



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Council Minute Book

Monday 15 December 2025

Executive

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 7 October 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Hingley (Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Also Present:

Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader, Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Phil Chapman, Vice-Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Charlene Greenaway, Transformation Consultant
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety

Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

36 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Chapman, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Rogers to the meeting. Councillor Chapman would speak on item 7, Notice of Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Rogers would speak on item 10, as the proposer of the motion.

38 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reported that there was no change to the timetable for Local Government Reform and work was on track. A Special Council was scheduled on Monday 10 November and a Special Executive would take place on Thursday 13 November. The deadline for submission to the Government was 28 November.

40 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

41 **Notice of Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report to notify the Executive of recommendations from the March 2025 meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), and to request an Executive Response.

Councillor Chapman, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, explained that four OSC working groups were constituted during the 2024-2025 Municipal Year, Food Insecurity, Climate Action, Planning Application Appeals, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (joint working group with Personnel Committee).

The Planning Application Appeals, Climate Action and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion working groups each produced a series of recommendations, that had been considered and endorsed by OSC. The Food Insecurity produced an end of inquiry report that provided commentary on their work but did not include any recommendations. In addition to the four working groups, following consideration of an item relating to the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership, OSC agreed a recommendation to Executive.

On behalf of Executive, the Chair thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the valuable work it undertook and confirmed that responses to the recommendations would be submitted to the December Executive meeting for consideration and agreement.

Resolved

- (1) That the reports and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- (2) That it be agreed that an Executive Response be prepared for each set of recommendations, for consideration and agreement, within two months of this notice.

Reasons

The recommendations ensure both Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive comply with requirements as detailed in Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to provide an Executive response. This is rejected, as it would be contrary to Section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000. Regardless of Executive's decision relating to the various recommendations, a response must be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

42 Bicester Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Implementation Report

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report which sought consideration of the renewal of the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Bicester town centre. The report provided Executive with the background to the proposal, a summary of the consultation undertaken, the feedback from stakeholders and the details of the potential scope of the Order.

Resolved

- (1) That the Public Spaces Protection Order for Bicester town centre, taking into consideration the outcomes of the public consultation and the feedback received from stakeholders, be renewed.

- (2) That the basis of the order will be the following items and the order will apply to the area set within the red border in the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- a) No person shall loiter in the restricted area either as an individual or in a group if they are causing or likely to cause anti-social behaviour. If asked to disperse by a Police Constable, PCSO, or an authorised officer of the Council that person must not return to the restricted area for a period of 24 hours.
 - b) No person shall beg (using either active or passive methods of obtaining alms) or ask members of the public for money in the restricted area.
 - c) No person shall consume alcohol in the restricted area (other than premises specified in Section 62(1) of the Act) in a manner which causes nuisance or annoyance to other persons in the locality.
 - d) No person shall continue to consume alcohol when directed by an officer to stop in the restricted area.
 - e) No person shall fail to surrender alcohol or a container for alcohol when requested to do so by an officer in the restricted area.
- (3) That it be agreed the Order can remain in place for up to 3 years.

Reasons

The results of the consultation show overwhelming support for the introduction of a PSPO in Bicester Town Centre from the public and stakeholder organisations. The responses support including all three prohibitions that were included in the consultation.

Crime and incident data from the Police evidence supports the conclusion that prevalent and persistent problem of anti-social behaviour in and around Bicester town centre and that the legal requirements for the introduction of a PSPO are met. Therefore, the Executive is recommended to approve the renewal of the PSPO for Bicester town centre.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not renew the PSPO.

This option is not recommended. The information gathered to support the renewal of the PSPO for Bicester town centre demonstrates that there is a persistent problem with ASB occurring in and around Bicester town centre. The consultation outcomes show very strong support for the renewal of the PSPO to continue to tackle this problem and stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, support the proposal.

Option 2: Introduce a PSPO with a more limited scope.

This option is not recommended. The consultation outcomes show support for all aspects of the proposed PSPO, and the information collected provides evidence that the prohibitions to be included are proportionate to the issues that the PSPO will look to address.

43

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Corporate Director Communities submitted a report to endorse the publication of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities explained that the Environment Act 2021 established the requirement on Local Authorities to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) was the Responsible Authority for Oxfordshire and had the duty to prepare the LNRS. Each of the District Councils, the City Council and Natural England were Supporting Authorities who played a key role in shaping the LNRS throughout its preparation. Whilst Supporting Authorities were required to confirm they “raised no objection” to the publication of the LNRS, OCC had requested they endorse the Strategy.

The Environment Act placed a duty on Local Authorities to have regard to the LNRS in exercising their functions and Supporting Authorities would be key users of the Strategy. It was intended that Local Plans would refer to the LNRS as a guiding document and it would be used to inform decisions within Planning and direct any council efforts for nature recovery. This would help the council deliver other organisational objectives and duties more effectively such as biodiversity net gain and the Biodiversity Duty but would not otherwise have direct implications for the council's processes and operations.

Resolved

- (1) That the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy be endorsed and its publication by Oxfordshire County Council be approved.

Reasons

The Environment Act 2021 establishes the requirement on Local Authorities to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Supporting Authorities are required to confirm in writing that they are content for the LNRS to be published within 28 days of the Responsible Authority providing them with the final draft of the LNRS. The council received the final draft of the LNRS on 22 July 2025 and the deadline for raising an objection or endorsing the LNRS is 15 October 2025.

The Council's Senior Ecologist has been closely involved in the preparation and drafting of the LNRS, and there has been a series of public and stakeholder engagement events and a full public consultation. Consultation comments have now been acted on and the final draft LNRS documents have now been prepared based on the feedback from the public consultation and

input from a wide variety of biodiversity experts as well as the Supporting Authorities. Officers are satisfied that the document is fit for publication and should be endorsed.

Alternative options

Option 1: Object to the publication of the LNRS and submit a PAN (publication advisory notice). Regulation 15 of the LNRS regulations provides that a Supporting Authority may submit a publication advisory notice to the Responsible Authority. It may do this if it considers that, either parts of a final local nature recovery strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken or that the strategy is materially defective.

This option has been rejected because CDC Officers have been closely involved in all stages of the development, review and preparation of the LNRS and support the publication and endorsement of the LNRS.

44

Response to Motion: Primary Care Facilities in North Oxfordshire

The Corporate Director Communities submitted a report to agree the response to the motion raised by Councillor Rogers at the Council meeting on 21 July 2025 with regard to supporting the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in making provision for Primary Care Facilities.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities thanked Councillor Rogers for the motion and gave an overview of the current opportunities for engagement with the ICB in its planning of primary care facilities and the opportunities for the ICB's input into the planning of new development. It proposed more regular, mutually beneficial engagement.

As proposer of the motion, Councillor Rogers addressed Executive in respect of the response. Councillor Rogers thanked officers for the comprehensive report, highlighted the importance of dialogue between planners, developers and the ICB and requested consideration be given to the inclusion of relevant information in the performance of S106 delivery to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That clear commitment to supporting the Integrated Care Board in meeting its responsibilities for the planning, commissioning and management of NHS services for the population of Cherwell be affirmed.
- (2) That officers be requested to offer regular, structured meetings with the Integrated Care Board to support this commitment.
- (3) That the important role the Council has in holding the Integrated Care Board to account for the appropriate and timely provision of Primary Care and its supporting infrastructure be noted.

Reasons

The motion referred to Executive seeks the expansion and improvement of Primary Care facilities across north Oxfordshire.

It is recommended that the Executive affirms its clear commitment to supporting the ICB in meeting its responsibilities for the planning commissioning and management of NHS services for the population of Cherwell. Officers proposed that regular, structured meetings with the ICB are offered to support this commitment. The Executive is also invited to note the important role the Council has in holding the ICB to account for the appropriate and timely provision of Primary Care and its supporting infrastructure.

Alternative options

It is proposed to seek engagement with the ICB on a more regular basis. However, it is an option not to deploy officer resource in this way. A more structured approach to meeting with the ICB should be mutually informative and support the common aims with regard to the provision of primary care. It is therefore recommended.

45

Award of Grant to Banbury Museum Trust

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report which t sets out the reasoning for an award of grant funding until March 2027 to The Banbury Museum, of which Cherwell District Council was the principal funder.

In considering the report, Executive members noted that whilst some outreach work was already undertaken, they commented on the importance of Banbury Museum catering for the whole district.

Resolved

- (1) That Banbury Museum Trust be awarded a grant for their continued operation until 31 March 2027.

Reasons

The continued funding of Banbury Museum and Gallery is in line with approved budget plans and maintains the Councils commitment to providing high quality opportunities to participate in cultural activity locally for residents.

Alternative options

Option 1: To fund the museum at the previous level and not achieve budget savings as approved

Rejected; The Council must balance its budget and continue to drive efficiencies in its own and funded operations.

Option 2: To not fund the Museum

Rejected; This would result in immediate closure and run counter to the Councils current agreed policies.

46

Growth and Regeneration Funding 2025/26 - 2027/28

The Corporate Director Communities submitted a report to secure project funding to the Growth & Regeneration and Development Management Services within the Place and Regeneration Directorate to address capacity constraints and to support priority projects including the Housing Delivery Action Plan, Local Area Energy Planning, inputting into the Oxford Growth Commission and enabling infrastructure to support complex development sites.

Resolved

- (1) That an award of £300k funding from MHCLG be accepted to be spent in 2025/26 on investment in capacity funding to support the acceleration of infrastructure and housing delivery in Bicester as part of the Bicester Garden Town Programme.
- (2) That £600k be transferred from the projects reserve to a new earmarked "Growth and Regeneration Projects Reserve" and to allocate £100k of this in 2025/26, which will add capacity to the other two Area Oversight Group areas of Banbury and Kidlington (and the 4 surrounding parish areas of the Local Plan Partial Review 2020) to accelerate housing and employment delivery through specific projects.
- (3) That it be agreed to delegate to the Corporate Director Communities (post title will change to Executive Director Place and Regeneration effective 15 October 2025), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration, the programme management and change control of funding to meet the identified projects, and subject to approval of the project business plans by Executive.

