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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday 8 September 2026

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)

Councillor John Brown
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Michael Wilson

Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Rob Packard
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Linda Ward
Vacancy (Liberal Democrat)

Substitutes

Any member of the relevant political group, excluding Executive members

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip. Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2026.

4. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

5. Urgent Business

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

6. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026-2027 (Pages 9 - 40)

Report of Head of Chief Executive's Office

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position as of the end of Quarter 1 2026/27, further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's performance Quarter 1 2026/2027 report.

7. Update on Executive Responses to Previous Scrutiny Recommendations (Pages 41 - 56)

Report of Assistant Director Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer

Purpose of report

To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on progress of the Executive response to previous recommendations relating to the Climate Action and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Working group reports.

Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To note the progress made on previous recommendations made to the Executive, as detailed in appendices one (Climate Action) and two (Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion).

8. Work Programme Update (Pages 57 - 64)

An update on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves:

1.1 To consider and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme update.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following report contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraph 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 item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider it 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.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to resolve as follows:

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, 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.”

10. Update on progression of Graven Hill Village Development Company (Pages 65 - 72)

Exempt report of Shareholder Representative

For Information - Scrutiny Guide

The Scrutiny Guide is attached for information and reference.

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

Information about this Meeting

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.

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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.

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Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Emma Faulkner / Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections
democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Friday 28 August 2026

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 18 June 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Brown
Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Linda Ward
Councillor Michael Wilson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Bryonie Wells

Also Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Mark Gorman

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Officers Attending Virtually:

Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Geoff Taylor, Head of Property and Assets
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Appointment of Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor David Rogers be appointed Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

3 **Appointment of Vice-Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Dom Vaitkus be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **Performance Monitoring Report End of Year 2025 - 2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's office that detailed the council's performance position as at the end of the 2025-26 financial year.

Presenting the report, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that the council had broadly performed well, with 29 of the 49 monitored measures reporting green at year end. 12 of the 26 Annual Delivery Plan actions had been achieved, and six of the seven directorate KPIs reported green.

Regarding indicator BP1.2.10A, % of major application overturned at appeal (application determined April 2023 to March 2025), the Leader of the Council

and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that the Council had now been designated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), due to the overall percentage of 11.2% for the relevant period.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that designation meant applicants submitting new major planning applications could choose to submit them directly to the Planning Inspectorate for determination, rather than the Council. Major applications already in progress and minor applications would continue to be determined by the Planning department.

The Council were able to request an exit from designation after two clear quarters, with any request supported by a well-presented case, including evidence of current performance and actions in place to maintain an improved performance. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration added that current figures for major applications overturned at appeal was 5.15%, significantly under the 10% threshold.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP1.2.13, net additional housing completions to meet Cherwell needs, and the 'data not available' status, the Assistant Director Planning explained that the data had been collected and was being verified to ensure it was accurate. Once verification had been complete the figure would be made available.

With regard to indicator BP2.2.05, total greenhouse gas emissions for the year, officers agreed to gather detailed information relating to the methodology for calculating the figures, and circulate it after the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's end of year 2025-26 performance report be noted.

8 Work Programme Planning for 2026/27

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year.

The Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead explained that the work programme would be reviewed at each Committee, but Members could suggest items for inclusion at any time.

The Chair encouraged the Committee to read the scrutiny guide appended to the agenda pack, as it gave useful information regarding the different ways of working available to the Committee.

In response to comments from the Committee regarding an item incorporating the various planning elements from the indicative work programme, and

points raised during the previous agenda item in relation to the designation status of the planning service, the Monitoring Officer confirmed he would liaise with relevant officers and the Chair, and report back to the next meeting.

The Committee also requested additional items on progress of the climate action plan, and a follow-up to the fly tipping presentation and discussion at the November 2025 meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the addition of items relating to progress of the Climate Action update, and a follow-up to the flytipping item, the indicative work programme for 2026/27 be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.33 pm

Chair:

Date:

This report is public	
Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026 – 2027	
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee	08 September 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	17 August 2026
Report of	Head of Chief Executive's Office, Kaimi Ithia

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position as of the end of Quarter 1 2026/27, further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's performance Quarter 1 report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Performance report presents how the council has performed against its priorities for 2026/27, which are set out in Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial and resource implications arising directly from this report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 23 July 2026
Legal	The report sets out as at Quarter 1 2026/27 performance position for the Council as part of its overall control and monitoring duty. There are no legal implications arising at this stage. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal, 26 May 2026
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 22 July 2026

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 22 July 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 has 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

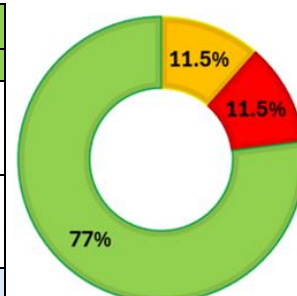
- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its performance to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.
- 3.2 This monitoring takes place at least quarterly for performance, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.

4. Details

4.1 Performance Summary

- 4.1.1 The Council's Corporate Performance Management Strategy, including the Annual Delivery Plan 2026/27, set out the strategic actions and key performance indicators that showcase our delivery against the Council's priorities and goals.
- 4.1.2 The Council's 2026/27 priorities are:
- Long-Term Economic Prosperity
 - Community Leadership
 - Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action
 - Quality Housing and Place Making
- 4.1.3 This report provides an overview of the Council's performance in delivering against its strategic priorities. Performance is measured using a traffic light rating system. Indicators or actions that are meeting, exceeding, or within an agreed tolerance of their target are rated green. Indicators that are marginally below target are rated amber. A red rating signifies that performance is off target and requires corrective action.
- 4.1.4 The council is performing well against its objectives, which consist of 12 Corporate KPI Measures, 12 monitoring only measures and 23 Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Q1 milestones. Please find details on Quarter 1 performance on the table below. Please find details on all KPIs in Appendix 1 and Annual Delivery Plan in Appendix 2.

Plan	Total number of measures	Red		Amber		Green	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Annual Delivery Plan Milestones	23	2	9%	4	17%	17	74%
Corporate KPIs (Targeted)	12	2	17%	0	0	10	83%
Total	35	4	11.5%	4	11.5%	27	77%



4.1.5 At time of reporting end of year 2026/27 results the data for the measure “**Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs**” was not available to be included in the Executive report, as agreed then please find details below:

- **Result:** The end of year 2026/27 figure was 790 dwellings against a target of 1,582 dwellings.
- **Comments from the service:** Housing delivery continues to be influenced by a range of national and local challenges, including economic pressures, higher interest rates, global uncertainty and ongoing changes to the planning system. Locally, progress in areas such as Bicester and Kidlington has been affected by significant infrastructure constraints. In response, the Council has developed a Housing Delivery Action Plan and is working closely with Homes England and key partners to unlock barriers, support development and accelerate the delivery of much-needed new homes across the district.

4.1.6 In addition to the measures above, the Council monitors 12 key indicators to help identify emerging trends and potential areas of concern that may require early intervention, either directly by the Council or in partnership with other organisations. As these indicators are influenced by a range of external factors beyond the Council’s control, in consequence, they are not subject to performance targets. Oversight is provided by the Performance Team and the relevant Director, with reports typically brought forward when a significant change in trend is identified. To provide a comprehensive overview, all 12 indicators are reported as part of the Quarter 1 and Quarter 4 performance updates (as part of Appendix 1).

4.2 Performance Highlights

Below is a snapshot of some of the council’s key achievements during the first quarter of 2026/27:

- 4.2.1 Faster Processing on time taken to process Housing Benefit Change Events and Council Tax Reduction claims, providing better outcomes for residents -** Despite Quarter 1 being one of the busiest periods of the year, change events were processed in an average of just 2.85 days, significantly exceeding the 8-day target. This strong performance has been driven by ongoing digital transformation, with over 40% of processes now fully or partially automated, helping the service remain efficient, resilient and responsive during periods of high demand.
- 4.2.2 Climate Action Plan Gains Momentum with Strong Early Results -**The Climate Action Plan has made an encouraging start, with more than 70% of actions currently on track and early delivery already achieving an estimated 318 tonnes of CO₂ emissions savings (for nine months). Strong progress is being made across key areas including fleet, buildings, housing and communications, as the programme moves from planning into delivery. With a growing pipeline of projects and a clear focus on accelerating implementation, the Council is well positioned to build on this momentum and deliver even greater environmental benefits in the months ahead.
- 4.2.3 Working Together to Reduce Health Inequalities –** During the first quarter, 2,582 residents, an increase of 966 compared with the same period last year, benefited from a range of health and wellbeing programmes, including Move Together, You Move, Youth Activator, Active Travel initiatives and Community Insight Profiles.

These initiatives continue to make a positive impact in reducing health inequalities across Cherwell, with particularly encouraging improvements in Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury. The results demonstrate the value of targeted support and strong partnership working in helping residents lead healthier, more active lives.

4.3 Performance per priority

4.3.1 Priority: Long-Term Economic Prosperity

4.3.2 We want to create thriving town centres and rural communities across Cherwell, building places that are welcoming, prosperous and full of opportunity. By supporting local businesses and encouraging innovation, we can grow a strong, resilient economy that benefits everyone. We will promote inclusive, sustainable growth, creating opportunities for residents while reducing environmental impact and investing in green infrastructure for the long-term benefit of our communities.

4.3.3 Of the six targeted measures set for Quarter 1 to track progress against this priority, the following were reported Amber or Red:

Plan	Action / Measure or Milestone	Status	Comments from the Service
ADP	Action - Build a new community sports facility with outdoor provision at Graven Hill / Q1 Milestone - Develop Plans/Planning Permission for the Community Centre, Sports Pitches and Pavilion.		Programme has been delayed due to continuing discourse over the site layout and underlying ground conditions.
ADP	Action - Develop and agree capital programme to deliver the partner culture strategy for the District / Q1 Milestone - Options appraisal report covering design, cost plan and procurement strategy.		The report will be presented to Executive team in September, although the options appraisal work was completed in Q1.
ADP	Action - Make best use of council owned assets, including Bodicote House to promote innovation and strategic growth / Q1 Milestone - Conduct financial appraisal and site surveys for the repurposing of lower bridge street. Complete license of occupation for Banbury Library, alongside completion of feasibility and surveys (completed by OCC).		Lower Bridge St - report for information considered at Informal Executive on 29 June, with agreement that an Exec report would be taken in Autumn 2026 when the options and feasibility reports have been further developed. Work continues on OCC Library, with much of the activity needed dependent on OCC and their programme.

4.3.4 Priority: Community Leadership

4.3.5 We want to build strong, resilient communities where everyone can play their part and thrive. By working closely with residents, community groups and partners, we will create inclusive solutions that meet local needs. We will also improve health and wellbeing across Cherwell, tackling inequalities, strengthening community connections and focusing support where it is needed most.

4.3.6 Of the six targeted measures set for Quarter 1 to track progress against this priority, the following reported Amber:

Plan	Action / Measure or Milestone	Status	Comments from the Service
ADP	Action - To agree a strategic asset management policy that will promote innovation and best use of our resources / Q1 Milestone - Agree and approve the asset management approach and establish a clear prioritisation order for all assets.		The information is available but needs to be collated into the appropriate format.

4.3.7 Priority: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

4.3.8 We will protect and enhance Cherwell's natural environment, supporting biodiversity and safeguarding our landscapes for future generations. By promoting a circular economy through reducing waste, reusing materials and increasing recycling, we will encourage a more sustainable way of living that benefits both our communities and the environment.

4.3.9 Of the six targeted measures set for Quarter 1 to track progress against this priority, the following were reported Amber:

Plan	Action / Measure or Milestone	Status	Comments from the Service
ADP	Action - Encourage the creation of biodiversity sites / habitat banks / carbon sequestration, in line with local and national planning policy, engaging with developers and partners where appropriate / Q1 Milestone - Initiating the Biodiversity and Climate Resilience Strategy.		We have initiated work and progressing on developing Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.3.10 Priority: Quality Housing and Place Making

4.3.11 We are committed to delivering sustainable, well-planned development that meets Cherwell's needs now and, in the future, ensuring new homes are supported by essential services, strong transport links and community facilities. We will also increase the supply of high-quality, genuinely affordable housing across a range of tenures, helping residents from all walks of life find a secure place to call home.

