

This report is public	
Calendar of Meetings 2025/2026	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	16 December 2024
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Service, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	5 December 2024
Report of	Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

Council is asked to consider and agree the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2025/2026 (Appendix 1).

1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the calendar of meetings for Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2025/2026 (Appendix 1).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 It is necessary for Council to agree a calendar of meetings to enable the business of the council to be programmed appropriately in conjunction with its statutory requirements and the Executive's and Committee's work programmes and to enable the corporate leadership team and senior managers to programme key dates into their work plans.
- 2.2 The proposed Cherwell District Council 2025/2026 calendar of meetings is attached at Appendix 1.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report. Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner for Resources, 2 December 2024

Legal	Meetings which the Council is required by legislation to hold have been included on the meeting calendar. There are no other legal issues arising from this report. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 28 November 2024			
Risk Management	The Council needs to have in place a programme of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decision making. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 5 December 2024			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				N/A
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				N/A
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	All - Agreement of a calendar of meetings has significant implications for the Council's business planning and the programming of work.			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	Corporate Leadership Team: Support and recommend the adoption of the proposed calendar Leader of the Council in respect of the scheduling of Executive meetings			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cherwell District Council calendar of meetings has been prepared on the basis of the considerations set out in the paragraphs below and takes into account Bank Holidays, the summer period when meetings are traditionally avoided as far as practicable and the 2025 post-election (whilst there are no scheduled Cherwell District Council elections in May 2025, many Members and officers will be involved in the Oxfordshire County Council elections) and 2026 pre-election periods.
- 3.2 The calendar has been developed over time to meet the changing needs of the authority. Meeting dates are set to ensure that there are appropriate reporting lines to allow relevant committees to be informed, scrutinise and make valuable contributions to the decisions of Executive and Council.

4. Details

Full Council

- 4.1 Council meetings are held on Mondays apart from the Annual Council meeting, which will take place on Wednesday 21 May 2025. This date was agreed as part of the consideration of the 2024/2025 meeting calendar in October 2023.
- 4.2 The 2026/27 Annual Council is included on the meeting schedule at Appendix 1. District council elections are scheduled in 2026 (polling day is Thursday 7 May 2026), and therefore the proposed date, Wednesday 20 May 2026, allows time for political groups to meet and nominate their committee members before the Annual Council meeting.
- 4.3 At the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, the first meetings of formal committees, excluding Overview and Scrutiny Committee, are held for Committees to appoint their Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming municipal year.
- 4.4 The Constitution Review report included on this agenda sets out that the February Council meeting will solely be for the purpose of setting the budget for the forthcoming financial year and any associated items, i.e. the setting of council tax.
- 4.5 A Council meeting is therefore scheduled in March, ahead of the pre-election period, to allow for consideration of council business reports, questions and motions.

Executive and Shareholder Committee

- 4.6 Meetings of Executive are scheduled on the first Tuesday of each month with the following exceptions: August and May when no Executive meetings are scheduled and June when the meeting is scheduled for the second Tuesday to enable agenda publication after Annual Council. The change from Monday to Tuesday is at the request of the Leader, supported by all Executive members.

- 4.7 The Shareholder Committee is a sub-committee comprising five Executive members who will be appointed by Executive at their first meeting of the 2025/26 municipal year. Shareholder Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget Planning Committee

- 4.8 Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Planning Committee are scheduled to tie in with key activities undertaken by each Committee. The scheduling ensures that meetings enable feedback between the Executive and the respective Committee.
- 4.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out that the first meeting of the Committee at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are appointed, will not be held at the conclusion of the Annual Council meeting. A meeting for this purpose is therefore scheduled to take place on the same date as training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.
- 4.10 Scrutiny review working groups established by the Overview and Scrutiny will set their own meeting dates.

Planning Committee

- 4.11 Meetings of the Planning Committee are scheduled every 4 weeks as far as practicable taking into account Bank Holidays and election periods. No Planning Committee meetings are scheduled in the pre-election period.
- 4.12 It is mandatory for councillors appointed to Planning Committee or as a named substitute to attend training each year prior to attending a committee meeting. The training date is included in the Planning Committee meeting dates list.

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

- 4.13 The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is a key component of Cherwell District Council's corporate governance framework. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment, the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee has six scheduled meetings.
- 4.14 It is mandatory for all members appointed to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee each year to attend training prior to attending a committee meeting. The training will be held on the same date, immediately prior, to the first scheduled meeting to facilitate attendance. Additional training/briefings for Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee members will continue to be scheduled prior to or at the conclusion of scheduled meetings as this has been received favourably by Committee members.

Personnel Committee and Appeals Panel

- 4.15 The Personnel Committee is responsible for staffing matters in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Meetings are scheduled quarterly to enable the Committee to receive regular staffing updates and support officers scheduling items that require

decision by the Committee. A short training session for Personnel Committee members immediately prior to the first scheduled meeting.

- 4.16 The Appeals Panel would only meet to determine appeals in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Meetings will be arranged if required, following consultation with the Appeals Panel Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in their absence), HR and relevant Director(s).

Licensing Acts Committee, General Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub-Committee

- 4.17 At an earlier agenda item, the establishment of a Licensing Acts Committee and General Licensing Committee was considered. This report assumes agreement of the recommendation to establish two separate committees.
- 4.18 The Licensing Acts Committee is responsible for determining all matters under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. The General Licensing Committee is responsible for determining issues relating to licensing and registration.
- 4.19 As the membership of the two Committees is the same, two placeholder dates are scheduled to allow for meetings of either or both Committees to take place if there is business for either Committee.
- 4.20 The Licensing Sub-Committee is required to meet if decisions on applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 cannot be decided under delegated powers as valid objections/representations have been received and not withdrawn. The Licensing Sub-Committee must meet within set timescales and meeting dates will be agreed with Sub-Committee members and Licensing Officers to ensure the statutory requirements are fulfilled.
- 4.21 The Licensing Subcommittee will be made up of any three Members drawn from the membership of the Licensing Acts Committee who have received appropriate training. This training will be scheduled as part of the Member Induction programme.

Standards Committee

- 4.22 The Standards Committee is responsible for matters relating to Member conduct and the ethical framework in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Two meetings are scheduled as placeholders and will take place if there is business for the Committee.

Committee Specific Training and All Member Briefings

- 4.23 There are no scheduled Cherwell local elections in May 2025. A Member induction programme is therefore not included on the meeting calendar. In the event of a by-election at any point in the municipal year, a bespoke induction would be arranged to ensure the Member elected at the by-election is provided with all information and support they need to fulfil their role.
- 4.24 Mandatory Planning Committee and Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee training, which must be attended by all councillors appointed to each committee. This is scheduled ahead of the first meeting of each committee to facilitate attendance for

committee members. Specific training for Personnel Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee members is scheduled. Training for other committees will be scheduled as required. All committee training is open to all Members.

- 4.25 Monthly “All Member Briefings” have been included on the proposed calendar of meetings. The briefings are scheduled monthly from June 2025 to March 2026. The day of the week varies in acknowledgement of other commitments Members have. Additional briefing and training sessions will be arranged throughout the year as necessary to cover matters as requested by Members or officers.
- 4.26 Member briefing and training sessions are not open to the public. It is anticipated that sessions will be largely hybrid or virtual, content dependant, in continuation of the well-received and well-attended hybrid and virtual sessions. Hybrid and virtual seminars also help the Council meet its climate change objectives by eliminating the need for travel, which in turn supports facilitates attendance for Members in reducing the time taken to travel.

Cherwell Parish Liaison Meetings

- 4.27 The bi-annual Parish Liaison Meetings are scheduled and organised by the Localism Team. The 2025/2026 meetings will be held on Wednesday 11 June 2025 and Wednesday 12 November 2025. The dates are included in this report for information. Further details will be provided to Parish Councils and Members in advance of each meeting.

Publicising Meeting Dates and Addition of Meeting Dates to Calendars

- 4.28 Once agreed, all committee meeting dates listed at Appendix 1 will be added to the Council’s website. This online calendar is the most effective way to view accurate and up to date public meeting dates. Members (and anyone who wishes) can download meeting dates into their own calendar from the website.
- 4.29 The Democratic and Elections Team will send meeting requests to committee members to ensure Members have meeting dates in their calendars. After the May 2025 Annual Council Meeting, updated meeting requests will be sent as required to reflect any changes to committee membership.
- 4.30 For Member Seminar and Briefing sessions, the meeting requests will include details as to how to join the sessions virtually.

Amendments to the Calendar of Meetings

- 4.31 Members are reminded that the Council’s Constitution sets out that no alterations to the dates and times of meetings shall take place unless Council, the Committee or Sub-Committee agrees an ad-hoc change or the Chairman of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee, after consultation with the Assistant Director Law and Governance, concurs with either a cancellation, or an alternative date or time.
- 4.32 If there are any changes to meeting dates Members will be notified via email, updated meeting requests sent and the website updated accordingly.

Format of Meetings

- 4.33 Committee members (and appointed substitutes) are required to attend formal meetings in person to be able to participate and vote. Formal meetings are held as hybrid meetings which enables non-committee members, officers and members of the public wishing to address a meeting to attend virtually. All meetings are webcast unless exempt or confidential items are being considered.
- 4.34 The Government is currently consulting on introducing powers for local authority members to apply to the relevant authority for a dispensation to attend formal council meetings remotely and vote by proxy in certain circumstances. If any changes were made to legislation as a result of the consultation, they would apply to all local authorities in England.
- 4.35 The [consultation](#) is still underway (closes 19 December 2024) and therefore existing legislation requiring committee members to attend in person, as set out at paragraph 4.33, is still in place.
- 4.36 Most informal meetings and Member briefings are held virtually or hybrid. This helps facilitate attendance for Members and supports the council's climate agenda by reducing travel where possible.

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: To amend dates in the proposed calendar. This is not recommended as any changes to the proposed calendar may have a knock on effect to the meeting cycle or performance targets / statutory deadlines which may in turn require the whole calendar to be redrafted. The Constitution allows for in-year meeting dates to be added and changes to meeting dates. The process for this is set out at paragraphs 4.31 and 4.32.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 It is believed that the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2025/2026 as set out at Appendix 1 will provide a suitable decision making framework for Cherwell District Council.

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	Proposed Meeting Calendar for the municipal year 2025/2026
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Report Author contact details	democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221534
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of statutory officer, Monitoring Officer