

This report is public	
<b>Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance Amendment to 2026/27 Budget and MTFS</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee</b>	23 February 2026

## Purpose of report

To present the amendment put forward by the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance to the budget for 2026/27 recommended by Executive to Council.

### 1. Recommendations

The Council resolves:

- 1.1 To insert the following new recommendations in the report to Council entitled 'Budget Setting for 2026/27 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy up to 2030/31'.
- 1.2 In relation to the Revenue Budget Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), insert at recommendation 1.5 the following:
  - 1.2.1 Agree net directorate budgets as set out in table 2.2 below (and as a consequence of this amendment other tables will need to be amended accordingly per recommendation 1.6).
  - 1.2.2 To introduce the following service investments on a one-off basis:
    - Free car parking trial £0.100m on weekends in December 2026 and January 2027.
    - Additional Homelessness Prevention Support of £0.049m targeted at veterans.
    - Additional Banbury and Bicester town centre street cleansing £0.050m.
    - Additional rural kerbside litter picking £0.025m.
  - 1.2.3 To delay savings proposal EEV12605 - Transfer/Closure of Public Convenience - Pioneer Square by one year, reducing costs in 2026/27 only, by £0.026m
- 1.3 To insert at section 4.2.13 in relation to the potential use of Local Area Development funds
  - retain fortnightly residual waste collections.
  - Freeze for one year garden waste subscription fees at 2026/27 rates in 2027/28
- 1.4 In relation to Council Tax:
 

To amend recommendation 1.6.7 (a) to reduce expenditure by £0.100m and 1.6.7 (b) to reduce income by £0.100m.

- 1.5 Delegate authority to the S151 officer to update the suite of budget papers and appendices to reflect this amendment.

## **2. Executive Summary**

### **2.1 Conservative and Independent Alliance Narrative**

- 2.1.1 *The Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance believe that Councils should serve local people and businesses.*

*To that end, our amendment seeks to:*

*Allow for two-weekly bin collections to be maintained where residents demand;*

*Make car parking free at weekends through December and January to support our town centre businesses;*

*Clear up Banbury and Bicester town centres by providing extra street-cleaning;*

*Improve grass and verge tidiness in our rural parishes;*

*Limit increases in garden waste subscription fees;*

*Provide much needed homelessness support for our military veterans; and*

*Keep public toilets in Bicester town centre open.*

- 2.2 The overall financial impact of this proposed budget amendment in 2026/27 is £0.250m with there being no overall impact on an ongoing basis. Funding for the net cost of the service changes of £0.250m is made through a reduction in the Strategic Development Fund.
- 2.3 This budget amendment does not impact on the proposed level of council tax that will be charged of £163.50 for a Band D property. The gross budget is reduced by £0.100m, and income assumptions by the same resulting in no change to the proposed council tax requirement of the council. As there are changes to the gross budget, the statutory calculations in the council tax setting element of the report would also need to be amended.
- 2.4 The impact of the proposed budget movement is shown in Table 2.1. There is net nil impact in 2026/27, and no net ongoing impact in future years.

Table 2.1 – Impact of proposed budget movements on MTFS Budget Gap

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
<b>MTFS Net Budget Gap</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Free car parking trial on weekends in December and January	0.100	(0.100)
Homelessness Support including targeted support for veterans	0.049	(0.049)
Banbury & Bicester town centre additional street cleansing	0.050	(0.050)
Rural kerbside litter picking	0.025	(0.025)
Retain Pioneer Square, Bicester public conveniences for 1 year	0.026	(0.026)
<b>Total cost of new recommendations</b>	<b>0.250</b>	<b>(0.250)</b>
Funded by Reduction in Strategic Development Fund	(0.250)	0.250
<b>Revised MTFS Net Budget Gap</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>

2.5 The proposed amendments to Directorate budgets are as follows:

Table 2.2 – Budget movements to fund proposed amendment

Directorate	Net budget 2026/27 £m	Proposal £m	Revised Net Budget 2026/27 £m
Chief Executive's Office	2.402	0.000	2.402
Resources	9.978	0.000	9.978
Neighbourhood Services	8.888	0.150	9.038
Place & Regeneration	0.865	0.100	0.965
<b>Service Sub-total</b>	<b>22.133</b>	<b>0.250</b>	<b>22.383</b>
Corporate Costs	6.655	0.000	6.655
Policy Contingency	2.179	0.000	2.179
Development Funds	1.300	(0.250)	1.050
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>32.267</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>32.267</b>
Funding	(32.267)	0.000	(32.267)
<b>Funding Gap / (Surplus)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>

2.6 A summary of the proposed changes to the overall savings proposals by directorate is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 - Movement on 2026/27 efficiency and income proposals

Directorate	2026/27 £m	Proposal £m	Revised £m
Chief Executive's Office	0.010	0.000	0.010
Resources	(0.145)	0.000	(0.145)
Neighbourhood Services	(0.671)	0.026	(0.645)
Place & Regeneration	(0.475)	0.000	(0.475)
Executive Matters	(1.009)	0.000	(1.009)
<b>Total Savings Proposals</b>	<b>(2.290)</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>(2.264)</b>
Prior Year Income	(0.249)	0.000	(0.249)
Prior Year Efficiency Savings	(0.256)	0.000	(0.256)
New Efficiencies	(1.419)	0.026	(1.393)
New Income	(0.366)	0.000	(0.366)
<b>Total Efficiency and Savings Proposals</b>	<b>(2.290)</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>(2.264)</b>

2.7 A summary of the proposed changes to the overall service investment proposals by directorate is shown at Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 – Movement on 2026/27 service investment proposals

Directorate	2026/27 £m	Proposal £m	Revised £m
Chief Executive's Office	0.044	0.000	0.044
Resources	0.356	0.000	0.356
Neighbourhood Services	1.065	0.124	1.189
Place & Regeneration	0.444	0.100	0.544
<b>Total New Service Investments</b>	<b>1.909</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>2.133</b>
Prior Year Investments	(0.189)	0.000	(0.189)
Savings Non-delivery	0.001	0.000	0.001
New Investments	2.097	0.000	2.321
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>1.909</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>2.133</b>

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
<b>Finance</b>	<p><b>S151 Opinion</b></p> <p>The proposed amendment can be accommodated within the resources available to the council by reducing the Strategic Development Fund by £0.250m to fund the proposals in this amendment.</p> <p>Reducing the development funds to fund reductions in estimated income reduces the gross budget and income by equal amounts but has no impact on the net budget or the council tax requirement; therefore, the formal calculations to arrive at the council tax requirement need to be amended for this. However, it is important to note that there are no implications for the overall level of council tax requirement to be required, or the band D level of council tax of £163.50.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>The proposals set out in this budget amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not materially impact on the S25 statement at Appendix 3 and so Members of the Council should continue to have due regard to this statement in considering this budget amendment.</li> <li>• are fully funded in 2026/27 through reducing the Strategic Development Fund by £0.250m.</li> </ul> <p>As such the Assurance Statements on the robustness of the revenue estimates and adequacy of reserves (para 31 – 32) in the S25 Statement at Appendix 3 of the Executive's proposed budget continue to apply.</p> <p>Therefore, I am satisfied that this budget amendment proposal is robust.</p> <p>Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151), 12 February 2026</p>
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget each year together with a requirement to produce a Revenue Budget under the various Local Government Finance Acts. The legal framework for which is set out in the main body of this report. Officers consider the recommendations will achieve this if approved by full Council.</p> <p>Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires that the Council must consult persons or bodies appearing to it to be representative of persons subject to non-domestic rates in its area about the Council's proposals for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in the financial year. The Council must do this each year and do so before the budget decision making meeting</p>

	<p>(makes it calculations for the council tax requirement) in relation to the financial year.</p> <p>The statutory consultation outlined above has taken place alongside a more general consultation with the wider public on the draft budget and budget priorities. The savings proposals have been consulted upon as appropriate, and further consultations may be required prior to implementing certain proposals.</p> <p>Members must have regard to the s25 report of the s151 officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty S149 (1) requires a Local Authority in exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.</li> <li>(b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> <li>(c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> </ul> <p>Decision makers must keep the above requirements in mind when making decisions.</p> <p>Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, 12 February 2026</p>
<b>Risk Management</b>	No change in risks.