Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Council Minute Book

Monday 20 July 2026

Contents

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 3 March 2026 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 Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities

In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing (Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, at the time of agenda publication)
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources

109 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Ford, who, as proposer of the motion, would be speaking in respect of item 7, Response to Motion: Free Parking on Remembrance Sunday; Councillor Dr Okeke, who as proposer of the motion, would be speaking in respect of item 8, Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Policy and Response to Motion: Supporting our High Streets"; and, Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group.

111 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

112 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

113 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

114 **Response to Motion: Free Parking on Remembrance Sunday**

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report to respond to the motion raised at Full Council in December 2025 requesting Executive to consider providing free car parking each year in Council owned and managed car parks on Remembrance Sunday.

Councillor Ford, who had proposed the motion at Council, thanked Executive for the positive response agreeing to implement the motion.

In considering the report, Executive members thanked Councillor Ford for bringing the motion forward. The provision of free parking in Council owned and managed car parks on Remembrance Sunday, was, as the motion set out, a practical and meaningful gesture of support for the Armed Forces community.

Resolved

(1) That free car parking be provided each year in Council owned and managed car parks, except those at Castle Quay, on Remembrance Sunday.

Reasons

Provision of free car parking in council owned car parks (excluding Castle Quay) supports Remembrance Sunday is a national day of remembrance to honour the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not supporting the motion could infer that the Council is not supportive of the wider purpose and aims of Remembrance Sunday.

115 Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Policy and Response to Motion, "Supporting our High Streets"

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to inform Executive of the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief and seek approval of the updated policy and respond to the motion from Council on supporting our high streets.

Councillor Dr Okeke, who had proposed the motion at Council, addressed Executive, commenting on the importance of supporting local businesses and thanked Executive for the response.

Resolved

(1) That the contents of the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be noted.

(2) That the policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be approved.

(3) That the response to the motion “Supporting our High Streets” be noted.

Reasons

The Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief policy was last reviewed in 2024. It is good practice to review policies to ensure they remain relevant and in line with supporting the delivery of the Council’s policies.

The report also sets out a response to the motion “Supporting our High Streets”. Council supports the intent of the motion and acknowledges the ongoing challenges faced by high streets, including changes in consumer behaviour, rising costs, and the legacy of wider economic disruption. Cherwell District Council has already taken, and continues to take, a range of targeted and place-based actions to support town centres and high streets, working closely with partners and stakeholders.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not approve the discretionary rate relief policy. Members could choose not to agree the proposed policy, but it would mean that we wouldn't be able to continue to support local businesses, charities and voluntary organisations and would also reduce our financial flexibility in the future. The local authority must have a system in place to allow a person to make the request.

116 **Housing Payments Policy**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to inform Executive of the reviewed policy for Housing Payment (HP), formally known as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), and proposed updates.

Resolved

(1) That the contents of the reviewed policy for Housing Payments be noted.

(2) That the policy for Housing Payments be approved.

Reasons

Housing Payments are vital for residents in the current economic climate and help to support our most vulnerable residents with housing costs. It is recommended that the policy is endorsed by Executive to continue delivering support to these customers.

Alternative options

Option 1: Returning the funds to Department for Works and Pensions has been rejected as this would not be in line with Cherwell's objectives of continuing to respond to the cost-of-living crisis and working to prevent homelessness.

117 **Biodiversity Duty Report 2024-2025**

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report to consider and endorse the Biodiversity Duty Report 2024-25.

Resolved

(1) That the Biodiversity Duty Report 2024-25 be endorsed.

(2) That it be noted following the completion and adoption of a Community Biodiversity Plan, an annual update be presented to the Executive.

Reasons

The Biodiversity Duty Report is presented for the reporting year 2024-25 to demonstrate what the Council is doing to conserve and enhance biodiversity, to highlight the relevant policies and objectives that are contributing to meeting the biodiversity objective and where delivery is being achieved. It also identifies the future actions necessary for on-going statutory compliance and to demonstrably improve the variety of the living organisms and ecosystems that comprise Cherwell's natural environment. Members are invited to endorse the report and the proposal for an annual report following the completion of the Community Biodiversity Plan which will also be presented to the Executive.

Alternative options

Option 1: The Executive could decide not to endorse the Biodiversity Duty Report. This option is not recommended as the Report will assist in meeting statutory requirements notwithstanding the on-going commitment to produce the Community Biodiversity Plan within the new Biodiversity and Climate Resilience Service.

118 **Whitelands Farm Sports Ground 3G**

The Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services (at the time of agenda publication) submitted a report to obtain Executive Approval to commence next steps on the development of a new 3G Football Pitch at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground in Bicester. The report outlined any financial risks.

In considering the report, Executive members commended the hard work of officers to secure external funds.

In response to comments from Councillor Ford and Councillor Sibley who welcomed and were supportive of the additional facilities but sought clarification regarding the communication and engagement with Bicester Town Council, the Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities explained he had spoken with the Bicester Town Council Policy Committee Chair regarding the signing of the lease agreement. The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing confirmed that CDC had answered all questions raised by Bicester Town Council and confirmed the lease arrangements had now been signed.

The Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities confirmed that he, together with the Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, would be happy to meet Bicester Town Councillors.

Resolved

(1) That the next steps in developing a new 3G Football Pitch at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground in Bicester, accounting for any financial risk, be approved.

Reasons

An opportunity has been identified to increase and enhance the leisure facilities within Cherwell with the development of a new 3G Football Pitch at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground in Bicester which would add to the current provision. The funding for the proposed new 3G pitch is through identified S106 and partnership funding of up to 75% of project costs with the Football Foundation.
It is recommended that officers are to be instructed to continue to work in partnership with the Football Foundation to seek to secure grant funding. Whilst there is a risk that should the Council not wish to proceed with the project even after a grant offer from the Football Foundation the level of this risk is capped at circa £35,000.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to apply for grant funding from the Football Foundation
This to be rejected on the basis that without Football Foundation/3rd Party Funding then the delivery of new facilities becomes unaffordable and the unmet demand for 3G pitches in Bicester remains. The ability to deliver on the actions within the Playing Pitch Strategy and provide excellent leisure facilities to residents is extremely important

119 **Finance Monitoring Report January 2026**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to report to the Executive the council’s forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the January 2026.

Resolved

(1) That the council’s financial management report as at the end of January 2026 be noted.

(2) That the Use of Reserves (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

(3) That Write Offs (exempt Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

(4) That the Corporate Debt Policy 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.

120 **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 1, 2 and 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.

121 **Finance Monitoring Report January 2026 - Exempt Appendix**

There being no questions on the exempt appendix, this had been agreed as set out under Minute 119.

122 **Thorpe Place Industrial Estate, Banbury – Roof Replacement**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of roof replacement at Thorpe Lane Industrial Estate Banbury.

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.

123 **Approval To Award a Contract for the Provision of the Council's HR and Payroll System and Managed Payroll Service**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted an exempt report to seek approval to award a contract for the provision of the Council's HR and Payroll System and Managed Payroll Service

Resolved

(2) 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 7.36 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 7 April 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

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

Apologies for absence:

Councillor David Hingley, Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities

Also Present:

Councillor David Rogers, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor John Broad

Officers:

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Ann Slavin, Cherwell Futures Director
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Michael Suddens, Head of Biodiversity and Climate Resilience
Mehmoona Ameen, Programme Manager
Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Steve Brown, Programme Manager – Environmental Services

124 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rogers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, and Councillor Broad to the meeting.

126 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

127 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair noted the tragic event that had resulted in the passing of Councillor Reeves' pet dog and, on behalf of Executive, extended condolences to Councillor Reeves and his family.

128 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

129 **Climate Action Plan 2026-27**

The Head of Biodiversity and Climate Resilience submitted a report to seek the Executive's approval of the Climate Action Plan for 2026-27.

In response to Executive member comments regarding the alignment of the action plan with those of other authorities and embedding in future plans in light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGE), Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services explained that currently different tier of local government were responsible for collection and waste disposal, LGR offered an opportunity to remove this and align. All local authorities CDC was working with in respect of LGR should be operation at peak performance, so would be ready to go at the relevant time.

Resolved

(1) That the Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the 2026-27 financial year be adopted.

(2) That it be noted that following the adoption of the Climate Action Plan, Executive will receive an annual update on delivery progress.

Reasons

The Climate Action Plan 2026-27 identifies actions and projects across a range of carbon emissions sources and enabling themes.

For Cherwell District Council, each action identifies the emissions area, the goals they would contribute towards, carbon saving potential and key performance indicators to monitor delivery progress. Council actions focus on carbon emissions from fleet, property, staff activities, procurement and enabling areas including funding, governance and monitoring.

For the district area, each action identifies the emissions area, the goals they would contribute towards and key performance indicators to monitor delivery progress. District actions focus on carbon emissions from transport, households, business, community and enabling areas including planning, evidence bases, communications and engagement.

Alternative options

Option1: Do Nothing: This option is not recommended as the previous action plan covered up to the end of 2025-26 financial year only. A refreshed CAP enables stronger programme management and likelihood of realising new opportunities to deliver the Council’s net zero ambitions.

Option 2: Delay Decision: This option is not recommended as this CAP covers the 2026-27 financial year only and a delay will reduce the potential impact and benefit of the plan.

