the area covered by the existing strategy and accesses services within the wider partnership. This enables essential support for vulnerable people. To exit this arrangement without an alternative in place would put services at vulnerable people potentially at risk or harm. This is rejected

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sex	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Carers	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Other Council Services	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Providers	☐	☒	☐	The countywide strategy does impact on wider providers operating within the Alliance. This is made up of a small number of charitable providers who provide the services such as supported accommodation, outreach and prevention services.	Annual monitoring	Head of Housing	N/A
Social Value ¹	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC and CDC aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Energy use in our buildings or highways	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Our fleet	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff travel	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Purchased services and products (including construction)	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maintained schools	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

We are also committed to enable Cherwell to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Oxfordshire by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?	☒	☐	☐	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	Upon review of strategy
Person Responsible for Review	Head of Housing
Authorised By	AD Wellbeing and Housing

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This report is public	
Cherwell Futures Reserve Draw Down 2026/2027	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Leader – Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	9 September 2026
Report of	Cherwell Futures Director, Ann Slavin

Purpose of report

This paper seeks approval and allocation of the draw down of £1.1million of Cherwell Futures Reserves approved by the Executive in October 2025. It sets out the full costs of the Cherwell Futures Programme and how additional requirements are being funded.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves to:

- 1.1 Approve the draw down and allocation of £1.1million of Reserves to be used as set out within this paper.
- 1.2 Approve the use of in year savings of £0.330million from the Customer Front Door Programme to fund additional investment required in new systems and capacity building as set out within this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council, like many local authorities across the country, continues to face significant financial and operational pressures to deliver within the funding and income that it receives. To respond in part to these pressures, a Transformation Programme, Cherwell Futures, was launched in 2025 to deliver efficiency savings and position the Council as a resilient and effective organisation for the future.
- 2.2 As such, the Cherwell Futures Transformation Programme is a strategic priority for the Council, bringing together a broad range of improvement activities across services, ways of working, and major projects. This includes service and process improvements, organisational change initiatives, as well as developing the operating principles that will shape how services are delivered in the future.

2.3. On 7 October 2025, the Executive approved:

- That Cherwell Futures would focus on three priority areas – Planning, Environmental Services and the Customer Front Door noting that the savings from these programmes plus that what was already built into the MTFS would deliver over £4million in savings (see 3.4.)
- The allocation of £0.4million from the Projects Reserve to fund initial support and preparatory work for Cherwell Futures.
- The transfer of £1.1million from the Projects Reserve to a new Cherwell Futures Reserve for implementation and resource costs.

2.4. Together, the Cherwell Futures programmes form the core of the strategic transformation and change activities and support the Council's wider ambitions for modern, responsive and sustainable services that meet the needs of its communities now and in the future. By strengthening how it works now, Cherwell will be better placed to respond to future opportunities, while building the capacity to shape, influence and lead during periods of change.

2.5 Each programme of work has been subject to detailed Full Business Cases with the Customer Front Door being approved on 13 July 2026, Environmental Services on 7 September 2026 and Planning due to be approved in January 2027.

2.6 The original request for Reserves in October 2025 was to fund targeted investment to cover the costs of essential interim roles and specialist expertise. This structure has been established and has led the detailed analysis and preparation of Full Business Cases. Through this, the new intelligence and analysis that has been undertaken has identified investment required in systems (both new and upgrades), external consultancy support (Route Optimisation, etc), and gaps in capability and capacity to deliver from within existing services. These additional requirements are in the region of £0.330m and can be satisfied by utilising in year savings from the Customer Front Door Programme.

2.7 Over the past 12 months, the Cherwell Futures programme has achieved a number of successes through discrete projects and activities. These are summarised in Appendix 1 and work is underway to map the benefits realised from these through the Benefits Realisation Board.

2.8 This paper therefore seeks:

- Approval to draw down the allocation of £1.1million of Reserves.
- Set out the full costs of the Cherwell Futures Programme and approval for how additional requirements (£0.330m) can be funded from in year savings from the Customer Front Door Programme.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	£1.1m is available to support the Cherwell Futures project from an earmarked transformation reserve. In order to release the further £330k of funding required for the programme, in-year savings from the Customer Front Door project are required to be delivered – the assumption is that the associated changes from Customer Front Door would be in place from 1 January 2027. These savings are not budgeted for and if delivered, would generate a surplus that can be made available to the Cherwell Futures Programme. If the savings are not delivered in-year then the costs would still be incurred and the council will need to establish an alternative funding source in 2026/27. These savings are wholly dependent on the services identified implementing restructures in line with the proposals from the Customer Front Door Project. If the restructures are not designed to at least match those identified as part of the approved business case then the ongoing savings will also be less than anticipated whilst the council will incur the ongoing costs – i.e. the net anticipated benefit will be less. If there are any associated one-off staffing costs related to the implementation of these changes then the council has a separate reserve available to address these costs. If and when any costs are identified Executive will be made aware and asked to release reserves in line with the Council's Reserves Policy. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 14 September 2026
Legal	This report focuses on the allocation of reserves and seeks approval in line with the Constitutional requirement. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance, 15 September 2026
Risk Management	There is a risk that, without approval of the proposed reserve draw down, delivery of the Cherwell Futures Programme could be delayed, impacting the timely achievement of planned transformation outcomes, service improvements and associated financial benefits. This risk will be mitigated through established programme governance arrangements, regular performance monitoring and targeted deployment of specialist resources to support delivery. This and any further arising risks will be managed through the programmes' risk register and escalated to the Corporate Risk Register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 4 September 2026

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				Not Applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		There is no impact on equality identified as part of this paper. Please note that separate Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for the three Cherwell Futures programmes of work.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		As above.
Climate & Environmental Impact		✓		There is no impact on the environment identified as part of this paper. Please note that separate Impact Assessments will be undertaken for the three Cherwell Futures programmes of work.
ICT & Digital Impact		✓		ICT and Digital impacts arising from the delivery of the Programme will be addressed and governed via the Design Authority Board and Transformation and Change Board. This paper in itself does not identify an impact to flag.
Data Impact		✓		As above.
Procurement & subsidy		✓		Internal processes relating to procurement will be undertaken by each Programme (where relevant) including seeking approval from the Procurement and Contracts Group and Design Authority Board.
Council Priorities	The Cherwell Futures Programme supports the Council's Vision to be ' <i>A modern council inspiring and enabling positive, lasting change</i> ' and the four strategic priorities of Economic Prosperity, Community Leadership, Environmental Stewardship and Quality Housing and Place Making.			
Human Resources	There is no anticipated impact on people in relation to the purpose of this paper. Each Cherwell Futures programme has a dedicated Business Partner within the Human Resources team to closely manage and mitigate any people related impacts from the respective scopes of work. This has been detailed within the Full Business Cases that have or are due to be approved.			
Property	There is no impact in relation to Property that has been identified.			

Consultation & Engagement	There is no public consultation in relation to this paper. Any consultation required with the public, unions, or other stakeholders will be identified and managed through specific programme plans.
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Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1. Cherwell Futures was launched in 2025 to deliver efficiency savings and position the Council as a resilient and effective organisation for the future.
- 3.2. At the centre of this approach is Cherwell Futures, the Council's agreed framework for delivering three priority transformation and change programmes:

Customer Front Door

- 3.3 The Customer Front Door Programme is the primary mechanism through which the Council will deliver the ambitions of its Customer Experience Strategy. It is designed to provide a simpler, clearer and more consistent experience for residents, ensuring they can easily understand how to access services, what actions they need to take, what to expect from the process, and how the Council will support them throughout their journey.
- 3.4 By creating a single, accessible and customer-centred route into Council services, the Programme removes the need for residents to understand the Council's internal structures, teams or responsibilities. Instead, it focuses on delivering seamless access to services through a consistent and intuitive experience, regardless of channel or service area.
- 3.5 At its core, the Programme is a customer experience transformation programme, translating the principles of the Customer Experience Strategy into practical improvements that reduce customer effort, improve accessibility and increase confidence in Council services.

Planning Service Improvement Programme (PSIP)

- 3.6 The Planning Service Improvement Programme (PSIP) is an integrated service transformation programme that will:
 - Modernise Cherwell's Planning Service through coordinated improvements to people, processes, governance, data and digital capability, with technology acting as a key enabler of wider service improvement.
 - Improve outcomes and experiences for residents, applicants, agents, Members and staff by delivering simpler, more consistent and transparent customer journeys, efficient digital workflows and effective cross-directorate working.
 - Establish reliable and accessible planning information, creating a single source of truth for planning case history and work in progress to support right-first-time decision-making, stronger performance management and improved accountability.

- Support sustainable operational performance recovery, statutory compliance and continuous improvement, contributing to the Council's wider ambition to exit Government designation and deliver measurable service and financial benefits.

Environmental Services Transformation Programme

- 3.7 Environmental Services deliver a broad range of functions that affect every resident in the District. These services shape how the Council is viewed, influence quality of life in Cherwell's communities, and generate many of the issues, enquiries and service requests raised by Members on behalf of local people. Effective delivery underpins wider strategic confidence in the Council and helps ensure that Members' concerns are properly addressed.
- 3.8 The Environmental Services Transformation Programme will:
- Further strengthen reliable, visible frontline services, making it more responsive to customer needs.
 - Improve customer understanding and self-service by providing clear information and simple routes to get help working collaboratively across the Council and its stakeholders in a more effective way.
 - Ensure services operate more effectively by simplifying processes, clarifying responsibilities and making best use of capacity and resources to allow for investment in services to improve customer outcomes.
- 3.9 Each programme of work has been subject to detailed Full Business Cases:
- Customer Front Door was approved by the Executive on 13th July 2026
 - Environmental Services was approved by the Executive on 7th September 2026
 - Planning Service Improvement Programme is due to be presented to the Executive in January 2027
- 3.10 Through the development of detailed Full Business Cases, the potential savings from the Programme have been refined and are summarised below:

Executive Paper (September 2025)

- Estimated £2.8m – £3.0m with the potential for a further £1.0m in other initiatives over 6 – 18 months

Full Business Case Position (September 2026)

Programme	Saving
Customer Front Door	£0.795m
Planning Service Improvement Programme	£0m ¹
Environmental Services Transformation Programme	£0.559m - £1.017m
Already built into the MTFS 2025/ 2026	£1.8m
Total	£3.154m - £3.612m

¹cashable savings, additional income, released capacity and cost avoidance will be validated after the DEF fit-gap assessment and process redesign (due Nov 2026)

3.11 The development of these Full Business Cases has identified a shortfall in available funding to deliver the scopes of work to the value of £0.330m. These can be attributed to two main areas:

- Systems and Tools: Investment in systems that has now been scoped and market tested with the main cost being the new telephony system and website to enable the Customer Front Door programme.
- Capability Building: Investment in staff to be able to sustain and maintain new systems and processes that are introduced. This will initially be delivered by interim resource whilst upskilling staff to take forward in the longer term. This includes skills in website development, data-driven decision making and leadership development.

3.12 In addition to savings and service improvements, the transformational outcomes delivered by Cherwell Futures will prepare the Council for the future by improving systems, processes and ways of working. From research undertaken the team has identified opportunities for additional savings that can be achieved and will be explored as part of any later phases of work.

4. Details

4.1 The available 2067/ 2027 funding for Cherwell Futures is as follows:

Budget/ Reserve	Total 2026/ 2027
Approved Budget	£0.567m
Approved Reserves	£1.100m
Total	£1.667m

4.2 Note that the Approved Budget above is comprised of £0.515m of Reserves carry forward from 2025/ 2026 and £0.052m internal transfer of budget to fund the Zero-Based Budgeting project within the Environmental Services Improvement Programme. To date, spend against the original budget (2025/ 2026) has, in part, been invested to support improvements and capability development in service areas outside of the core Cherwell Futures programmes. The benefits derived from these is currently being quantified and will likely increase the savings that can be attributed to the Programme.