4.3.12 Of the 17 targeted measures set for Quarter 1 to track progress against this priority, the following were reported Red:

Plan	Action / Measure or Milestone	Status	Comments from the Service
ADP	Action - Adopt & commence implementation of the new Local Plan / Q1 Milestone - Examination of the local plan		The Local Plan was submitted for Examination on 31 July 2025. The Examination commenced on that date and the timetable for it is solely the responsibility of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Initial public hearings were held in February 2026 and a letter regarding the outcome had been awaited from the two appointed Planning Inspectors. On 20 May, the Inspectors advised that 'due to the technical nature of the matters discussed during the hearing sessions, the Inspectors were carrying out additional work to ensure that their letter identifies a robust position from which the examination can progress efficiently. This process has unfortunately resulted in some delay beyond that arising from the pre-election period. However, the Inspectors are doing all that they can to expedite matters...'. A new Inspector was subsequently appointed. On 7 July, he advised, 'I am aiming for no later than mid-August to come to a view on whether there is any additional evidence I need in relation to initial procedural matters for Cherwell and whether I would need to re-open any of the related hearing sessions. I will write again to the Council, through the Programme Officer, at that time.'
Corporate KPIs	of Non-Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator		Reporting 38.7% against a target of 70% or more. The planning improvement work we are delivering will be seeking to reduce this and improve the response time for processing applications.
	% of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025		Reporting at 11.2% against a target of less than 10%. An action plan was implemented following Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) placing Cherwell into Designation for the determination on Major planning applications. Improvements have already been made, and we are now below the 10% target set by MHCLG.

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 a snapshot of our Performance position for Quarter 1 2026/27, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 One of the roles of scrutiny is performance monitoring. This report details the 2026/2027 quarter 1 for the Committee to consider and provide comments to the Executive.

Decision Information

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

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Business Plan KPIs Q1 2026-27
Appendix 2	Annual Delivery Action Plan Q1 2026-27
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader
Report Author contact details	Celia.Prado-Teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221556
Executive Director Approval (if not report of Executive Director or Statutory Officer)	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive Office, 16 July 2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.02 No. of Homeless Households living in nightly charged (Hotel) Temporary accommodation (TA)	Cllr I Middleton	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Smaller Is Better	20	25	★
Commentary The number of clients in hotel provision remains consistent. Clients are being moved on as soon as possible into self-contained accommodation as soon as units are identified and ready for occupation						
BP1.2.05 % of Homelessness cases successfully prevented rather than relief/main duty being applied	Cllr I Middleton	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Bigger Is Better	68.00%	60.00%	★
Commentary At the end of Q1 we have successfully prevented homelessness in 60 cases against an total prevention caseload of 88						
BP1.2.08 % of Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Bigger Is Better	84.2%	60.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.09 % of Non-Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Bigger Is Better	38.7%	70.0%	▲
Commentary The planning improvement work we are delivering will be seeking to reduce this and improve the response time for processing applications.						

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.10A % of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	11.2%	10.0%	▲
Commentary An action plan was implemented following Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) placing CDC into Designation for the determination on Major planning applications. Improvements have already been made and CDC is now below the 10% target set by MHCLG.						
BP1.2.10Aa No. of Current Major Decisions between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	116		n/a
BP1.2.10Ab No. of Major Appeals allowed between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	13		n/a
BP1.2.10Ac No. of Major Pending appeals between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	0		n/a

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.10B % of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2024 to March 2026, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	5.1%	10.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.10Ba No. of Current Major Decisions between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	99		n/a
BP1.2.10Bb No. of Major Appeals allowed between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	5		n/a
BP1.2.10Bc No. of Major Pending appeals between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	4		n/a

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.10C % of Major Applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2025 to March 2027, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	0.0%	10.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.10Ca No. of Current Major Decisions between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	56		n/a
BP1.2.10Cb No. of Major Appeals allowed between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	0		n/a
BP1.2.10Cc No. of Major Pending appeals between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	4		n/a

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.11A % of Non-Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	1.1%	10.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.11Aa No. of Current Non-Major Decisions between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	2,826		n/a
BP1.2.11Ab No. of Non-Major Appeals allowed between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	31		n/a
BP1.2.11Ac Non-Major Pending appeals between April 2023 to March 2025	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	1		n/a

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.11B % of Non-Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2024 to March 2026, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	1.0%	10.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.11Ba No. of Current Non-Major Decisions between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	2,487		n/a
BP1.2.11Bb No. of Non-Major Appeals allowed between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	26		n/a
BP1.2.11Bc No. of Non-Major Pending appeals between April 2024 to March 2026	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	6		n/a

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP1.2.11C % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2025 to March 2027, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	0.9%	10.0%	★
Commentary						
BP1.2.11Ca No. of Current Non-Major Decisions between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	1,149		n/a
BP1.2.11Cb No. of Non-Major Appeals allowed between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	10		n/a
BP1.2.11Cc Non-Major Pending appeals between April 2025 to March 2027	Cllr C Brant	- Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Smaller Is Better	5		n/a

Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2025-26

BP1.2.01 Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation (TA)

The number of clients in TA has fallen slightly this quarter. Households are receiving permanent offers more quickly reducing the time spent in TA

Commentary

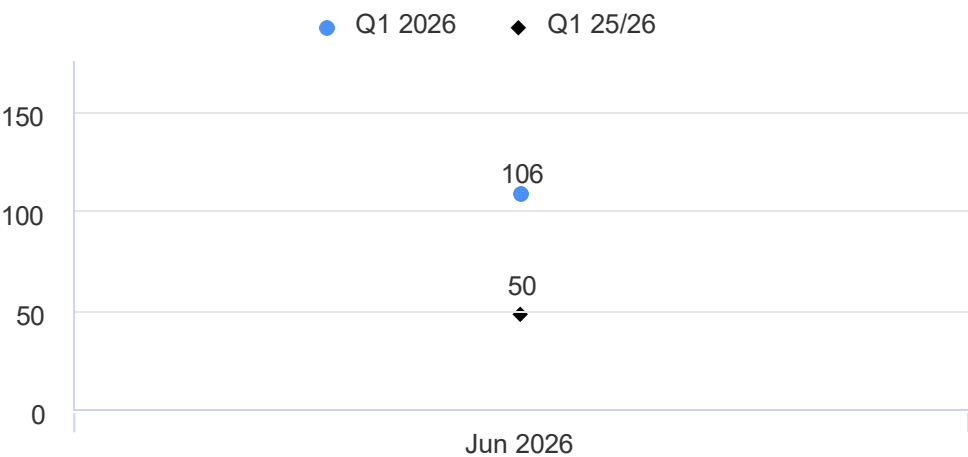
Page 24



BP1.2.04 Number of affordable homes delivered

The 106 affordable completions included 70 affordable rent homes, 4 social rent, 24 shared ownership and 8 First Homes.

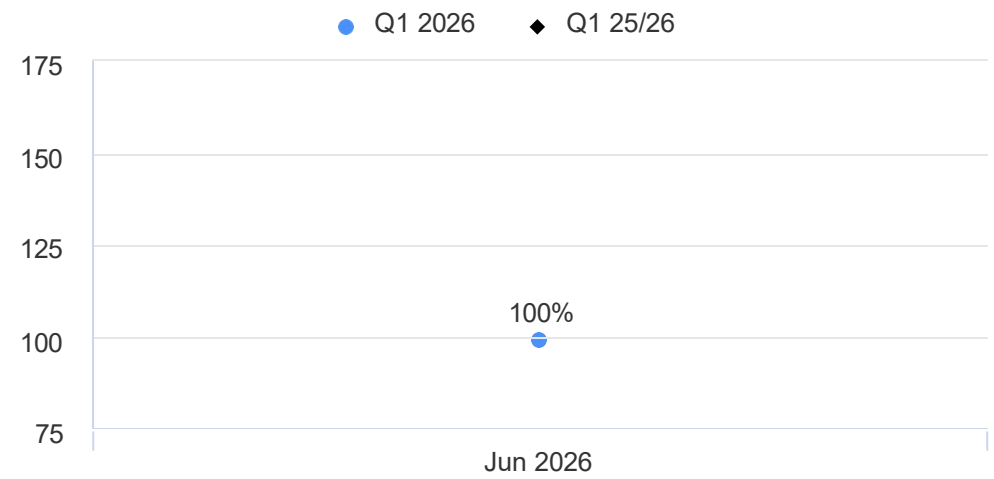
Commentary



BP1.2.15 Building Safety Regulatory - Quarterly data - return all data by statutory date

All 2025/26 returns including annual return (all by end of month following the quarter) were submitted on time.

Commentary



Environmental stewardship - Corporate KPI's 2026-2027

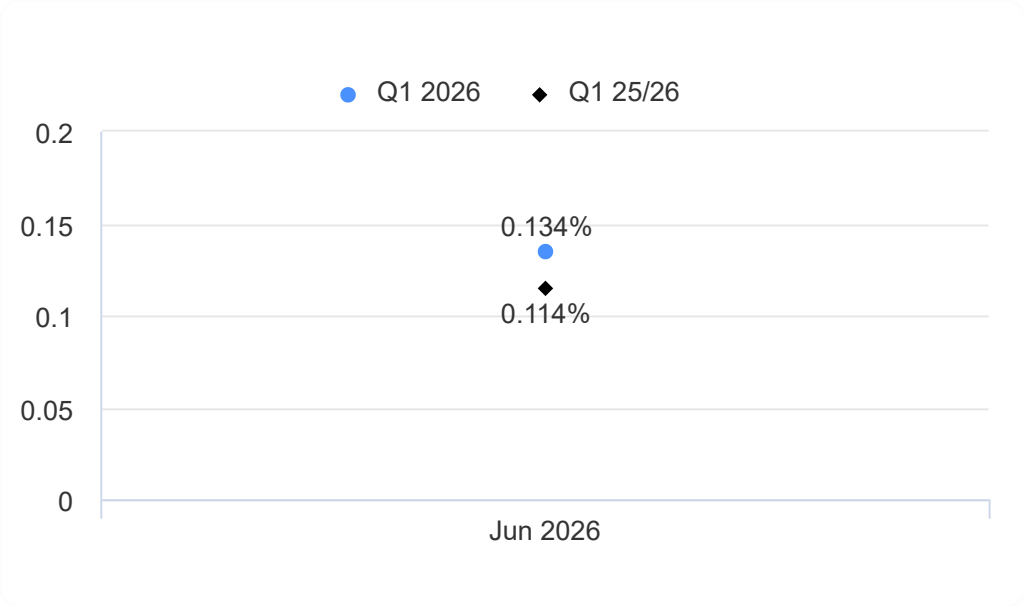
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.
BP2.2.01 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Cllr A Russell	- Ed Potter - Kristian Aspinall	Bigger Is Better	52.02%	54.00%	★
Commentary Current recycling rate is in line with the previous year, remaining within tolerance against our target.						
BP2.2.03 % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target	Cllr I Middleton	- Ian Boll - Michael Suddens	Bigger Is Better	70.27%	66.00%	★
Commentary The programme has made a strong and positive start, with 26 out of 37 actions rated green and early delivery already generating measurable outcomes, including c.318 tCO2e savings (for 9 months) from initial HVO rollout, with a projected 1,257 tCO2e annually at full implementation. Delivery is progressing well across core areas including fleet, buildings, housing, and communications. The programme is now transitioning from design to delivery, supported by completed workshops and emerging project pipelines. Key dependencies remain around EV infrastructure, grid capacity, and LAEP outputs, which are critical to unlocking further progress. Focus is now on accelerating delivery, progressing design actions (17) into delivery, and progressing the 5 not yet started actions.						

Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2025-26

BP2.2.04 % of missed waste containers

Commentary

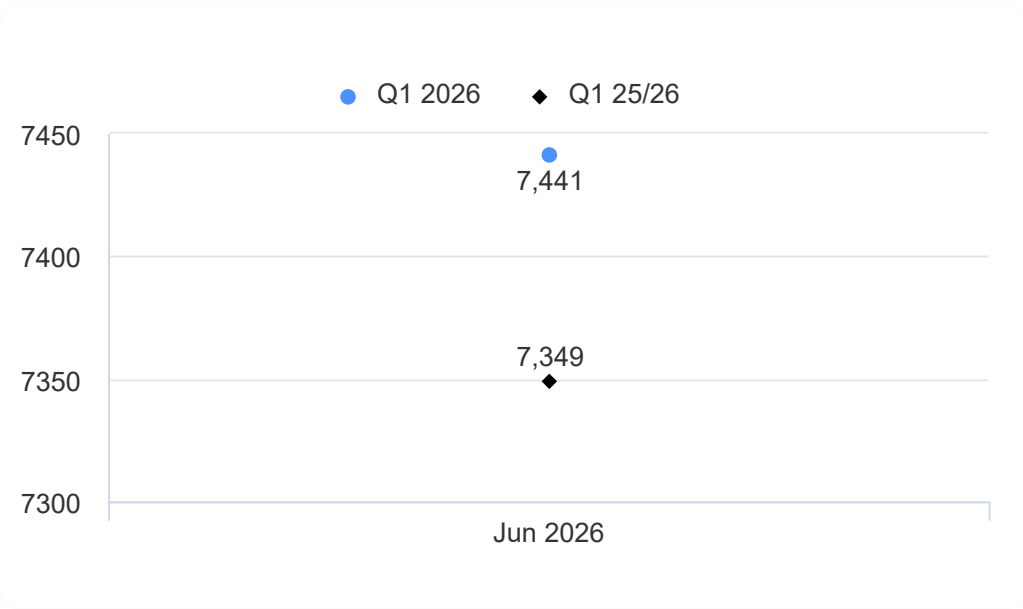
0.134% of containers have been missed in the first quarter this below the national average.



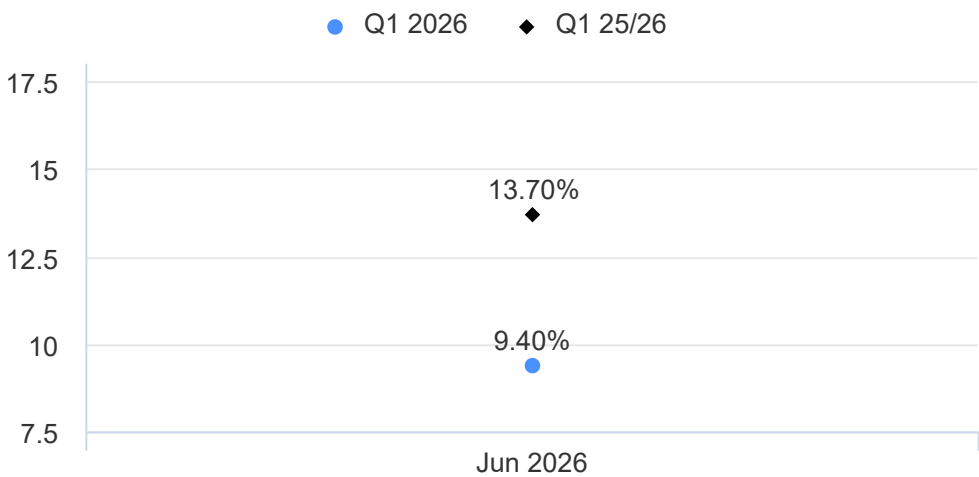
BP2.2.01d Tonnes residual household waste collected

Commentary

Household waste continues to grow with the increased population in the CDC area.



	BP2.2.07 % of Recycling Contamination rate
Commentary	Contamination rate has reduced, due to crew training and continued promotion of the recycling service. Average contamination rate for MRF'S (Materials Recovery Facility) is 16%.



Economic prosperity - Corporate KPI's 2026-2027						
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G.

Please note there are no Corporate KPIs under this priority due to be reported during Q1 2026-27

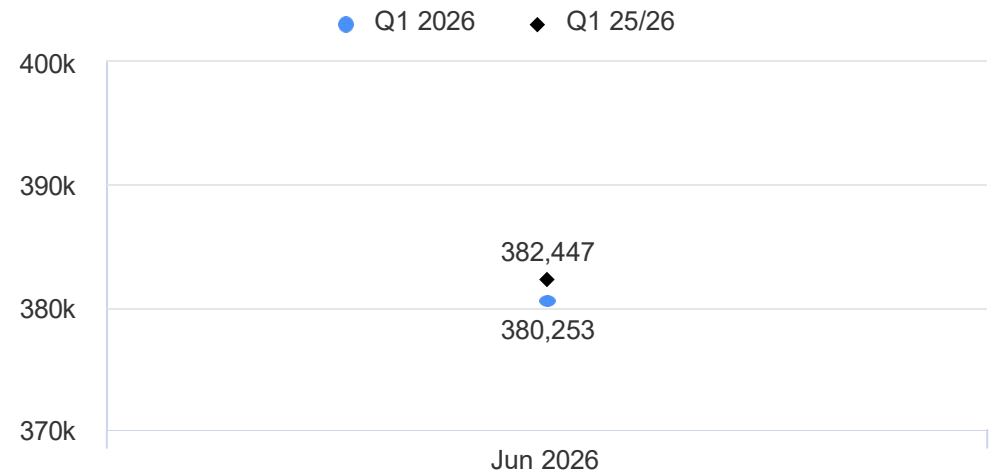
Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2025-26

BP4.2.01 Number of Visits/Usage of all Leisure Facilities within the District

Utilisation Figures for Q1 for the Leisure Facilities are broadly in line with Q1 of 2025. Improvement in position was significant for Kidlington Leisure Centre during this period (improving by nearly 19,000). As Stratfield Brake transferred to Kidlington Town Council these figures are no longer captured within the KPI

Commentary

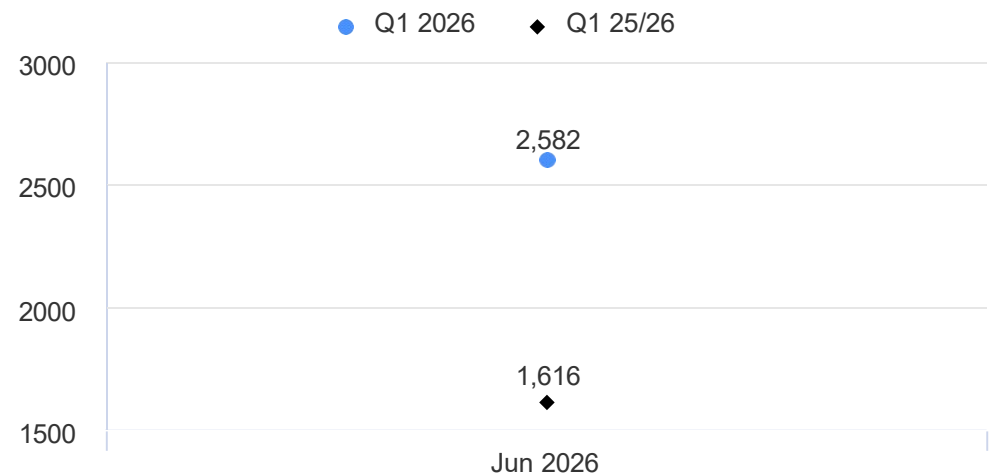
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BP4.2.02 Residents who have taken part in programmes contributing to reducing health inequalities

Residents have been involved in a range of opportunities to tackle Health inequalities such as Move Together, You Move, Youth Activator, Community Insight Profiles, Active Travel and more. These have all continued to contribute towards the reduction in IMD across Cherwell with an example of this working really well in Ruscote, Neithropp and Grimsbury with the IMD reducing from 20% to 30%

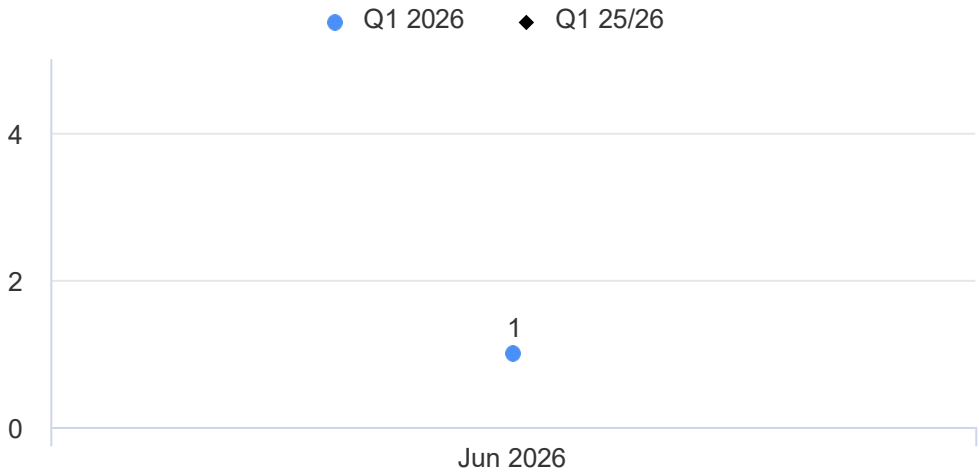
Commentary



	BP4.2.05 Number of Fly Tips reported
Commentary	Including 97 Duplicate Reports where the same fly tip has been reported more than once by different members of the public. These still need triaging by officers to identify that the same fly tip has been reported twice - so we don't send out the clearance crews twice. Last years figures for the same period were lower because they were the number of Fly Tips Cleared by Environmental Services. We have changed this measure to indicate the number of reports we receive as Environmental Enforcement Officers have to spend time triaging each one, even if they are duplicates. This means we won't get a meaningful comparison until Q1 27/28.



	BP4.2.06 Implement Marmot principles across the district - Deliver 5 Community Insight profile
Page 31 Commentary	Heyford Community Insight Profile has been developed with an action plan in place to deliver recommendations



BP4.2.07 Implement Marmot principles across the district - Deliver 10 community-led projects

Commentary

The food voucher scheme was extended, increasing both the number of referrers and the areas covered, with referral pathways now established across all four Marmot villages. Connections were strengthened with key community settings, including schools and places of worship, helping to build a wider support network. Nutrition-focused activities were delivered through HAF Easter sessions, school nutrition workshops, and Adopt a School sessions, promoting healthy eating and wellbeing within local communities.

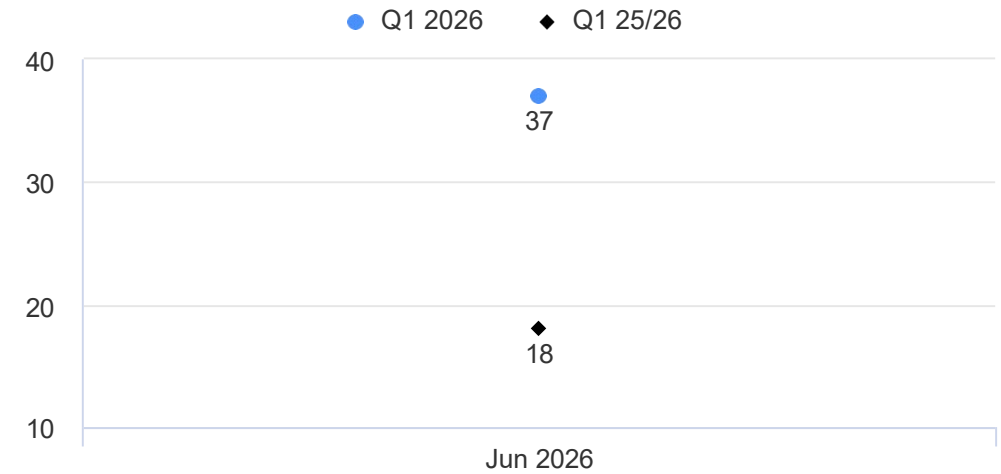


Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2025-26

BP5.1.07 Number of upheld complaints

92 = Total complaints received 80 = Total completed 37 = Total completed and upheld 43 = Total completed and NOT upheld 12 = Total in progress therefore no outcome recorded

Commentary



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Goals	Aims	Actions	Portfolio Holder	Lead/Director	Milestones Q1 - Q4	R.A.G.	Performance
Create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages	To foster diverse economic centres and villages that support local businesses, attract investment, and enhance community life	Build a new community sports facility with outdoor provision at Graven Hill	Cllr L Smith	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Develop Plans/Planning Permission for the Community Centre, Sports Pitches and Pavilion	▲	Programme has been delayed due to continuing discourse over the site layout and underlying ground conditions
					Q3 - Commence Construction for the new Community Centre, Sports Pitches and Pavilion	»	
					Q4 - Monitor Progress	»	
		Develop and agree the Economic Prosperity Strategy, including the Economic Action Plan, in order to establish a long-term programme of regeneration and strategic actions	Cllr L McLean	- Ian Boll - Peter Sharp	Q1 - Start Stakeholder Engagement to support the Visitor Economy & High Streets Strategy as part of wider Economic Prosperity work	★	Stakeholder engagement is on target - a workshop for CDC Members is being scheduled for 14 July.
					Q2 - Commission wider Economic Growth Plan to explore cluster potential and set long-term strategic vision for Cherwell economy	»	
					Q3 - Complete the Visitor Economy & High Streets Strategy including Action Plan	»	
					Q4 - Complete the Economic Growth Plan including Action Plan	»	
	To promote sustainable economic prosperity through innovation, resilience, and strategic growth	Develop and agree capital programme to deliver the partner culture strategy for the District	- Cllr L Smith - Cllr R Pattenden	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Options appraisal report covering design, cost plan and procurement strategy	●	The report will be presented to the Executive team in September, although the options appraisal work was completed within Q1.
					Q2 - Consider funding strategy	»	
					Q3 - Begin detailed planning if activity in Q1 and Q2 positive	»	
		Make best use of council owned assets, including Bodicote House to promote innovation and strategic growth	Cllr R Pattenden	- Ian Boll - Mona Walsh	Q1 - Conduct financial appraisal and site surveys for the repurposing of lower bridge street. Complete license of occupation for Banbury Library, alongside completion of feasibility and surveys (completed by OCC)	●	Lower Bridge St - report for information considered at EMPB2 on 29 June, with agreement that an Exec report would be taken in Autumn 2026 when the options and feasibility reports have been further developed. Work continues on OCC Library, with much of the activity needed dependent on OCC and their programme.
					Q2 - Exchange of Contracts for Bodicote House. Conduct design and stakeholder engagement for Lower Bridge Street repurposing. Finalising scheme design and procurement with OCC for Banbury Library	»	
					Q3 - Agreeing all other legal documentation with OCC in relation to Banbury Library	»	
					Q4 - Scope planning application for repurposing of Lower Bridge Street. Work on site for Banbury Library commence	»	
		Work with Oxfordshire Growth Commission to deliver economic development, infrastructure and housing growth	Cllr L McLean	- David Peckford - Ian Boll - Peter Sharp	Q1 - Complete technical review of delivery of LPPR sites	★	Stage 1 & 2 of the Kidlington Spatial Study is now complete. Awaiting date to present the reports to BPM. Stage 3 (commissioned directly by Homes England) underway.
					Q2 - Seek further funding support for development of place narratives	»	
Build an inclusive and green economy	To build an economy that is both inclusive and environmentally sustainable, ensuring equitable opportunities for all while minimising environmental impact	Continue to support the work of the Marmot Place Partnership for Oxfordshire	Cllr L Smith	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Consider rural inequalities work outcomes	★	Target villages chosen and first stage of engagement work has been undertaken and report available in July
					Q2 - Share Partnership updates with Members	»	
					Q4 - Seek endorsement for 2027/2028 plan	»	

ADP 2026/27 - Priority - Community Leadership

Goals	Aims	Actions	Portfolio Holder	Lead/Director	Milestones Q1 - Q4	R.A.G.	Performance
Strengthen community collaboration and resilience	To work closely with communities and partners to foster shared solutions to building safe, resilient, and empowered communities	Identify barriers to accessing council services and agree an improvement plan	Cllr I Middleton	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Develop Audit for accessing services	★	Audit survey has been designed and sent out to services to respond to. Data is back and currently being reviewed.
					Q2 - Deliver Audit to assess accessibility of services	»	
					Q3 - Review and develop improvement plan from audit	»	
					Q4 - Deliver and review improvement plan	»	
		Improve customer experience and reduce contact volumes by making information easily accessible and enabling effective self-service wherever possible	Cllr L McLean	- Ann Slavin - Stephen Hinds	Q1 - Commence delivery of Single Front Door Programme of work	★	The Outline Business Case for the Single Front Door Programme was approved in April 2026. The Full Business Case has since been developed and endorsed by the Transformation and Change Board and Corporate Leadership Team in June 2026. Formal approval is sought from the Executive on 13th July 2026.
					Q2 - Continue delivery in line with programme timeline	»	
					Q3 - Continue delivery in line with programme timeline	»	
					Q4 - Continue delivery in line with programme timeline	»	
		The council will look to automate the application of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for people that it is made aware of that are in receipt of Universal Credit. This will help to maximise the take up of this vital financial support to some of the most vulnerable members of our society	Cllr D Hingley	- Michael Furness - Stephen Hinds	Q1 - Ensure the automation is applied to bills for 2026/27	★	
		To agree a strategic asset management policy that will promote innovation and best use of our resources	Cllr R Pattenden	- Ian Boll - Mona Walsh	Q1 - Agree and approve the asset management approach, and establish a clear prioritisation order for all assets	●	The information is available but needs to be collated into the appropriate format.
					Q2 - Commence delivery of the asset management approach, focusing first on the highest-priority assets	»	
					Q3 - Continue delivery of the asset management approach, guided by the established asset-priority information	»	
					Q4 - Continue delivery of the asset management approach, making ongoing use of priority asset information	»	
Promote health and wellbeing with a focus on inequality	To enhance health, wellbeing, and social cohesion across the district and address inequalities through preventive initiatives and targeted interventions	Expand youth programmes to promote better mental health	Cllr L Smith	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Launch mental wellbeing report and deliver action plan	★	20 schools will be part of a new mental health programme from September
					Q2 - Develop DCMS funded Action Plan for delivery	»	
					Q3 - Evaluate impact and review Mental Wellbeing programme	»	
					Q4 - Evaluate and review DCMS youth programme and impact	»	
		Work to reduce inequality in Banbury's most deprived wards (Grimsbury, Neithrop, Ruscote), with a specific focus on Health Prevention and Stronger Communities themes of Brighter Futures	Cllr L Smith	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley	Q1 - Deliver Community Insight Profile grant programme	★	New grant programmes launched and live in this quarter
					Q2 - Evaluate Community Insight Profile programme against IMD metrics	»	
					Q3 - Evaluate Community Insight profiles 3 year review and impact to show change in inequalities	»	
					Q4 - Develop Brighter Futures Annual Report	»	

ADP 2026/27 - Priority - Environmental stewardship and climate action

Goals	Aims	Actions	Portfolio Holder	Lead/Director	Milestones Q1 - Q4	R.A.G.	Performance
Safeguard the environment and promote biodiversity	To implement sustainable policies and practices, protect natural habitats, and support conservation initiatives that enhance ecosystem health and biodiversity while responding to the climate emergency	Continue with fleet decarbonisation, utilising electric vehicles where possible	Cllr A Russell	- Ed Potter - Kristian Aspinall	Q1 - Review the introduction of HVO	★	Due to problems in Middle East the price of HVO went very high. It was decided to wait until prices came down. The first order of HVO - 20k litres goes in to our Highfield Depot 1st July 26.
		Encourage the creation of biodiversity sites / habitat banks / carbon sequestration, in line with local and national planning policy, engaging with developers and partners where appropriate.	Cllr I Middleton	- Ian Boll - Michael Suddens	Q1 - Initiating the Biodiversity and Climate Resilience Strategy	●	We've initiated work and progressing on developing Biodiversity Action Plan.
		Establish a new programme of asset decarbonisation projects, using Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding	Cllr I Middleton	- Ian Boll - Michael Suddens - Mona Walsh	Q1 - Identify and explore available funding opportunities, and develop a schedule of assets that are suitable candidates for decarbonisation	★	Three funding opportunities have been identified and actively promoted through council newsletters to community groups and parish councils, including school-based climate grants, community nature funding, and local nature recovery grants, supporting awareness and uptake ahead of upcoming application windows. The need to develop a schedule of assets suitable for decarbonisation has been identified and agreed with the relevant service area following initial scoping.
					Q2 - Review and assess the shortlisted assets for decarbonisation potential, and agree which schemes should be pursued in future funding rounds	»	
					Q3 - When suitable funding schemes open—and assuming the assets meet the required grant criteria—submit priority assets for decarbonisation funding	»	
Promote the circular economy of reduce, reuse and recycle to minimise waste	To encourage sustainable consumption, optimise the use of resources, and implement efficient recycling systems that support waste reduction and reuse initiatives	Continue the district-wide rollout of Simpler Recycling and integrate the requirements of the Deposit Return Scheme in preparation for its implementation in 2027/28	Cllr A Russell	- Ed Potter - Kristian Aspinall	Q1 - Review the introduction of kerbside glass & the removal of bring bank sites	★	Glass was introduced at Kerbside in January and banks were removed before the end of March.
					Q2 - Review the TEEP assessment for separate paper & cardboard	»	
					Q3 - Consider Capital impact	»	

ADP 2026/27 - Priority - Quality housing and place making

Goals	Aims	Actions	Portfolio Holder	Lead/Director	Milestones Q1 - Q4	R.A.G.	Performance
Deliver sustainable and strategic development that meets Cherwell's needs now and in the future	To ensure the right mix of facilities, services and infrastructure for new developments, to create successful, well-designed communities	Adopt & commence implementation of the new Local Plan	Cllr C Brant	- David Peckford - Ian Boll	Q1 - Examination of the local plan	▲	The Planning Inspectorate oversees the timetable for the Examination. The Inspectors' letter, following initial hearings in February, has not yet been received.
					Q2 - Examination of local plan	»»	
					Q3 - Examination continues	»»	
					Q4 - Estimated Plan Adoption	»»	
		Commence delivery of the Bicester Market Square	Cllr L McLean	Ian Boll	Q1 - Commence concept validation phase and surveys + updated cost plan	★	The validation phase has commenced, with technical surveys and investigations under way. Work is progressing to confirm the scheme's deliverability, constraints and updated cost plan ahead of the next decision stage.
					Q3 - Complete preliminary design stage	»»	
					Q4 - Complete detailed design stage and secure planning permission	»»	
				- Ian Boll - Peter Sharp	Q2 - Complete validation phase and subject to decision gateway, procure consultants for preliminary design	»»	
		Continue with implementation of housing delivery in accordance with housing delivery action plan	Cllr C Brant	- David Peckford - Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Q1 - Continue working with the Atlas/Homes England Team in Bicester to support housing delivery	★	Work is ongoing with ATLAS. A new funding agreement for 26/27 is awaited - expected in mid July
					Q2 - Half year return on housing delivery	»»	
					Q4 - Full Year Return on Housing Delivery & Annual Monitoring Report to Executive	»»	
		Continue with the programme for the review of Conservation Area Appraisals for the following villages: Hampton Gay, Shipton on Cherwell & Thrupp, Hook Norton and Chesterton	Cllr C Brant	- David Peckford - Ian Boll	Q2 - Commence 3 CAAs	»»	
					Q4 - Complete 3 CAAs	»»	
		Implement 'section 106' process improvements	Cllr C Brant	- Denzil Turberville - Ian Boll - Paul Seckington	Q1 - Finalise the S106 templates	★	Significant progress has taken place, planning officers and legal are reviewing draft documents with plan to implement by Autumn 2026
					Q2 - Create Practice Notes	»»	
					Q3 - Implement Improvements	»»	
					Q4 - Review	»»	
		Implement the National Building Safety Levy	Cllr C Brant	- David Peckford - Ian Boll	Q1 - Preparation for implementation	★	The project team is meeting regularly. Software has been procured and is in the process of installation. Corporate project management support is in place.
					Q2 - Preparation & Trial Implementation	»»	
					Q3 - Implementation by October 2026	»»	
					Q4 - Review and refine process	»»	
Achieve more high-quality, secure, and affordable housing that caters for the diverse needs of our residents	To help all residents access safe places they can make/call their home, including housing that is affordable through direct ownership, private rental and social rent housing	Embed requirements from Renters Rights Bill into service delivery to improve the standards of households on low incomes	Cllr I Middleton	- Kristian Aspinall - Nicola Riley - Richard Smith	Q1 - Hold tenant and landlord liaison events and launch communications strategy for new legislation, specifically end of S.21 evictions	★	Tenancy Relations Drop-in service expanded from 1 day per month in Castle Quay to offering an in-person drop-in advice service for landlords and tenants available once every week at different locations across the district Banbury Castle Quay and Sunrise Centre, Bicester Library, Kidlington WISH. Information on updated tenant rights included on video screens at entrance to CQ offices. Regular social media comms sent out in lead-up to Renters' Rights Act implementation. Website updated with RRA information for landlords and tenants. Update on Renters' Rights provided to Registered Providers during forum on 30/04/2026. Private rented sector Landlords Forum delivered 02/04/2026 with over 30 attendees.
					Q2 - Review, update and draft new policies affected by new legislation	»»	
					Q3 - Confirm new resource requirements following receipt of grant funding	»»	
					Q4 - Complete a fine income benchmarking exercise, to understand potential budget implications in future years	»»	
		Oversight of Phase 2 of the Graven Hill development	Cllr D Hingley	Stephen Hinds	Q1 - Commence 39 Dwellings HZ 4 ~ Phase 3a	★	Commenced delivery of 39 dwellings, and already commences the delivery of Q2 27
					Q2 - Commence 27 Dwellings HZ 4 ~ Phase 3a and Target Planning permission Stage 2 Hybrid	»»	

Goals	Aims	Actions	Portfolio Holder	Lead/Director	Milestones Q1 - Q4	R.A.G.	Performance
					Q3 - Commence Infrastructure Stage 2 ~ Phase 1, Commence 34 Dwellings Stage 2 ~ Phase 1 and First Deliveries 39 Dwellings HZ 4 ~ Phase 3a	»»	
					Q4 - First Deliveries 27 Dwellings HZ 4 ~ Phase 3a	»»	

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This report is public	
Update on Executive Responses to Previous Scrutiny Recommendations	
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny
Date of Committee	8 September 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	N/A
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	N/A
Report of	Assistant Director Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on progress of the Executive response to previous recommendations relating to the Climate Action and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Working group reports.

1. Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To note the progress made on previous recommendations made to the Executive, as detailed in appendices one (Climate Action) and two (Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides a brief update on issues previously considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, specifically progress on the Executive responses to the Climate Action and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion working group reports.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	This is an information report only and therefore there are no financial implications. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance/S151 Officer. 21 August 2026

Legal	This is an information report only and therefore there are no legal implications.			Denzil Turberville, Head of Legal, 28 August 2026
Risk Management	This is an information report only and therefore there are no risk implications.			Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader. 20 August 2026
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				This is an information report only and therefore there are no equality impact implications. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader. 20 August 2026
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				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	Environmental Stewardship (Climate Action) Community Leadership (EDI)			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A as this is an update report.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, and the Executive has a statutory duty to respond. The Executive Response should provide the Executive's decisions in respect of scrutiny recommendations made, along with any specific actions the Executive agree to take.
- 3.2 In January 2026, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received Executive responses relating to recommendations from three working groups – Climate Action; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); and Planning Application Appeals.
- 3.3 OSC agreed to monitor progress of the Executive responses after six months.
- 3.4 Appendix one provides an update on the response to the Climate Action recommendations. An update on the response to the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion recommendations is set out at Appendix two.
- 3.5 Progress relating to the Planning Application Appeals recommendations will be covered by items scheduled for consideration at meetings as set out on OSC work programme. No update is therefore provided on those recommendations as part of this report.

4. Details

Climate Action

- 4.1 The Climate Action working group was initially established in 2022 and continued during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 municipal years. The group produced an end of inquiry report that included eight recommendations, relating to a new Council climate action strategy; corporate priorities; environmental impact assessments; building emissions; and investment in renewable energy.
- 4.2 Executive agreed all recommendations. The initial response included additional information setting out timeframes for some elements.
- 4.3 Appendix one to this report gives a detailed update on each of the previously agreed recommendations.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- 4.4 The EDI working group was initially established as a joint group with Personnel Committee in 2022 and continued during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 municipal years. The group produced an end of inquiry report that included 10 recommendations, covering equality and service delivery; equality in employment; equalities communications and engagement; and measuring progress

- 4.5 Executive again agreed all recommendations and provided additional information and commentary for each recommendation.
- 4.6 Appendix two to this report gives a detailed update on each of the previously agreed recommendations.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 This is an information report, therefore there are no alternative options.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The recommendation to note the progress ensures OSC remain informed on progress regarding previous recommendations.

Decision Information

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

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Climate Action Recommendations update
Appendix 2	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Recommendations update
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Executive meeting – 7 October 2025 . Agenda item 7, Notice of Recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny (includes full end of review reports) Executive meeting – 2 December 2025 . Agenda item 8, Executive Response to Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations
Report Author	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead
Report Author contact details	01295 221534

	Democracy@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer – Monitoring Officer

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Executive Response to the Report and Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Name of Executive Portfolio Holder Councillor as at December 2025: Councillor Tom Becket – Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities	Name of Chief Officer(s) as at December 2025: Jo Miskin - Climate Action Manager, Environmental Services Hitesh Mahawar - Climate Change Programme Manager
Name of Executive Portfolio Holder Councillor as at July 2026: Councillor Ian Middleton - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Services	Name of Chief Officer(s) as at July 2026: Michael Suddens – Head on Biodiversity and Climate Resilience. Hitesh Mahawar - Climate Change Programme Manager
Name of External Organisation (if relevant): N/A	Lead Scrutiny Officer contact: Emma Faulkner - Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead Emma.Faulkner@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Overall response to the Scrutiny Report at December 2025

Cherwell District Council welcomes the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and acknowledges the importance of accelerating climate action across the organisation and district.

The Council has already embedded climate priorities within its corporate vision, notably through the “Environmental Stewardship” priority, and is actively progressing workstreams aligned with Net Zero pathways.

Key mechanisms such as the Annual Development Plan and Performance KPIs are in place to monitor delivery against agreed targets, with quarterly updates provided to the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Climate Change Programme Board has been created to enable and drive the delivery of Climate Programmes.

The Council remains committed to developing a robust Climate Change Strategy, strengthening governance, and ensuring that sustainability remains ambitious, inclusive, and central to decision-making.

Executive Decisions (Response to Scrutiny Recommendations).

No.	Recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny	Agreed? (Yes/ No)	additional information	Update on progress as at July 2026
R1.	That a new Council Climate Action Strategy be prepared for agreement by the Executive and full Council, with clear strategies, ambitious yet realistic objectives to deliver year on year reductions in the Council's carbon emissions,	Yes	Officers have already started working on producing a climate strategy. This is being informed by Net Zero pathways' studies for Council and District. Engagement with every service area is	The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 was adopted by the Executive in March. The plan covers activities across council operations and the

	strategies, and targets to reduce district area emissions, to be agreed by full Council in 2025.		taking place and expected to complete in 2025 and climate team will be taking the Strategy to Executive in Feb'26.	wider district in line with net zero commitments.
R2.	That Climate Action be made a higher key corporate priority, reflected in the Council key priorities (to be agreed by Council), to be reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan, service delivery plans, and its annual and quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports, with ambitious but realistic measurable targets and performance measures.	Yes	The key element of this recommendation has already been incorporated in CDC's vision as one of the priorities i.e. "Environmental Stewardship". To ensure progress, the Annual Development Plan and Performance KPIs are in place, enabling quarterly monitoring against agreed targets and providing updates to both the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) committees. Officers Climate Change Programme Board has been created to coordinate and drive the delivery of Council's Climate Programme and support District's Climate Programme agreed by the Strategic Programmes Board.	The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 contributes to the Environmental Stewardship priority of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan. To monitor and report progress, the climate action programme reports: - Monthly updates to Directorate Portfolio Board. - Bi-monthly updates to Transformation Board - Quarterly updates to Corporate Leadership Team - Annual updates to Executive
R3.	That the Council request that more detailed Environmental Impact Assessments be included in reports to the Planning Committee.	Yes	The Planning Committee report template will be amended to include a section on how the development has been considered having regard to climate change. Expected to be amended by January 2026	
R4.	That an evaluation and feasibility assessment of interim options and measures to replace the Council fleet of vehicles be carried out, with alternatives for less CO2 emissions.	Yes	CDC have commissioned a Fleet Decarbonisation pathway study and one of the recommendations was to use HVO as transition fuel before CDC switch to EV. Executive has approved use of HVO as a transition fuel, and Environmental	The council began purchasing HVO in July 2026 at the Bicester depot. Full roll-out is expected in September and continued thereafter.

			Services is in the process of going out with tender. Expected to award a supplier and implement HVO tentatively by December 2025.	The council continues to transition its fleet to electric where appropriate, recognising HVO as an interim solution to decarbonisation.
R5.	That the Council agree much greater focus, plans and targets, for reducing buildings emissions to achieve 2030 Net Zero targets, with clearly assessed deliverable measures to be put in place over the next five years, with clear objectives, milestones, and implementation dates.	Yes	The council acknowledges that it's pathway to becoming net zero by 2030 must change from its current trajectory - this is evidenced in the last Greenhouse Gas Reports which show that emissions remain stable, rather than falling steeply, as required. The need to decarbonise the corporate estate remains a significant challenge and a greater focus is required to ensure we have the necessary resources to implement the required, wide-ranging programme of works. CDC's Property Team have been tasked with producing a decarbonisation plan for the corporate estate and are currently working on rectifying legacy issues from PSDS1 as well as implementing PSDS4, both of which are government-funded schemes to support decarbonisation. Building/Estate Decarbonisation Plan by Q2 2026/27 if funds were made available. Climate Action Plan 2026 – 2028 by June 2026	The council is currently delivering Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 4 (PSDS) The Council secured £1,099,862 in capital grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS4). This is now under delivery and supporting decarbonisation of three council-owned buildings by replacing fossil-fuel-based heating systems with low-carbon alternatives and implementing energy efficiency upgrades. Rooftop solar PV (e.g. Spice Ball Solar PV) is being delivered through the Capital Work Programme. Additional opportunities for decarbonisation of heat and solar PV have been put forward as part of the 2026-27 MTFS. Delivery of these will be dependent on funding and capacity, in addition to other considerations.

				A low carbon asset register is in development to better understand performance of assets (e.g. heat pumps & solar PV). A property decarbonisation plan is not yet in delivery due to not securing funding to enable the activity.
R6.	That Council buildings be refurbished with space heating systems replacing gas powered radiators and insulation for energy conservation.	Yes	The executive acknowledges that decarbonising the corporate estates consist of two main elements. 1. How we provide heat, 2. Energy efficiency of building, both required an investment plan e.g. castle quay. which will come out from R5	Please see the update above in R5.
R7.	That the feasibility of introducing air-to-air heat pumps in buildings throughout the entire Council estate be investigated.		This is covered under R5	Please see the update above in R5.
R8.	That the Council agree hypothecated investment in Cherwell Council district corporate capacity to manage and optimise renewable energy and new technologies.		This is covered under R5	Planning and delivery of decarbonisation works in CDC owned assets will be dependent on capacity and resources in the Property team. Following retirement of the Capital Project Manager the post was advertised and we failed to appoint a suitably experienced candidate. The post will be readvertised. Recruitment to a further vacant Building Surveyor role will commence shortly. Note – decarbonisation work is only a part of the work undertaken by Property and the small team has multiple

				other workstreams in hand - all of which need to progress.
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Executive Response to the Report and Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Name of Executive Portfolio Holder Councillor as at December 2025: Councillor Chris Brant – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services	Name of Chief Officers as at December 2025: Claire Cox - Assistant Director of HR Celia Prado-Teeling - Performance and Insight Team Leader Nicola Riley - Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing; DSL
Name of Executive Portfolio Holder Councillor as at July 2026: Councillor Nicola Borkmann – Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services	Name of Chief Officer(s) as at July 2026: Claire Cox - Assistant Director of HR Celia Prado-Teeling - Performance and Insight Team Leader Nicola Riley - Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing; DSL
Name of External Organisation (if relevant): N/A	Lead Scrutiny Officer contact: Emma Faulkner - Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead Emma.Faulkner@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Overall response to the Scrutiny Report at December 2025

The Executive thank the EDI working group for their care and attention to this core theme across the whole council and its service delivery. Actions that were recommended through the work of the EDI working group have been progressed by officers. It is acknowledged that this is a developing area of the councils work, and the actions outlined underline the good practice in place and identify how the council could be even better in its performance by reducing barriers to residents needing to use the services we provide.

Executive Decisions (Response to Scrutiny Recommendations).

No.	Recommendation	Agreed? (Yes/ No)	additional information	Update on progress as at July 2026
R1.	That a refreshed Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and framework be developed and agreed by the Executive for ratification by full Council in 2025, with refreshed EDI objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that they link directly and cross reference to the Council's	Yes	This is due for review as it has been in place for over 4 years. We have requested our Inclusion Champions complete an initial review and provide feedback and recommendations for us to consider.	Inclusion Champions provided feedback which now has been incorporated. Currently the final version is being designed to align with Cherwell's Comms look and

	EDI strategy framework, with KPIs clearly referenced against the delivery of each EDI strand.			feel, ready for publication in Q2.
R2.	That the Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy focus and cross reference directly and specifically to the delivery of the key statutory responsibilities from the Public Sector Equality Duty.	Yes		As per the above.
R3.	That Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) audits of public facing services be undertaken to ensure maximum accessibility and inclusion.	Yes	This work will begin after Christmas and will begin in Housing, moving on to Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services, Environmental Services and Regulatory Services and finally Planning and Wellbeing. The audit will approach each service from the perspective of a resident and consider where we create unnecessary barriers for the resident based on protected characteristics. A small project team will carry out the audits and report back rather than ask each service to self-audit to ensure we are holding every service to the same high standard	An EDI self-assessment survey was completed by 21 representatives from public-facing services. The survey identified common barriers relating to digital exclusion, complex forms and evidence requirements, reliance on written English, and physical access to council facilities. Whilst services offer a range of support measures, including telephone assistance, translation services and alternative formats, provision is not always consistent. The results will now be used to inform the resident-focused EDI audit programme, which will systematically review services to identify and remove unnecessary barriers for residents with protected characteristics.