Option 3: Do Not Adopt: This option is not recommended as this CAP supports the delivery of the Council’s strategic priorities and covers the 2026-27 financial year only, where a delay will reduce the potential impact and benefit of the plan.

130 **Response to the Planning Advisory Service's Planning Committee Review**

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report to advise the Executive on how the Council is responding to the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review of Planning Committee Decision Making.

In response to Executive member comments regarding the importance of the continuation of resident and community representation in the planning process, the Assistant Director Planning confirmed that the officer response to the recommendations would not impact on resident and public participation. The Statement of Community Involvement set out the consultation and engagement processes that would be used in preparing planning policy documents.

Resolved

(1) That thee work in progress in responding to the PAS recommendations and advice be noted.

Reasons

The PAS review of decision-making has put a constructive spotlight on the important work of the Planning Committee and the Development Management service. Significant changes have been made in response to the recommendations of PAS and work is continuing alongside corporate transformation and service improvement. The Council remains at risk of designation in significant part because of the legacy impact of the previous monitoring period. Close monitoring and management of decision making must continue in the interest of emerging from a position of risk and to avoid a similar position in the future. Very close working between officers and Members will be critical in supporting this.

Alternative options

There are no alternatives to the recommendations presented.

131 **Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27**

The Head of Chief Executive's Officer submitted a report which provided 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.

Resolved

(1) That the new Corporate Performance & Insight Strategy (Appendix 1 to the report) and the Key Performance Indicators (Appendix 2 to the report) be approved.

(2) That the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Milestones 2026/27 (as approved as part of the Budget) be noted.

(3) That, having given due consideration, 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 be noted.

Reasons

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.

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

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.

Alternative options

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.

132 **Updated Procurement Strategy**

The Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report which sought approval for the new Procurement Strategy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Procurement Strategy be approved.

Reasons

It is recommended that the Executive approves the development and adoption of a revised Procurement Strategy aligned with the Procurement Act 2023 and emerging priorities for the next two years. A shorter strategy period should be endorsed to allow for regular review and timely updates in response to legislative changes, market developments, and corporate priorities. The updated strategy should strengthen governance, support consistent practice across departments, and embed enhanced Social Value and environmental requirements, ensuring that procurement continues to deliver high-quality outcomes and value for money for our community.

Alternative options

Option 1: Remain with current procurement strategy - Without updated guidance, officers may interpret PA23 reforms differently, leading to inconsistent approaches, delays, or poor-quality procurement documentation, which can undermine effectiveness and accountability. The existing strategy may not capture new corporate priorities around Social Value, sustainability, climate action, and carbon reduction. This limits the Council’s ability to maximise community benefits and deliver on its environmental responsibilities.

Option 2: A longer-term Procurement Strategy would not be a viable option, as it would risk becoming outdated and misaligned with the rapidly changing procurement landscape, particularly in light of the new requirements introduced by the Procurement Act 2023 and the ongoing developments in Social Value, sustainability, and environmental obligations. Legislative, technological, and market conditions are evolving at pace, and a fixed five-year strategy would lack the flexibility needed to respond to these changes effectively. A shorter strategy period ensures the Council can remain agile, regularly update its priorities, and maintain a governance framework that reflects modern best practice, emerging initiatives, and the Council’s evolving corporate objectives.

133 Acceptance of MHCLG Large-Scale Housing Development Grant Funding

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which sought approval of associated budget virement, and to agree programme delivery and governance arrangements in respect of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provision of £500,000 of specific grant funding for non-statutory feasibility work to test the strategic case for large-scale housing development. This included capacity funding, technical studies and financial modelling.

The Chair noted that Councillor Rogers had submitted questions in respect of this item. In response to comments from Councillor Rogers, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration explained that the funding allowed for non-statutory feasibility work to test the strategic case for large-scale housing development and one of the first tasks would be to look at the governance arrangements.

Resolved

(1) That it be agreed to increase both the Regeneration and Economy income budget in recognition of the grant income and the expenditure budget for associated works.

(2) That authority for the development of a programme in support of the grant objectives be delegated to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

(3) That it be noted that procurement of specialist consultancy support and other external resources required to deliver the programme will be undertaken in accordance with the Council’s constitution and

procurement procedures and that further authorisations may be required as individual commissions are scoped.

Reasons

The £500,000 MHCLG preparatory funding provides an important opportunity for the Council to lead the feasibility assessment of Heyford Park as a potential large-scale new settlement. The programme is fully externally funded with no call on Council resources, and the MoU provides a clear framework for delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

The budget virement to recognise the grant income and associated expenditure requires Executive approval. Accepting the grant and establishing the delegation and governance arrangements sought in this report will enable the programme to be delivered efficiently within the required timescales, while ensuring that procurement and other internal governance requirements are met.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not accept the MHCLG funding.
This would mean the Council would not participate in the feasibility programme for Heyford Park as a potential new settlement. The £500,000 grant would not be drawn down. The Council would lose the opportunity to shape the evidence base and strategic case for one of the largest development sites in the district. Given the scale of the planning application already submitted, there is a strong case for the Council to be actively engaged in understanding the infrastructure implications and delivery options. This option is not recommended.

Option 2: Accept the funding but defer programme commencement until later in the financial year.
This would delay the start of feasibility work, creating a risk of not meeting MHCLG’s delivery timetable and the reasonable endeavours requirement to spend in a timely manner. Given the MoU was only signed on 12-13 March 2026, the programme timeline is already compressed. This option is not recommended.

134 **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 provision 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.

135 Outline Business Case – Digital Planning Improvement Programme

The Executive Director Place & Regeneration submitted an exempt report which sought agreement of the outline Business Case – Digital Planning Improvement Programme.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(3) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(4) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(5) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

136 Environmental Services Operational Transformation and Improvement

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted an exempt report to seek Executive agreement to progress the Environmental (Operational) Transformation Programme to Full Business Case.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(3) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(4) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

137 Outline Business Case: Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Front Door

The Executive Director Resources submitted an exempt report which sought agreement of the outline business case: Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Front Door.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(3) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(4) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(5) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

138 Approval to Appoint a Contract for the Provision of a Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Service

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted an exempt report which sought approval to award a contract for the reactive repair and maintenance of Council owned and managed assets.

Resolved

(6) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

139 Property Management Contract, Castle Quay Centre, Banbury

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the award of contract for the provision of Property Management Services at Castle Quay Shopping Centre and Lock 29, Banbury, following completion of the final stage of the competitive procurement process.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) 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 8.11 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 16 June 2026 at 5.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration) (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services
Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Frank Ideh, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets
Councillor Alisa Russell, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Lisa Smith, Portfolio Holder for Lesiure

Also Present:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys, Leader of Reform UK Group
Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader, Conservative Group
Councillor Mark Gorman

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Les Sibley

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety
Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management
Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Economy

Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Sean Tilbury, Planning Enforcement Team Leader
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Geoff Taylor, Head of Property and Assets
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions.

The Chair advsied there was one request to address the meeting, from Parish Councillor John Offord, Chair of Hornton Parish Council, on item 7, Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction.

3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair referred to the change of date and time for future Executive meetings confirming that the website had been updated and updated meeting requests sent to reflect the change.

5 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

6 **Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction**

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report to inform the Executive of the recommendation to proceed with a targeted non-immediate Article 4 Direction restricting temporary use permitted development rights, and to set out the legal and procedural steps required for the Direction to be made and confirmed.

The Chair referred to correspondence from lawyers instructed on behalf of Hornton Parish Council and explained that officers had responded to the letter accordingly. The content of the letter was not for discussion at Executive.

Parish Councillor John Offord, Chair of Hornton Parish Council addressed Executive.

In introducing the report, the Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement thanked officers in planning and legal for their hard work and extended thanks to Hornton Parish Council, neighbouring parishes and local residents for their time spent on this complex issue.

The Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement explained that the recommendation struck the appropriate balance between allowing the longstanding activity to continue whilst ensuring the council could exercise proportionate control where needed. It was a forward-looking preventative measure that was evidence based and policy compliant and would restore the council's ability to manage the scale and operation of the events through the planning system where necessary.

Resolved

(1) That it be agreed to make the following non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

(2) That the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to finalise the wording of the Article 4 Direction and to undertake all necessary procedural steps to give effect to the Direction, including issuing the Direction, undertaking statutory consultation, notifying the Secretary of State, and reporting back to the Executive for confirmation following consideration of representations.

(3) That the process for making, consulting upon and confirming an Article 4 Direction, including notification to the Secretary of State and consideration of representations prior to confirmation be noted.

Reasons

It is proposed that the Executive resolves to make a targeted, non-immediate Article 4 Direction expressly designed to maximise the prospects of confirmation and to enable proportionate planning control should future evidence justify intervention, as set out below:

The development permitted pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any successor order) shall not include use of the land for motor racing:

i. on the day each year of Easter Sunday or
ii. on the day each year of Remembrance Sunday or

iii. on the day each year of Christmas Day or
iv. on the day each year of New Years Day or
v. on the first Bank Holiday Monday in May or
vi. on 11 November or
vii. on any day between the hours of 6:00pm and 9:00am.

The development permitted pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any successor order) shall not comprise use of the land for any motor racing event which involves the attendance at any event of more than 120 motor racing participants (riders) unless in accordance with the provisions of an Event Management Plan (EMP) for the specific event which in advance has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The EMP shall address, proportionately to the event's scale:
traffic, parking and noise management.

Informative: In preparing and updating the EMP, which may be submitted annually, the applicant is advised to engage with the Safety Advisory Group and include a statement summarising Safety Advisory Group feedback and how it has been addressed.

Factors in favour:

- A high volume of complaints has been received alleging harm to residential amenity, transport conditions and the environment. The Council considers there is a significant potential for planning harm were an Article 4 Direction not pursued.
- Wroxton Motocross would retain the ability to apply for planning permission for temporary uses of land, providing appropriate regulatory oversight.

Alternative options

Option 1: Make a non-immediate Article 4 Direction unconditionally removing the application of Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
This option is rejected because, on balance, a qualified Article 4 Direction would result in a more proportionate approach, recognising the historic nature of the land use and toleration of motor racing activity. A qualified Direction is considered more likely to withstand challenge and therefore maximises the prospects of successful control, as opposed to seeking the full removal of permitted development rights, which would carry a greater risk of failure.

Option 2: Do not make an Article 4 Direction.
This option is rejected because, on balance, the evidence base indicates there is some harm to residential amenity and transport from the current scale and nature of the operation, and, in the absence of a Direction, the Local Planning Authority does not have an effective means to manage the scale and operation of events undertaken under permitted development rights. The Council therefore considers it expedient to make an Article 4 Direction and undertake a statutory consultation.

Option 3: Make an immediate Article 4 Direction.
An immediate Article 4 Direction is considered to be disproportionate. It would give rise also to a significant risk of compensation liability under the GPDO, in respect of abortive expenditure or losses directly attributable to the withdrawal of permitted development rights where such expenditure had already been incurred. This potential liability would arise irrespective of the merits of the Direction and could not be reliably quantified in advance. The Council considers that this exposure represents an unacceptably high financial risk, such an intervention is not necessary and that the benefit/risk assessment therefore clearly favours a non-immediate approach.

7 Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report for Executive to consider the Examiner's report on the draft Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (the Draft Neighbourhood Plan") to determine whether the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating modifications should proceed to referendum.

Councillors Pattenden and Hingley, ward members for Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote, commended the work to date and commented on the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan for Bloxham Parish Council.

Resolved

(1) That all the Examiner's recommendations and modifications to enable the Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating the recommended modifications be approved to proceed to a referendum.

(2) That the issue of a 'decision statement' confirming the Executive's decision including that the Neighbourhood Plan will now proceed to a referendum be authorised.

(3) That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised to make any minor presentational changes and corrections necessary to ready the Neighbourhood Plan for referendum.

Reasons

The draft Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan Review has been independently examined and is recommended by the Examiner for referendum subject to the incorporation of a number of modifications. Officers agree with the Examiner's conclusion. It is therefore considered that, with the recommended modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requisite Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to accept all the Examiner's recommendations.
Where a local planning authority proposes to make a decision that differs from the Examiner's recommendations it is required to set out these reasons in a

Decision Statement which would be subject to further consultation. Officers consider that the Examiner's recommendations should be accepted.

Option 2: Not to accept the Examiner's recommendations and not to proceed to a referendum.
Option 2 could only be justified if the Examiner recommends that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to a referendum, or the Council is not satisfied that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has met the procedural and legal requirements. Officers consider that the Examiner's recommendations should be accepted and are of the view that the procedural and legal requirements have been met.

8 Response to Motion: Keep Cherwell Tidy

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which outlined the response to the motion submitted to Full Council in March 2026 calling for a campaign to "Keep Cherwell Tidy". As the motion fell within the remit of the Executive powers, it was referred to the Executive.

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Rebecca Biegel, who had confirmed she had no further comments and did not wish to speak at Executive.

Resolved

(1) That the response to the motion be noted.

(2) That the extensive efforts already underway to keep Cherwell tidy be endorsed.

(3) That the development of a series of campaigns throughout the year on keeping communities tidy, rather than a single campaign in March, which will better reflect the different needs of rural environments throughout the year be endorsed.

Reasons

The Council is already undertaking the activities outlined in the council motion, and therefore it is recommended that we continue delivering this vital programme through Environmental Services.

Alternative options

Option 1: Stop activity
These activities are already planned as part of the annual service delivery Environmental services. Stopping them would make the district less tidy and dirtier and prevent us from tackling perpetrators of fly-tipping and making them pay

9 Response to Motion: Consultation on move to three-weekly collections

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which outlined the response to the motion submitted to Full Council in March 2026 requesting clarity on any consultation on changes to our waste collection service. As the motion fell within the remit of the Executive powers, it was referred to the Executive.

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Eddie Reeves, who had confirmed he had no further comments and did not wish to speak at Executive.

Resolved

(1) That the response to the motion be noted and the commitment to extensive consultation on any proposed changes be endorsed.

(2) That it be noted that there is no decision to proceed with three weekly collections, and this response outlines how any consultation on any proposed significant changes to the service would be conducted in the future.

Reasons

The council has committed to a thorough and meaningful consultation on any large-scale changes to waste collection and environmental services, including moving to three weekly collections.

This is the only option that both meets the Executive's commitment to "listening to residents" and delivers best value for money when making any changes. It also ensures that future services are designed with residents at the heart of what we do.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do minimal consultation
The Executive has committed to thorough and meaningful consultation on this area, with a commitment to "listening to residents" as a core principle throughout the council's work. Only conducting a minimal consultation would not meet the expectations set by Executive for Cherwell, and as such is not a recommended option.

Option 2: No consultation
Doing no consultation would not only fail to meet the Executives commitment to "listening to residents but would also expose the council to legal challenge on any significant changes to the service. This would increase costs, delay implementation, and not provide best value for money for the council.

10 Banbury Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Variation

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report sought consideration of a proposed variation to the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Banbury town centre, following public consultation.

Resolved

(1) That the introduction of the proposed variation to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Banbury town centre be approved.

Reasons

The results of the consultation show support for the variation to the current PSPO in Banbury Town Centre from the public and stakeholder organisations. Therefore, the Executive is recommended to approve the variation to the current PSPO in Banbury Town Centre

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to vary the PSPO.
This option is not recommended. The information gathered to support the variation of the PSPO for Banbury town centre demonstrates that there is a continuing problem with ASB occurring in and around Banbury town centre. The consultation outcomes show strong support for the variation of the PSPO to continue to tackle this problem.

11 Housing Civil Penalties Policy

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for the new Housing Civil Penalties Policy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Housing Civil Penalties Policy be approved.

Reasons

It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Alternative options

Option 1: Retain existing policy
This is an option that could be taken. However, it would have the following implications:

- Policies will not adequately reflect the statutory duty to enforce under section 107

- Ongoing risk of inconsistency across England
- Reduced clarity for officers, landlords and tenants
- Higher likelihood of legal challenge and policy failure under scrutiny
- Reputational risk for ineffectively implementing the Renters' Rights Act

This option is therefore rejected.

12 Housing Enforcement Policy

To Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for the new Housing Enforcement Policy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Housing Enforcement Policy be approved.

Reasons

It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Alternative options

Option 1: Retain existing policy
This is an option that could be taken. However, it would have the following implications:

- Policies will not adequately reflect the statutory duty to enforce under section 107
- Ongoing risk of inconsistency across England
- Reduced clarity for officers, landlords and tenants
- Higher likelihood of legal challenge and policy failure under scrutiny
- Reputational risk for ineffectively implementing the Renters' Rights Act

This option is therefore rejected.

13 Community Event Parking in Banbury and Bicester

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report to seek Executive approval to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, to approve the temporary closure or operational use of Council parking spaces or car park areas in Banbury and Bicester for civic, commemorative and community events.

The proposal related to the temporary use of parking areas to facilitate the operation of events and does not constitute the provision of free parking for event attendees.

Resolved

(1) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, to approve the temporary closure or operational use of District Council parking spaces or car park areas in Banbury and Bicester for civic, commemorative and community events where there is a demonstrable public benefit.

(2) That it be confirmed that commercial or profit-generating events will continue to be subject to the appropriate fees and charges in accordance with the Council's adopted schedule of fees and charges.

Reasons

The proposed delegation formalises the Council's longstanding approach to supporting established civic, commemorative and community events through the temporary operational use or closure of limited parking areas where required to facilitate event delivery. The proposal does not provide free parking for attendees but enables appropriate operational flexibility to support events which provide clear community and town centre benefit.

Granting delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, provides a proportionate governance framework. It removes the need for repeated Executive reports for recurring events while maintaining appropriate Member oversight and ensuring that commercial events remain subject to the Council's adopted fees and charges.

Alternative options

Option 1: Require full payment of parking charges for all events
This option was considered but rejected. Military and civic commemorative events are held in recognition of public service and align with the Council's commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant. Requiring payment in these circumstances would be inconsistent with established practice and could undermine the Council's visible support for such events.
In the case of town centre civic and community events, the temporary closure of limited parking areas is typically operational in nature and required to facilitate the safe delivery of the event itself. These arrangements support wider town centre vitality, footfall and community engagement.

Option 2: Continue to require separate Executive approval for each event
This option was also rejected as it results in unnecessary administrative delay and repeated reporting for a small number of established, recurring events. Delegated authority provides a proportionate governance approach while retaining appropriate Member oversight.

14 Request for Strategic Development Funding

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report to request an allocation of £250k from the Strategic Development Fund reserve (£400k) to progress economic development and regeneration activity.

Resolved

(1) That an allocation from the Strategic Development Fund of £250k to commission an Economic Plan for Cherwell district and a masterplan for Bicester town centre be agreed and it be noted that monies would be spent according to CDC financial and procurement regulations led by the Regeneration & Growth (R&G) service.

(2) That it be agreed to renew Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire (£15k) for 2026/27, utilising existing service budgets and to agree to consider allocating funds in future years as part of the budget-setting process.

Reasons

This report seeks to agree to an allocation from the Strategic Development Fund of £250k to commission an Economic Plan for Cherwell district and a masterplan for Bicester town centre.

Monies would be spent according to CDC financial and procurement regulations led by the Regeneration & Growth (R&G) service.

The report also seeks to agree to renew Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire (£15k) for 26/27, utilising existing service budgets and to agree to consider allocating funds in future years as part of the budget-setting process.

The proposed commissions will help to position the council ahead of future LGR, setting out a clear vision and action plan for economic growth as well as a comprehensive framework for one of the district’s primary urban centres. This is particularly important given the scale of development envisaged in the Bicester area over the coming years.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not proceed with the development of an Economic Plan for Cherwell and a Bicester Masterplan. This alternative would not provide a good foundation for the delivery of the council plans of the coming years or foundation blocks as LGR is enacted.

Option 2: Do not proceed with the development of a Bicester Masterplan. This is likely to lead to a more fragmented approach to development and not address the needs of existing communities.

Option 3: Do not proceed with the development of an Economic Plan for Cherwell. As Option 1, this would not provide a good foundation block ahead of LGR and would not meet the action set out in the Annual Delivery Plan.

Option 4: Do not proceed with renewal of Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on efforts to support and grow the visitor economy in Cherwell, as referenced by current work to develop a Visitor Economy and High Streets Strategy.

15 **Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring End of Year Report 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and Head of Chief Executive's Office submitted a report to report to Executive the council's year-end financial, performance and risk position as of the end of financial year 2025-26.

Resolved

(1) That the council's finance, performance, and risk management report as at the end of financial year 2025/26 be noted.

(2) That the capital outturn position be noted and the capital reprofiling (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

(3) That the use of reserves and grant funding detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be approved.

(4) That the use of reserves to be released in 2026/27 (set out in Appendix 6 to the report) be approved.

(5) That the balanced outturn position for 2025/26 after the proposed contributions to reserves be noted.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the year-end financial, performance and risk 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 financial, performance and risk position up to the end of the financial year 2025-2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

16 **Appointments to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, Member Champions and Shareholder Committee 2026/27**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report to appoint representatives to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, where these are executive functions, Member Champions and the Shareholder Committee, for the municipal year 2026/2027.

Resolved

(1) That appointments to partnerships, outside bodies, the Shareholder Committee, Member Champions and advisory groups for the 2026/2027 municipal year be made as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

(2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to appoint Members to any outstanding vacancies and make changes to appointments, including new appointments, as may be required during the 2026/2027 Municipal Year.

(3) That appointed Members be reminded to update their Register of Interests as may be required, to reflect these appointments.

Reasons

It is proposed that representatives are appointed to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, Shareholder Committee and as Member Champions as set out at Appendix 1 to ensure that the Council is represented and maintains links with partnerships and outside bodies.

Delegation to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader provides flexibility for the remainder of the Municipal Year to appoint to any outstanding vacancies, or if amendments are required to any appointments, and ensures they are made in a timely manner.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to appoint representatives to outside bodies, partnerships and as Member Champions. This is not recommended as the internal working groups would be ineffective and the Council would not be represented on these outside bodies and could miss valuable information and opportunities.

17 **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 item 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.

18 **Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) - Property Services - Facilities Management - Managed Buildings**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report to seek Executive approval for the award of contract to deliver statutory Planned Preventative Maintenance services across operational buildings managed by the Property Services Facilities Management Team.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) 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 7.10 pm

Chair:

Date:

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 18 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

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

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Besmira Brasha

Also Present:

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

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Ian Middleton
Ed Lambert-Martin, Internal Audit - Veritau
Stuart Limb, Internal Audit - Veritau
Mark Bartlett, External Audit, Bishop Fleming

Officers:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Ruth Wooldridge, Health and Safety Manager
Mary Denedo, Strategic Finance Business Partner

72 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

73 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

74 Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

75 Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

76 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

77 Health and Safety Report Quarter 3 2025/26

The Assistant Director of Human Resources submitted a report to provide the Committee with an update on the Council's Health and Safety performance for Quarter 3 of the 2025/26 financial year.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that the majority of health and safety incidents involved Environmental Services as this was the highest risk area within the Council. To help mitigate, the Health and Safety Manager has been spending three days per week at the depots to support their safe operations.

In response to a question regarding the completion of mandatory online health and safer training across the council, the Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that managers were able to monitor their team's training progress and confirmed that staff were able to complete the training modules in work time.

The Committee was advised that in autumn 2025 a HSE Inspector had visited the Castle Quay offices to look at how asbestos was managed in council buildings. This is a UK wide initiative with HSE Inspectors visiting local authorities across the country as there is concern about the amount of asbestos present in public buildings.

In response to a question regarding the policy of reversing large recycling vehicles, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services explained that it was expected there would always be someone behind the lorry to help the driver to reverse. Any breach of this policy was taken extremely seriously and could lead to disciplinary action.

Resolved

(1) That the Health and Safety Report Quarter 3 2025/26 be noted.

78 **Risk Based Verification Policy**

The Assistant Director Finance submitted a report to seek approval of the reviewed Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy for 2025/26.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration outlined the Risk Based Verification process. The policy enabled low risk claims to be processed more quickly with minimal disruption and freed up resources to be targeted at the higher risk claims which aligned with best national practice.

In response to a request for comparative data with previous years it was agreed that this would be circulated to Committee members after the meeting.

Resolved

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Risk Based Verification policy for the financial year 2026/27 be approved.

79 **Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025-26**

The Head of the Chief Executive's Office 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 advised that there was one score change within the Leadership Risk Register and this related to risk L05 - Planning Applications for Major Development which had been increased from Medium to High.

In response to a question regarding the potential for incorporating additional performance metrics to monitor the performance of the Castle Quay shopping centre, the Committee was advised that any changes to the performance measures would need to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it was responsible for the monitoring, reviewing and scrutinising of council services. If agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this would be included in its recommendations to Executive.

In response to a query regarding the risks associated with the Cherwell District Council's Local Plan (risk LA3), the Assistant Director of Planning explained that a recent interim report from the Oxford Growth Commission had highlighted potential additional housing requirements in the Oxford area that would possibly impact on the District's own Local Plan. Central government had not yet responded to the Commission's report.

In response to a question regarding the increase from medium to high for Planning Applications for Major Developments (risk L05), the Assistant Director of Planning explained that this was largely due to the fact that the data used to measure performance against the 10% threshold for applications overturned at appeal, came from the 2022-2024 period which contained a larger number of these type of decisions. The next reporting period was likely to provide a similar outcome as it would also include legacy data. The Assistant Director of Planning advised that transformation and improvement work was ongoing.

Resolved

(1) That the Risk Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 2025-26 be noted.

(2) That the proposal to add additional performance indicators relating to Castle Quay shopping centre, be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and possible onward recommendation to Executive.

80 **Draft Annual Report of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee 2025/26**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted the draft annual report of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee for the financial year 2025/26. It had been prepared to enable the Committee to demonstrate to Council how it had fulfilled its terms of reference.

In introducing the report, Ed Lambert-Martin, Audit Manager at Veritau, provided the Committee with details on how it had discharged its duties during the 2025/26 period through the reports it had reviewed. Members were advised that Veritau planned to carry out a self-assessment exercise in the next financial year to review the effectiveness of the Committee against the CIPFA position statement.

Resolved

(1) That the draft annual report be finalised in preparation for the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee Chair’s presentation to Council.

81 **Internal Audit Progress Report 2025/26**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery of the 2025/26 internal audit work programme up to the end of February 2026.

In introducing the report, Ed Lambert-Martin, Audit Manager at Veritau explained that three audits had been finalised since this was reported to the Committee at their meeting 19 November 2025. These were IT Asset Management, Cyber Security user awareness training and utilities management follow up.

In response to a question regarding the delayed implementation of the new card payment system, the Committee was advised that a new system had now been procured but it was still in the process of being installed. Veritau was waiting for an update on the revised timescale for this.

In response to a question regarding an action raised as part of the utilities management audit in particular an expected credit for utility payments relating to the Banbury Museum, the Audit Manager at Veritau explained that an external report commissioned by the Museum's Trust had been delayed. Follow up would continue until a conclusion was reached.

Resolved

(1) That the progress made in delivering the 2025/26 internal audit work programme be noted.

82 **Internal Audit Work Programme 2026/27 and 2027/28**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which provided the Committee with the programme of internal audit work to be undertaken in 2026/27 along with an indicative work programme for 2027/28.

In introducing the report, Ed Lambert-Martin, Audit Manager at Veritau explained that due to the ongoing process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), it was prudent to consider assurance requirements and priorities over the next two financial years rather than just the forthcoming period.

In response to a question regarding the impact of LGR on the internal audit work programme in particular the potential for priorities to change, the Audit Manager at Veritau advised that the focus may change but this was dependent on the outcome of the LGR decision.

Resolved

(1) That the 2026/27 internal audit work programme be approved and the indicative 2027/28 internal audit work programme be noted.

83 **Counter Fraud Progress Report**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which provided an update on counter fraud work undertaken so far in 2025/26.

In introducing the report, Stuart Limb, Corporate Investigations Manager at Veritau highlighted that Veritau continued to provide fraud awareness training. In November, training had been presented to the Corprоate Leadership Team and a further session was planned with the Executive Leadership team.

The Corporate Investigations Manager confirmed the volumes of referrals and investigations carried out was normal for the size of the council. In addition to its own referrals, Veritau shared fraud alerts from the National Anti-Fraud Network with relevant council departments.

Resolved

(1) That the update on the counter fraud progress report 2025/26 be noted.

84 **Counter Fraud Plan Report**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to update the Committee on the counter fraud plan for 2026/27.

In introducing the report, Stuart Limb, Corporate Investigations Manager at Veritau provided an overview of the plan, which was largely informed by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption that identified the main areas of risk.

In response to a question regarding the level of reactive investigations in relation to proactive ones, the Corporate Investigations Manager at Veritau explained that it was important that referrals from officers were followed up in a timely manner. They were treated as a priority to ensure that staff were motivated to continue making appropriate referrals.

In response to a question about the use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to detect fraud the Committee was advised that at present appropriate software was not yet available but technology continued to develop.

Resolved

(1) That the 2026/27 Counter Fraud Plan be approved.

85 **2024/25 Final Statement of Accounts**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to ask the Committee to note the final audit results and annual report of the council's external auditors in relation to the 2024/25 statement of accounts

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration confirmed that the 2024/25 statement of accounts had been published by the statutory deadline of the 28 February 2026 with a disclaimer opinion. There had been one further change from the draft accounts that had been presented on the 19 November 2025, which related to the Council's loan to Crown House Banbury Limited.

In response to a query regarding the timeframe for moving to an Unqualified opinion on the financial statements, the Director at Bishop Fleming advised that the roadmap was in place and was on schedule for the 2026/27 final accounts.

Resolved

(1) That the final 2024/25 Statement of Accounts and the associated changes between the draft and final versions be noted.

(2) That the final letter of representation for 2024/25 be noted.

(3) That the final Auditor's Annual Report and Audit Completion Report from the council's external auditors, Bishop Fleming, be noted.

86 **External Audit Plan 2025/26**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report outlining the External Audit Plan for 2025/26 from the Council's external auditors, Bishop Fleming LLP

Mark Bartlett, Director at Bishop Fleming explained that whilst the audit plan was largely similar to previous years, a change had been introduced relating to the frequency of the valuation of land and buildings following instructions from HMRC. The Committee was also updated on the process of moving to an Unqualified opinion by 2026/27.

Resolved

(1) That the External Audit Plan for 2025/26 be noted.

87 **Treasury Management Report - Q3 2025/26 (Dec 2025)**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and treasury management policy for Quarter 3 2025-26 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The report set out that the Council had operated within the Treasury and Prudential indicators as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025-26.

In response to a question regarding the reduction in the capital expenditure forecast due to the re-profiling of the spend, the Head of Finance explained that this had included the removal of the proposed new depot at Bicester from the programme to pipeline. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration confirmed that the reprofiling was not due to potential changes stemming from Local Government Reorganisation but was a result of the auditing of the capital programme to ensure that items included in the programme were deliverable.

In response to a request for the current interest rate percentage to be included in the borrowing table, the Head of Finance agreed that this would be added to future reports.

Resolved

(1) That the Treasury Management Q3 2025/26 report be noted.

88 **2025/26 Accounting Policies**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which asked the Committee to review and approve the Accounting Policies for inclusion in the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts which were due to be published by 30 June 2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that the main change related to the methodology used for the valuation of the non-investment operational assets that had been introduced to ensure that asset values were kept materially accurate.

Resolved

(1) That the accounting policies as recommended by the Chief Finance Officer be approved.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Audit and Governance Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 May 2026 at 7.25 pm

Present:

Councillor Simon Lytton (Chair)
Councillor David Rogers (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Mark Gorman
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julian Nedelcu
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Alisa Russell

1 **Appointment of Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Parkinson and seconded by Councillor Rogers that Councillor Lytton be appointed Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Simon Lytton was duly elected Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 **Appointment of Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Lytton and seconded by Councillor Russell that Councillor Rogers be appointed Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor David Rogers was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Audit and Governance Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 17 June 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Simon Lytton (Chair)
Councillor David Rogers (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Mark Gorman
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julian Nedelcu
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Nelly Lukwo, Independent Person, no voting rights
Sarah Thompson, Independent Person, no voting rights

Substitute Members:

Councillor Lesley McLean (In place of Councillor Alisa Russell)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Alisa Russell

Also Present:

Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Frank Ideh, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance
Ed Lambert-Martin, Internal Audit - Veritau
Stuart Limb, Internal Audit - Veritau

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Ruth Wooldridge, Health and Safety Manager

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 18 March 2026 and 20 May 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

6 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

7 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

8 **Health & Safety Quarter 4 2025-26**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to provide the Committee with an update on the Council's Health and Safety performance for Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance explained that as in previous reporting periods, the majority of incidents involved Environmental Services as this was the highest risk area for the Council. Each incident was investigated and corrective action taken where necessary including training, supervision and monitoring.

In response to a question regarding Graph 1, that showed the percentage of time lost due to sickness, the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed that this was the percentage for each service and was not based on the actual numbers of staff in each department. The higher percentage for Environmental Services was largely due to there being a higher number of manual staff, who were unable to work from home, unlike office based staff, for illnesses that did not require workers to be absent under agile working principles.

In response to a question regarding the audit of community centres and if there was a potential risk arising from the change in status of the relationship between the council and the community centres, the Assistant Director

Human Resources and Healthy and Safety Manager undertook to provide details to Committee members after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding the resource level to manage health and safety issues within the Environment Services department, the Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that the significant level of risk associated with the activities undertaken within the service required additional support and expertise to ensure the risks were mitigated as much as possible. The Assistant Director Environment Services outlined the processes in place for new starter induction of new employees and ongoing training for existing employees, which took place on a regular basis and following any accidents. It was reiterated that line management for health and safety rested with supervisors and that the Health and Safety team visited the depots regularly to provide support to the arrangements in place.

Resolved

(1) That the Health and Safety Report Quarter 4 2025/26 be noted.

9 **Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 4 2025-26**

The Head of Chief Executive's Office submitted a report to update the Committee on how well the Council was managing its strategic risks.

In introducing the report, the Leader (of the Council) – Strategic Partnerships and Regeneration (Councillor McLean) confirmed that there were no score changes in the Leadership Risk Register during the last quarter of the 2025-26 financial year. High and medium risks remained under close review with mitigating actions in place.

The Committee was advised that as the risk register reflected the final quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, it did not include any changes in light of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) recently placing the council under government designation for major developments. The Leader – Strategic Partnerships and Regeneration explained that once further review of the impact had concluded, the risk register would be updated accordingly.

Resolved

(1) That the Risk Monitoring Report for Quarter 4 2025-26 be noted

10 **Head of Internal Audit Annual Report 2025-26**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which presented the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report for 2025/26 which summarised internal audit work undertaken in 2025/26 and provided an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

In introducing the report, Ed Lambert-Martin, Internal Audit Manager at Veritau advised the Committee that for the 2025-26 financial year the Head of Internal Audit's opinion was that "Reasonable Assurance" could be provided on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control. One significant control weakness had been identified which was considered relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, the council's utilities management arrangements.

In response to a question regarding the significant control weakness, the Internal Audit Manager explained that progress had been made to address issues identified in the utilities management audit issued in January 2024, however weaknesses remained relating to the fragmented responsibilities, limited oversight and financial risk exposure. Actions to address these had been identified and included the appointment of a specialist external company. Veritau would conduct further work to confirm the action had been completed and weaknesses addressed.

In response to a request for an update on the internal audits that were currently in progress, the Internal Audit Manager advised that the audit work on Section 106 agreements was currently being reviewed, the Crown House and Graven Hill audit was scheduled for submission to the September Committee meeting. Work had only just commenced on the Project management relating to the Bicester Market Square audit.

Resolved

(1) That the results of internal audit work undertaken, and the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit that Reasonable Assurance can be provided on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control be noted.

(2) That the update on Veritau's quality assurance and development arrangements, including the confirmation that the internal audit service conforms to public sector internal auditing standards be noted.

(3) That it be noted that one significant control weakness had been identified by internal audit during the year which was considered relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, this being: the council's utilities management arrangements.

11 Counter Fraud Annual Report 2025-26

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which presented the Counter Fraud Annual Report for 2025/26.

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) explained that the council's counter fraud service was delivered by Veritau. The savings realised from work undertaken were approximately the same as its costs.

In response to a question regarding the significant increase in the number of referrals made to the Counter Fraud Team, the Corporate Investigations Manager explained that this did not necessarily represent an increase in the level of fraud and was likely due to a heightened awareness among staff of the risk of fraud. The Corporate Fraud Manager undertook to provide comparative data in future reports to assist the Committee to understand trends.

In response to a query regarding the outcomes of fraud investigations, the Corporate Investigations Manager advised that if significant issues were identified in a particular area, the Internal Audit team (Veritau) would be notified to determine whether a full investigation should be undertaken.

Resolved

(1) That the Counter Fraud Annual Report 2025-26 be noted.

12 **Treasury Management Report - Outturn 2025/26**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and compliance with the Treasury Management Policy for 2025-26 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The report also demonstrated that all treasury management activities undertaken during the reporting period complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that as at 31 March 2026 the Council had borrowings of £144M, with investments of £16M, which resulted in a net borrowing of £128M. This reflected a £16M decrease on the net borrowing position as at the end of March 2025 and was largely due to a £14.6M discount received from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) following the early repayment of a 50 year loan.

In response to a question relating to the rationale of borrowing from other Councils rather than using the PWLB whose rates seemed lower, the Head of Finance explained that the PWLB rates were no longer available and that other council lending rates were now better than the PWLB ones.

Resolved

(1) That the Treasury Management Performance Report – Outturn 2025/26 be noted and that Council be recommended to receive the report.

13 **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 8.20 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 10 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Les Sibley

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present:

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

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Partnering & Controls
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property

41 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

42 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

44 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

45 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

46 **December Monthly Performance Report 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to the committee to report the financial position at the end of the financial year 2025/2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised the committee that the year-end forecast position for 2025/26 was projected to be an overspend of £3.024m against an £18.893m budget. Services with the largest pressures reported were within Property, Environmental Services and Wellbeing and Housing.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised that the forecast overspend was partially offset but corporate underspends in the areas of Executive Matters and Policy Contingency.

Resolved

(1) That the report be noted.

47 **Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Policy and response to motion from Council Supporting our high street**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform Budget Planning Committee of the reviewed Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief policy and the response to the motion from Council on supporting our high streets. This was submitted to the 3 March Executive for decision and was submitted to Budget Planning Committee for information.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised the Committee that the provision of Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief allowed the council to offer targeted financial support where the national framework did not provide relief or where additional local discretion was justified.

In response to a question from the Committee asking if the Leader had written to the Secretary of State and copied the relevant Members of Parliament, which was included in the motion to Council motion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property confirmed that the Leader had written to the Secretary of State and copied the relevant Members of Parliament but no response had yet been received.

Resolved

(1) That the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be noted.

(2) That the response to the motion to Council, subsequently referred to and agreed by Executive, be noted.

48 Review of Committee Work Plan

In considering the Committee Work Plan, the Assistant Director of Finance advised that the inclusion on "Business Rates Reset Consultation" for the 30 June 2026 was an error and would not be heard at the forthcoming meeting.

Resolved

(1) That the work programme be noted.

49 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 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.

50 Car Park Revenue

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in response to the request from Budget Planning Committee for information about parking revenue, expenditure and if free parking had any impact on footfall in town centres.

Resolved

(1) That the exempt report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.19 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 20 May 2026 at 7.32 pm

Present:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Mark Gorman
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Bryonie Wells

1 **Appointment of Chair for the Municipal Year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Harwood and seconded by Councillor Pattenden that Councillor Reeves be appointed Chair of the Budget Planning Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Eddie Reeves was duly elected Chair of the Budget Planning Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 **Appointment of Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Hingley and seconded by Councillor Ideh that Councillor Beckett be appointed Vice-Chair of the Budget Planning Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Cherry and seconded by Councillor Reeves that Councillor Vaitkus be appointed Vice-Chair of the Budget Planning Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Vice-Chair, a vote was taken. There were seven votes for Councillor Beckett and four votes for Councillor Vaitkus, with one committee member not voting.

Councillor Tom Beckett, having received the most votes, was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Budget Planning Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

General Licensing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 18 February 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Chris Pruden

Officers:

Jan Southgate, Health Protection, Compliance & Licensing Manager
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead
Rebecca Wise, Trainee Solicitor

Officers Attending Virtually:

Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Amanda Ward, Licensing Enforcement Officer

10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

11 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business

12 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair’s Announcements.

14 **New Cherwell District Council Street Trading Policy**

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report to seek approval from the General Licensing Committee for the New Street Trading License Policy.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager outlined the new Cherwell District Council Street Trading Policy for adoption from the 1 April 2026.

In response to the question, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager confirmed that the DBS basic check would be introduced in this new policy as a requirement and that this was required for public safety and to allow applicants to be evaluated for suitability to hold a licence.

Resolved

(1) That the new Cherwell District Council Street Trading Policy be approved for adoption from the 1 April 2026 be approved.

15 **New Cherwell District Council Pavement Licence Policy**

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report to seek approval the new Pavement Licensing Policy for adoption from the 1 April 2026 to ensure that the Council’s policy reflected the current Government guidance be approved.

In introducing the report, The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that the policy had been developed in response to legislative provisions enabling businesses, particularly hospitality venues to place furniture such as tables and chairs on the highway. The policy aimed to balance support for local economic activity with the need to ensure public safety, accessibility, and amenity.

In the course of the discussion, Committee Members considered the need to strike an appropriate balance between supporting local businesses and safeguarding the public realm. Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on pedestrians and the practicalities of enforcing licence conditions.

Members also highlighted concerns about ensuring sufficient space for wheelchair users and visually impaired pedestrians, as well as avoiding cluttered pavements, and sought assurance that the policy included robust protections for vulnerable users.

In response to a question, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing

Manager confirmed that appropriate accessibility standards were incorporated within the policy and advised that enforcement mechanisms were in place to address non-compliance.

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that the policy included provision for consultation and flexibility in its application. The Committee was further reassured that the policy was consistent with current legislation and reflects local requirements.

Resolved

(1) That the new Pavement Licensing Policy be approved for adoption from 1 April 2026

The meeting ended at 6.52 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

General Licensing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 May 2026 at 7.35 pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu (Chair)
Councillor Chris Pruden (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Lisa Smith
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Michael Wilson

1 **Appointment of Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Biegel and seconded by Councillor Pruden that Councillor Dr Elugwu be appointed Chair of the General Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu was duly elected Chair of the General Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 **Appointment of Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Smith that Councillor Pruden be appointed Vice-Chair of the General Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Chris Pruden was duly elected Vice-Chair of the General Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.36 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Licensing Acts Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Acts Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 May 2026 at 7.36 pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu (Chair)
Councillor Chris Pruden (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Lisa Smith
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Michael Wilson

1 **Appointment of Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Biegel and seconded by Councillor Pruden that Councillor Dr Elugwu be appointed Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There were no further nominations.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu was duly elected Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 **Appointment of Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027**

It was proposed by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Smith that Councillor Pruden be appointed Vice-Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Biegel and seconded by Councillor Webb that Councillor Ahmed be appointed Vice-Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Vice-Chair, a vote was taken. There were six votes for Councillor Pruden and five votes for Councillor Ahmed, with one committee member not voting.

Councillor Chris Pruden, having received the most votes, was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.38 pm

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 27 January 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight

Also Present:

Councillor David Hingley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
David Spilsbury, Head of Digital Innovation
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Charlene Greenaway, Transformation Consultant
Heidi Radcliffe Hill, Interim Head of Chief Executive's Office
Lucy Wainwright, Transformation Programme Manager
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

46 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

47 **Minutes**

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

48 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair’s announcements.

49 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

50 **Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025 - 2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Head of the Chief Executive Office that detailed the council’s performance position at the end of quarter 3 2025-2026.

In introducing the report, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership advised that the Council was performing well against its quarter 3 objectives, with 88% of measures on target or within tolerance.

Out of the 34 total measures, four reported red, 12 were amber and 18 were green. On the annual delivery plan there were 15 milestones to deliver in quarter 3, five of which had been achieved or were within the agreed tolerance, eight slightly behind target, and two were behind target.

Members were also advised that of the 12 targeted corporate key performance indicators, eight achieved their Q3 target or reported within the agreed tolerance, and three reported slightly behind target, and 1 was red.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Council’s Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025 - 2026 performance be noted.

51 **Executive Response to the Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Committee considered the Executive responses to four sets of recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following the presentation of the scrutiny reports to the Executive on 7 October 2025.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership gave a brief introduction to the report.

Members were advised that as part of recommendation 1.2 regarding the progress and implementations of recommendations, actions would be logged in a tracking document that would be submitted to Committee as a progress check in approximately six months' time.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Executive Response to the Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations be noted.

(2) That the progress/implementation of recommendations be monitored, with an update scheduled for the July 2026 meeting of the Committee.

52 **Cherwell Futures Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources detailing updates on the Council's Cherwell Futures Programme, focused on governance improvements, standardisation, workforce development, and the agreement of priorities.

In introducing the report, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership gave a presentation detailing the progress of the Councils transformation through the Cherwell Futures Programme. The programme aimed to make financial savings from streamlined efficiencies whilst improving and protecting council services

Members were advised that the programme was on track to achieve its medium-term financial target savings of 3-4 million pounds, through efficiency and structural savings.

In response to a question regarding whether there was oversight of the various project boards, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership explained that there was the Transformation and Change board as well as further oversight from Executive members.

In response to a question regarding whether the programme included any resources dedicated to ecological improvements, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership explained that the programme in its current form focussed on three main points; Customer Front Door, Planning Transformation and Environmental Services improvement, and that the forthcoming Climate Action Plan due to be published would detail further plans for ecology and greenhouse gas emissions for the District.

In response to a request from the Committee, officers agreed to produce a diagram to illustrate the makeup and relationship between the various project boards referenced in the presentation.

In response to a question regarding the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on staffing structures and potential redundancies, the Executive Director Resources explained that any impact would depend on a business case evaluation.

In response to a question regarding a possible delay in the introduction of new waste collection timetables ahead of Local Government Reorganisation to ensure that resources in the meantime were not in vain, the Executive Director, Resources explained that the Cherwell Futures Programme would not carry out abortive work and that any work commenced would be with the intention of positioning the District in the best possible place for leading processes during Local Government Reorganisation.

In response to a question regarding advanced technology integration and back up support for communication services such as internet and whether council data was securely stored, the Head of Digital and Innovation advised that the Council had back up for both internet and telephone lines, and that the Council operated on a cloud based service with cyber security was at the forefront of operations. Members were also advised that the Councils IT services were subject to mandatory comprehensive security assessments known as the Public Services IT Health Check that ensured services were resilient and compliant against cyber security threats.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Cherwell Futures Programme update be noted.

53 **Work Programme Update**

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

Members were advised that the Temporary Accommodation update had been moved from the January meeting to March 2026, due to Officer availability.

Members were advised that officers were in discussion to ensure that the Performance of S106 delivery report was ready to be brought to the March committee.

Members were advised that the March meeting of the committee would include the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report ahead of its submission to Full Council.

Members were also advised of the following additions to the 2026-27 work programme; Kidlington Illegal Landfill Lessons learnt, Monitoring of the implementation of the Working Group recommendations to Executive.

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 7.22 pm

Chair:

Date:

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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 24 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill (for Labour Vacancy)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Gemma Coton
Vacancy (Labour Group)

Also Present:

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder Corporate Services

Also Present Virtually:

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

Officers:

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Charlotte Baylis, Housing Management Team Leader
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office

Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management
Sean Tilbury, Planning Enforcement Team Leader

54 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

55 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

56 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

57 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

58 **Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Chief Executive Office that provided an overview of the 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.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that the report set out a clear framework to link the Corporate Delivery Plan, Annual Delivery Plan and Service plans to move emphasis from reporting metrics in isolation with the aim to provide meaningful evaluation to support decision making and service outcomes.

Members were also advised that the report responded directly to the findings of the 2025 internal audit and performance management framework. A total of 16 Corporate and 28 Directorate performance indicators were proposed with a benchmarking exercise comparing Cherwell's key performance indicators (KPIs) with those used by potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) partners, as well as reflecting recommendations from the Local Government Association to ensure better alignment of decision making for preparations for LGR.

In response to a question regarding the ability of quarterly reporting cycles to efficiently handle emergency situations, the Performance Team Leader explained that work was being carried out to introduce an ongoing performance monitoring structure to work alongside the current reporting cycle, to ensure that measures were in place to help monitor and mitigate any potential issues as they occurred.

In response to a question regarding the inclusion of indicators for tracking climate change, the Performance Team Leader explained that a separate Climate Action Plan was in production that would include dedicated KPIs and actions related to climate change within the district.

In response to a question regarding LGR and its potential impact on the Climate Action Plan, and whether a strategy for solar energy would be at the forefront, the Corporate Director of Communities explained that both the Climate Action Plan and the emerging Solar Strategy were still in draft and yet to be reviewed by the Executive.

In response to a question regarding the time frames allocated to targets and KPI’s, the Performance Team Leader explained that all targets and time frames were discussed with the service line and benchmarked against national targets.

In response to a question regarding a contradiction in the wording regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the district, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that they would liaise with officers to better clarify the wording for future reports.

In response to a question regarding the omission of measured targets for certain KPIs the Performance Team Leader explained that where appropriate figures were displayed as percentages, but the baseline figures were available for officers, and that other targets without measures were in the process of baseline monitoring with the intention for true targets to be included going forward.

In response to a question relating to a recommendation forwarded from the Accounts, Audit and Risk committee regarding the inclusion additional performance indicators relating to the environmental and social value of Castle Quay, members were asked to endorse the recommendation

It was proposed by Councillor Vaitkus and seconded by Councillor Lytton that the recommendations as set out in the report, as well as the additional recommendation relating to the inclusion of further performance indicators in relation to Castle Quay, be included.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27 be noted with the following comments to be submitted to the Executive for consideration:

- That consideration be given to 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) That having given due consideration, the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Milestones 2026/27 be noted.

59 **Temporary Accommodation Policy Presentation**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Assistant Director of Wellbeing and Housing Services that detailed the councils Temporary Accommodation Policy.

Members were advised that the policy outlined the provision of temporary accommodation (TA) as part of the councils' statutory duties, and that TA was used when households presented as homeless and were categorised as Priority Need., 'Priority Need' status was a legislative test.

Members were advised that TA was provided either within units of residential accommodation or within hotels, and that when the council either found someone permanent accommodation or had no duties to continue housing them, the TA duty ended.

Members were also advised that demand for TA was rising rapidly, driven by affordability issues, complex needs, and crisis presentations and that the Council was shifting away from expensive, unsuitable hotel use toward owned/self-contained accommodation. there was also a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention, increasing housing supply

In response to a question regarding the rise in more complex needs of households, as well the rise in needs due to reports of domestic violence, the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services explained that the perceived rise in complexity could be contributed to national initiatives to increase awareness of domestic violence scenarios, as well as officer training to help identify needs.

In response to a question regarding the building of suitable housing for council stock, whether officers had given thought to the creation of a housing revenue account and whether the onset of LGR had an impact on any present and future plans, the Head of Housing explained that the government had revised its thresholds for housing revenue accounts, but temporary accommodation did not contribute towards it. The council had a capital scheme in place to aid in the purchasing of properties suitable for temporary accommodation. Members were also advised that the impact of LGR on the council's position on TA was unknown, but government incentives were in place to ensure that development of housing was at the forefront of local authorities' agendas.

In response to a question regarding the inspection and quality control of housing that was being acquired for the use of TA, the Head of Housing explained that all properties were vetted and assessed before use, and that most properties were newly built for purpose.

In response to a question regarding the comparison in cost effectiveness of the Tenancy Sustainment Programme compared to TA and whether budgets set were adequate to sustain such programmes, the Head of Housing explained that focus was given to prevention initiatives but due to legislative restrictions, once a household presented as homeless they would have to be dealt with as such and therefore tenancy sustainment would not be possible.

In response to a follow up question regarding whether the council was doing everything it could to help prevent and mitigate homelessness within the district, the Head of Housing explained that there was always more work to be done, and that officers were tackling high caseloads, but priority was given to cases where the most work could be done to help.

In response to a question regarding the role Councillors had in helping officers with their work on housing and homelessness, the Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing explained that signposting to services and relevant officers was the best way to support the service.

In response to a question regarding the involvement of enforcement tactics in relation to Council Tax arrears for residents that were already facing housing crises, the Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing explained that there were discretionary funds available that were subject to stringent criteria and reviewed on a case by case basis. , There was also a dedicated policy regarding revenue and benefits that detailed options available to officers and residents.

In response to a question regarding the reduction in the use of hotels for temporary and emergency accommodation, the Head of Housing explained that the reduction was linked to many factors such as acquisition of suitable alternative accommodation and local and national demand, as well as national trends in cost of living and affordability crises that have an impact on the demand and supply of accommodation in the district.

Resolved

(1) That the Temporary Accommodation Policy Presentation be noted.

60 **Response to the Planning Advisory Service: Review of Planning Committee Decision Making**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director Planning that aimed to advise the Committee on how the Council was responding to the Planning Advisory Service review of Planning Committee decision making.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that a review of the Council's decision-making on planning applications for major developments was undertaken in 2025 by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) which formed part of the Local Government Association (LGA). Members were advised that the review was undertaken for the period April 2022 to March 2024, due to the percentage of the Council’s decisions overturned at appeal having slightly exceeded the nationally prescribed threshold of 10%.

Members were advised that the review concluded that the Council had an effective planning committee with professional, knowledgeable officers and members who understood planning issues and the importance of following officer advice. However, a number of recommendations were made in the interest of improvement;

- Improve early member engagement at pre-application stage
- Standardise and strengthen site visit procedures
- Introduce 24 Hour cut-off period prior to committee for late submissions
- Increase member involvement in planning appeals
- Improve understanding of planning enforcement
- Enhance clarity of officer reports as well as required considerations
- Strengthen member training programme
- Reintroduce developers’ forum
- Review legal representation at committee

In response to a question regarding decisions that go against officer recommendation and the resulting appeal determination, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that PAS concluded that members were overly influenced by local objection and not evidence-based planning considerations in their decision making process.

In response to a question regarding the removal of a questions section before debate within Planning Committee meetings to allow for a more natural flow of questions and debate, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that this had been considered but consensus amongst members and officers was mixed, and that the potential introduction of pre-meetings could help alleviate the volume of questions asked within the meetings.

In response to a question regarding member participation in Planning Committee as well as pre-committee site visits for members who were in full time employment, and whether consideration could be made for such members, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that due to the technical intricacies of planning applications and their impact on the length of committees resulted in meetings needed to be held earlier in the day to allow time for full consideration of applications brought before members.

In response to a question regarding the involvement of Parish Councils at the pre-application stage, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that due to the confidentiality of applications at the pre-application stage, involvement was restricted. Members were advised that officers were working on the possibility of ward members involvement at pre-application stage, to better articulate localised issues and requirements.

In response to a question as to whether planning forums and training could be made available to all members of the council and not limited to Planning Committee members, the Assistant Director Planning explained that internal and developer planning forums were already open to all members, and that officers would ensure any training provided would also be open to all members, should they wish to attend.

In response to a question regarding the criteria for approving applications for development on land prone to flooding, the Head of Development Management explained that for applications on such sites, officers would consult with the Environment Agency, the local flood authority and the local draining provider, and a flood risk assessment would be carried out to assess whether the site would be acceptable for development.

It was proposed by Councillor Wood and Seconded by Councillor Thornhill that the Committee support the suggestion from PAS that consideration be given to dispensing with the questions stage before a debate (para 6.1 of the PAS report), and it be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

Resolved

(1) That the Response to the Planning Advisory Service: Review of Planning Committee Decision Making report be noted.

(2) That Executive be advised that Overview and Scrutiny support the suggestion from PAS that consideration be given to dispensing with the questions stage before a debate (para 6.1 of the PAS report)

61 **Performance of S106 Delivery**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director Planning that provided an overview of the Section 106 agreement and infrastructure delivery process, and a review of infrastructure delivery in Cherwell from a health perspective.

In introducing the report, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement advised that Section 106 (S106) agreements secured infrastructure contributions to mitigate the impacts of development.

The Council was required to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) setting out contributions secured, received, held and spent. The report provided an overview of the S 106 process and highlighted the factors that influenced both the securing and delivery of obligations, with a focus on health contributions in Cherwell.

In response to a question regarding the implementation of infrastructure as a result of development, with particular focus on health provision, and whether in lieu of input from parties such as the Integrated Care Board (ICB) the Council be eligible to fulfil the role of developer, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration explained that should the situation arise, the council would have powers to act in such a capacity, but market interest and input from suitable developers with better market intelligence would be sought first.

In response to a question regarding the expansion of primary care provision as a result of developer contributions as part of S106 agreements, and whether the Council had any involvement in the ICB's decision making process for requesting sufficient funds to support growth in housing provision within the District, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration explained that the Council had the powers to request involvement in that process, but were not in that position currently.

In a follow up question regarding the Committee's ability to make recommendations to the Executive on expansion of primary care provision, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration advised that such involvement would result in the Council's intervention in the aforementioned processes officers would have to take that away for further discussion.

In response to a question regarding whether the lack of requests for funding from the ICB was linked to staffing provision issues, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that the Council was not privy to that information and therefore could not comment on the reasoning behind the ICB's decisions.

In response to a question regarding S106 contributions for healthcare from 48% of developments since 2021 and whether the remaining 52% was made up of developments that did not require health contributions, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that the contributions were received from the development of residential sites and that not all of those sites included within the percentage demonstrated a need for contributions for health provisions.

In response to a question regarding what S106 contributions would typically be used for the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that contributions would consist of capital contributions with the intention of building improvements, and any contributions would be subject to demonstrable need.

Resolved

(1) That the Performance of S106 Delivery presentation be noted.

(2) That the key findings for health contributions currently held by the Council and trends in health contributions secured between 2019/20 and 2024/25 be noted.

62 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report - 2025-26**

The Committee considered a report of Assistant Director – Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (OSC) constitutional obligation to report annually to Council on function of their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

The Committee were asked to consider and approve the draft annual report for 2025-26, for submission to full Council. The report provided a summary of the subjects covered by OSC during the previous Municipal Year, highlighting key observations and outcomes of discussions.

Members were advised that due to the timing of the draft report, information would need adding to reflect the discussions had at this meeting. Delegated authority was therefore requested for the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair, to finalise the report as required for its submission to full Council in May.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report – 2025-26 be noted.

(2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Chair, to finalise the report for submission to full Council

63 **Work Programme Update**

The Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead provided an update on the Committee's Work Programme 2026 – 2027.

Members were advised that there would be a detailed work programme planning discussion at the first meeting of the committee at the start of the new municipal year 2026 – 2027, at which point the indicative items can be discussed in detail and proposed dates for consideration could be agreed by members. Should the committee be minded the set-up of any dedicated working groups could also be considered.

In response to a question regarding requests from the public for items to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and whether mention of this mechanism could be included on the work programme for the benefit of the public, the Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead explained that topics listed on the work programme were often a result of suggestions from elected Members, who may have had subjects raised with them by residents the topics with their elected representative., Consideration would be given to the possibility of highlighting the opportunities for the public to suggest items for the work programme.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the Work Programme 2026 – 2027 be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.22 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 4 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chair)
Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Rob Pattenden

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

31 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

32 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 21 November, 3 December and 10 December 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

33 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised that she would be standing down at the forthcoming elections in May and thanked Committee members for their work and support during her time as a member and Chair of the Committee. The Chair paid particular tribute to Councillor Coton as Vice-Chair of the Committee and thanked officers for their help and support.

34 Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

35 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

36 Policy Review Updates

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to seek approval from the Personnel Committee on proposed changes to eight HR policies: Parental Leave Policy; Paternity Leave Policy; Probation Policy; Compassionate Leave Policy; Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy; Court Attendance Policy; Honorarium Policy; Health and Safety Policy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, explained that the Policies were part of a rolling programme of updates that aimed to review policies on a 3-year cycle to ensure that they remained compliant and reflected current practices.

In response to a question regarding whether there were any operational challenges to implementing and maintaining HR policies within the organisation, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that work was ongoing to ensure that policies were up to date with government legislation and could be easily comprehended and utilised. They were important in providing guidance to staff, and where there were issues there was flexibility to amend as needed.

In response to a question regarding the inclusion of more gender neutral and inclusive terms within the Parental and Paternity Leave policies the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed that the HR team would review, and amend where considered appropriate, the current terminology, .

Resolved

(1) That, having given due consideration, the following policies be approved for implementation:

- Parental Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Probation Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy
- Court Attendance Policy
- Honorarium Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

37 Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 3 of 2025-26

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to update the Committee on Cherwell District Council's workforce as at the end of quarter 3 of 2025/26, including measuring staff well-being and highlighting the actions officers were taking to address any issues.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, advised that there were no issues, risks or concerns to highlight.

In response to a question regarding the effects of staff absences on the waste collection department, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that there were issues relating to both staff absence as well as vacancies that have been impacting the service, but that HR Business Partners were working with department managers to rectify and recruit.

In response to a question regarding reasons provided by staff leavers, and whether there were any follow up actions or tracking for patterns, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that several measures were in place to monitor responses to exit interviews and should any concerns arise they were escalated appropriately.

In a follow up question regarding the low completion rate of exit interviews and whether interviews were held in an impartial manner, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that exit interviews were not mandatory but encouraged, and that interviews were undertaken by a member of the HR team to ensure that they were open and impartial.

Resolved

(1) That the workforce profile statistics for quarter 3 of 2025/26 (financial year dates) be noted.

38 Gender Pay Gap Report

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report which provided the Committee with the latest Gender Pay Gap report for information ahead of it being published on the council's website by 30 March 2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder Corporate Services advised Members that the Gender Pay Gap report outlined a mean difference in pay between men and women of 3.1%, with men earning an average of £0.65 more an hour than women. For the fourth year in a 4-year period, there had been no median pay difference between men and women. Even with a mean difference of 3.1% CDC remained significantly lower than the national public sector mean pay gap of 12.3%, and the median pay gap of 13.5%.

In response to a question regarding management development and training for female staff and whether processes were in place to encourage equal opportunities for senior roles within the organisation, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the Council was a equal opportunity employer and that the recruitment process was under review with the aim to understand and remove barriers that may prohibit progression and opportunities for all staff.

Resolved

(1) That, having given due consideration, the Gender Pay Gap Report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.18 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 May 2026 at 7.39 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Chair)
Councillor Julius Parker (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Paul Jeffreys
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Nigel Simpson
Councillor Bryonie Wells

1 Appointment of Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Creed and seconded by Councillor Dr Faltermeyer that Councillor Biegel be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Popescu and seconded by Councillor Jeffreys that Councillor Jeffreys be appointed Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Chair, a vote was taken. There were ten votes for Councillor Biegel and two votes for Councillor Jeffreys.

Councillor Rebecca Biegel, having received the most votes, was duly elected Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2026/2027

It was proposed by Councillor Pruden and seconded by Councillor Wells that Councillor Parker be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Popescu and seconded by Councillor Jeffreys that Councillor Jeffreys be appointed Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

There being two nominations for the position of Vice-Chair, a vote was taken. There were ten votes for Councillor Parker and two votes for Councillor Jeffreys.

Councillor Julius Parker, having received the most votes, was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The meeting ended at 7.43 pm

Chair:

Date: