



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Foreword

Welcome to Cherwell District Council's (CDC) annual report that summarises our performance and key achievements from April 2022 to March 2023.

During the past 12 months, we have stood firm and achieved many successes against a challenging economic backdrop that affected all local councils.

We became a standalone authority for the first time in over a decade in August 2022 - just five months after announcing the end of our partnership with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

Our immediate priority was then to take stock and, to do this, we enlisted the help of a Local Government Association Peer Review Challenge.

This involved a team of our contemporaries from other councils carrying out a root and branch review of how we operate and how well-equipped we are to face the future.



Councillor Barry Wood
Leader,
Cherwell District Council



We're pleased to say its findings were overwhelmingly positive, describing Cherwell as a leader of a place with big ambitions.

Better yet, it also equipped us with an action plan to help us plan and build for the future.

The cost of living crisis has been a central concern for the council, and we've made supporting our residents through it an essential mission while ensuring that we can balance the books.

Much work was put into a well-thought-out budget which made modest savings on the revenue side while also providing exciting investments.

Across sports, leisure, housing and environment, we are proud of the services and initiatives we have provided for you in north Oxfordshire.

Read on to learn more about what we've delivered across Cherwell and where you live.



Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive,
Cherwell District Council



Our Business Plan 2022 – 2023

Our 2022/23 business plan includes the following four priorities:

Housing that meets your needs

Promote affordable, green housing and minimum rental standards. Prevent homelessness with partners. Support vulnerable residents. Prepare the Local Plan.



Supporting environmental sustainability

Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Promote the green economy. Reduce waste and improve air quality with partners.



An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Support business growth. Partner for skills and innovation. Promote district as a visitor destination and attract investment. Ensure business compliance and best practices.



Healthy, resilient, and engaged communities

Encourage active lifestyles and wellbeing. Develop leisure services. Support community and diversity. Address health inequality. Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.



Our 2022 - 2023 performance

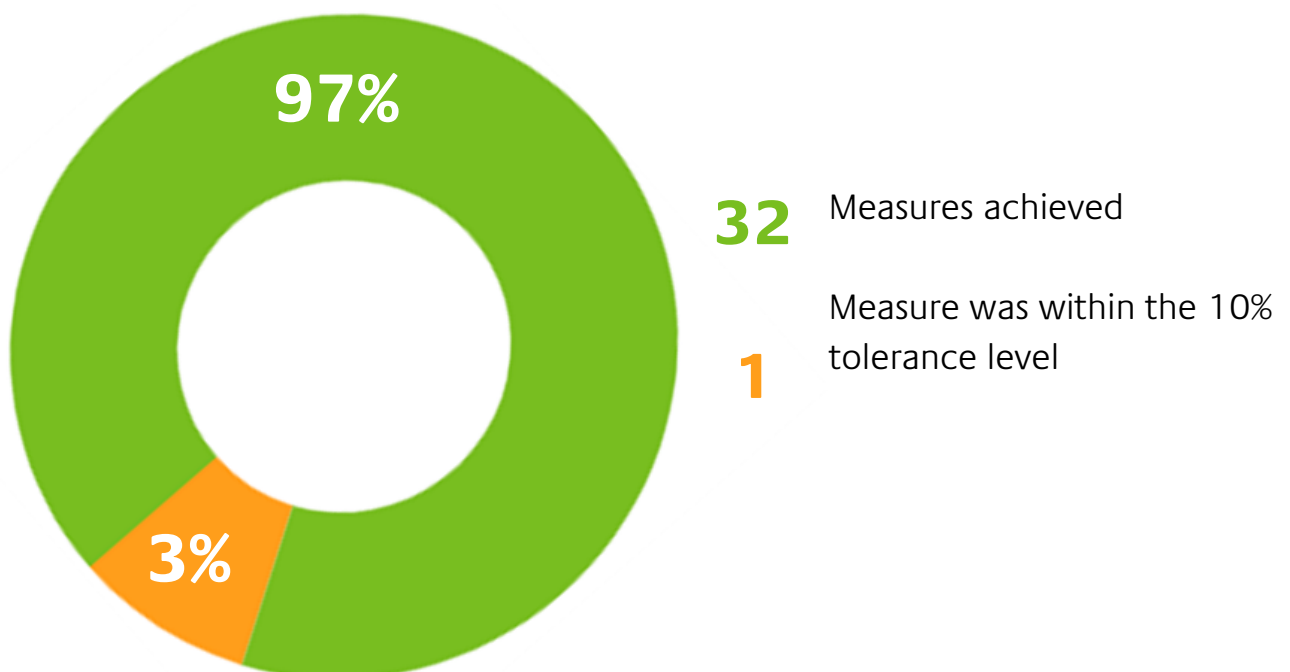
Every year, we look to serve you better. This includes emptying your bins, managing your planning applications, handling housing benefit requests, keeping your communities clean and tidy, and delivering crucial day-to-day services.

This report highlights some notable accomplishments from the past year that are on top of our regular work.

We assess progress based on our four key business plan priorities, measured through 33 performance goals.

In 2022/23, we achieved 32 goals, marking a 12% improvement compared to the previous year.

We were close to hitting our waste recycling and composting goal and remained within an acceptable margin. Our objective was to achieve a 56% recycling rate, and our actual rate was a commendable 53%. It's important to highlight that this figure is 9% above the average recycling rate for councils in England and shows our commitment to environmental sustainability.