R4.	That the Council review all policies plans and projects to make sure that they have up to date Equality Impact Assessments in place.	Yes	A policy catalogue for the organisation is currently in development. It will include an assessment on EIAs linked to all policies that require one.	This is a work in progress. EIA section has been added to the catalogue and to our service plans.
R5.	That the Council further explore opportunities to achieve further accreditation and better publicise the accreditation that the Council already has.	Yes	We are already Disability Confident Employers. Whilst there are other accreditations available, these are not as widely used or recognised as a scheme such as Disability Confident Employer and come at a cost. There is currently no budget allocated for an accreditation. It is also worth considering, if budget could be sourced, would this, along with officer efforts, be better utilised on key matters in EDI, such as, training colleagues and raising awareness on aspects of inclusion.	No change from previous commentary.
R6.	That the Council's recruitment process be reviewed to make it more inclusive and remove irrelevant barriers to recruitment.	Yes	Work has commenced on this and HR are in the process of running workshops with Inclusion Champions and the wider organisation to gather feedback and ideas.	Workshops have been completed and the outcomes are being reviewed to be worked up into an action plan.
R7.	That the Council should actively facilitate the creation of staff diversity networks and embed this approach.	Yes	We have created the Inclusion Champion Network in the last 12 months and this is going well to date. This group are able to put forward ideas of changes they may like to see, are consulted on EDI-related matters, and have pulled together a calendar of EDI events for the Council to acknowledge and celebrate.	The Inclusion Champion Network is established and is working well. An EDI calendar is in place with events planned accordingly. The network meets regularly and put forward ideas on a regular basis, where possible these have come to fruition. Champions are also consulted on our

				policies as part of our rolling review programme.
R8.	That the Cherwell District Council Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2029 include strategies and actions for monitoring response rates among individuals from each of the Protected Characteristics. This should involve incorporating diversity monitoring questions in all consultation and engagement surveys, providing essential evidence for decision-making across all areas of Council policy and service delivery.	Yes	The Strategy is currently in Draft form. It does include a section on Equalities and accessibility.	The draft strategy is being revised as part of the Customer Front Door programme, Equalities and accessibility sections are included.
R9.	That a full Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) audit of the Council website and communications be undertaken to ensure that the Council web communications effectively engage with all sections of the community.	Yes	This will begin once the service audits have been completed, recognising the budget pressure that may arise from the necessary actions.	An accessibility update of the website has been undertaken during Q1, results are currently being analysed.
R10.	That the Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives / KPIs reflect meaningful outcomes to be delivered for each key strand, as well as measurable outputs and outcomes (metrics) with milestones and implementation dates.	Yes	Following the approval of the refreshed Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and framework, the Performance & Insight Team will work with EDI Leads to build a set of KPIs to support monitoring of related activities/initiatives.	Work on benchmarking potential KPIs has started during Q1, they will be review in line with the strategy looking into being incorporated into a framework by the end of the financial year.

Indicative Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2026-27

(Updated: 24 August 2026)

Items allocated to specific meeting dates

13 October 2026

Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
Development Management Performance - Designation Under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Report on designation by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and actions arising – consideration prior to November Executive. This report will cover the Motion raised at 20 July Council, as well as incorporating information relating to the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review that took place during 2025, and had been listed under the later work programme item <i>'Action Plans stemming from Planning and Development Management'</i>	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place and Regeneration David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
Review of Work Programme for 26-27 Standing item	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered.	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

17 November 2026

Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
Quarter Two (July to September) Performance Monitoring Report Regular item	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter two performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive.	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
New item Follow-up to Flytipping item Committee suggestion – Vice-Chair Cllr Dom Vaitkus, 18 June meeting	Committee received a presentation in November 2025 that outlined known issues across the district, and improvements that would be introduced to address them. Committee have requested an update on whether the measures outlined have improved the situation with fly tipping.	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Alisa Russell
Safeguarding Annual Reflection	Performance Monitoring - Annual recurring item Overview of the safeguarding cases, pressures and levels of training completions. Annual item	Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing/Designated Safeguarding Lead Susan Asbury, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Review of Work Programme for 26-27 Standing item	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered.	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

15 December 2026

Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Thames Valley Police Attendance	External Scrutiny - Annual recurring item To fulfil the Council's requirement regarding crime and disorder scrutiny to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions no less than once in every twelve-month period. All Members are invited to attend the meeting. Annual item	Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Thames Valley Police Attendance Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Review of Work Programme for 26-27 Standing item	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered.	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

26 January 2027

Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
Area Oversight Groups Suggested after CLT 10.2.26	Executive authorised the establishment of non-decision making Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) in November 2024. This item would be an overview of their work to date. More information on AOGs can be found in the original report to Executive from November 2024.	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place and Regeneration Pete Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Growth



	Item suggested by Corporate Leadership Team	
Cherwell Futures Programme (may feed into Local Government Reorganisation and Budget Planning) Carried over from 25-26	Holding the Executive to account. To consider regular updates on the Cherwell Futures Programme For information – business cases related to the programme are being considered by Executive in September and October Annual item.	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources Ann Slavin, Director – Cherwell Futures Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Action Plans stemming from Planning and Development Management To include: • Merton College PR9 Site Appeal • Housing Delivery Action Plan (as discussed at 3.6.25 Committee) Carried over from 25-26	Holding the Executive to account Multiple items across the year; Scrutinising implementation of the various action plans. Full detailed report on each action plan. For information – The remaining aspects of this item (PR9 and HDAP) are now overseen by the Transformation Programme; therefore officers considered it logical to bring this report to the same meeting as the wider Cherwell Futures update.	David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini- Brant
Review of Work Programme for 26-27 Standing item	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered.	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead



Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report Annual item	To consider the draft annual report of the Committee, prior to submission to full Council	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Quarter Three (October to December) Performance Monitoring Report Regular item	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter three performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive.	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy Annual item	To consider and make comments / recommendations to Executive on the draft strategy for 2027-2028 prior to Executive adoption.	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Review of Work Programme for 26-27 Standing item	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered.	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Items to be discussed/allocated

Item	Brief Description	Lead Officers and Portfolio Holder(s)
New item Progress of Climate Action Plan Committee suggestion – Cllr Linda Ward, 18 June meeting	Tracking on progress of Climate Action plan, following reference to year end performance position being Amber (25-26 Indicator reference BP2.2.03, % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target)	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place and Regeneration Michael Suddens, Head of Biodiversity and Climate Resilience



	To be picked up during September Work Programme Item	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities, Councillor Ian Middleton
Local Government Reform update Suggested at CLT 10.2.26	External Scrutiny Update to Committee on progress of LGR proposals Item suggested by Corporate Leadership Team To be picked up during September Work Programme Item	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Performance of S106 delivery – Infrastructure focus Carried over from 25-26	Many housing developments across the district, particularly in Banbury, are having houses built but then developers appear to not be completing additional infrastructure such as play parks. For information – the informal Planning Forum on 20 August covered the overall approach to S106 Agreements. To be picked up during September Work Programme Item	Paul Seckington – Head of Planning Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
Lessons Learnt from Kidlington Illegal Landfill Carried over from 25-26	External Scrutiny To review lessons learnt from the recent illegal landfill at Kidlington, with the Environment Agency invited to attend Item suggested by 25/26 Committee For information – officers have indicated there will be a lessons learnt discussion between the Environment Agency (EA), Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Alisa Russell



	Cherwell District Council. Timing of this item to OSC will depend on the wider discussion with EA and OCC.	
Year end Performance Monitoring 2026/27 Annual item	Performance Monitoring To consider the year end performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive.	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean

Remaining Meeting dates 2025-26 (All Tuesday 6:30pm unless indicated)
8 September; 13 October; 17 November; 15 December; 26 January; 23 March

Members are reminded of the five roles of scrutiny when considering items for the work programme:
Performance Monitoring; Policy Development; Policy Review; Holding the Executive to Account; External Scrutiny
The Executive Forward Plan is [published on the Cherwell District Council website monthly](#).

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

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Guidance

May 2025

This document is designed to be used as a reference guide alongside the detailed section of the Constitution Part 4a.

It builds upon the Cherwell Council Scrutiny Guide February 2025.

Agreed by the Council on 21 May 2025.

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1. Introduction

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 1.1. Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of local authority decision making governance arrangements. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 which created separate Executive and Overview and Scrutiny functions within local authorities, with an Executive making executive Key Decisions, Overview and Scrutiny Committees to provide a check and accountability and provide an opportunity for non-Executive Members to make reports and recommendations to the Executive and a full Council that sets the overall policy and budgetary framework.
- 1.2. Councils operating executive decision making arrangements are required to create one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees made up of councillors who are not members of the Executive,
- 1.3. Cherwell District Council operates an Executive/Cabinet and scrutiny decision making model, which is broadly, conceptually, based on the Westminster Parliamentary model, which has a government Cabinet executive and parliamentary select committees.
- 1.4. The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny is to ensure that decision-making in local government is transparent, accountable and provides an opportunity for non-executive Members of the Council to contribute to policy making and review. The scrutiny process should help to ensure that all decisions are taken in the interests of the residents of Cherwell.
- 1.5. Scrutiny committees are led by elected Members of the Council, which provides them with a particular democratic mandate and legitimacy.
- 1.6. Scrutiny committees are independent and hold the Executive to account by acting as a “critical friend”, as well as providing a vehicle for the wider membership of the Council to contribute to policy development and review.
- 1.7. Overview and Scrutiny committees have the power to consider any issue which “affects the area or the area’s inhabitants” and to examine cross-cutting issues and context to local decision making, including local partnerships and community wellbeing.
- 1.8. Overview and Scrutiny committees may:
 - require information that is held by the Council (with councillors sitting on overview and scrutiny committees having particular rights to access certain information - for example, information that might be commercially confidential),
 - require attendance at committee meetings by Executive members and Council officers,
 - require from the Executive responses to recommendations made by scrutiny committees.

What are the aims of scrutiny?

- 1.9. At Cherwell District Council the aims of scrutiny are:
- *To contribute to ongoing service improvement*
 - *To hold the Executive to account on behalf of local residents*
 - *To contribute to policy development and review through scrutiny reports and recommendations to the Executive.*
- 1.10. Scrutiny meets these aims by carrying out independent scrutiny inquiries and reviews of Council and community policies and services. These are carried out either as a full Committee or by a small group of Members in a time-limited scrutiny working group.

What are the benefits of scrutiny?

- 1.11. Overview and Scrutiny should help to drive improvement and accountability in local government through the democratic and governance process. It can also help to build a more inclusive decision making process by involving non-executive members, as well as community partner organisations and local people.

How does scrutiny work at Cherwell?

- 1.12. Every local authority is required to put in place arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny; however the particular arrangements for this is for the individual authority to decide. In Cherwell, scrutiny undertakes the majority of its scrutiny inquiries through the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but also via a combination of scrutiny working groups and spotlight reviews.
- 1.13. Cherwell Council has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), established by the Council, to carry out the Overview and Scrutiny function.
- 1.14. The OSC is politically proportionate and meets roughly six times a year. The Committee may consider any policy issue across the range of Council services or which affect the wellbeing of the local community. This includes services provided by, or on behalf of the Council; or by external agencies. Scrutiny can consider the impact of Council policies and decisions and outcomes for residents.
- 1.15. It may consider issues before the Executive makes a decision (“pre-decision scrutiny”) and also has the power to Call In any Executive Decision made by the Executive or delegated to an officer, for review.
- 1.16. Regulatory decisions, i.e. those relating to planning or licensing applications, are not within the remit of OSC.
- 1.17. Section 5 of the OSC Constitution provides more detail on the specific functions of Committee.

2. Advice and Support to Scrutiny Committees

- 2.1. Scrutiny committees also receive professional advice from council chief officers and directorates according to their purview. In particular scrutiny committees may draw upon the advice and support of the Council's statutory officers, including the Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive.
- 2.2. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny committees receive advice and administrative support from the Democracy and Elections Team.
- 2.3. Scrutiny committees may also be allocated with support from one or more Scrutiny Officers, to provide specialist advice and support on the scrutiny process and provide practical support in drafting scrutiny reports and recommendations, preparing briefings, drafting report requests and acting as an interlocutor between scrutiny committees, the Executive and council departments.

The Monitoring Officer

- 2.4. The Monitoring Officer is the statutory officer responsible for the legal governance of a local authority. As such, this includes providing advice and support on the Council's Constitution, governance and decision making arrangements and relationships, including Overview and Scrutiny.

Scrutiny Officers

- 2.5. Scrutiny officers provide professional impartial advice and support to members of the scrutiny committees leading up to a scrutiny meeting, during the meeting itself and subsequently. They can advise on the scrutiny process, as well as support with analysis and desk research on items being considered by scrutiny and assist in developing questions to witnesses, scrutiny reports and scrutiny recommendations for agreement by the committee.

Democratic Services Officers

- 2.6. The scrutiny committees may also be allocated committee support from the Democracy and Elections Team. Democratic Service Officers provide specialist committee advice and support on committee procedures and provide the committee administration, including agenda preparation, agenda and reports publication, drafting and publishing committee minutes and following up on matters arising from committee meetings. Democratic Service Officers work closely with scrutiny officers to ensure the smooth running of the committee and scrutiny processes.

Departmental Officers

- 2.7. Senior Council officers for each department provide expert advice and support on Council services within their purview, this includes advice and support to Overview

and Scrutiny Committees when scrutiny committees are considering matters within their departmental and service area.

- 2.8. Council departmental officers provide advice and information on issues being considered by Scrutiny to ensure that Scrutiny Members have access to the information and expert advice they need to understand issues they are considering. In the scrutiny process they are key “expert witnesses”, being responsible for the delivery of Council policy and services and also being experts in their respective areas.
- 2.9. Council departments provide information reports to scrutiny committees and other information requested, for matters being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Working Groups. In addition to information requests made ahead of or during a committee, senior officers should review the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme to anticipate reports requested to be provided to scrutiny committees and the deadlines for reports.
- 2.10. Because Council officers also advise and support the Executive and because senior officers also manage services and make decisions (including Key Decisions where delegated to them), their role is also part of supporting Executive accountability by answering questions in committee, along with the Executive.

3. Appointing the Chair and Vice-Chair

- 3.1. A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be scheduled as soon as possible after the Annual Council Meeting, when committee appointments have been approved, to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider any proposals for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair from among its members. Any member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may stand to be elected for these positions and any member may propose (and second a proposal) for any other member for to make their case for being appointment as Chair and Vice Chair, so long as those persons accept the nomination.
- 3.2. Prior to the meeting, those wishing to stand for Chair/Vice Chair will have an opportunity address fellow committee members, explaining their reasons for being considered for the role(s). This is also an opportunity for any member wishing to propose another member of the Committee to explain their reasons for the proposal. The expectation is that an informal session will take place shortly before the formal Committee meeting to facilitate discussions between members who wish to be considered for the role of Chair and Vice Chair.
- 3.3. The Chair of OSC has a responsibility for establishing the profile of the committee, its influence across the council and its ways of working, as well as ensuring that the scrutiny process is managed in a fair and balanced environment, is free from political point scoring and allows for effective scrutiny of all issues presented for consideration. Members putting themselves forward for the role may wish to use these points as guidance for the basis of their discussions with the committee.

- 3.4. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the prospective chairs and vice-chairs before the formal meeting.
- 3.5. The appointment of Chair will normally take place at the first formal meeting of the Committee in the usual way.
- 3.6. The Monitoring Officer or his representative will call for nominations to the position of Chair of the Committee, with seconders as appropriate. Voting will take place for each nominated candidate, via a show of hands, in line with section 4, paragraph 4.26 of the Constitution, with steps repeated as necessary until one candidate is successful.
- 3.7. The newly appointed Chair will then take the Chair, and preside over the appointment of the Vice Chair, which will follow the same process. Once the Vice Chair has been appointed, the meeting will be brought to a close if there are no further items on the agenda.
- 3.8. *Note – those wishing to stand as Chair/Vice Chair will be expected to attend in person.*

4. Work Planning

- 4.1. Scrutiny committees should plan their work carefully throughout the year to ensure that the scrutiny process can be effective. At Cherwell Council this includes development of an Annual Scrutiny Work Programme of issues that will be considered throughout the year through its main committee and through commissioned scrutiny working groups, as well as planning ahead of scrutiny committee meetings to plan out the objectives, key information required, key lines of enquiry and possible outcomes for each scrutiny topic.
- 4.2. There are normally six formal committee meetings scheduled throughout the year. In addition, OSC can appoint working groups to carry out detailed research and inquiries on behalf of the formal Committee (as detailed in Constitution section 4a)

The Annual Scrutiny Work Programme

- 4.3. Each year the scrutiny committees consider and agree a programme of work for the municipal year ahead, after considering what the key issues facing the Council and local community where consideration by a scrutiny committee might add value are. Usually, the work programme is for the municipal year period following the Annual Council Meeting, from June to May the following year.
- 4.4. Each year, in drawing up the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme, there is held an informal planning session, where members of the scrutiny committees may consider and discuss proposed topics for inclusion on the work programmes.
- 4.5. This informal session with members of the scrutiny committee allows for the committee to consider key background information and to consult the relevant

Council directorates and other stakeholders on the key issues for the Council and community partners that may usefully be considered by the scrutiny committees and to identify:

- the main topics for consideration throughout the year,
- the purpose and scope of each topic
- when each topic should be considered, and
- which departments, external agencies and expert witnesses should be called as witnesses to provide evidence.

- 4.6. The identified topics can then be developed into a work programme for the scrutiny committee that can be agreed by the next formal meeting of the committee, reported to full Council and used to plan the meetings of the committees throughout the year ahead.

Topic Selection and Prioritisation

- 4.7. Initial subjects for consideration will be requested from members of the Committee at a work programme planning session, with committee members given the opportunity to suggest subjects for inclusion on the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme.
- 4.8. Scrutiny members should consider key background information for the Council and the District to help prioritise and scope its Work Programme topics. This includes key strategic documents such as:
- Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan
 - the Annual Delivery Plan priorities,
 - Cherwell District Council Residents' Survey
 - Annual Corporate Performance reports
 - Budget Performance reports
 - The Executive Forward Plan.
- 4.9. An important document the Committee may wish to refer to during the planning session is the Executive Forward Plan (also known as the Executive work programme), the statutory document that is published on a monthly basis covering a rolling four-month period. More detailed information on the requirements of the Forward Plan can be found in section 6 of the Constitution, paragraph 6.1.
- 4.10. OSC may find it useful to refer to the latest version of the Forward Plan throughout the year, as well as during the work programme planning session, to consider upcoming items for the Executive and whether they would benefit from detailed discussion by OSC.
- 4.11. The OSC should prioritise possible issues carefully to ensure that only a manageable amount of issues are selected for consideration throughout the year; eg no more than twelve substantive issues and ensure that the issues selected are of significance to the Council and local residents and where consideration by the scrutiny committee can add value to the decision making process.

- 4.12. The OSC should be clear on the purpose of consideration by the scrutiny committee. Broadly there are two main rationales for scrutiny review, either:
- To provide accountability – eg performance reports and reviews,
 - Policy development and review – considering policy and service areas before a decision by the Executive – eg “pre-decision scrutiny”.
- 4.13. The proposed Work Programme needs to balance issues throughout the year and ensure that these are timely, appropriate and when scrutiny review can be effective, eg when a policy or service review reaches maturation, when information becomes available and ahead of when the Executive will make a decision on the issue (so that the Executive may receive recommendations from the OSC).
- 4.14. The OSC should review proposed issues for the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme to ensure that work of the Committee remains timely, adds value and does not duplicate activity already underway or undertaken by external regulators.
- 4.15. After the planning session, the Chair and Vice Chair will meet with officers from the Democratic and Elections Team to consider which subjects will be taken forward for the formal Annual Scrutiny Work Programme and what style of scrutiny (see the options below) would best suit each subject. The proposed Annual Scrutiny Work Programme will be presented to OSC at the next meeting for approval.
- 4.16. The OSC should review the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme throughout the year to ensure that work of the Committee remains timely, adds value and does not duplicate activity already underway or undertaken by external regulators. The working group scoping document ensures that the key questions that members want to address are listed.
- 4.17. The Chair of the Committee will be responsible for allocating the Committee’s time to each work programme item, to ensure the best approach to each subject.

“Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that if work programming is robust and effective there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.”

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024

How do Committees choose what to scrutinise?

- 4.18. The OSC should ensure that it consults key stakeholders in developing its Annual Scrutiny Work Programme, particularly the main departments and chief officers of the Council and the Executive. Additionally, suggestions can be received from partner organisations or the public.
- 4.19. Effective scrutiny requires a balanced work programme, which examines the most important challenges facing the district and responds to the concerns of residents.

- 4.20. It is important to remember that scrutiny is an independent member-led process and it is ultimately the responsibility of the Chair and the committee to determine what is scrutinised and when. This should, however, be based upon officer advice.
- 4.21. The *Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics* Guidance Note explains some of the key factors in determining whether an issue should be scrutinised.
- 4.22. Here are a few key points to remember when choosing subjects to scrutinise:
- It is not possible to scrutinise everything that might be suggested. Therefore, a rigorous approach should be taken to prioritising which topics are to be scrutinised.
 - thinking about the work of commissioned organisations and the monitoring other public bodies, and how scrutiny inquiries should involve and engage external witnesses and partner organisations
 - The Committees have to be realistic about what can effectively be scrutinised and needs to be prepared to say 'No' to some suggestions and be able to explain why they will not be scrutinised.
 - It is also important to consider what the best method to deal with any given scrutiny topic is. The choice may depend on the nature of the activity and the capacity of members and officers to conduct further topic groups within the suggested timeframe.
- ❖ If necessary, further items can be added to the work programme during the year, with additional meetings between the Chair, Vice Chair and officers being scheduled as necessary.

What methods are there to conducting scrutiny?

- 4.23. Overview and Scrutiny can use a range of different approaches depending on the issue being scrutinised. An important part of the work planning process is deciding on how a topic will be examined. Using the full range of methods open to it, scrutiny will be able to mix in-depth and searching inquiries with concise and effective reviews.
- 4.24. Here are some examples of different methods open to committee, some of which are discussed in more detail below:
- Whole committee scrutiny working groups
 - Scrutiny working groups with other non-executive Members of the Council
 - Single issue meetings ("Spotlight Reviews")
 - Calling witnesses or experts to provide specific information to members at committee
 - Site visits.

5. Scrutiny Pre-Meetings and Agenda Planning

- 5.1. There are normally six meetings of the OSC in each municipal year. Ahead of the main meeting, but after the formal agenda and reports have been published, an

informal meeting of the committee members may be held with the scrutiny officer to plan the key lines of enquiry, questions and possible outcomes for each item, which may include considering possible draft conclusions and recommendations from the committee.

Scrutiny Planning Meetings

- 5.2. Before the start of each formal meeting, an informal meeting of the committee may also be held to organise the key questions and possible outcomes for each item.
- 5.3. The agenda for the informal pre-meetings should include:
 - Introduction by the Chair (setting out the purpose of the meeting)
 - Briefing on the Meeting Plan – including main agenda items, key witnesses for each item, proposed agenda timetable etc
 - Key Questions in Committee – prioritisation, rationalisation and allocation of questions for each agenda item.
 - Possible Outcomes – including key consultation and scrutiny recommendations. Key questions need to be included for these to ensure that they are evidence based.
- 5.4. These informal meetings can be important to making the scrutiny process effective, as they provide an opportunity for members of the committee to get organised in considering the key information they need to find out, organising their questions for the main meeting and considering possible outcomes from the meeting, such as proposed key conclusions and recommendations. Attendance and participation in these meetings is therefore highly encouraged.
- 5.5. There should be a clear rationale and agenda for the pre-meetings so that it is clear to members what the meetings are for. The meeting also provide an important opportunity for the Chair and scrutiny officers to discuss the approaches, meeting plan and outcomes with the members of the committee.
- 5.6. These meetings should pay particular attention to the possible key conclusions, observations and recommendations to the Executive which may arise in the main meeting. It can be very challenging to develop appropriate conclusions and scrutiny recommendations in the formal meeting, so this is an important opportunity to consider how these might be framed and worded.
- 5.7. Scrutiny recommendations should be clearly addressed to the relevant decision maker (eg the Executive), and SMART (specific measurable, achievable, realistic and time based). They also need to be clearly linked to evidence received in the report and in questions, so links back to planning the key questions. This usually requires some consideration and forethought.

“Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.”

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024

Scrutiny Briefing Plans

- 5.8. Ahead of each meeting, the scrutiny officer will normally provide a short briefing on the meeting, including the expected participants, the items being considered, along with any suggested considerations for the committee. The scrutiny officer will normally provide a specific briefing for the Chair of the committee to provide additional guidance on the main stages and directives from the chair.
- 5.9. The scrutiny officer may also provide advice on suggested key lines of enquiry and suggested questions to witnesses, which may be discussed in committee.

6. Options and Approaches for Scrutiny Reviews

Single item on a committee agenda

- 6.1. This may offer limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue.

At a single meeting - ‘Spotlight Review’

- 6.2. Either a formal committee meeting or an informal working group or briefing session. This could provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of appropriate officers or subject matter experts.

A Scrutiny Working Group - ‘light touch’ review (eg two or three meetings)

- 6.3. A shorter scrutiny review may be most effective even for complex subjects. Properly planned and focused, they allow members to swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, over a short time period such as a couple of months.

A Scrutiny Working Group - longer-term - ‘full length’ review

- 6.4. Multiple meetings spread over a number of months. This is most appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. This may be suited to the most complex subjects, due to the length of time and wider resource implications for a long review.

7. Scrutiny Working Groups

- 7.1. Working groups involve a small number of councillors looking at an issue in greater detail, in some cases over a day. This process is more time consuming for councillors and officers than other scrutiny activities. Consequently, issues for topic groups are carefully prioritised. In order to make sure that the review is as effective as possible, it is vital that the scope of the review is well-defined.

- 7.2. For this reason each review starts with the completion of a scoping template (see *Scrutiny Working Group Inquiry Scoping Document template*) which outlines the key lines of enquiry,, outcomes and constraints, time- scale, key sources of information and principal witnesses.
- 7.3. At its meeting, the working group will hear from a range of witnesses and the lead officer. Depending on the topic, this may include expert witnesses and stakeholders, service users, managers and the relevant executive member/s.
- 7.4. Councillor questioning skills are a significant element of scrutiny and the quality of the questions is instrumental to achieving clear outcomes and strong recommendations.
- 7.5. A short report on the scrutiny inquiry undertaken, its findings, key witnesses and evidence considered and scrutiny recommendations (and the evidence to substantiate those recommendations) is referred to the OSC for ratification and agreement and then published.. The relevant Executive member is required to respond to the report and its recommendations within two months. Six months following the scrutiny, the OSC will monitor implementation of the recommendations.

8. 'Call In' of Executive Decisions

- 8.1. The Local Government Act 2000 allows Overview and Scrutiny Committees to Call In any Executive Key Decision for review (these are Key Decisions taken by the Executive or a key decision made by officers, but not yet implemented).
- 8.2. Unless it meets exemption criteria (detailed in paragraph 13.1 of Part 4a the Constitution), any Executive or officer Key Decision can be called in by noon within four working days of publication of a Key Decision made by the Executive or by an officer (Executive decisions will be published as soon as practicable after the Executive meeting). A key decision can be called in for scrutiny by five Non-Executive members specifying the reason or reasons for the proposed Call In review.
- 8.3. A meeting of OSC will be held within 10 working days. Implementation of the decisions will be delayed while OSC meets and considers the decision.
- 8.4. One of the councillors who submitted the Call In notice are expected to address the committee and, for Key Decisions made by Executive, the relevant Executive Member will respond on behalf of the Executive.
- 8.5. Having reviewed the decision, OSC can:
 - a) Let the decision stand (take no further action).
 - b) Refer the decision back to the Executive or officer (as the case may be) for re-consideration, stating its concerns and the decision that the Committee wish the decision taker to make.
 - c) Determine if the reviewed decision is contrary to the policy framework or to the budget; and in which case refer the matter to Full Council for consideration.Decisions referred for further consideration remain suspended until redetermined.

- 8.6. Call In should not be used on an issue that has previously been considered by OSC.
- 8.7. *Sections 13 to 17 of the OSC Constitution give more detailed information and guidance on the call-in process at Cherwell.*

9. Access to Information and Reports

- 9.1. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information¹
- 9.2. Scrutiny committees normally access information through requesting officer reports to committee for items on the agenda and may also request information at a meeting of the committee.
- 9.3. Where the committee makes requests for information in committee, this is normally made available to all members of the committee thereafter. This should be done before or at the next meeting of the committee.

Report Requests

- 9.4. There is a general expectation that officers will provide a written report for items on a scrutiny committee agenda. There is a standard format for this, which should provide the main information pertinent to the matter under consideration. Scrutiny members should expect this standard report be made available to the committee and not simply a PowerPoint presentation slides.
- 9.5. The general expectation is that reports will be made available to a committee upon request with a reasonable notice period, sometimes at relatively short notice. However, scrutiny members should also be aware of the time it can take to prepare a formal report and also the Council's operational report clearance processes and make report request in good time to allow for this.
- 9.6. The report also needs to be available at least five "clear days" ahead of the meeting as a minimum to meet the statutory publication deadlines. Deadlines for reports should normal b provided with the report requests. The deadline for final reports will usually be at least ten days ahead of a meeting to allow time for compilation and publication within the statutory deadlines.

¹ Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
↪ [The Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

- 9.7. As far as practicable, five to six weeks before a meeting of the committee, a report request is submitted by the scrutiny officer to the relevant department, which provides a still brief but more detailed scope of the topic and the key information to be addressed in the report. This is normally drawn up by the scrutiny officer in consultation with the Chair of the committee.
- 9.8. This should be used by the department to guide the preparation of any requested reports to the committee.
- 9.9. The report requests should include the subject for consideration, the purpose of the inquiry, the key lines of enquiry being addressed, the relevant Executive Member and directorate, any external witnesses anticipated and the deadline date for submission of any papers for publication with the agenda, (which must be at least 5 “clear days” before the meeting). Normally, a draft copy of the report will be requested for at a week before the final report deadline to allow the Chairperson of the scrutiny committee to review the draft report.

Scrutiny Agenda Publication

- 9.10. Scrutiny agendas and papers must be published five clear days in advance of the meeting and are published on the Council website.

10. Questions in Committee

- 10.1. Members of scrutiny committees will put questions to witnesses in committee, including to Executive Members, council officers and external witnesses. Putting the right questions in a scrutiny committee can be key to ensuring that the scrutiny process is effective in obtaining evidence in support of scrutiny recommendations and in providing focused accountability. Scrutiny Members need to be careful however that questions are focused and strategic towards the objectives of the scrutiny inquiry being undertaken.
- 10.2. Broadly, the purpose of questions in committee is either:
- To hold the executive to account,
 - To better understand the area under consideration,
 - To seek information to inform the development of any proposals (scrutiny recommendations) or conclusions drawn from the matter under consideration.
- 10.3. Questions from the committee may be put in committee without any advance notice and answered in committee.
- 10.4. Questions from members of the committee may be sent to the scrutiny officer or collated ahead of the meeting, and with the permission of the members of the committee, submitted to the department, may provide for a more considered or extensive answers in committee, but such questions are still to be put and answered at the meeting, along with any supplementary information made available in response.

11. Scrutiny Reports and Recommendations

- 11.1. The main statutory role of scrutiny committees is the power to make reports and recommendations to the Executive. Scrutiny recommendations may be made in committee to the Executive or other local decision makers. The Executive has a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny reports and recommendations made.
- 11.2. Scrutiny reports and recommendations may be drawn up in advance, with the advice and support of a scrutiny officer, sometimes through a Scrutiny Working Group. Scrutiny reports and recommendations are agreed by resolution of the committee in committee.
- 11.3. The resolutions of the committee should be put to the committee verbatim by the Chair (or through the clerk or scrutiny officer in assisting the Chair), or tabled in written form (such as on an officer report with officer recommendations). Such proposed resolutions may then be debated and amended before being resolved upon. Scrutiny recommendations may also include those made in scrutiny reports agreed in committee (e.g. through Scrutiny Working Groups).
- 11.4. Consideration should be given before and during the meeting as to how scrutiny recommendations should be worded so that they are worded in the most meaningful and effective way. The wording of scrutiny recommendations should be framed in such a way as to provide possible executive decisions if agreed by the Cabinet (or other decision maker).
- 11.5. As far as possible, scrutiny recommendations should be SSMART – Strategic, Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Time-based.
- 11.6. What is the best way to make sure our recommendations are implemented?
- 11.7. A scrutiny inquiry will conclude by making recommendations to decision-making bodies, such as the Council's Executive.
- 11.8. The following tips can help ensure that scrutiny recommendations are implemented:
 - Recommendations that are specific, strategic, substantive, achievable and few in number:
 - Recommendations based on logical argument drawing on evidence.
 - Ensure those responsible for implementing recommendations are asked about what the feasibility of proposed recommendations and can suggest modifications in evidence if that is going to make it more likely that the recommendation will be implemented.
 - Recommendations will be drawn up and presented clearly by the working group as part of its final report. Executive, via the appropriate Executive member, will provide a response to all recommendations explaining the reasons for accepting or not accepting any of the recommendations.
 - Implementation of recommendations should then be monitored.

12. The Executive Response

- 12.1. Once a scrutiny committee has resolved to make a report and/or recommendations to the Executive, the scrutiny report and/or recommendations are referred to the Executive (or other decision maker) for an Executive Response.
- 12.2. The Scrutiny Officer will prepare an officer cover report to the Executive or Executive Member (as appropriate) to present the scrutiny report or recommendations and once this is authorised for publication by the Monitoring Officer, will be placed upon the agenda of the Executive. This serves as the formal notice to the Executive of a scrutiny report or recommendations. This notice must require the Executive to respond within two months of receiving the report notice.
- 12.3. Where a scrutiny report or recommendations are referred to the Executive, at the relevant meeting of the Executive, the Chair of the OSC relevant Scrutiny Working Group will be permitted, at the discretion of the Chair of Executive (the Leader), to briefly address Executive to provide a brief oral summary report on the key findings and scrutiny reports and recommendations being made, requesting an Executive Response to any reports and recommendations made.
- 12.4. It is a statutory duty of the Executive to respond a scrutiny committee:
 - (a) to consider the report or recommendations,
 - (b) to respond to the scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,
 - (c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, to publish the response.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9FE>

- 12.5. The Executive Response is made at a formal meeting of Executive (or other decision making body), by formal resolution.
- 12.6. The draft Executive Response should be drawn up in advance by the relevant department, in consultation with the relevant decision maker. The Executive Response should provide clear executive decisions for each scrutiny recommendation.
- 12.7. The Executive Response should be drafted in such a way as to provide clarity on whether the scrutiny recommendation is agreed or rejected, or if an alternative course will be agreed, the relevant portfolio holder (Executive member), the implementing department and when the agreed actions and decisions will be implemented.
- 12.8. The Executive must respond **within two months** beginning with the date on which it received the notice of the scrutiny report or recommendations.

13. Scrutiny Review of Implementation

13.1. *How are recommendations monitored?*

- 13.2. Six months after the OSC has made recommendations to the Executive, progress on the implementation of those recommendations should be reported to OSC. The format of the monitoring may differ from subject to subject, but may include:
- A table listing each recommendation with a 'progress' column
 - A written report from relevant Executive member/officer
 - A presentation
- 13.3. OSC should evaluate and assess the impact of their previous recommendations, referring back to the initial scoping document and compiling a brief evaluation summary for publication.

14. Scrutiny Co-optees

- 14.1. The constitution allows co-option of external people to assist with specific scrutiny reviews (section 4a, paragraph 6.9). Such co-options can be made to the formal OSC, however it is more likely that committee will want to appoint co-optees to task and finish scrutiny working groups that are established for specific reviews.
- 14.2. Once a scrutiny working group has decided to co-opt members, Expressions of Interest to join the working group may be sought from the desired background, included other non-executive Members of the Council, external organisations, experts in the field, service users.
- 14.3. In considering co-option of people outside of the Council and external organisations particular care should be given to consider appropriate persons, mindful of the fact that people and organisations may have particular political and personal interests in an issue. Elected Members and external cooptees need to bring an objective and independent mindset to the scrutiny process, along with their knowledge and expertise.
- 14.4. In seeking Expressions of Interest the following details need to be defined and communicated to people who may be interested, the following steps may be followed:
- the subject under review
 - an indicative timeframe for the whole review
 - an estimate as to the number of meetings that the co-optees will be expected to attend
 - the format and anticipated location of the meetings, i.e. online via MS Teams, in person at Council offices, or a hybrid approach
 - how interested parties should make their application, eg. via a CV and covering letter, email or application form
 - the deadline for applications/expressions of interest.

- 14.5. In identifying Expressions of Interest from external people and organisations, an advertisement of the co-option opportunity may be sent out to relevant agencies and advertised through Council media and other available media, providing the details of the role and scrutiny inquiry.
- 14.6. Members of the scrutiny working group may consider expressions of interest received, creating a short list for interview. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a meeting, and the task and finish group will decide who to appoint.
- 14.7. The Scrutiny Working Group will reserve the right to not appoint any co-optees following interview.
- 14.8. Any appointments made will be for a specified time period, likely to coincide with the estimated timeframe for the scrutiny inquiry.
- 14.9. Once the recruitment process has completed, meetings of the scrutiny working group will take place in line with the process detailed at paragraph 6.6 of the Constitution.

15. Scrutiny Training and Development

- 15.1. The Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024 says that Local Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively and that authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.
- 15.2. Cherwell District Council draws up an annual programme of scrutiny training and development for members and officers, including training and development for new members of the a scrutiny committee, training and development for all members of the OSC and scrutiny working groups, scrutiny training for all members of the Council, including Members of the Executive, training for council officers involved with Overview and Scrutiny.

16. Further resources and reviewing and updating of this guide

- 16.1. The Monitoring Officer and Democratic and Elections Team will periodically review this guide with the Chair and Vice Chair, gathering feedback from OSC as required, to ensure it remains up-to-date and appropriate.
- 16.2. In addition to this guide and the formal CDC Constitution, OSC members may wish to consult further resources, such as the LGA's Councillor Workbook on Scrutiny - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-scrutiny> (updated September 2023) which gives more detailed information about possible approaches to Scrutiny.

- 16.3. *This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Cherwell District Council Constitution](#)² and the [Statutory Scrutiny Guidance](#)³ issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.*

² The Cherwell District Council Constitution

<https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=531&MId=3982&Ver=4&Info=1>

(Accessed 11 February 2025).

³ Statutory guidance - Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
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