Reasons

Investing in capacity to support sustainable growth is a priority for the council as set out in the plans and strategies outlined in the report. The allocation of grant funding to provide further capacity shows that this is a priority understood by government.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do nothing.

This would severely limit the ability of the Growth and Regeneration Service to continue to support the Area Oversight Groups and to progress actions within the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2025 and the ADP. The £300k grant to

MHCLG would be returned. S106 projects would not benefit from additional oversight or acceleration.

It is not recommended to select this option. Without progress on the key infrastructure projects to support allocated growth sites, the councils housing supply figures could worsen and growth across unallocated sites would likely be forthcoming at an increased rate.

Option 2: Only accept the MHCLG funding and await decision to invest council funding in continuation of the service for 2026/27 – 2027/28 until the Medium-Term Funding Strategy is set in February 2026.

This option would restrict investment in year to the MHCLG grant for Bicester only and would prevent the service from making early progress in recruiting and deploying resources until a decision is reached in February 2026 at the earliest.

This option is not recommended due to the urgency of the Housing Delivery Action Plan and the ongoing priorities associated with unlocking growth. With the government direction on Mayoral Strategic Authorities and strategic planning, it is anticipated that there will be a significant shortfall in resources to support priorities and waiting a further five months will compound this risk.

47

Cherwell Futures Programme

The Corporate Director Resources and Transformation submitted a report to seek approval for the next phase of Transformation to transition to the Cherwell Futures Programme. Following a comprehensive review by the Executive and analysis of progress made in 2024-25, the programme's focus had been strategically narrowed to focus on three priority areas: Planning, Environmental Services, and Customer Engagement (Single Front Door).

This approach would provide clear assurance on targeted savings and establish a definitive means of implementation. Depending on the full scope of the project agreed, it was anticipated to achieve between £3 million and £4 million in savings per annum over the medium term (6-18 months) from approval.

The report asked Executive to allocate an initial £400k in funding to enable work on the priority areas identified, and to agree that a further £1.1m could be accessed subject to strict governance and oversight procedures.

Resolved

- (1) That the Cherwell Futures Programme to prioritise the three key areas of Planning, Environmental Services, and Customer Engagement (Single Front Door), as the core focus for the next phase of work be approved.

- (2) That the allocation from the Projects Reserve of £0.4 million to fund initial support and preparatory work required for the three prioritised areas noted in resolution (1) above, together with transferring £1.1 million from the Projects Reserve to a new Cherwell Futures Reserve for implementation and resource costs, subject to Executive approval, as required by the Council's Reserves Policy, be approved.
- (3) That the proposed delivery model, which aims to bring more project management in-house to reduce risk and maximise cost-effectiveness, using external support only where necessary, be approved.

Reasons

The refined Cherwell Futures programme represents a strategic and forward-thinking approach to service excellence, efficiency, and readiness for organisational change. The council has demonstrated its ability to deliver tangible results, with £1.8 million in savings already secured and approved. The proposed Phase Two represents a deliberate, low-risk pathway to build on this success and provides a credible roadmap to achieving between £3 million and £4 million in additional savings over the medium term.

The proposed initial allocation of £400k plus an additional earmarked £1.1 million is a critical and prudent investment. It will enable the council to initiate and drive the delivery of three high-priority projects, each with a clear potential for significant savings and service improvements. The robust governance structure and phased delivery model will ensure that public funds are managed responsibly and that the Executive retains control over the programme's direction, safeguarding service delivery through the need for a business case at each appropriate stage.

By approving this report and funding the next phase of the Cherwell Futures Programme, the Executive will enable the council to proactively address its financial challenges, protect essential services for residents, and prepare for a sustainable future within the new unitary authority framework, as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do Nothing

This approach would involve taking no decisive action to address the council's financial and operational challenges. Maintaining the status quo would result in a projected cumulative deficit of around £46 million by 2029/30. This would inevitably lead to greater service provision cuts and compromise service effectiveness, statutory compliance, and public trust, while failing to address underlying operational inefficiencies. Savings will need to be delivered through traditional budget methods, likely leading to greater service provision cuts. The risks of inaction far outweigh the required initial investment.

Option 2: Minimal or 'In-House Only' Delivery

This model proposes that the council's internal teams lead and deliver the transformation programme without any external support. While the proposed

plan for Phase Two brings more delivery in-house, a purely in-house model is not considered feasible to deliver the required scale of change and pace of delivery. The current lean change capacity within the organisation is not sufficient to deliver the programme's ambitious objectives and realise the extent of savings identified. Given the urgent need to address the projected funding gap and meet government expectations for financial sustainability ahead of Local Government Reorganisation, a solely in-house approach would not be able to deliver the savings in the required timeframe.

Option 3: Full Partner Model

A single transformation partner model was initially considered to accelerate delivery and achieve "Speed to Value" across the Council's savings proposals. While this approach offered potential for rapid impact, concerns were raised during the Executive in July regarding risk exposure and assurance of return on investment (ROI).

Further refinements to the model were explored and presented in August, but feedback from the Executive indicated continued reservations. These discussions highlighted the need for a more prudent and targeted strategy.

The revised approach now focuses on strengthening internal delivery capability and engaging external partners only where there is a clear, evidence-based need. This ensures a lower-risk, cost-effective model with stronger ROI assurance, supported by internal readiness assessments and robust business cases. Future partner engagement will be highly selective, designed to maximise value and align with organisational priorities.

Option 4: Achieve Savings Through Service Cuts

This option, which involves directly reducing or eliminating council services to achieve the required financial savings, is not recommended as the primary strategy for achieving savings. A strategy based on widespread service cuts would be detrimental to the community, directly impacting frontline service delivery, potentially compromising the council's ability to meet its statutory duties and significantly harming public satisfaction. While some service consolidation may be necessary in the future, the recommended approach of transformation seeks to improve efficiency and generate new income, thereby protecting core services rather than cutting them.

Finance Monitoring Report August 2025

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the August 2025.

There being no questions on the exempt appendix to the report, it was not necessary to exclude the press and public during this item.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of August 2025 be noted.
- (2) That the Use of Reserve and Grant Funding Requests (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That the amendments to the capital programme (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (4) That the proposed write offs be approved.

Reasons

The report updates Executive on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

49 Exclusion of the Press and Public

There being no questions on the exempt appendix to the Finance Monitoring Report August 2025, it was not necessary to exclude the press and public.

50 Finance Monitoring Report August 2025 - Exempt Appendix

There being no questions on the exempt appendix, this item had been agreed as set out under Minute 48.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 4 November 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Hingley (Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management
Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Also Present:

Councillor John Broad

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance
Councillor Amanda Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Ian Upstone, Waste Resource Manager
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

51 **Declarations of Interest**

11. A New Arts Centre for North Oxfordshire.
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Other Registerable Interest, as a Trustee of Mill Arts Centre Trust.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, Councillor Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group, and Councillor Broad to the meeting and advised them to indicate if they wished to speak.

53 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

54 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised that all Members and staff were invited to assemble in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 11 November at 10:30am. Councillor Pattenden would deliver a call to order prior to an air horn marking the beginning of a two-minute silence at 11am. The air horn would sound again at two minutes past eleven. Councillor Pattenden would conclude by reading the Kohima Epitaph.

The Chair reminded Executive members that a Special Executive was taking place at 6.30pm on Thursday 13 November to agree the council's local government review submission to the Government.

55 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

56 **Kerbside Glass Collection Service**

The Assistant Director Environmental Services and Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which set out the possible options for the Kerbside glass collection, a new requirement driven by the Environment Act.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services explained that two changes were required to meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling, a new law. Firstly, glass must be collected at the kerbside. In addition, paper and cardboard must be collected separately from the rest of the recycling materials. The initial focus was the introduction of the Kerbside Glass collection in 2025/26.

All of the options considered to introduce kerbside glass collection would unavoidably increase the costs of the service. The proposed option of collecting glass in recycling blue bins was the least expensive. It was also considered straightforward as it did not require extra vehicles or staff and would be easy for residents to use. A communications plan would be developed to inform residents of the changes.

In considering the report, Executive members commented that this was a positive change that would be welcomed by residents. It would particularly benefit residents in rural areas with less access to bring banks.

In response to a query from Councillor Sibley regarding the cost of introducing the scheme from January 2026 rather than April, the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services explained that whilst there would be some loss of income, it was beneficial for residents for the service to start as soon as practicable.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed changes to the waste collection service, introducing kerbside glass collections from January 2026 be supported.
- (2) That the potential impacts of the Environment Act on the waste collection service and that a further report on other elements of Simpler Recycling will come forward soon be noted.

Reasons

The council recommends introducing glass recycling from the kerbside by adding it to the blue bin during January 2026 to comply with Simpler Recycling. This approach has several benefits:

- This should make it easier for residents to recycle their glass and lead to a slight increase in the recycling rate (1-1.5%).
- It does not require additional capital for new containers or vehicles or the associated revenue implications of capital expenditure.
- It aligns with the method of glass collection used by Oxford City Council, which is essential as the three councils (including West Oxfordshire) move toward a potential new unitary council.

Remove the remaining banks in a planned manner. In some areas, the bring banks can be a focus for fly tipping. As kerbside glass collection is introduced, the volume of glass through the glass banks will roll out, and the volume of glass through the bring banks will fall.

Alternative options

Option 1: Collect glass mixed in with the blue bin (Preferred Option)

This option involves adding glass to the existing blue bin with other dry-mixed recyclables. It is straightforward, does not require extra vehicles or staff, and is easy for residents to use.

Key Financials: This option has no additional capital costs for new containers or vehicles. While there would be a capital cost of around £1.5 million for new bins for each property to comply with Simpler Recycling fully, this specific option does not add to it. However, the financial value of colour-separated glass is lost, and the gate fee at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is the same whether glass is present or not, as of a new contract in August 2025. The gate fee would cover 15,000 tonnes of dry mixed recycling with glass, up from 11,500 tonnes without.

Option 2: Collect Glass Separately at the Kerbside (Rejected Option)

This method would require residents to have another container, likely a box, specifically for glass. It would also require more staff and vehicles.

Key Financials: The option for separate kerbside glass collection has significant capital costs:

- New vehicles: £625,000
- New kerbside boxes: £316,800
- Total estimated capital cost: £941,800
- The costs include delivery of boxes (£30,000) and removal of bring banks (£25,171).