Housing that meets your needs

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Prevented 654 households from becoming homeless.

Reduced the number of rough sleepers through effective intervention with partners.



Increased our housing supply to 5.4 years through to 2027, up from 3.5 years, to ensure there is land to build the right homes in the right places to meet our residents' needs.

Built 16% more homes than last year (1,318). Of which 181 were affordable homes, a 4% increase and above the national average.



Adapted 666 homes to enable vulnerable residents to remain living independently.

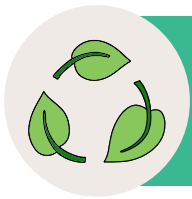
Improved 151 homes through enforcement to ensure homeowners and landlords provide safe places for people to live, a 9% increase.



Processed new housing benefit claims in 8 days, quicker than England's average of 21 days.

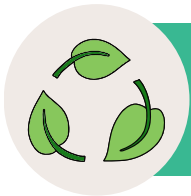
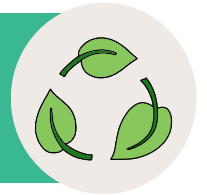
Supporting environmental sustainability

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



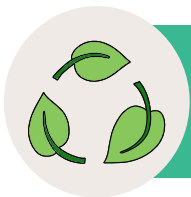
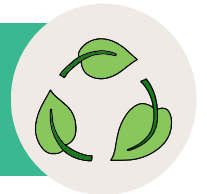
Fitted air source heat pumps and batteries at our Thorpe Lane waste and recycling depot in Banbury to cut emissions and deliver an annual saving of £180,000.

Saved 785 tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution annually through installing new sustainable measures at our outdoor and indoor swimming pools.



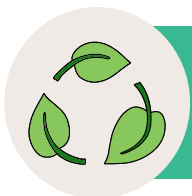
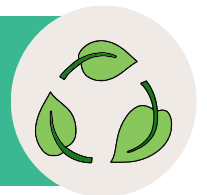
Reduced our fuel use by 5% through more efficient waste collection routes to over 73,000 homes.

Collected 58,183 tonnes of waste, 12% less than last year, as we help residents become more environmentally conscious.



Recycled 53% of waste collected, 9% more than England's average.

Collected waste from 619 businesses, schools, and charities, 13% more organisations than last year, with 91% customer satisfaction.



Dealt with 299 abandoned vehicles, 22 less than last year, as we helped reduce the number of offences.

An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Committed to creating a Banbury Vision 2050 masterplan as the first step towards the future regeneration of the town.

Allocated £4.25m of capital funding to an exciting regeneration project for Bicester Market Square.



Awarded 30 grants from the Cherwell Business Adaptation Fund. This government Covid-19 funded scheme provided £450,000 in total to help our businesses recover post-Covid.

Successfully bid for £1.8m from UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund to support local schemes, infrastructure and community pride.



Opened The Light entertainment complex at Castle Quay Waterfront, to attract more visitors to Banbury.

Approved the new phase of development at Oxford Technology Park in Kidlington to attract new investment.



Healthy, resilient, and engaged communities

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Developed a comprehensive support package to help residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. This included giving £100 food vouchers to those most in need before Christmas.

Launched Warm Spaces with our partners for vulnerable residents to meet and connect with others in the winter.



Welcomed 1,423,867 visitors to our leisure centres, 10% more than last year.

Encouraged 1,600 children to become more active through our Youth Activators program.



Delivered 120 new bikes to 32 schools through our partnership with British Cycling.

Attracted 1,815 residents to our You Move programme to enjoy free and reduced-price physical activities. This represented 37% of the total referrals, making us leaders in the county.



Supported 331 Ukrainian guests through the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.

Backed 90 local causes through the Cherwell Lottery, with nearly £24,000 raised last year.



How we spend your money



Sound financial planning saw us achieve a slight underspend of £0.001m. This positive outcome is a remarkable accomplishment, given the current economic climate.

Where did our funding come from?

Government grants	Council Tax	Business rates	New Homes Bonus
£0.121m	£8.509m	£10.529m	£3.462m

Totalling £22,621m in funding for last year.

We monitor our ongoing budget position to enable the Executive to make timely decisions on any required changes. Through this robust process, we have demonstrated that we are fiscally responsible and, with this strong end-of-year financial position, have put us in a good place for the year to come.

Where did we spend our funding?

Here is where we spent our funding and what services each directorate covers:

Chief Executive Directorate	Resources	Communities	Executive Matters
Human Resources Organisational Development Wellbeing & Housing Customer Focus	Finance Legal & Democratic Digital & IT Property	Planning & Development Growth & Economy Environmental & Regulatory Service	Includes corporate costs and income, including pension and interest payments
£6.606m	£5.244m	£8.509m	£2.240m

Customer service excellence

Providing quality customer service for all our residents is another priority.



Improved our 24/7 'My Account' online service to make it easier for people to request and track services like bulky waste collections.

Resolved 94% of queries were first time, way above our 75% target.



Help us to help you

We are committed to delivering the best service possible and ensuring our services are accessible to all. Doing things online is much cheaper and means we can spend more on providing essential services, so wherever possible, please make use of our 24/7 online services, which can be found at: [cherwell.gov.uk](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk)

Here, you can access a range of services and can Pay, Apply, Report and Book

If you cannot use our online services, email customer.service@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or call 01295 227001.

Alternatively, please write to us at Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4AA.

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