4.3 It should be noted that when the original request of a total of £1.5m of Reserves was made in 2025 it was to fund specialist interim resource only and based on very limited planning of what was required in the fullness of time once Full Business Cases had been developed. Since approval of the allocation of Reserves, interim teams have been established in line with this model as follows:

Customer Front Door	Environmental Services	Planning
1 x Programme Manager	1 x Programme Manager	1 x Programme Manager
2 x Project Managers	1 x Project Manager	1 x Project Manager
1 x Business Analyst	2 x Business Analysts	1 x Business Analyst

4.4 The 2026/ 2027 full year costs for this resourcing structure fits within the available Reserves budget. However, new intelligence and a full analysis that has been

undertaken within the business cases has identified a number of additional requirements identified in the region of £0.330m and are summarised as follows:

Reason	Additional Cost
Capability development	£0.067m
Unknown requirement in October 2025	£0.263m
Total	£0.330m

4.5 Forecasted in-year savings from the Customer Front Door Programme of £0.330m are proposed to be utilised to fund the additional costs identified.

4.6 The split of the draw down of Reserves is summarised below and mainly relates to interim resource. The one-off costs associated with the website and telephony upgrades for Customer Front Door programme are also included:

Programme	Total 2026/ 2027
Cherwell Futures (overall)	£0.195m
Customer Front Door	£0.862m
Planning Service Improvement Programme	£0.370m
Environmental Services Transformation Programme	£0.570m
Total Programme 2026/ 2027	£1.997m

4.7 The split of the draw down of Reserves is broken down as follows by Programme:

Cherwell Futures (overall)

Item	Total 2026/ 2027
Interim Resource:	£0.151m
• Transformation Director	
Consultancy Support:	£0.034m
• Service support for the Project Management Tool	
Products and Services:	£0.010m
• Project Management Tool licences	
Total	£0.195m

Customer Front Door

Item	Total 2026/ 2027
Interim Resource:	£0.519m
• Programme and Project Management	
• Business Analyst	
• Web expertise	
Consultancy	£0.0m
• None	
Products and Services:	£0.343m
• Netcall and Jadu one off costs	
• Revenue and Benefits system upgrades	
Total	£0.862m

Note that some costs for Netcall are offset by existing service budget provision.

Planning Service Improvement Programme

Item	Total 2026/ 2027
Interim Resource: • Programme and Project Management • Business Analyst	£0.370m
Consultancy: • None	£0.0m
Products and Services: • None	£0.0m
Total	£0.370m

Environmental Services Transformation Programme

Item	Total 2026/ 2027
Interim Resource: • Programme and Project Management • Business Analysts	£0.434m
Consultancy: • Zero-Based Budgeting • Route Optimisation	£0.126m
Products and Services: • Weighbridge data module	£0.010m
Total	£0.570m

- 4.8 Note that consultancy support for the Zero-Based Budgeting project has been funded from a different budget and does not form part of this draw down. It is listed above for completeness.
- 4.9. In developing the resourcing model and therefore split of Reserves draw down, a number of options have been considered and are summarised in Section 5.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below:

Option 1: Do Nothing

The Full Business Cases for the Cherwell Futures Programme cannot be delivered in house with existing capabilities and the outcomes set in terms of benefits and savings could therefore not be realised without the allocation of Reserves funding. This option is therefore not recommended.

Option 2: Alternative Resourcing Model

Alternative resourcing options through the use of internal capability through secondment, fixed term contracts and outsourcing to consultancies have been considered.

Internal secondments in particular for project management have been advertised within the Council with only one successful appointment.

Equally the use of fixed term contracts has been explored but discounted due to the appetite in the market for short term contracts for high demand expertise. The potential lead time associated with this model was also considered to be an issue.

The longer-term adoption of the transformation being delivered is a critical success factor for the Programme and outsourcing packages of work to consultancies limits the opportunity for integrating with the impacted services teams to take ownership of the changes longer term.

Note that the options appraisal for IT solutions to be adopted have been documented within the respective Full Business Cases which included consideration of alternative options and the rationale for the approach to be taken.

For the reasons above, this option is not recommended to be taken forward.

Option 3: Proposed Model

The use of interim resource provides the:

- Required skills and expertise that is not currently available within the Council.
- Flexibility to bring in when it is required within the Programme and drop off when no longer needed.
- Ability to integrate delivery teams within the respective services on a day-to-day basis to aid ownership, adoption and knowledge transfer.

As noted above, the options appraisal and justification for non-resource related investment have been provided within the respective Full Business Cases.

Option 4: Rescope Programme

In the event that the request for additional Reserves cannot be approved, a number of scenarios have been modelled to be able to deliver as much as the Cherwell Futures programme as possible within the available budget. These scenarios all relate to resource as non-resource related spend has been committed:

- Reducing the level of interim resource, sharing wherever possible across the Programmes with the likely impact of a delay in deliver as available time will need to be prioritised.
- Accelerating the recruitment of in-house capability in areas that it is required noting that there would be no interim resource to begin this and upskill. This would have a likely impact on the time to deliver some elements of the Programme particularly in Environmental Services.
- Descoping entire elements of the Programme which would enable delivery of part of the Programme in line with the respective Full Business Cases rather than trying to deliver all three in part.

All of the possible scenarios have pro's and con's associated with them and related impacts to timing and realisation of savings/ benefits. Should this be the determined Option by the Executive, a detailed paper will be provided to inform how this prioritisation should be made.

For the reasons set out, it is recommended that Option 3 is approved.

- 5.2. In recommending the above option, the following programme level risks and issues have been considered, and Option 3 presents the best mitigation for them:

Risk/ Issue	Mitigation
The Council does not have the skills and expertise in house to deliver the Programme.	Internal skills and capability have been reviewed with limited opportunities being identified in house. Bringing in external resource is therefore the only option to deliver the Programme with interim appointments being favoured for the flexibility it provides compared to fixed term contracts, etc. This also provides opportunity for knowledge transfer to incumbent teams as part of their assignments.
Where skills and expertise are available, there is no capacity to deliver.	Secondment opportunities have been offered with one successful appointment. Specialist skills in Power BI for example were originally identified to support the delivery of the Programme but capacity to deliver in house alongside other commitments has since materialised as an issue. The appointment of interim resource is therefore the best mitigation strategy to enable delivery of the Programmes within the timeframes set.
Services do not take ownership for the transformation which inhibits adoption and realisation of the benefits and savings set out.	Dedicated delivery teams utilising the skills and expertise of contributing service areas allows for buy in from members of staff who are part of the transformation as it happens. It provides the balance of utilising subject matter expertise when it is needed supported by dedicated resource to drive delivery. Alternative resourcing models such as outsourcing packages of work do not enable this collaboration and contribution.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 For the reasons set out within Section 5, it is recommended that Option 3: Proposed Model is approved by the Executive.
- 6.2 The Model proposed provides the Cherwell Futures Programme with the required skills and expertise to deliver the programmes of work set out within the respective Full Business Cases. The utilisation of interim resource allows for targeted support when it is required and appropriate knowledge handover to the respective services to embed as 'business as usual' beyond the life of the Programme.
- 6.3 In proposing this model, internal capability has been explored with secondment opportunities being offered where possible. In most cases, the skills and expertise required is not available in house which has informed the model/ approach

proposed. This will need to be considered for the longer term whereby capability in web design and Power BI reporting for example will be an ongoing requirement for the Council.

Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	Not Applicable
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Projects Delivered Summary
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Cherwell Futures Programme Executive Paper 7/10/25
Report Author	Ann Slavin, Cherwell Futures Director
Report Author contact details	Ann.slavin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director - Resources

Appendix 1: Projects Delivered Summary

Project	Outcome	Benefits
Auto capture of emails	Revenues and Benefits has experienced a 23% increase in workload from customer enquiries that would previously have been handled by Customer Services.	This increase relates primarily to general enquiries that are now being routed directly to the service without any increase in R&B FTE – so more efficient, but the workload has significantly reduced in the contact centre.
Hybrid Mail	All mail runs sent to a central location and issued at lower printing and postage cost	CDC doesn't have to do its own printing and postage – benefits through a reduction of workload in the post room. Potential for contract to be rolled out across entire organisation.
Arrangement Manager	Customers establish and manage payment arrangements through self-service functionality,	Reducing customer contact and routine administration
DD Automation	Automate the creation, amendment and maintenance of Direct Debit instructions	Further reducing customer contact and transactional activity
Taxi Vehicle Assessment Booking Process	The process for licenced drivers to book and have their vehicle assessed for private hire by CDC has been documented, standardised and reviewed. Online booking via the CDC website has been implemented.	Automated booking of taxi vehicle assessments means this new process should have no impact on customer contact levels and won't create any additional administrative burden.
Fly Tipping Resolution Process	The process for tracking a fly-tip, from receiving a report, through investigation to resolution and closure has been documented, standardised and reviewed. Roles & responsibilities have been clarified, leading to a more effective process. Teams across Regulatory and Environmental services are using the existing iDox system as a single data source.	The documented process will be used for training purposes and to identify further improvement opportunities. Time spent, and risk associated with manual data transfer has been removed. The team has learnt about principles of customer value add, and how to spot opportunities to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and has developed an improvement plan to help with standardising decision-making, balancing the need to remove fly-tips with the desire to identify offenders.

Building Safety Levy Implementation	Relevant CDC staff are trained in a documented new process, and systems have been adapted to handle new work, following central government's introduction of the Building Safety Levy for certain developments, which must be collected by all local planning authorities. CDC can now collect and process the new levy.	This new process has been set up effectively and efficiently so that staff roles are clear, staff are able to handle the new work, and CDC will be meeting the new central government requirement. The new process will be monitored to make sure it is delivering expected outcomes. (The right sum collected in relation to the right developments, and these funds directed appropriately)
Programme Governance Process	CDC has a programme governance framework prompting the right level of programme and project information to be available to decision-makers at the right time,	Informed decision-making is enabled, escalations are facilitated where appropriate, and senior leaders have the necessary assurance relating to programme and project delivery. CDC programme and project teams have increased understanding of why programme governance is important and how it can support them in meeting programme/project goals.
Capital Bids Process	Documented end-to-end capital bids process.	All roles involved can see and understand the end-to-end capital bids process, and their role in it. Following the standardised process will result in increased right-first-time decision making and reduced re-work, providing greater clarity on the exact nature of the capital works programme. The capital programme defined via this process will provide a clear input for the capital works board, helping them to monitor delivery.
Organisation Wide Process Catalogue	Listed over 900 processes carried out regularly across the council: Their start and end points, high level steps, roles involved (including external partners/stakeholders) systems used, volume, frequency, typical end-to-end process time.	We have a high-level understanding of what all the work is that we do. We have used this rich data source to identify the highest value and volume processes needing standardisation via more detailed mapping, and simplification via rigorous process review and improvement, as well as identifying processes with high levels of manual data transfer, which could be automated. The process catalogue will define our pipeline of process improvement and help us to develop a culture of effective

		process ownership & management, key for performance measuring and improvement.
Weighbridge Data Validation	Mapped the end-to-end weighbridge data validation process and conducted a Lean review. Identified multiple points of manual data transfer resulting in errors, re-work, lost time and poor use of skills, systems and resources.	The findings of the process review were handed over to the Environmental Services Transformation Programme, which has implemented solutions to make savings, ensure effective use of systems and increase right-first time results (correct data and payments processed)
Housing Register Applications	Mapped the end-to-end housing register applications process and conducted a Lean review. Identified multiple bottlenecks, risk of inconsistent decision-making, risk of error through manual data handling.	Mapped process and recommendations were handed over to the Customer Front Door Transformation programme. Processing Housing Register applications via the new Customer Front door will increase right-first-time applications (i.e. all required evidence and documentation present and correct on submission), reducing handing time and re-work currently carried out by CDC staff and meaning that applications can be processed more efficiently.
Taxi licence application and renewal process	Mapped the end-to end taxi licence initial application and licence renewal processes and conducted a Lean review. Identified multiple bottlenecks, risk of error resulting from manual data handling Designed future state with improved effectiveness and efficiency	Staff have a standardised process to refer to, ensuring consistent handling of applications and driving consistent, and effective and efficient decision-making. New staff will be trained using the documented process, removing risk of knowledge attrition and associated risk to business continuity. Specific improvements to parts of the process including developments to the online application form, English Language level checking and knowledge test administration have resulted in reduced administration time and increase in right-first-time applications.
Policy catalogue maintenance process	Mapped the end-to-end process policy catalogue review process, identified improvement opportunities and provided recommendations to the process owner. Produced documentation to support knowledge transfer and onboarding of a new team member.	Roles and responsibilities for reviewing and updating policies listed in the catalogue are standardised, to facilitate the annual policy catalogue review, ensuring policies are documented, accessible and maintained.