There are also ongoing revenue costs resulting from capital expenditure to consider. Once these are added to the figures in section 4.6, the options relating to separate glass collection become the most expensive to implement. The additional revenue costs are forecast on an incremental basis in the table in the report.

This option also introduces new health and safety risks for collection staff related to manual handling and noise.

Option 3: Produce a TEEP assessment and continue using bring banks (Rejected)

This option involves a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment, which may help to delay the implementation of the new requirements. The current low-cost glass bring bank system captures 70% of household glass. The Kerbside glass collection is significantly more expensive than the current bank system.

A TEEP assessment arguing for a delay in glass collection is unlikely to be robust or accepted. There are no technical or environmental barriers to kerbside collection. The economic argument will likely be considered weak, especially since the council will receive significant EPR funding from November 2025.

57 **Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which reported to Executive the council's forecast yearend financial, performance and risk position as of the end of Quarter 2 2025.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised that the exempt appendix had been withdrawn and the associated recommendation 1.6 was therefore also withdrawn.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's finance, performance, and risk management report as at Quarter 2 be noted.
- (2) That the reprofiling of projects in the capital programme (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That £0.040m of Rural England Prosperity Funding for the enhancement of Park Hill Recreation Ground in Kidlington be approved.
- (4) That the transfer of Extended Producer Reliability grant (£1.4m) to sit within Environmental Services from Executive Matters be approved.
- (5) That the virement of £85k from Health & Wellbeing (this budget was originally intended for the heating hardship fund, however, the Government re-instated the winter fuel allowance national scheme, so this is no longer required) to Environmental Services for the Councils contribution to the Oxfordshire Waste & Environmental Services Programme be approved.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26, Quarter 2 performance position and updated Leadership Risk Register. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast financial position up to the end of End of Year 2026, and a snapshot of our Performance and Risk position for Quarter 2 2025-26, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

58 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 3 and/or 5 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.

59 **Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025-2026 - Exempt Appendix**

The exempt appendix had been withdrawn under item 8 (Minute 57).

60 **A New Arts Centre for North Oxfordshire**

The Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted an exempt report in respect of a new Arts Centre for North Oxfordshire.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

61 **Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - Award of Contract**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the award of contract for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI).

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 13 November 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Hingley (Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management
Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Also Present:

Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Andrew Crichton, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

63 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, Councillor Crichton, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group, to the meeting.

64 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

65 **Local Government Reorganisation - Full Proposal**

The Executive Director Resources submitted a report which summarised the Council's full proposal for two unitary councils in Oxfordshire for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In introducing the report, the Leader of the Council thanked colleagues and officers for their diligent work and engagement on the proposals to date, including at Member briefing events held and the special Council meeting held earlier in the week.

The Leader added that across the four Oxfordshire Councils that had considered the proposals, 100 Councillors had voted in favour of the two unitary approach, with only six voting against.

Commenting on the proposals and comments made by the wider Council membership at the special Council meeting, Executive members echoed the thanks of the Leader to all those involved in the proposals so far.

Executive members highlighted that the two unitary proposal being put forward drew inspiration from the cultural, geographical and geological history of Oxfordshire. Prior to the 1974 Local Government Reorganisation, everything north of the River Thames had been Oxfordshire, with areas in the south part of Berkshire.

Regarding questions that had been raised by some residents of the District relating to the inclusion of Oxford in the northern Oxfordshire proposals, Executive members felt this was a positive opportunity but also highlighted that due to the size requirements set out by Government when LGR was announced, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Districts together were too small to move forward.

Executive members also commented on the hope that as proposals were advanced once Government had made their decision, more integration of climate resilience, nature recovery and sustainable development could be added to the vision, collaborating with future partners accordingly.

Councillor Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, offered support of both the Accounts, Audit & Risk and Overview & Scrutiny Committees in the monitoring of the legal, financial and risk elements of the proposal, and added to the thanks of the Executive.

In response to a query from Councillor Rogers regarding the total cost of the proposals so far, the Leader explained that £250,000 had been set aside in an earmarked reserve. The final cost wouldn't be known until later on in the process, but current estimates were in the range of £85,000 to £175,000, within the allocated budget.

Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group commented that the amount of support across the four councils for the two unitary proposal showed that everyone was speaking with one voice, and urged Executive to continue working in collaboration with the potential future partner councils whilst the Government decision was awaited.

The Chief Executive added his thanks to those mentioned by the Committee, specifically to Stephen Hinds, Nicola Riley, Michael Furness, Joanne Kaye, Julian Cotton, Shiraz Sheikh, Rakesh Kumar, Clare Addison, Emma Williams and Ian Boll.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the views of Council of 10 November 2025 on the final proposal be noted.
- (2) That the Council's final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire of a two-unitary model comprising One unitary authority covering the boundaries of Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, and Oxford City Council, with the working title 'Oxford & Shires', and a second unitary authority covering South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and West Berkshire Council, with the working title 'Ridgeway', be approved.
- (3) That it be agreed that the Leader submits the final proposal to government by the 28 November 2025 deadline.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final amendments to the full proposal and associated documentation prior to submission.

Reasons

The report proposes the submission of a Full Proposal for a two unitary model based on one new unitary council covering the entire existing boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and West Berkshire Council, with the working title of 'Ridgeway', and a second new unitary council covering the entire existing boundaries of Cherwell and West

Oxfordshire District Councils and Oxford City Council, with a working title of 'Oxford & Shires'.

Alternative Options

Option 1: Not to submit the Full Proposal.

This would be contrary to the direction issued by the Government and therefore not recommended.

Option 2: Other options contain the Full Proposal.

The other options are set out in the Full Proposal and rejected for the reasons provided within.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm

Chair:

Date:

Council

Record of Portfolio Holder Decisions for the period 11 October 2025 to 5 December 2025

Portfolio Holder	Decision Subject Matter	Decision Date
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management	Application for the Redesignation of a Neighbourhood Area for the parish of Bodicote	22 October 2025

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 24 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Simon Lytton (Chair)
Councillor David Rogers (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Sarah Thompson, Independent Person, no voting rights

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Also Present:

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration

Also Present Virtually:

Mark Bartlett, External Audit, Bishop Fleming

Officers:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

34 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised the Committee that he had agreed to amend the order of the agenda. Item 10, Monitoring Officers' Annual Report 2024/25 – Complaints, Conduct & Ethics would be the first report.

35 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

37 **Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2024/25 - Complaints, Conduct & Ethics**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted an annual report on matters relating to the standards and conduct of Members within the Cherwell District at District and parish level and information in respect of complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman in the 2024/25 municipal year.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer explained that it was incumbent on the Monitoring Officer to report on the functions for which he was responsible, including Code of Conduct matters. The standards of ethical conduct of Members at both District and Town and Parish level remained good.

With regard to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report, the Committee was advised only one complaint had been upheld by the Ombudsman but overall, there were no serious concerns raised by the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the Monitoring Officer report including the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report be noted and it be noted it would be circulated to all Town and Parish Councils in the district for information.

38 **External Audit Update 2024/25**

Mark Bartlett, Director at Bishop Fleming, the Council's external auditors, reported that the External Audit 2024/25 was in its final stages and there were no issues to report to date. The value for money audit was progressing well and that there were no items of concern to raise at this stage.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update on the External Audit 2024/25 be noted.

39 **Risk Monitoring Report - Quarter 1 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director Customer Focus submitted a report to update the Committee on how well the Council was managing its strategic risks.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained the Council's overall risk profile remained stable and there were no changes to the residual risk score in the corporate risk register. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services highlighted a change to the risk numbering of items between the current report and previous versions which meant that the risk scores would not be directly comparable.

In response to a Committee question asking for more details regarding risk L04 – Five year housing land supply and a query regarding why there had been no change to risk L10 – Cyber Security and what the council was doing to address potential cyber attacks, the Head of Finance undertook to liaise with the risk owners and provide a written response.

Resolved

- (1) That the Risk Monitoring Report for Quarter 1 2025 – 26 be noted.

40 **Health and Safety Report Quarter 1 2025/2026**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report that provided the Committee with the Council's Health and Safety performance for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that there had been no regulatory interventions or enforcement action taken against the council during this reporting period. The Health and Safety Supervisor was supporting Environmental Services teams to address actions that had arisen following the Internal Audit carried out by Veritau, the Council's Internal Auditors, in December 2024.

In response to a question regarding the impact of the introduction of kerbside glass collection on the health and safety of waste collection staff, the Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that due to the proposed

collection method, there would be a noise and weight impact for staff. Waste collection was an extremely dangerous industry. Health and safety was paramount to keep staff and the public safe. Training was extremely important with safety embedded in the workforce

In his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Middleton highlighted the importance of investing in the council's depots to maintain employee safety, future proof the service and provide services required by residents.

In considering the report, the Committee noted that the council had begun looking at properties in its portfolio to establish whether the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) would have an impact on each property and requested that an update be included in a future report

Resolved

- (1) That the Health and Safety Report performance for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year be noted.

41

Environmental, Social and Governance considerations

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to update the Committee on the Council's position on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations in relation to its investments and line with CIPFA recommendations.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that whilst the Council looked to invest sustainably, security, liquidity and yield remained the primary investment considerations as required by the Treasury Management Code and there was no requirement currently to audit organisation's ESG.

In response to a question regarding the investments held by the council, the Head of Finance confirmed that the council only held funds in Article 8 (funds that promoted, among other characteristics, environmental or social characteristics, or a combination of those characteristics, provided that the companies in which the investments are made follow good governance practices) and Article 9 (funds that had sustainable investment as their objective) categories. There were no funds currently held in the Article 6 category (funds that do not integrate sustainability into the investment process).

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations report be noted.

42 **Support to Subsidiaries**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Committee of the overall level of support provided to the council's subsidiaries and how this was considered as part of the external audit.

43 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the 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.

44 **Support to Subsidiaries - Exempt Appendix**

The Committee considered the exempt appendix to the report on Support to Subsidiaries which summarised the support the council had extended to its subsidiaries.

In introducing the exempt appendix, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised that it was important for the Committee to be aware of the level of support extended in order to ensure good governance, manage risk and to inform decision making.

45 **Readmittance of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

46 **Support to Subsidiaries**

Having considered the exempt appendix, the Committee considered the public report.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and exempt appendix be noted.

Review of Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered its work plan and had no queries or additional items for the Committee Work Plan.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 16 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Barry Wood

Present Virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chairman)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway

Also Present:

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

Officers:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Partnering & Controls
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

15 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

16 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

17 **Quarter 1 Finance Monthly Performance Report 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to advise of the Council's position at the end of the financial year 2025-2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised the Committee that as of June 2025, the Resources & Transformation and Communities directorates were forecasting an overall year end overspend of £2.291m, which was a significant increase from the forecast year end position of £0.296m in May 2025. The Council forecast overspend was mainly driven by pressures in Property and Environmental Services. Within Executive Matters there was an underspend on treasury of £0.35m. Given the last two years of dividends from Graven Hill, officers considered a further £0.5m receipt could be forecast this year

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that it was proposed that £1.1m of Market Risk be released from Policy Contingency to offset the remaining forecast directorate overspend until mitigations were put in place. This would result in a total forecast deficit of £0.132m.

In response to a Committee question regarding the forecast overspend, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that discussions with those services with a significant forecast overspend would be considered at the Budget Oversight Group so that mitigations could be identified and service implications considered.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

18 **Budget Process 2026/27**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Committee of the proposed approach to the 2026/27 Budget Process, as approved by the Executive at its meeting 2 September 2025. The report provided context and background information on the existing Medium-

Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and information on latest Government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised that there was an uncertainty in Government funding for 2026/27 and beyond, however, the Government had committed to providing a 3-year settlement. The Provisional Financial Settlement was not expected until late November 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration reported that the Government had consulted on phased relief and the use of 'funding floors'. The planning assumption in the MTFS as at February 2025 was for the Fairer Funding formula and a reset of business rates to be phased over three years, beginning in 2026/27. That would remain until the Government provided a policy statement in October 2025.

In response to a Committee question asking for clarification on the funding floor, the Head of Finance explained that in the consultation, the Government had advised some Councils would be in a category of 0% floor and others would be in a minus 5 to minus 7% floor, The Head of Finance confirmed that Cherwell was proposed to be in the minus 5 to minus 7% floor. The Council's response on this aspect of the consultation was that all Councils should be included in the 0% floor category.

In response to a Committee comment regarding the process and that non-Budget Planning Committee members would not have an opportunity to comment on the budget until it was discussed at Full Council in February 2026, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised that budget setting was following the timetable that had been followed in previous years and this included meetings for Group Leaders.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget Process for 2026/27 be noted.
- (2) That the base assumptions to be used for the 2026/27 budget be noted.
- (3) That it be noted that a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2030/31 and five-year period for the Capital Programme to 2030/31 has been set.

19

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Chair asked the Committee if any Members had any queries or additional items for the Committee Work Plan to which no response was received.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 18:51

Chair:

Date:

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 9 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke

Substitute Members:

Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Zoe McLernon)
Councillor Amanda Watkins (In place of Councillor Lynne Parsons)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present:

Adrian Unitt, Managing Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company
Phillip Kassiram, Finance Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company
Terry Fuller, Chair of the Board - Graven Hill Village Development Company

Officers:

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

22 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

24 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

25 **Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2025 - 2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director – Customer Focus that detailed the council's performance position at the end of quarter 1 2025-2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration advised that the Council was performing well against its quarter 1 objectives, with 82% of measures on target or within tolerance.

Out of 38 total measures 0 were red, 7 were amber, and 31 were green. On the annual delivery plan there were 23 milestones to deliver in quarter 1, 20 of which had been achieved or were within the agreed tolerance, and 3 slightly behind target. The actions with milestones behind target were Strengthen community cohesion - Produce Annual EDI General Duty Compliance report; Deliver Planning Service Improvement - establish performance improvement indicators, targets and resource needs; and Create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages - complete an asset register and agree future plan for each, with focus on those that are underutilised or suitable for community transfer.

Members were advised that work had begun on the milestones but was not yet completed.

Members were also advised that of the nine targeted corporate key performance indicators, five achieved their Q1 target or reported within the agreed tolerance, and four reported slightly behind target.

Officers then responded to a series of pre-submitted questions from members.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP2.2.03 the Q1 Climate Actions, and elaboration on the red status of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) within the report, the Climate Action Manager had provided a detailed written response, stating that since the publication of the agenda some of the action points had achieved a green status., The remaining were in progress and a comprehensive detailed response on the status of the remaining KPI's would be published after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding membership of the Climate Change Programme Board (CCPB), and were others able join it, the Corporate Director Communities explained that the CCPB was a closed officer led board, comprising of a number of assistant directors, heads of service and senior officers, used to monitor the progress of the climate action programme. Members were also advised that a Climate Action Working Group was due to be formed, at which appointed members would receive updates and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Climate Change Programme.

In response to a question regarding educating public facing officers in British Sign Language (BSL) as part of EDI General Duty Compliance, the Performance Team Leader relayed a response from the Assistant Director of Human Resources stating that the Council's language bank had been launched and internal resources had been identified. Information had also been sought for sign language courses, including the associated costs.

In response to a question relating to indicator BP2.2.05 total greenhouse gas emissions for the year, and whether the report took into account changes made to residential properties by householders to reduce emissions as well as any retrofitting to commercial buildings, the Assistant Director Communities explained that the council monitored two distinct sets of emissions., Organisational emissions, which were those directly linked to council operations, and District-wide emissions; which included emissions from homes, businesses, transport, and other sectors across Cherwell Any changes to residential and commercial were not tracked at an individual property level, they were captured indirectly via the cumulative effect becoming visible in national and regional emissions data.

In response to a question regarding the delivery of Planning Service improvements, and whether this would diminish residents and parish council input into the planning process, and if it would also include improvements to external input from such bodies as Oxfordshire County Council Highways, the Assistant Director - Planning and Development advised that there would be no reduction in parish or resident input to the planning process. It was the responsibility of said bodies to provide their input, but the action plan for the management of strategic planning applications included more structured tracking and chasing of consultation responses in the interest of avoiding unnecessary delays.

In response to a question regarding the implementation of the Parish Liaison Flood Toolkit, the Corporate Director Communities explained that a parish flooding workshop was due to be held which would help with the creation of the toolkit.

In response to a comment from the Committee regarding the collection of council tax and business rates, the Chair agreed to record the thanks given from the committee to officers for their efforts in achieving such high collection rates.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP1.2.10, % of major planning applications overturned at appeal, and whether the Councils position had fluctuated or remained close to the stated 16% and how that effected the risk of designation from the Planning Inspectorate, the Assistant Director – Planning and Development explained that the council had been contacted regarding its previously high percentage of 10.4% over a two year period for major applications overturned at appeal., Officers subsequently submitted an exceptional circumstances case to government, which resulted in no designation being made, as recognition was given to the councils' commitment and efforts to rectifying the situation. Members were then advised that due to an error in the recording of the data the Councils' Q1 total was not 16% and was below 10%., One of the two applications overturned at appeal had been minor and not major.

In response to a question relating to the amber designation of the production of the Annual EDI General Duty Compliance Report and whether the report would be produced in time, the Performance Team Leader explained that despite a slight delay, work on the report had begun, and officers were confident that the report would be ready in time.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Council's Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2025 - 2026 performance be noted, and no comments be submitted for Executive consideration.

26

Work Programme Update

The Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead provided an update on the Committee's Work Programme 2025 – 2026.

Due to the impact of external factors, items due for the October meeting had had to be rescheduled, and other items from the work programme were unable to be brought forward. Therefore, the Chairman and Monitoring Officer had discussed and agreed to cancel the meeting of the committee due to be held on the 14 October 2025.

Members were advised that due to the Executive considering Simpler Recycling at their October meeting, that item and the linked Flytipping item

had been moved from the October meeting to the November meeting of the committee.

Members were informed that the Transformation programme had been renamed the Cherwell Futures Programme and would be brought to the December meeting of the committee.

Members were also advised that the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley will join our December meeting to give their annual updates. As usual, all Members would be invited to attend this meeting.

Members sought assurance and it was agreed by the Chair that the scheduled item on the performance of Section 106 (S106) delivery would be expanded to include an analysis of S106 payments for the expansion and delivery of primary care, and that officers would endeavour to ensure the report be brought to Committee during this 2025-26 municipal year.

In response to a question regarding the status of the update to the Community Safety Partnership Plan, the Corporate Director Communities advised that the action plan was produced and owned by the Community Safety Partnership, to which the Council was a member. He confirmed that an updated plan was in existence and officers were working on bringing an update to the committee as soon as practicable.

Members thanked the Corporate Director Communities for the update, and the Chair highlighted that as the CSCP action plan tied in with the police, it would be useful if the update to Committee could be scheduled to coincide with the attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police in December.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Work Programme 2025 – 2026 be noted.

27

Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Graven Hill Village Development Company Update

The Corporate Director – Resources and Transformation submitted an exempt report detailing the Graven Hill Development Company (GHVDC) Phase 2 progress, performance in 2024/25, and governance arrangements.

The Committee received a presentation from the GHVDC Managing Director detailing the Graven Hill 2024/25 Business Plan & Budget as well as providing an up-to-date position statement. In introducing the presentation, the GHVDC Managing Director advised that it had been a challenging year in the housing market, due to factors such as higher mortgage costs, slowing buyer decisions, lack of government incentive schemes and changes to stamp duty and land tax.

Officers responded to detailed pre-submitted questions from the Committee and agreed to circulate the answers after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding GHVDC's social housing policy, the GHVDC Managing Director advised that levels of Affordable Housing included initially were compliant with national policy at the time of the initial application, and future applications would continue to be compliant with appropriate national policy.

In response to a question as to whether the Integrated Care Board (ICB) could be invited to discuss Primary Care provision at Graven Hill, the Assistant Director Law and Governance, Monitoring Officer explained that health scrutiny was the responsibility of the County Council and therefore questions regarding the ICB would be best placed with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Oxfordshire County Council.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Graven Hill Village Development Company Update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair:

Date: