

This report is public	
Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	7 April 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	23 March 2026
Report of	Head of Chief Executive's Office, Kaimi Ithia

Purpose of report

The report provides an overview of the proposed Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27, including proposed key performance indicators and annual delivery plan milestones to be reported across the new financial year.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To review and approve the new Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy presented in Appendix 1, Key Performance Indicators as proposed in Appendix 2.
- 1.2 To note the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Milestones 2026/27 (as approved as part of the Budget) included in Appendix 3 for information.
- 1.3 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to incorporate additional performance measures for evaluating the Castle Quay investment, ensuring that social impact, environmental outcomes and growth potential are monitored alongside the existing financial and treasury management indicators.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27 set out how Cherwell District Council will use performance management, data, and insight to support effective governance, informed decision-making, and improved outcomes for residents and acts as the 'golden thread' linking the Vision, Strategy, Annual Delivery Plan and Services Plans. It provides a clear and proportionate framework through a structured reporting cycle. By focusing not just on targets but on meaningful insight and impact, the strategy strengthens transparency, statutory compliance, and value for money, while supporting continuous improvement, public trust, and resilient delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 The strategy includes the proposed Corporate and Directorate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2026/27 which are consistent with the prior year.

- 2.3. Please note that KPIs have been reviewed during the Service Planning Process. In addition, a benchmarking exercise to compare our indicators with those used by potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) partners, and best practice recommendations by the Local Government Association has been undertaken. Together these highlight opportunities to strengthen alignment and fill gaps within the current monitoring and reporting which will be considered for next year's Annual Planning Process.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	<p>There are no financial implications as a direct consequence of this report.</p> <p>Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 26 February 2026</p>			
Legal	<p>There are no legal implications as a direct consequence of this report. However, where KPIs intersect with the Council's statutory or regulatory obligations (for example in relation to our homelessness duties), it is important to ensure that they do not inadvertently create obligations that conflict with our legal requirements.</p> <p>It is always best practice to regularly review performance metrics and KPIs.</p> <p>The report sets out how the proposals seek to address the recommendations within the audit.</p> <p>Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 25 February 2026</p>			
Risk Management	<p>There are no risk implications as a direct consequence of this report. The proposal reinforces our commitment to transparency and auditability, mitigating related potential risks. For further details on potential risks please go to section 4.7.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 28 January 2026</p>			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		x		N/A
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		N/A

B Will the proposed decision has an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		N/A
ICT & Digital Impact		x		N/A
Data Impact	x			The proposals will have a positive impact in the way we manage, monitor and present performance data. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 28 January 2026
Procurement & subsidy		x		N/A
Council Priorities	All			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	Considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of 25 March 2026 . Recommendation 1.3 is a recommendation from the Committee.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2025 the internal audit of Cherwell District Council's Performance Management Framework concluded that there is a generally sound system of governance and control in place, providing reasonable assurance overall regarding the Council's corporate performance. However, the audit identified a small number of significant and moderate weaknesses. Please find in the table a summary of the actions agreed during the audit to address weaknesses identified and how they are been addressed:

Finding	Agreed actions	Update
The performance management framework is not formally documented in a policy.	The development of the Performance Management Framework will be completed in quarter 2, as established in the Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26. The framework will set out the processes and expectations that form the golden thread between corporate, service and individual performance management, providing a consistent approach to the delivery of the council's priorities and objectives.	Delayed due to restructuring. The Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy (Appendix 1) will address this action.
The council does not optimise the functionality of the performance management system.	The Unity System is due for renewal in November 2026. The Performance & Insight Team will undertake an exercise to map out the technical needs for the organisation, in line with the new Performance Management Framework, to inform the decision on what system will be used going forward. This action will be supported and enabled by the Digital Innovation Team.	Work is underway to evaluate options; in the meantime, the Performance & Insight Team is working on optimising the system's functionality to support.
ADP Milestones could be more specific and include performance against allocated budgets.	As part of the development of the new Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy, clear expectations about target setting will be defined. There will be a requirement for milestones to be developed with a clear and precise plan on what actions will need to be taken for the achievement of each milestone.	This is an ongoing action. However, improvement has already been seen on making milestones and actions more specific in the 2026/27 Annual Delivery Plan.
	Budget allocations for Annual Delivery Plan targets will be considered for inclusion in the Performance Management Framework. Financial implications of the reported exceptional performance (amber and red) need to be added and monitor as part of quarterly reports.	The new Annual Planning Process will include better alignment between the ADP, service planning and budget planning. Also, this gap is addressed by the Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy. Additionally, financial implications of exceptional performance will be added to the 2026/27 reports.

- 3.2 Cherwell District Council approaches the 2026/27 financial year with a continued focus on its established corporate priorities: fostering economic prosperity across the district, strengthening community leadership and wellbeing, protecting, and enhancing the natural environment, and delivering high-quality place-making supported by secure, affordable, and sustainable housing. These priorities underpin the Council's strategic ambitions and set the context for how performance, progress, and service delivery are assessed throughout the year.
- 3.3 To ensure clear alignment with its strategic aims, the Council has carried out a comprehensive review of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2026/27. As part of the Service Planning Process, each team assessed whether current indicators remained fit for purpose, identified areas where adjustments were needed, and proposed new measures where these would add value. Targets for the forthcoming year were also set.

- 3.4 This internal work has been strengthened by a benchmarking exercise comparing Cherwell’s KPIs with those used by potential Local Government Reorganisation partners, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council, as well as reflecting recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA). This comparison has helped to highlight opportunities for greater alignment, as well as any gaps in monitoring or reporting.
- 3.5 Taken together, these steps ensure that the refreshed KPI framework is both robust and future-focused, providing a reliable basis for tracking progress against the Council’s priorities and supporting well-informed decision-making as preparations for LGR continue.

4. Details

4.1 Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy 2026/27

- 4.1.1 The new Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy sets out how Cherwell District Council will use performance management, data, and insight to support effective governance, sound decision-making, and improved outcomes for residents. It provides a clear and proportionate framework that links the Council’s strategic priorities to service delivery, resource planning, and accountability, ensuring that performance management focuses not just on targets, but on what genuinely makes a difference to communities.
- 4.1.2 By integrating and understanding the connection between performance, risk, and financial management and presenting them within a structured reporting cycle, the strategy enables timely challenge, escalation, scrutiny and assurance through established leadership and democratic processes. It provides clear roles and responsibilities to reinforce ownership, transparency, and statutory compliance, while using public reporting to strengthen trust and accountability. Overall, the strategy supports continuous improvement, value for money, and resilient service delivery aligned to the Council’s Vision and Strategy.

4.2 Corporate and Directorate Key Performance Indicators – Proposed by services

- 4.2.1 The Performance and Insight Team reviewed and challenged existing Corporate and Directorate KPIs as part of the 2026/27 Service Planning Process.
- 4.2.2 Key Performance indicators per priority proposed by services are as follows, it is proposed that there are no changes year on year to these Corporate measures:

Priority	Corporate	Directorate
Quality Housing and Place Making	8	14
Environmental Stewardship	5	3
Economic Prosperity	2	4
Community Leadership	0	6
Organisational	1	1
Total KPIs	16	28

Please note from the total 16 Corporate KPIs proposed, five are to be reported annually, one twice per year and 10 quarterly. For details, please go to Appendix 2.

- 4.2.3 For reference, the table below sets out the number of actions assigned to each priority area Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) for 2026/27 which complements the set of Key Performance Indicators that we report.

Priority	ADP Actions
Quality Housing and Place Making	8
Environmental Stewardship	4
Economic Prosperity	9
Community Leadership	4
Total Actions	25

4.3 Key Performance Indicators mapping ahead of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- 4.3.1 In order to strengthen alignment with our potential LGR partners (for example Oxford City Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council), and ensure consistency in how performance is measured, monitored and reported, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), reported across the mentioned authorities. This analysis will inform recommendations for the 2027/28 Annual Business Planning process.

4.4 Local Government Association (LGA) Benchmarking

- 4.4.1 As part of this work, we have also reviewed guidance issued by the Local Government Association on Performance management and Key Performance Indicators development.

- 4.4.2 According to the guidance effective performance frameworks should be firmly anchored to the corporate plan and wider strategic priorities, using established models such as the Balanced Scorecard or Theory of Change to provide structure. Measures ought to be few in number, focused on outcomes, and shaped by SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) or FABRIC (Focused, Appropriate, Balanced, Robust, Integrated, Cost-Effective) principles, with each indicator clearly specifying its measure, comparator and target. To support better insight and decision- making, authorities should look beyond simplistic RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings, instead drawing on trends, benchmarking and clear narrative context to properly reflect nuance and drive meaningful improvement.

- 4.4.3 The new Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy aligns well with these guidelines overall. However, there remains scope for further improvement, particularly around moving beyond simple RAG ratings and incorporating trends, benchmarking and clearer narrative context to reflect nuance more effectively. Advancing these elements forms a key part of our ambitions for the year ahead.

4.5 Local Outcomes Framework

- 4.5.1 In February 2026 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the Local Outcomes Framework which sets out a clear set of national priorities for councils, focusing on tangible results rather than detailed central oversight. It aims to give local authorities greater stability and clarity, bringing key outcomes, such as safe housing, improved health, better early years support, and stronger neighbourhoods,

together in one place, so central and local government assess progress through the same lens. The full framework including final metrics is due to be published in April 2026, and a digital tool will be launching later this year.

4.5.2 It also sets out a defined list of priority outcomes, each supported by existing metrics, to help councils work with local partners to improve services and residents' quality of life. While some areas, like economic prosperity and child poverty, are shaped by wider forces, they provide important context for understanding local challenges. Overall, the framework is designed to support collaboration, transparency, and better decision-making across England.

4.5.3 Cherwell's KPIs have been initially reviewed against the KPIs proposed to date as part of the Local Outcomes Framework, some of our current ones align, however there is still further KPIs that can be added into our set to completely align, this is still a work in progress which the Performance and Insight team expects to conclude before the first reporting cycle of the new financial year

4.6 Summary of appendices

4.6.1 Below is a summary of the appendices included in this report:

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27: outlines Cherwell District Council's approach to managing performance and insight, setting out how reliable data, clear governance, and structured reporting cycles support better decision-making and service delivery. It explains the principles, tools, and responsibilities that ensure accountability and continuous improvement, helping the Council translate its strategic priorities into meaningful outcomes for residents.
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Performance KPIs 2026/27: contains all Key performance indicators proposed by services for the next year including owner, targets and frequency of reporting.
- Appendix 3 – Annual Delivery Plan 2026/27 with milestones: contains all external Annual Delivery Plan actions for 2026/27 with correspondent quarterly milestones.

4.7 Potential risks

4.7.1 The table below reflects the potential risks associated to rejecting the proposals presented in this report:

Risk ID	Risk Description	Potential Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
R1	Absence of quarterly milestones for some ADP actions leads to perceived inactivity during reporting periods.	Misinterpretation of progress, reduced transparency, and potential reputational impact.	Low–Medium	Medium	Refine milestones' setting to ensure further clarity during 2027/28 Annual Planning process; public reports will ensure narrative updates reflect ongoing work

R2	Performance system functionality may not keep pace with the evolving framework ahead of system renewal.	Inefficient reporting, reduced data quality, and delays to performance analysis.	Medium	Medium–High	Optimise system; complete organisational needs analysis; work with Digital Innovation Team on improvements.
R3	Lack of publicly reported organisational-level actions creates an external gap in representing internal improvement activity.	Reduced transparency and incomplete external narrative of organisational performance.	Low	Medium	Capture organisational performance in Corporate KPIs for 2027/28; cover internal improvement work through performance cover reports during 2026/27
R4	Misalignment with peer authorities and potential LGR partners limits comparability of performance.	Reduced ability to benchmark, inconsistent reporting, and missed opportunities for harmonisation.	Medium	Medium	Integrate benchmarking findings; conduct annual KPI alignment exercise; reflect LGA guidance during the 2027/28 Annual Planning Process.

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 review and approve the proposed Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27 with appendices.

Option 2: To do nothing or delay the decision(s). This option is not recommended, as democracy deadlines need to be met and systems need to be prepared with final approved Key Performance Indicators ahead of reporting cycle for the next financial year.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The proposed Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27 offers a clear and proportionate framework that strengthens governance, transparency and informed decision- making across the Council, ensuring that performance activity is firmly aligned with corporate priorities and future requirements.

6.2 Having addressed the recommendations from the internal audit, the strategy provides a robust foundation for delivering consistent, evidence- based insight in the year ahead.

6.3 Endorsing the strategy and associated appendices is therefore recommended, as doing so will safeguard continuity, reinforce statutory and democratic accountability, and

mitigate risks linked to delay, particularly in relation to planning cycles, system optimisation and preparation for potential Local Government Reorganisation.

Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026-27
Appendix 2	Proposed Performance KPIs 2026/27
Appendix 3	Annual Delivery Plan 2026/27 with milestones
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Chief Executive, Gordon Stewart Head of Chief Executive's Office, Kaimi Ithia 25 March 2026