eCase Information Governance	Documented Freedom of Information and Standard Access Request process. Implemented use of eCase system.	Documented process clarifies roles and responsibilities, and defines where and how system use will improve effectiveness and efficiency. Implementation of eCase system provides a performance baseline, and will evidence the reduction of manual handling, faster processing times and monitor of data provided in response to requests, to ensure desired outcomes.
Annual Planning Process Improvement	High level process mapped. Standardised detailed steps allocated to owners and added to an online shared schedule with owners and dates and automatic reminders of deadlines etc.	The relationship between the related processes of horizon scanning and goal setting, budget preparation and service delivery planning and the ownership of each of these has been clarified, resulting in better defined outcomes and steps leading to those. The schedule in Microsoft Planner provides a version of the standardised process that drives progress through allocation of tasks to individuals, and automated notification of deadlines. The same schedule can be used in future years with revised dates and owners, if there are staff changes, but functional ownership is defined.
S106 Process Analysis	Mapped the high-level end-to-end S106 process, defining suppliers, customers, inputs, outputs and the high-level stages. Produced detailed cross-functional process maps of several subprocesses of the s106 process, including deeds of variation, obligation delivery monitoring and spending authorisation. Conducted Lean reviews and detailed root cause analysis activities. Produced an action plan for implementation of defined solutions.	Process documentation and improvement plan has been handed over to the Planning Transformation Programme. Discovery work with colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council identified the opportunity to re-use our work in a county-wide related piece of work, which has validated that all authorities across the county faces the same challenges and agree that the same solutions could provide appropriate solutions.

In addition, the benefits and outcomes realised from the following Digital and Innovation projects are currently being mapped for review by the Benefits Realisation Board:

- Eforms download and import into NEC Enterprise
- Download of Revs and Bens reports from Academy and automatic loading into SharePoint
- Download of Debtors files and import into NEC Enterprise
- Download of BACS files from Academy and email to Finance
- Taxi vehicle assessment bookings and assessments
- Taxi knowledge tests
- Street cleansing jobs now go directly to the team without E&C Admin needed to field/forward them
- Fixed Penalties process
- Listed Building Registerable Charges are automatically revealed in a Land Charges Search
- Sickness reporting for HR
- Insurance risk assessment reporting for Finance
- Planning performance and management information reporting
- Payout fees modelling
- Banbury BID reconciliation
- IT software packaging using inTune so users can install more software themselves
- Automated workload and performance reporting for the Conservation Team
- Members enquiries form and case management
- Automated the extraction of CT modelling data from Academy for Finance
- Automated the production of payment audit trails for the annual audit of accounts

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This report is public	
Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/2027	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor David Hingley
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	9 September 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer), Michael Furness

Purpose of report

To update and seek agreement on the proposed policy for applying the Council Tax empty homes premium and second home premium.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the reviewed policy for Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/27.
- 1.2 To approve the Council Tax Empty Home and Second Home Premium Policy 2026/27.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Councils have the discretion to decide whether to introduce a premium in their local area or parts of the area on long-term empty homes and second homes. They also have the discretion to decide on the level of the premium, up to the maximum statutory threshold.
- 2.2 Sections 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 determined a long-term empty property as a property that is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for two years or more. The legislation was amended through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 giving each local authority the power to charge a premium after one year of the property being unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Cherwell District Council implemented the change from two years to one year with effect from 1 April 2025.
- 2.3 Sections 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 determines a second home property as a property that is not occupied as anyone's sole or main

residence and substantially furnished. The section was inserted by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 giving each local authority the power to charge a premium as soon as these conditions are met. Cherwell District Council will implement the change with effect 1 April 2027.

- 2.4 The Council recognises that there are certain circumstances in which an exception from the premium may apply, including those set out in legislation.
- 2.5 The charging of a premium is to encourage owners to bring long term empty properties and second home properties back into use.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	Any changes to the premiums will be accommodated as part of the budget process with final estimates included in the annual council tax base calculation Kimberley Digweed, Finance Business Partner 21 August 2026
Legal	The report sets out the relevant legislation that gives the Council its statutory powers in relation to applying Council Tax premiums for empty and second home properties. The proposed policy covers the statutory exceptions that Councils cannot disapply. Also, the Council includes its own exception to the premiums, which is within its discretionary powers to determine within its area. In line with government guidance, the policy provides details on how a person can request a review of a decision, and if still unsatisfied with the Council's response, may be able to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. The Second Homes proposal was approved by full Council on 23 February 2026 and was published in a local newspaper with the 2025 - 26 Council Tax charges giving the 12-month statutory notice period, complying with the statutory requirements under Sections 11B and 11C. The Council's legal department can assist with any work required to implement and enforce the new policy. Denzil-John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 26 August 2026
Risk Management	The reviewing of this policy mitigates the risk of the Council being successfully challenged on any decisions it takes in line with its policy, providing transparency on our decision process. Celia Prado-Teeling Performance Team Leader 19 August 2026

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				N/A
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				NA
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	Housing that meets your needs			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 From 1 April 2013, billing authorities may charge a premium on a class of property that has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for two years or more.

- 3.2 Cherwell District Council commenced charging the additional premium effective from 1 April 2016.
- 3.3 Since 1 April 2016, the premium was charged at an additional 50%. This increased to a 100% premium from 1 April 2019. From 1 April 2020, the 100% premium remained for properties empty between 2 years and 5 years, with a 200% premium applied to properties empty 5 years or more. These premiums remained in place with the addition of a 300% premium from 1 April 2023 for properties that remained empty for 10 years or more.
- 3.4 Sections 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 enables councils in England to disapply the section 11(2)(a) discount which may otherwise apply to long-term empty homes and apply additional council tax (commonly called a premium). The 1992 Act was amended through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (“the 2023 Act”) so that councils can apply a premium on homes which have been empty for 1 or more years from 1 April 2024.
- 3.5 Cherwell District Council will charge a premium once a property has remained unoccupied and unfurnished for one year or more from 1 April 2025.
- 3.6 From 1 April 2025, billing authorities may charge a premium on a class of property that has been unoccupied as someone’s sole or main home but substantially furnished. For Council Tax purposes, these are known as second homes.
- 3.7 Cherwell District Council will, from 1 April 2027, automatically apply a Council Tax second home premium of 100% on unoccupied second homes.
- 3.8 The Council notified second homeowners through the Budget Consultation in November and December 2024 with the recommendation being passed at the full Council meeting on 23 February 2026.
- 3.9 The Government’s intention in granting billing authorities the power to charge a council tax premium was not to penalise owners of properties that fall within recognised exception categories, or where the circumstances are such that the property is not being deliberately kept empty or unoccupied. This includes, but is not limited to, properties that are genuinely being marketed for sale or let, as well as other circumstances where statutory exceptions apply.

4. Details

- 4.1 The premiums will apply to unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties with effect from 1 April 2025 as follows:
- Properties empty for a period of 1 to 5 years – the premium will be 100%.
 - Properties empty for a period of 5 to 10 years – the premium will be 200%.
 - Properties empty for a period of more than 10 years – the premium will be 300%.

- 4.2 The premium of 100% will apply to unoccupied and substantially furnished properties with effect from 1 April 2027 as follows:
- Unless the property meets one of the exceptions below, a premium will automatically apply.
- 4.3 The Council accepts that there are certain circumstances where it is reasonable to apply an exception to the Premium. The following exceptions apply to both long term empty premium properties and second home premium properties. These are as follows:
- Where the dwelling is actively marketed for sale or rent at a realistic market value with the intention of bringing the dwelling back into use as a sole/main residence.
 - Where the dwelling is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they are residing in job-related armed forces accommodation.
 - Unoccupied dwellings which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/letters of administration)
 - Annexes forming part of or being treated as part of the main dwelling.
 - Where the property needs major repairs or structural alterations before it can be occupied. The applicant must be able to demonstrate major repair or structural alteration is being undertaken and may be required to provide evidence such as a schedule of works, quotations/invoices and photographs. – A surveyor's report may be requested in these circumstances including an indication of the likely time to conduct repairs. (12 months' time limit)
 - The Council has introduced its own exception which acknowledges that owners may experience legal or technical difficulties which prevents the sales or letting of the property. – Evidence from a legal professional will be required in these circumstances giving an indication of when the legal/technical issue should be resolved. (12 months' time limit)
- 4.4 The following exceptions will apply to second home premium properties only:
- Where the resident must occupy the property as a condition of their employment to allow better performance of employment duties and the employer provides the accommodation.
 - An exception may apply to caravan pitches and boat moorings as these types of dwellings occupied as a second property may only be subject to 50% of the standard Council Tax charges.
 - A dwelling which prohibits the occupation all year round such as holiday accommodation or where a planning condition prevents occupation for more than 28 continuous days.
- 4.5 Where the Council determines that a property meets the criteria for an exception from the Premium, the Premium will not be applied, and the owner will remain liable

only for the standard Council Tax charge at 100% of the applicable liability for the period that the exception is in force.

- 4.6 It is expected that the property will have been brought back into occupation by the end of the exception period. Where this is the case, the Premium will no longer apply.
- 4.7 Each application for an exception of the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium and Second Homes Premium must be made by completing the online application form and will be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the proposed Policy.
- 4.8 The Council will determine the period for which an exception from the Premium applies. This will be based on the evidence provided and the facts known at the time of the decision. Any maximum period for which an exception may apply is specified above.
- 4.9 The Council reserves the right to carry out routine inspections of the property during the period that an exception from the Premium applies and may review the exception to satisfy itself that the qualifying circumstances continue to exist.
- 4.10 The Council reserves the right to review and withdraw an exception from the Premium where the circumstances that gave rise to the exception no longer apply. The taxpayer must notify the Council within 21 days of any material change in circumstances. Failure to do so may result in the exception being withdrawn in full and the Premium being applied accordingly.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not bring forward a reviewed and amended policy. However, this will reduce the incentive to bring long term empty and second homes back into use and result in reduced income to the authority.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Recommended to comply with the council's objective of reducing the number of long-term empty homes and second homes.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes. Community threshold met.
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected.	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Council Tax Empty Homes and Second Homes Premium Policy
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Appendix 1 – Empty Homes and Second Homes Premium Council Tax policy https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4175 Meeting of Council, 23 February 2026. https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/g4193/Public%20reports%20pack%20Monday%2023-Feb-2026%2018.30%20Council.pdf?T=10
Report Author	Vicki Taplin Revenue Services Manager
Report Author contact details	Vicki.Taplin@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 227927
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer, Section 151 Officer

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Appendix 1

Council Tax Empty Homes and Second Homes Premium Policy Guidelines

Introduction

This policy sets out how Cherwell District Council ("the Council") will apply Council Tax premiums to long-term empty homes and second homes and the circumstances in which an exception may be granted.

The Council is committed to bringing empty properties back into use as part of its wider Empty Homes Strategy. Reducing the number of dwellings that are not occupied as a person's sole or main residence helps to increase housing supply, support local communities and reduce the negative impact that long-term vacant properties can have on neighbourhoods.

Since 1 April 2016, the Council has applied Council Tax premiums to long-term empty dwellings. For Council Tax purposes, a long-term empty dwelling is a property that is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least one year.

A Premium is an additional Council Tax charge levied under sections 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 ("the Act") introduced additional powers allowing councils to charge a premium on an empty home after one year and charge a premium on a second homes. These changes were introduced to address situations where a property could avoid an empty homes premium simply by becoming substantially furnished whilst remaining unoccupied.

In accordance with these powers, Cherwell District Council will introduce a Second Homes Premium from 1 April 2027.

The Council Tax Empty Homes Premium

In accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the premium will be applied as follows:

From 1 April 2026

- Properties empty for more than 1 year, but less than 5 years – 100%
- Properties empty for between 5 and 10 years – 200%
- Properties empty for 10 years or more – 300%

The Council Tax Second Homes Premium

For council tax purposes, a second home is defined as a dwelling, which is not a person's sole or main home and is substantially furnished.

These properties are currently subject to the full 100% council tax charge.

The Council will, from 1 April 2027, automatically apply a Council Tax Second Homes Premium of 100% on unoccupied second homes.

The Act recognises the impact that high levels of second home ownership can have, and that more needs to be done to disincentivise people from simply doing nothing with their property or not using it to its full potential.

As with other changes introduced by the Act, Section 11C(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires that the first decision to impose this class of premium must be taken at least 12 months before the financial year to which it would apply. The Act now allows councils to apply a council tax premium of up to 100%, ensuring that the mandatory 12-month notice has been given to second homeowners.

The Council notified second homeowners through the Budget Consultation in December 2024 with it being approved at the full Council meeting on the 23 February 2026.

Exceptions to the Council Tax Empty or Second Home Premium Charge

There may be circumstances where an owner of a property is unable to bring their property back in to use for reasons outside of their control. Those owners can apply for an exception in accordance with this policy.

Applications for an exception to an Empty Homes Premium or Second Homes Premium must be submitted in writing by the owner of the property or their authorised representative.

The applicant must provide sufficient information and supporting evidence to enable the Council to determine the application. The Council may request additional

information where necessary and reserves the right to verify evidence provided and undertake inspections of the property.

Any additional information requested by the Council should normally be provided within one month of the request. Failure to do so may result in the application being determined on the information already available.

Council Tax and any applicable premium remain payable whilst an application or review is being considered.

Each application will be considered on its individual merits and in accordance with this policy.

The Council may use its discretion to suspend recovery proceedings of the council tax charge and premium with a solicitor undertaking that the charge is paid once the sale is complete. This will be limited to a maximum period of 12 months. This does not affect liability for council tax.

Empty Properties being actively marketed for sale or let

The Government has made clear that Council Tax premiums are not intended to penalise owners who are genuinely seeking to bring a property back into occupation.

The Council will therefore grant a statutory exception from the Empty Homes Premium or Second Homes Premium for up to 12 months where a dwelling is actively marketed for sale or let at a realistic market value.

The exception will apply from the date active marketing commenced and will end on the earliest of:

- the expiry of the 12-month period;
- completion of the sale;
- commencement of a tenancy; or
- the property no longer being actively marketed.

Examples of evidence include:

- confirmation from an estate or letting agent;
- online property advertisements;
- evidence that a sale or tenancy has been agreed and is progressing.

Empty Properties undergoing probate

The Council recognises that administering an estate following a death can be a lengthy and difficult process.

Following the expiry of any statutory Council Tax exemption applicable to a property subject to probate, a dwelling may become liable for an Empty Homes Premium or Second Homes Premium.

Where a property remains unoccupied following the grant of probate or letters of administration, the Council will grant an exception from the relevant premium for up to 12 months from the date probate was granted or letter of administration have been issued.

This exception applies only to the premium and does not affect liability for the standard Council Tax charge.

Where the property is subsequently placed on the market for sale or let, the owner may also apply for the active marketing exception detailed above.

Empty properties undergoing major works

The Council recognises that some long-term empty properties require significant repair work or structural alterations before they can be occupied.

Where a dwelling meets the qualifying criteria for the statutory major repairs and structural alterations exception, the Council will apply the exception for up to 12 months.

The applicant must demonstrate that major repairs or structural alterations are being undertaken and may be required to provide evidence such as:

- schedules of works;
- builder quotations, invoices or receipts;
- photographs;
- access to the property for inspection.

Where the property is subsequently marketed for sale or let, the owner may also apply for the active marketing exception subject to the relevant qualifying criteria.

Properties where legal or technical issues prevent sale or letting

The Council recognises that, in some cases, a property cannot be sold or let because of legal or technical issues beyond the owner's control.

Where satisfactory evidence is provided, the Council may use their discretionary powers to grant an exception from the premium for up to 12 months.

Evidence should normally be provided by a solicitor, surveyor or other relevant professional and should explain the nature of the issue and the anticipated timescale for resolution.

The exception applies to properties subject to either long term Empty Homes Premium or Second Home Premium.

Annexes and military accommodation

Two mandatory exceptions, which have applied to the Empty Homes Premium since 2016, also apply to the Second Homes Premium:

- A dwelling that is, or would be, the sole or main residence of a member of the armed forces who has been provided with accommodation as part of their service.
- A dwelling that forms part of a single property containing one or more other dwellings and is used by a resident of one of those dwellings as part of their sole or main residence.

Exceptions that apply to Second Homes only

Job-related dwellings, caravan pitches and boat moorings

A dwelling qualifying as a job-related dwelling under the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 is exempt from the Second Homes Premium.

A dwelling is considered *job-related* if it is provided because of a person's employment, or that of their spouse or civil partner, and one of the following applies (subject to certain exemptions):

- It is necessary for the proper performance of the person's employment duties.
- It is provided to enable better performance of employment duties, and it is customary for employers in that type of employment to provide accommodation.
- The person is contractually required to live at the property and carry on their trade or profession from that address.

The local authority is responsible for determining whether the exception applies.

Where a job-related dwelling discount applies, the property will also be exempt from the Second Homes Premium. However, this exception does not apply where a person chooses to keep an additional property closer to work while maintaining a

family home elsewhere, or where they are posted to a new location but retain their former home.

A 50% discount may also apply to caravan pitches and boat moorings that are not used as a person's sole or main residence.

Seasonal homes

A dwelling will be exempt from the Second Homes Premium where year-round occupation is prohibited, the property is specified for use as holiday accommodation, or a planning condition prevents occupation for more than 28 continuous days in any year.

For exceptions that apply to Second Homes Premiums only, the 12 month time limit does not apply.

Change in Circumstances

Applicants must notify the Council within 21 days of any material change in circumstances that may affect their entitlement to an exception. Failure to do so may result in the exception being revoked in full.

The Council reserves the right to inspect the property and review any exception granted.

Any exception granted under this policy will normally take effect from the date the Council receives the application, provided the Council is satisfied that the qualifying circumstances existed at that date. Exceptions will continue for the applicable period specified in this policy, subject to the qualifying circumstances continuing to apply.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

The Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to the administration of Council Tax premiums and exceptions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/long-term-empty-homes-and-second-homes-council-tax-premiums-and-exceptions/guidance-on-the-implementation-of-the-council-tax-premiums-on-long-term-empty-homes-and-second-homes#exceptions-to-the-council-tax-premiums-for-long-term-empty-homes-and-second-homes>

Where there is any conflict between this policy and legislation, the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, associated regulations and statutory guidance shall prevail.

Notification

The Council will notify applicants in writing of its decision as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 28 days of receiving all information required to determine the application.

Where an application is refused, the decision notice will explain the reasons for the decision and the review process available.

Right of Review

Any person who believes that a premium has been incorrectly applied should first contact the Council and provide any supporting evidence. A request for a review should normally be made within one calendar month of the date of the decision notice.

If the matter cannot be resolved, the taxpayer may request a review of the decision. Where appropriate, further rights of appeal may be available through the Valuation Tribunal Service.

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This report is public Appendix 5 to the report is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972	
Finance Monitoring Report August 2026	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	5 October 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Cllr David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	18 September 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer), Michael Furness

Purpose of report

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the August 2026. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of August 2026.
- 1.2 To note the S151 approval, as permitted under the Reserves Policy, of £0.005m use of the Community Initiatives Grant reserve for Hanwell Fields Community Centre works (Appendix 4).
- 1.3 To note and approve the proposed landlord capital works at Castle Quay, as detailed in exempt Appendix 5, are added to the capital programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the council's forecast year-end position for 2026/27, projecting an overspend of £0.436m to the financial year end.
- 2.2 The capital forecast year-end position will be reported on a Quarterly basis with the second report being as at September 2026 and reported to the committee in November.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	Financial and Resource implications are detailed within section 4 of this report. The reserves policy requires Executive to agree transfers to and from earmarked reserves and general balances during the financial year. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 8 September 2026			
Legal	There are no legal implications arising at this stage. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables Executive to remain aware of issues and understand the actions being taken to maintain a balanced budget. The report sets out as at August 2026 the finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 8 September 2026			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Financial resilience and any risks link to it are managed through the Corporate Risk register. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 8 September 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.is report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 8 September 2026
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact		X		N/A
ICT & Digital Impact		X		N/A
Data Impact		X		N/A
Procurement & subsidy		X		N/A
Council Priorities	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them during 2026/27.			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

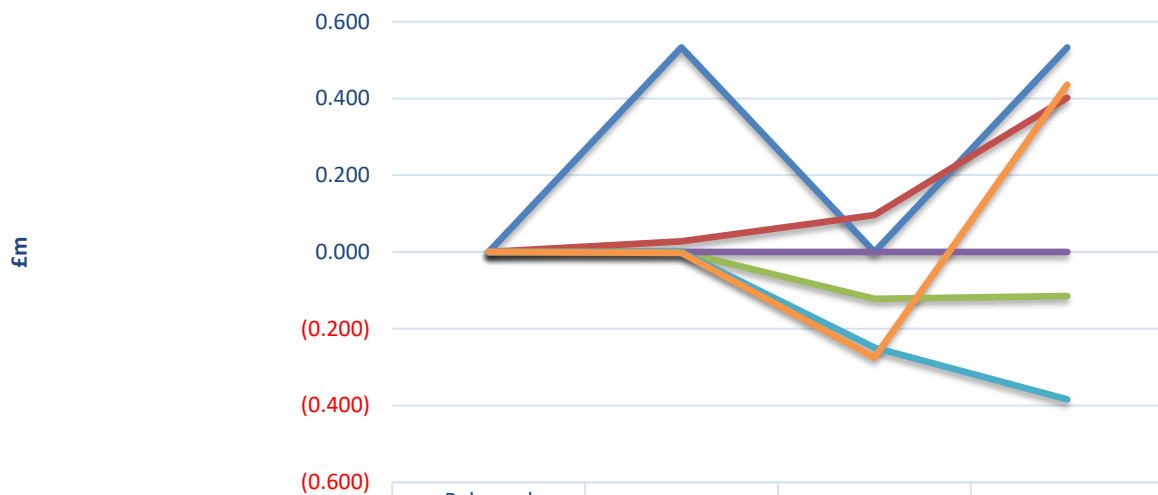
- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its financial position to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.
- 3.2 This monitoring takes place monthly for finance, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.
- 3.3 These updates are consolidated on a quarterly basis where Performance and Finance updates are given due to the implications and interdependencies between them, and this is the summary financial forecast for the end of the financial year position for 2026/27.

4. Details

4.1 Finance Update

- 4.1.1 The Finance section presents the forecast year-end revenue position for the 2026/27 financial year and in a summary dashboard as detailed below:

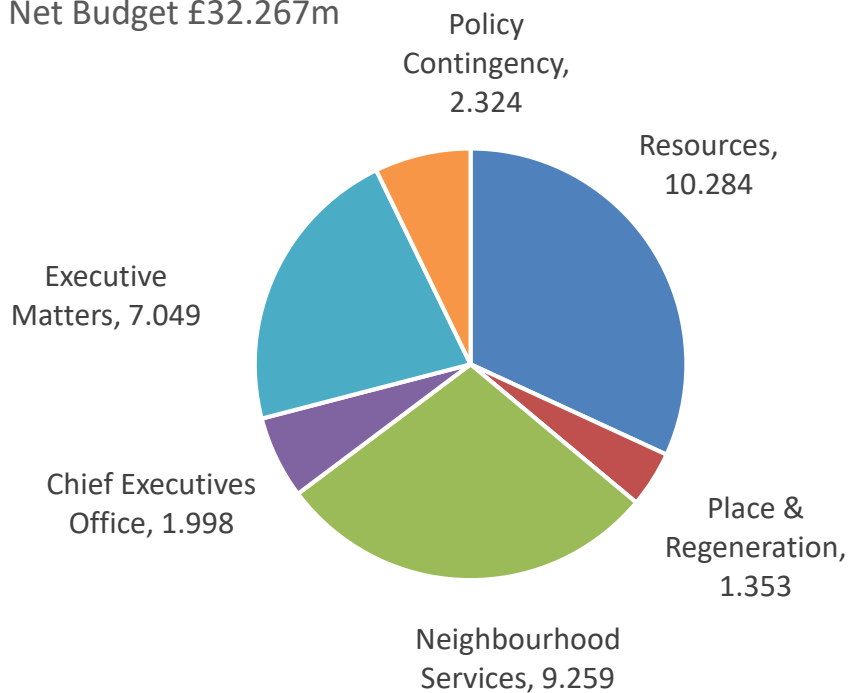
Monthly Forecast Variance By Directorate

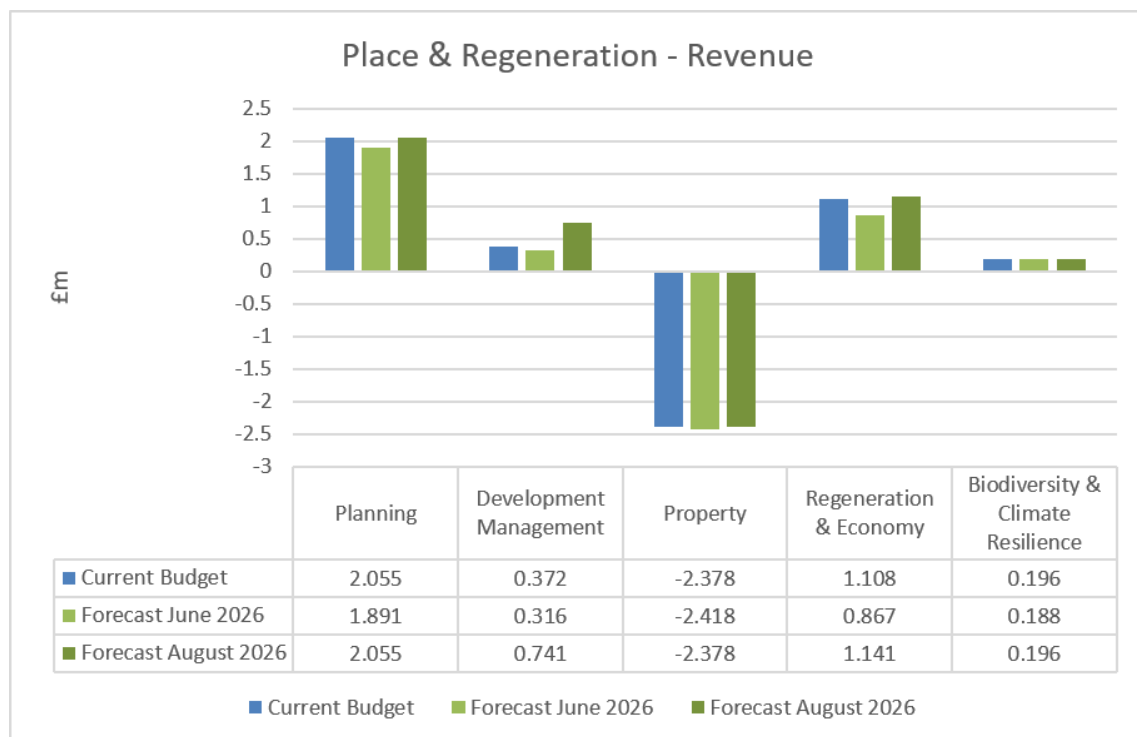
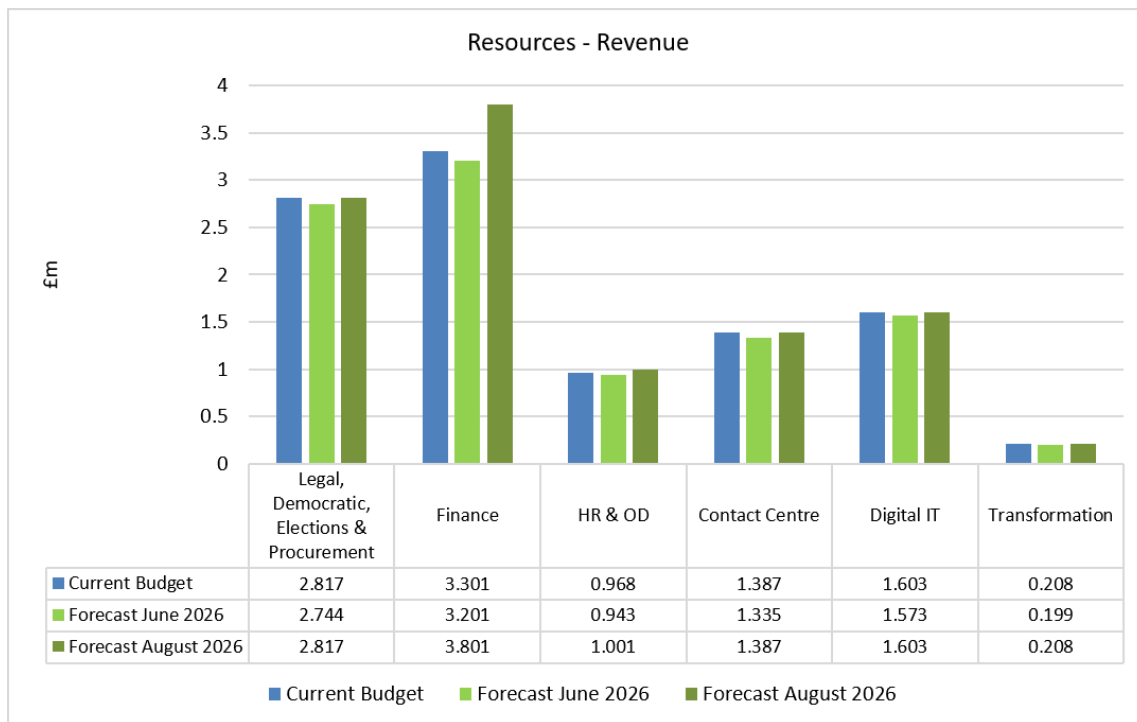


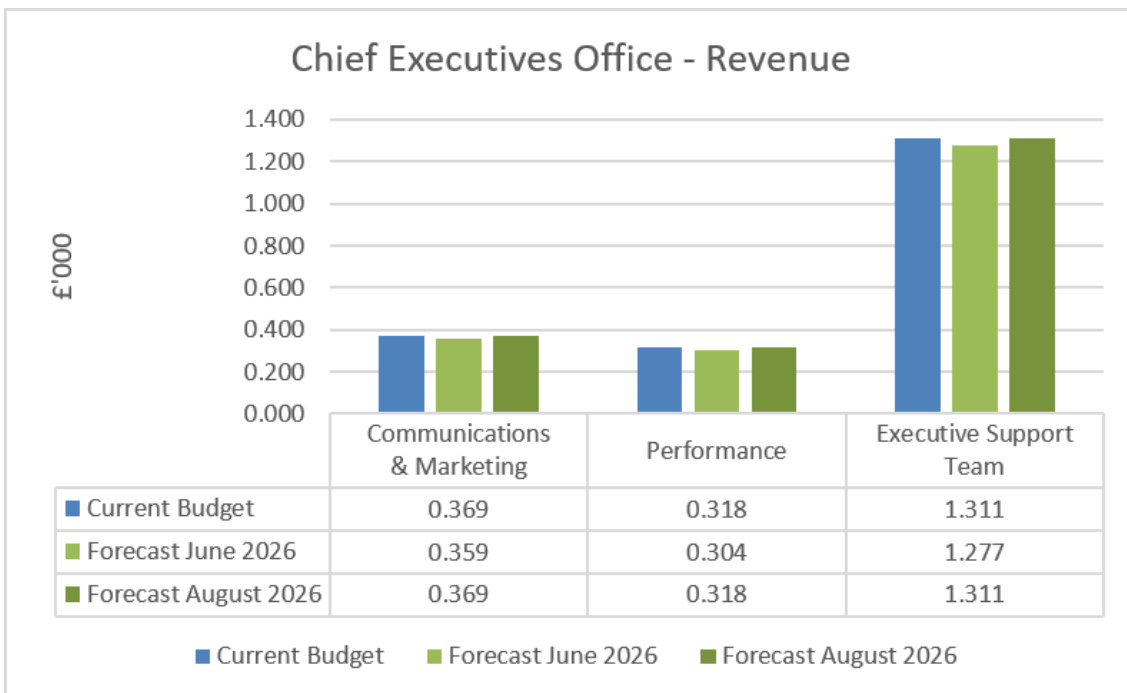
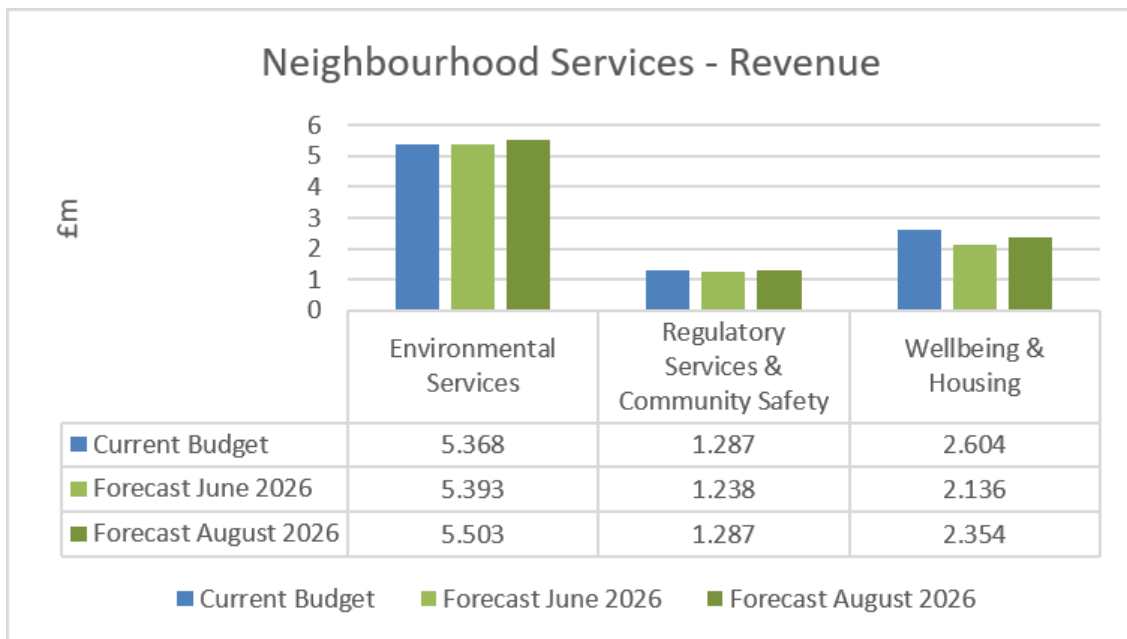
	Balanced Budget	May 26	June 26	Aug 26
Resources	0.000	0.533	0.000	0.533
Place & Regeneration	0.000	0.028	0.096	0.402
Neighbourhood Services	0.000	0.000	-0.122	-0.115
Chief Executives Office	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Policy Contingency & Executive Matters	0.000	0.000	-0.249	(0.384)
Overall Council Position	0.000	-0.002	-0.275	0.436

Current Budget By Service Area

Total Net Budget £32.267m

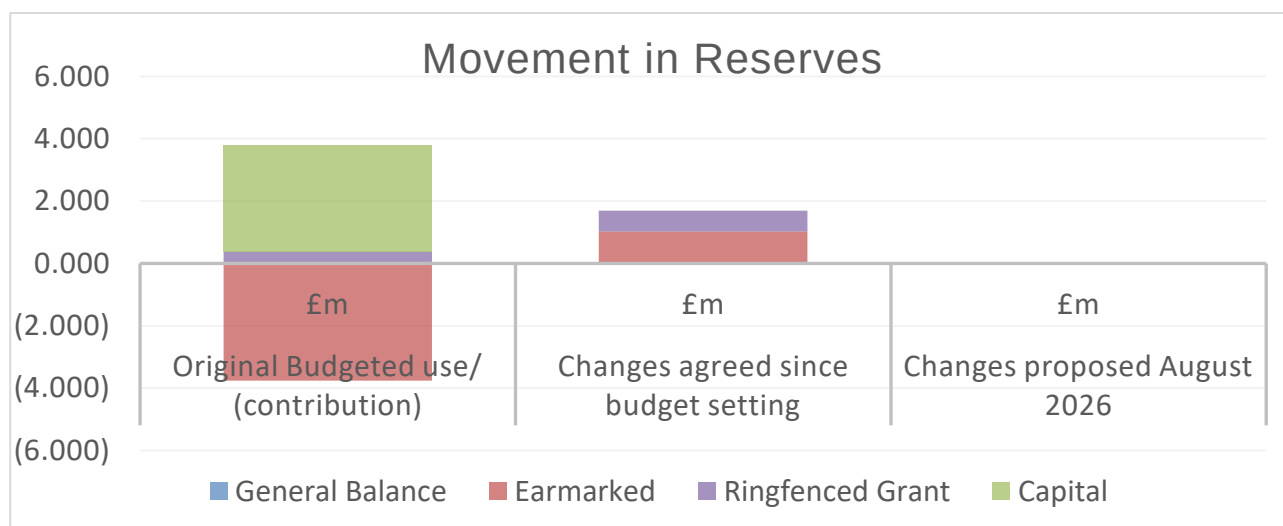






Directorate Analysis

Service	Resources £m	Place & Regeneration £m	Neighbourhood Services £m	Chief Executive Office £m	Executive Matters £m	Policy Contingency £m	Total £m
Budget approved by Council	9.979	0.728	8.889	1.940	7.954	2.779	32.269
Senior restructure		0.020				-0.020	0.000
reverse fees & charges as not applicable on court costs	0.016					-0.016	0.000
Allocation from PC for Pay award	0.288	0.233	0.491	0.058		-1.070	0.000
Roundings	0.001		0.001			-0.004	-0.002
Movement of Strategic Development Fund		0.250			-0.250		0.000
Move of Landscape Architects from Environmental Services to Planning		0.122	-0.122				0.000
Treasury Underspend to General Contingency					-0.655	0.655	0.000
Current Budget	10.284	1.353	9.259	1.998	7.049	2.324	32.267
Environmental Services - Agency Costs			0.135				0.135
Wellbeing & Housing - Using CDC Accommodation			-0.250				-0.250
Regeneration & Economy - staffing changes & devolution		0.033					0.033
Development Management - Income		0.369					0.369
Finance - Housing Benefit Payments	0.500						0.500
HR & OD - staffing costs	0.033						0.033
Higher Interest rates than forecast					-0.249		-0.249
Policy Contingency - Mitigate the overspend in Environmental Services						-0.135	-0.135
Current (Under)/Overspends	0.533	0.402	-0.115	0.000	-0.249	-0.135	0.436



4.1.2 The forecast summarised in Table 1 below currently shows an overspend across Directorates of £0.820m with potential mitigations that are currently being investigated, these mitigations are not part of the forecast. Further details providing explanations for projected variances can be found in Appendix 1.

4.1.3 The council is forecasting a £0.436m overall overspend (1.4%) to the end of the financial year, representing a £0.711m deterioration from the (£0.275m) forecast underspend reported in June.

The adverse movement is mainly driven by overspends in Resources £0.533m and Place & Regeneration £0.402m, particularly within Finance £0.500m and Development Management £0.369m. These pressures are partly offset by underspends in Neighbourhood Services (£0.115m), Executive Matters (£0.249m). Most other services forecasting balanced positions. The forecast also assumes the use of the (£0.135m) underspend in Policy Contingency which was ringfenced to help mitigate pressures within Environmental Services.

Table 1: Forecast Year End Position

Service	Current Budget £m	August 2026 Forecast to Year End £m	August 2026 Variance (Under) / Over £m	% Variance to current budget %	June 2026 Variance (Under) / Over £m	Change since Previous (better) / worse £m	
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	2.817	2.817	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Finance	3.301	3.801	0.500	15.15%	0.000	0.500	
HR & OD	0.968	1.001	0.033	3.41%	0.000	0.033	
Contact Centre	1.387	1.387	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Digital IT	1.603	1.603	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Transformation	0.208	0.208	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Resources	10.284	10.817	0.533	18.56%	0.000	0.533	
Planning	2.055	2.055	0.000	0.00%	(0.011)	0.011	
Development Management	0.372	0.741	0.369	99.19%	0.074	0.295	
Property	(2.378)	(2.378)	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Regeneration & Economy	1.108	1.141	0.033	2.98%	0.033	0.000	
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience	0.196	0.196	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Place & Regeneration	1.353	1.755	0.402	29.71%	0.096	0.306	
Environmental Services	5.368	5.503	0.135	2.51%	0.200	(0.065)	
Regulatory Services & Community Safety	1.287	1.287	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Wellbeing & Housing	2.604	2.354	(0.250)	-9.60%	(0.322)	0.072	
Neighbourhood Services	9.259	9.144	(0.115)	-1.24%	(0.122)	0.007	
Communications & Marketing	0.369	0.369	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Performance	0.318	0.318	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Executive Support Team	1.311	1.311	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Chief Executives Office	1.998	1.998	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000	
Subtotal for Directorates	22.894	23.714	0.820	3.58%	(0.026)	0.846	
Executive Matters	7.049	6.800	(0.249)	-3.5%	(0.249)	0.000	
Policy Contingency	2.324	2.189	(0.135)	-5.8%	0.000	(0.135)	
Total	32.267	32.703	0.436	1.4%	(0.275)	0.711	
FUNDING	(32.267)	(32.267)	0.000	0.0%	0.000	0.000	
Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit	0.000	0.436	0.436		(0.275)	0.711	

Note: A positive variance is an overspend or a reduction in forecast income and a (negative) is an underspend or extra income received.

Green represents an underspend and red represents a overspend for the forecast outturn position.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance – August 2026

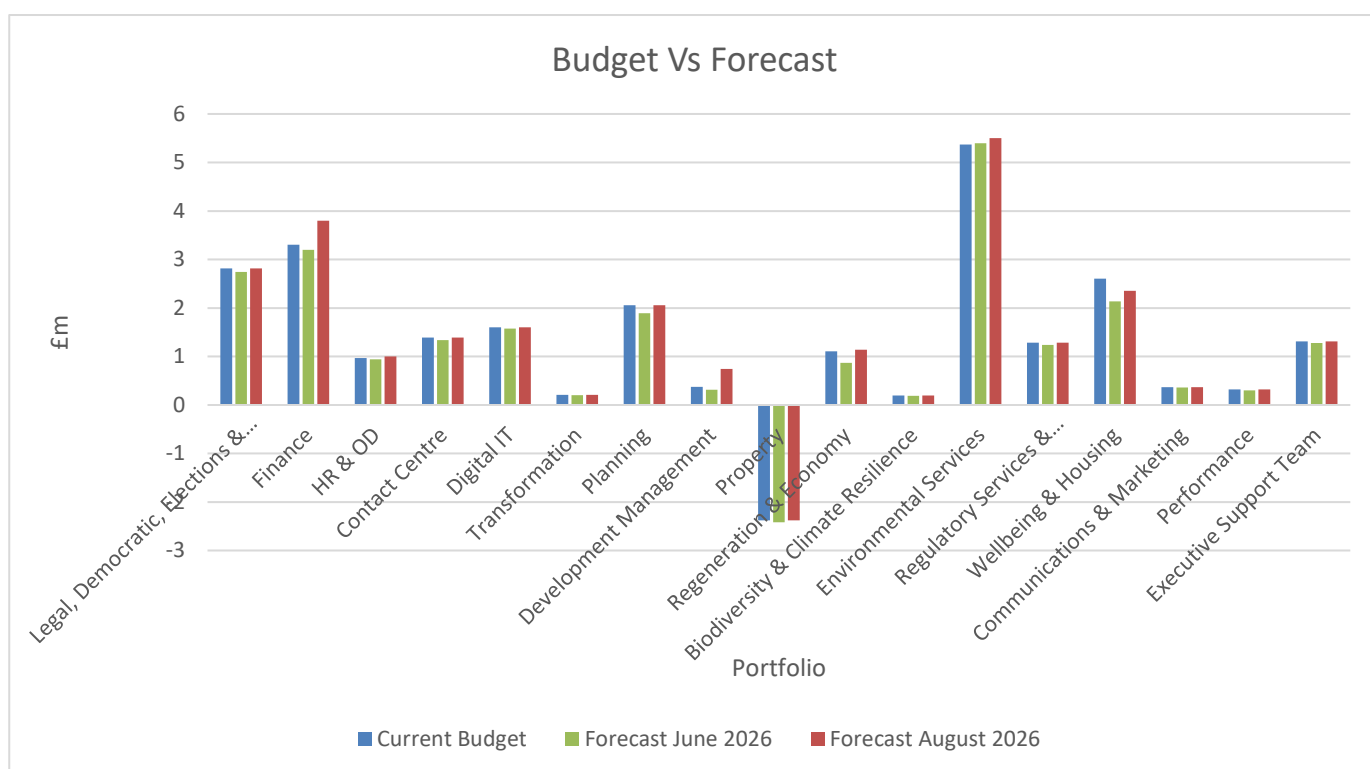
Breakdown of current month forecast	August 2026 Variance to Year End £m	Base Budget Over/ (Under) £m	Savings Non- Delivery £m
Resources	0.533	0.531	0.002
Place & Regeneration	0.402	0.038	0.364
Neighbourhood Services	(0.115)	(0.232)	0.117
Chief Executives Office	0.000	0.000	0.000
Subtotal Directorates	0.820	0.337	0.483
Executive Matters	(0.249)	(0.249)	0.000
Policy Contingency	(0.135)	(0.135)	0.000
Total	0.436	(0.047)	0.483
FUNDING	0.000	0.000	0.000
(Surplus)/Deficit	0.436	(0.047)	0.483

Savings non-delivery as detailed in Table 2 above relate to:

- **Resources** - Review of recharges to Parishes for CDC running Parish Elections - £0.002m
- **Place & Regeneration** - Continue the operation of national changes (planning) made to the household applications fee (introduced in April 2025 by central government) – providing an estimated planning income of £0.224m in 2026/27 - £0.224m.
- **Place & Regeneration** - Increase annual car parking charge of no more than 10p per hour - £0.100m
- **Place & Regeneration** - Finding efficiencies within facilities management - £0.040
- **Neighbourhood Services** - Charge for lost/damaged containers (Environmental Services) - £0.086m
- **Neighbourhood Services** - Transfer/Closure of Public Convenience - Pioneer Square - £0.026m
- **Neighbourhood Services** - Increase our focus on achieving fewer empty homes, aiming to boost supply within the local housing system - £0.005m

4.1.4 The graph below shows the Budget compared with the forecast to the end of the financial year.

Graph 1: Budget compared with Forecast



4.1.5 Table 3 below summarises the major variances for the reporting period. Further details can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 3: Top Major Variances:

Service	Current Budget	Variance	% Variance
Finance	3.301	0.500	15.1%
Development Management	0.372	0.369	99.2%
Environmental Services	5.368	0.135	2.5%
Total	9.041	1.004	

Reserves

4.1.6 Allocations to and from reserves are made according to the Reserves Policy. Table 4 below summarises the movements, for details of reserve requests for August 2026 please see appendix 4.

Table 4: Reserves forecast:

Reserves	Balance 1 April 2026	Original Budgeted use/ (contribution)	Changes agreed since budget setting	Changes proposed August 2026	Balance 31 March 2027
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Balance	(8.021)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(8.021)
Earmarked	(34.241)	(3.757)	1.022	0.000	(36.976)
Ringfenced Grant	(2.229)	0.380	0.669	0.005	(1.175)
Subtotal Revenue	(44.491)	(3.377)	1.691	0.005	(46.172)
Capital	(6.511)	3.416	0.000	0.000	(3.095)
Total	(51.002)	0.039	1.691	0.005	(49.267)

*According to the Reserves Policy Executive are only required to approve uses of Capital Reserves, not contributions to reserves.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2027, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2026/27. Regular reporting is key to good governance and

demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Detailed Revenue Narrative on Forecast August 2026
Appendix 2	Virements August 2026
Appendix 3	Funding August 2026
Appendix 4	Use of Reserves and Grant Funding August 2026
Appendix 5 EXEMPT	EXEMPT Castle Quay Works
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Leanne Lock, Finance Business Partner
Report Author contact details	leanne.lock@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 227098
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer, S151 officer

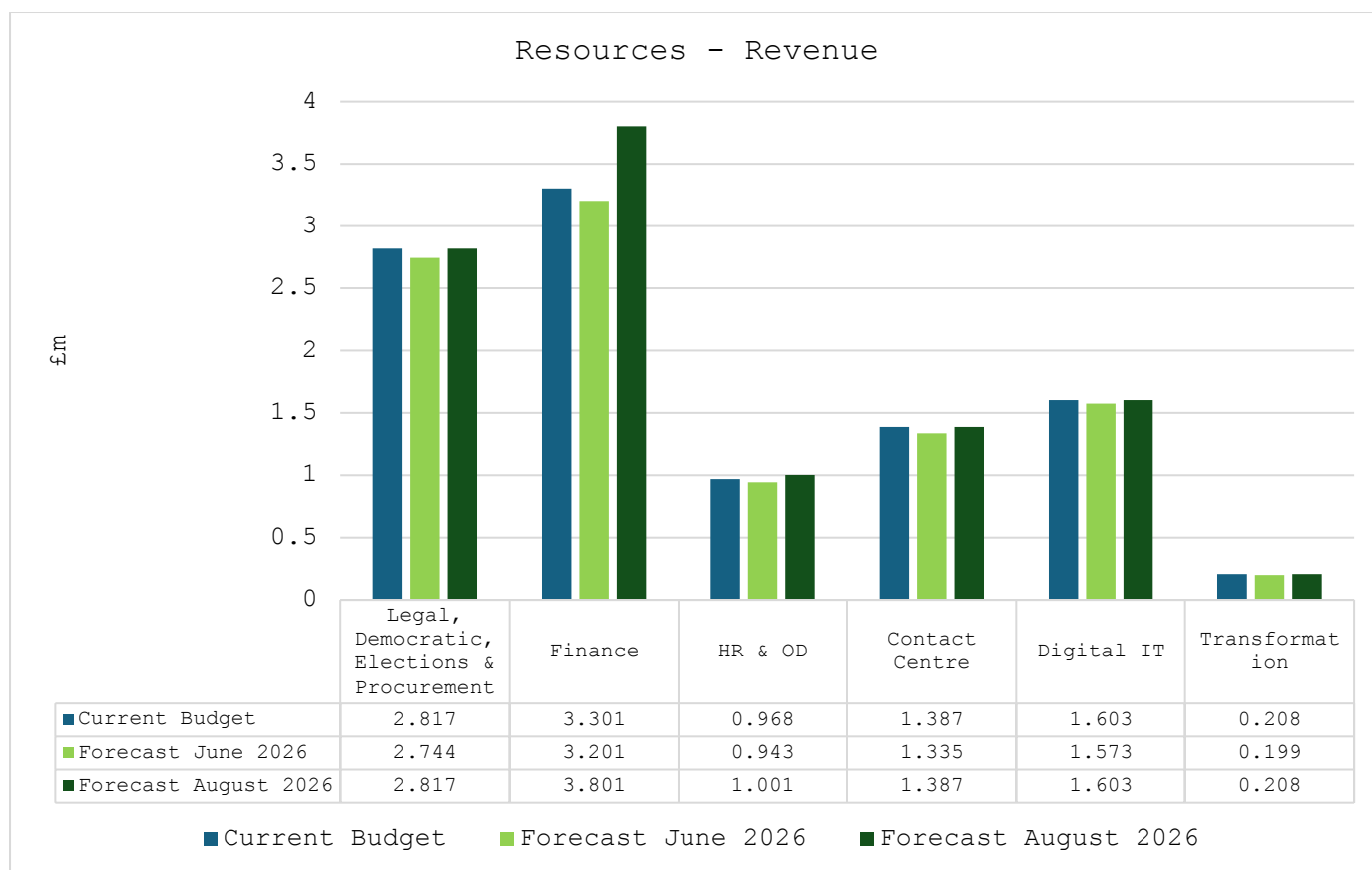
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Appendix 1 – Detailed Narrative on Forecast August 2026

Resources

Revenue:

Resources are forecasting an overspend of £0.533m against a budget of £10.284m (18.56% variance).



Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Finance Variation £0.500m	The proportion of Housing Benefit payments which are not fully funded by Housing Benefit Subsidy Grant is increasing, which means the Council receives a lower amount of income to fund payments it is obliged to make. The "gap" is currently around £0.675m but this is partly mitigated by an anticipated over recovery in both insurance income and within the income charges we receive for administering grants.

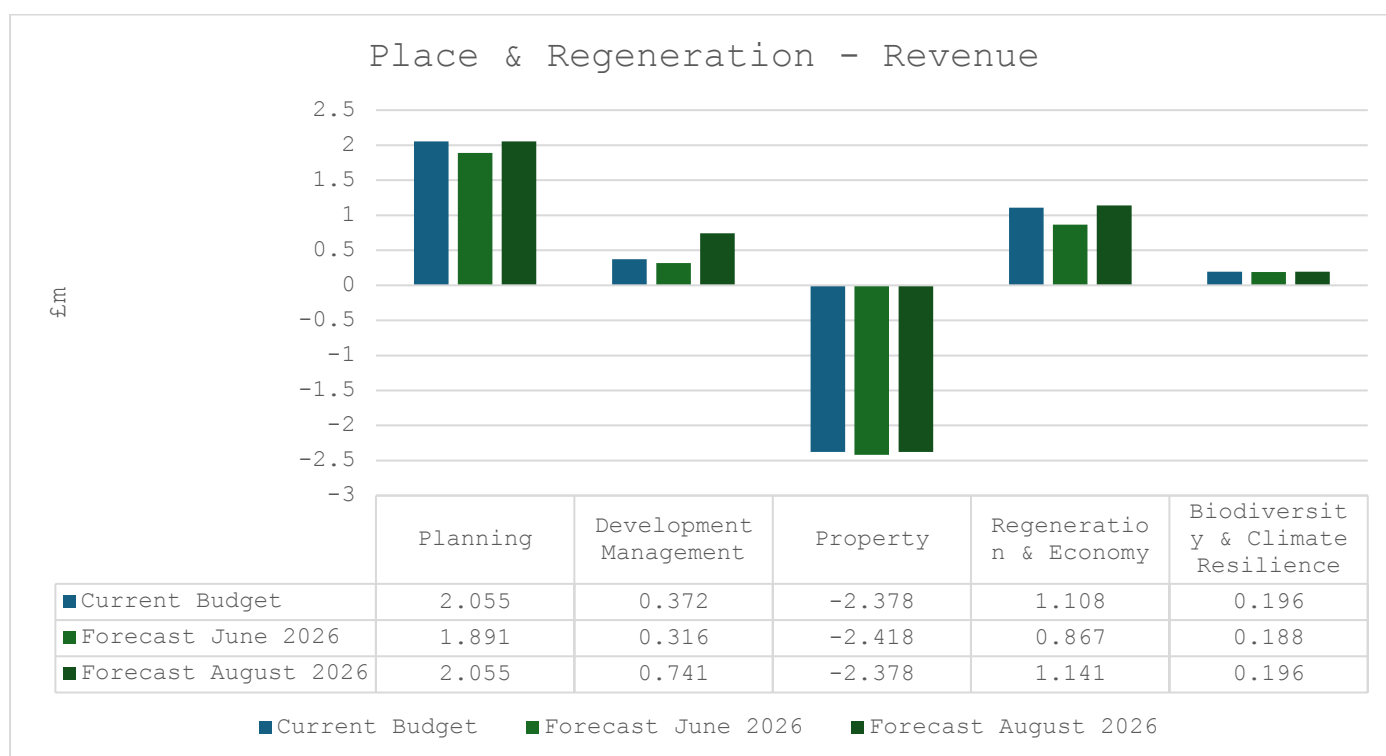
Variation to June's forecast £0.500m	
HR & OD Variation £0.033m Variation to June's forecast £0.033m	HR & OD is currently forecasting a £0.033m overspend which is due to staffing costs.
Contact Centre Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.030m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Digital IT Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Transformation Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.

Place & Regeneration

Revenue:

Place & Regeneration are forecasting £0.402m overspend against a budget of £1.353m (29.71% variance).

The directorate implications of the designation for major planning applications is being closely monitored with Development Management forecasting a reduction in income due to Section 62A applications. The remainder of the directorate is closely monitoring year end out turn and mindful of the need to control costs tightly and deliver expected savings.



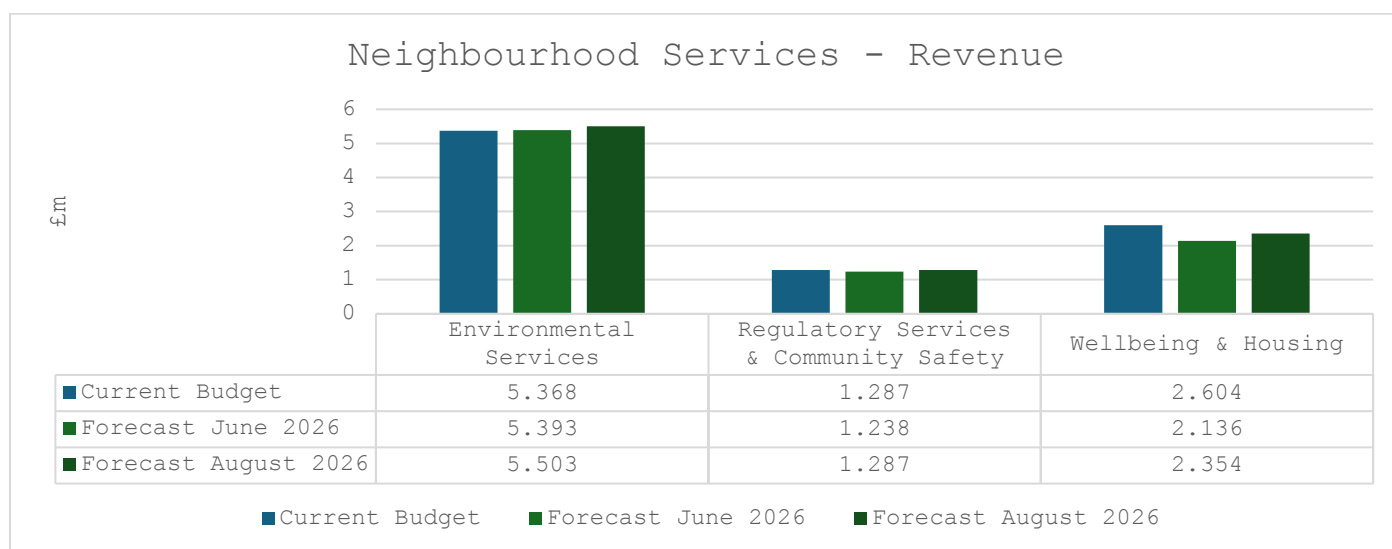
Planning & Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.011m	The Planning Policy, Conservation & Design and the Building Control services are presently reported as being within budget for 26/27. The small underspend previously reported (£0.011m) has been absorbed by ongoing service costs.
Development Management Variation £0.369m overspend	Development Management is currently forecasting a £0.369m overspend at year end. The principal pressures relate to staffing costs required to maintain sufficient capacity to manage a significant programme of major and strategic planning applications together with a forecast reduction in planning fee income arising from designation and the risk of major applications being submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate under Section 62A. While the forecast includes an allowance for the anticipated impact of designation, the overall financial effect remains uncertain and will

Variation to June's forecast £0.295m	depend on the number and scale of future applications received during the remainder of the financial year. The service continues to generate substantial planning fee and Planning Performance Agreement income which partially offsets these pressures. The forecast position has been revised following a review of staffing assumptions and budget allocations, including the transfer of Planning Performance Manager costs to the Planning service budget. Forecast income assumptions have also been updated to reflect the anticipated impact of designation. Management continues to closely monitor staffing expenditure, vacancy management and the use of agency resources across the service. Planning fee income, Planning Performance Agreement income and the impact of Section 62A applications will continue to be reviewed throughout the year. The service will seek to maximise income opportunities from its pipeline of major applications while identifying opportunities to reduce expenditure where this can be achieved without adversely affecting performance or service delivery.
Property Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Property is reporting on budget for 2026/27.
Regeneration & Economy Variation £0.033m Overspend Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	There is a small overspend reported for August. This is primarily due to costs associated with devolution, staffing changes and Future Oxford Partnership within the service. In-year budget mitigations have already been committed, leaving very limited scope for further mitigation. These costs will be retained within the directorate.
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Biodiversity & Climate Resilience is reporting on budget for 2026/27.

Revenue:

Neighbourhood Services are forecasting an underspend of (£0.115m) against a budget of £9.259m (-1.24% variance).

The service is currently forecasting an underspend, due to the significant work in Housing to reduce Temporary Accommodation. Environment continues to overspend due to the underlying lack of agency budget. This will be reviewed during the zero-based budget exercise as part of the Environment transformation project within Cherwell Futures, as the service will always need some form of agency work to deliver the service as expected. There is a one off-policy contingency fund of £0.290m that will be used to off-set this from the corporate centre, but this funding will not be available for 27/28. It is essential that through the Cherwell Futures: Environmental Services transformation programme these long-standing structural issues are identified and addressed.



Environmental Services	
Variation overspend £0.135m	Environmental Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.135m by year-end. The main overspend is agency costs covering for sickness in the Waste teams. This is offset by vacant posts to bring the net cost down to £0.446m. The income from charging for replacement bins will be significantly less than anticipated. However, this will result in corresponding lower costs in bin purchasing to give a net pressure of £0.026m. This has been addressed in the 27/28 budget process. Due to capacity issues at transfer stations, this is driving additional costs of £0.034m There is an underspend forecast on staff costs due to the freezing and delaying of recruitment to vacant posts. This is an underspend of (£0.140m).
Variation to June's forecast (£0.065m)	The service is forecasting to over recovery income from garden waste subscriptions, glass collection and taxi MOTs totalling (£0.141m)

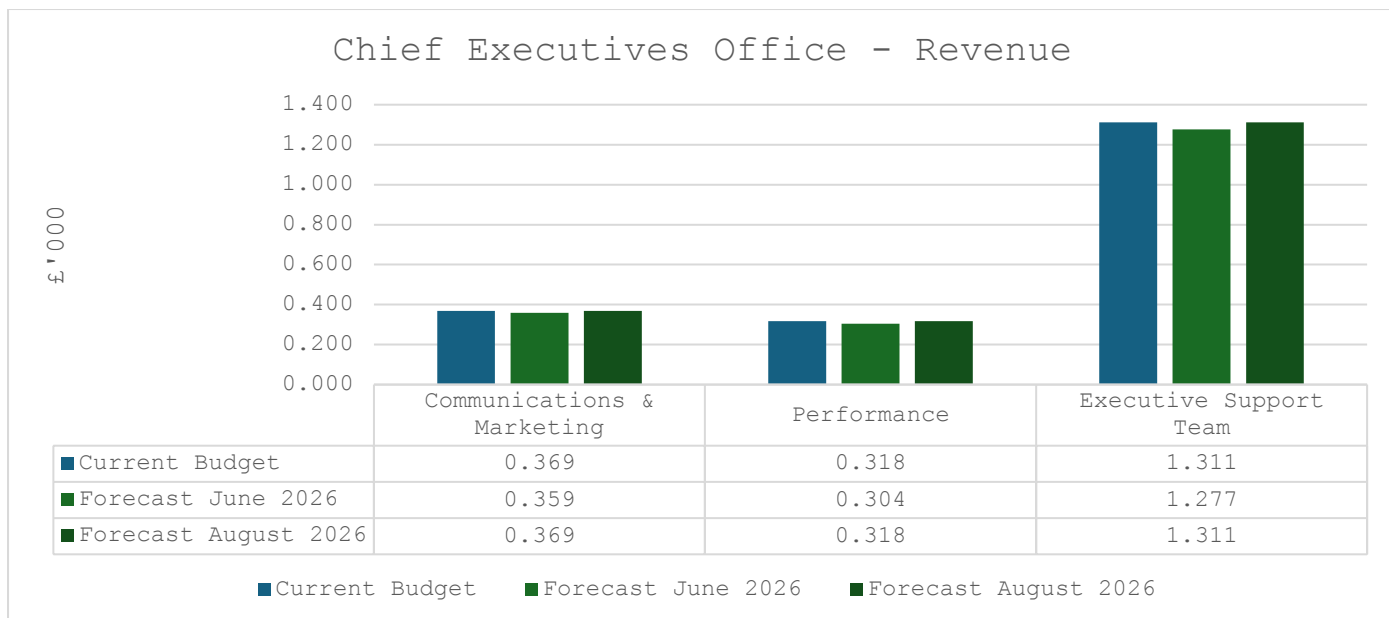
	There are other variances across the department that contribute to an overall forecast overspend. These are being monitored closely to try to bring the service back on track.
Regulatory Services & Community Safety Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Regulatory Services and Community Safety are forecasting a balanced outturn.
Wellbeing & Housing Variation Underspend (£0.250m) Variation to June's forecast £0.072m	The changes made to the procurement of temporary accommodation and using our own stock of accommodation more, is proving beneficial in reducing expenditure on temporary accommodation. Whilst the savings anticipated from the introduction of an agency agreement with our Leisure contractor, are delayed until November, the income should negate the pressure caused by the delay as the expectation is the total recovered will be greater than budgeted. Grant income has been confirmed for Wellbeing programmes being delivered. The reason for the change in forecast this month is due to the delay of leisure agency agreement to November 2026.

Chief Executive's Office

Revenue:

Chief Executive's Office are forecasting on target against a budget of £1.998m (0.00% variance).

The service is currently forecasting to be on budget. Any pressures that may arise during the year will be mitigated by the service to scale back to budget. Any efficiencies will be declared at the earliest opportunity.



Communications & Marketing Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Performance Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Executive Support Team Variation £0.000m Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.

Executive Matters

Revenue:

Executive Matters are forecasting an underspend of (£0.249m) against a budget of £7.049m (-3.5% variance).

Executive Matters	
Variation underspend (£0.249m)	Treasury is currently forecasting an underspend of (£0.249m), due to higher interest rates on investments than budgeted.
Variation to June's forecast £0.000m	

Policy Contingency

Revenue:

Policy Contingency are forecasting underspend of (£0.135m) against a budget of £1.669m (8.1% variance).

Policy Contingency	
Variation Underspend (£0.135m)	Policy Contingency are currently reporting an underspend (£0.135m) to mitigate the forecast overspend within Environmental Services relating to agency costs.
Variation to June's forecast (£0.135m)	

Appendix 2 - Virement Summary

Virement Movement

This table shows the movement in Net Budget from June 2026 to August 2026.

Virements - Movement in Net Budget	£m
Directorate Net Budget - August 2026	22.894
Directorate Net Budget - June 2026	21.572
Movement	(1.322)

Breakdown of Movements	£m
26/27 Pay Award	(1.070)
Movement of Strategic Development Fund	(0.250)
Rounding	(0.002)
Total	(1.322)

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Appendix 3 - Funding for 2026/27

Specific Funding received since budget was set:

Dept.	Grant Name	Funding £
Home Office	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(£0.304)
Home Office	Syrian Resettlement	(£0.063)
Home Office	Asylum Dispersal Grant	(£0.009)
Homes England	Atlas - Homes England	(£0.026)
HM Land Registry	HM Land Registry - Transition Payment	(£0.009)
MHCLG	ATLAS	(£0.025)
MHCLG	New burdens funding for the Renters Rights Act	(£0.146)
MHCLG	New Burdens Supported Housing Strategies Funding	(£0.048)
MHCLG	Digital Planning Improvement Fund	(£0.050)
MHCLG	Kidlington and Oxford Parkway spatial framework	(£0.080)
MHCLG	Crisis and Resilience	(£0.090)
MHCLG	Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	(£0.572)
MHCLG	Transitional Protection & Adjustment Support Grant	(£1.627)
DWP	Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative	(£0.018)
DWP	It Suppliers	(£0.002)
DEFRA	Extended Producer Responsibility	(£0.437)
		(£3.506)

Grants included as part of Budget setting:

Directorate	Grant Name	£m
Neighbourhood Services	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(1.550)
	Asylum Accommodation Dispersal	(0.336)
	Homeless Prevention Grant	(1.280)
	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	(0.016)
	Homes for Ukraine	(0.522)
	Housing Advice - Ns	(0.037)
	Rough Sleeper Initiative	(0.035)
	Resettlement schemes Business Support	(0.012)
	Resettlement Hardship Fund	(0.040)
	Neighbourhood Services Total	(3.828)
Place & Regeneration	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(0.335)
	Place & Regeneration Total	(0.335)
Resources	NNDR Cost of Collection Allowance	(0.231)
	Rent Allowances	(20.004)

	Resources Total	(20.235)
Services Sub-total		(24.399)
Funding	Business Rates Retained Scheme	(1.716)
	Revenue Support Grant	(17.147)
	Funding Total	(18.863)
Government Grants Total		(43.261)

Appendix 5 – Use of Reserves and Grant Funding

Uses of/ (Contributions to) Reserves

Specific requests

Directorate	Type	Reserve Name	Reason	Amount £m
Wellbeing & Housing	Grant	Community Initiative Fund	Paradigm funds for Hanwell Community Centre improvements	0.005
Total Ringfenced Grants				0.005

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