



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Council Minute Book

Monday 19 October 2026

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 13 July 2026 at 4.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services
Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets
Councillor Dr Lisa Smith, Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Frank Ideh, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance
Councillor Alisa Russell, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys, Leader of Reform UK Group
Councillor David Rogers, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Officers:

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Ann Slavin, Cherwell Futures Director
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Economy
Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Geoff Taylor, Head of Property and Assets
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property

Andy Bowe, Strategic Transport and Infrastructure Lead Officer
Mehmoona Ameen, Programme Manager

19 **Declarations of Interest**

17. Banbury Museum Utility Charges.
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Other Registerable Interest, as a trustee of Banbury Museum and would not vote on the item.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair referred to the recent announcement that, unfortunately, Banbury had been unsuccessful in its Town of Culture bid.

The Chair advised that the decision in relation to Local Government Reorganisation was due this week. Updates would be provided when information was available.

The Chair explained that she would address the 20 July Council meeting in relation to the council being officially designated by the Secretary of State on 15 June 2026 for decision making on major developments.

The Chair reported that a new Planning Inspector had been appointed for the independent examination of the Cherwell Local Plan 2042. Whilst no timeframe had been set, assurance had been given that the examination would move forward as soon as possible.

Referring to the death of former MP Ann Widdecombe at the weekend, the Chair implored all Members to ensure they are aware of their personal safety and to interact with Operation Ford.

23 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

Purchase of Housing Accommodation

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to put the necessary approvals in place for the Council to be able to purchase suitable property with funds within the capital programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the Head of Housing be authorised to determine the requirements of the additional housing (including location and specification), tenancy and rent setting and manage the acquired housing in accordance with obligations of the Council as a Registered Provider of Social Housing.
- (2) That the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with Assistant Director Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be authorised to make initial offers and begin the appropriate due diligence, once appropriate freehold or leasehold properties have been identified and it be noted that a separate report to seek final approval for the exchange of contracts to purchase property will be submitted to the Executive, this will then enable the purchase of property above financial thresholds.

Reasons

The report is necessary to assist in the delivery of the project aims and funding agreed within the budget

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not grant the authorisations

This is the status quo option. This would lead to delays and would likely mean that the Council would be delayed in closing deals and entering negotiations, which could prove counterproductive to the purpose of the agreed funding.

Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for the expenditure of capital grant received from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 4.

Resolved

- (1) That a capital grant to South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) of £342,100 for the delivery of new social housing within Cherwell from the grant received from MHCLG; Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4 be approved.
- (2) That it be approved that the remaining £319,900 grant be used to provide temporary accommodation units enabled by the Council, in accordance with grant criteria.

- (3) That the increase to the Council's capital programme of £342,100 that arises from the report be approved.

Reasons

The report will enable more affordable housing within the district, which is required to address demand pressures. It will not directly enable the planned self-contained temporary accommodation purchase to take place, but will reduce the amount of its own capital that the Council has to use when doing so.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to transfer the grant to SOHA and use another provider. All Registered Providers operating locally were given the opportunity to work with the Council and SOHA were the only ones to submit a compliant expression of interest. This is therefore rejected.

Option 2: The Council deliver all units. The Council is under time pressure to deliver units in accordance with the conditions of the grant and SOHA have an established reputation for delivery. The Council does have funds within the Capital Programme to purchase and develop temporary accommodation. Due to this, the report proposes to retain some of the grant to offset potential borrowing. However, the Council does not have capital within the capital programme for general property purchases (for resettlement households in this instance) and housing development that the grant could assist with. This is a requirement of the grant. This is therefore rejected.

Option 3: Not deliver any units. This would lead to the return of the grant to MHCLG. This would lead to the inability to offset any potential capital usage for temporary accommodation that is within the capital programme through grant usage. This is therefore rejected.

26 Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) Development and Governance

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report to advise the Executive of the interim governance and working arrangements for the preparation of a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

Resolved

- (1) That the interim governance arrangements for the Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy be noted.
- (2) That officers be instructed to request that the Council be formally co-opted as a 'partner authority' with Leader representation on the Spatial Development Strategy Partnership Board until such time that a 'Strategic Planning Board' is formally established.

- (3) That it be noted that the Executor Director Place and Regeneration will advise the Executive if the Council is not confirmed as a co-opted 'Partner Authority'.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration to agree detailed working arrangements for the pre-inception development of the Spatial Development Strategy in consultation with the Assistant Director Law and Governance.

Reasons

Completing an SDS for the Thames Valley by mid-2029 will be challenging. Progressing early preparatory and informative work ahead of secondary legislation is sensible and the governance and working arrangements proposed in the County Council's report will support the process. However, there remains some uncertainty about the co-opting of district councils and whether the Leader will have a seat on the Partnership Board. It is therefore recommended that the Council seeks confirmation of its co-opted partnership status and representation.

Alternative options

The Executive could decide not to seek formal co-opting as a 'partner authority' ahead of the establishment of a statutory Strategic Planning Board. However, it is considered to be in the best interests of Cherwell's communities to be as embedded as possible in the SDS process.

27

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) Final Report

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which presented the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and sought the Executive's endorsement following the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee endorsing the OxIS on 24 April 2026.

Resolved

- (1) That the final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy be endorsed.

Reasons

The final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy is a comprehensive countywide assessment of the strategic infrastructure needs to support sustainable development to 2050. It was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee on 24 April 2026 following a proactive approach to the Strategy's development with other Oxfordshire local authorities. It provides a potential tool for the prioritisation and funding of infrastructure projects and evidence for promoting the infrastructure needs to a wider range of audiences. Engagement included technical stakeholders has contributed to the final.

Further collaboration with stakeholders will be required Oxfordshire local authorities progress the delivery of infrastructure to support growth.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not endorse the OxIS – by not endorsing the Strategy, the Council would not benefit from the use of the data, and outputs it provides, in informing future plans and strategies.

Option 2: Endorse the Strategy – this is the recommended option.

Option 3: Endorse the Strategy with amendments. Officers have actively engaged in the preparation of the OxIS as part of the project working group from procurement to the final outputs and deliverable. The final reports meet the requirements of the project brief, and no further amendments are required.

28

Local Area Development Funds - Proposal for Allocation

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which set out the first tranche of projects – discussed and recommended by Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) – for Local Area Development Funding. This funding was agreed as part of the annual budget setting process by Council on 23 February 2026.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed to allocate £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects for the 2026/27 financial year as discussed and recommended at the respective Area Oversight Group:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k *27/28: £38.5k	Banbury
-	-	Bicester
-	-	Kidlington
Total Funding Requested	£21,500	
<i>* Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.</i>		

- (2) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, to agree final cost plans for the above projects subject to the maximum cost envelope outlined in Figure 1.

Reasons

This report seeks to agree an allocation of £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds for delivery of specific projects in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.

The proposed projects are supported by the respective AOG and support the council's priorities around delivering economic prosperity and community leadership.

Alternative Options

Option 1: Do not proceed with projects proposed - Funds have already been allocated as set out in Section 4 and priorities have been agreed by Area Oversight Groups. This report is intended to utilise some of this funding for enhancements identified by ward councillors as representatives of our communities. Doing nothing means that identified priorities will not be funded and commitments made to the district as part of the budget setting process will not be fulfilled.

29 Finance Monitoring Report May 2026

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the May 2026.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's financial management report as at the end of May 2026 be noted.
- (2) That the use of reserves and grant funding detailed in the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

Reasons

The report updates the Executive on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2026/27. 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 2027, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

30 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.

31

A New Arts Centre for Banbury

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted an exempt report in respect of a new Arts Centre for Banbury.

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.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

32

Cherwell Futures Customer Front Door Programme – Final Business Case

The Executive Director Resources submitted an exempt report for Executive to consider the Cherwell Futures Customer Front Door Programme Final 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.
- (5) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (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.

33 The Hill Youth and Community Centre - Lease to The Hill Banbury CIC

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of The Hill Youth and Community Centre - Lease to The Hill Banbury CIC.

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.

34 Banbury Museum Utility Charges

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted an exempt report in respect of Banbury Museum utility charges.

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.

(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.

35

Renewal of Lease at Castle Quay

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of a lease renewal at Castle Quay.

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 6.26 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 7 September 2026 at 4.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets
Councillor Dr Lisa Smith, Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Apologies for absence:

Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Alisa Russell, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Also Present:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys, Leader of Reform UK Group

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor David Rogers, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
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
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Economy
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Steve Brown, Programme Manager – Environmental Services
Richard Smith, Head of Housing

36 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair advised that Councillor Sibley had requested to address the Executive on item 7, Local Area Development Funds – Proposal for Allocation.

38 **Minutes**

Subject to an amendment on exempt Minute 31 regarding shared funding, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair made the following announcements:

1. Information had been received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Local Plan, which was continuing through the process and which would move forward in due course. The Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement thanked officers for their hard work to date.
2. The consultation period for Site A – Bicester Garrison was between 7 and 17 September and it was important all parishes were aware.
3. The Parish Liaison Meeting scheduled for 10 September would be cancelled in light of the Government announcement to pause Local Government Reorganisation.
4. There was a CEO sleepover at the beginning of October, which members of the Executive would be taking part in. More information would be provided in due course.
5. The Monitoring Officer and members of the legal team would be representing Cherwell District Council taking part on the Local Government Challenge on Friday 11 September raising money for the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research.

6. The Government had earlier in the day announced its decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Leader explained that she had communication from the BBC at lunchtime in relation to this and communication from the Government at 4pm. It was disappointing the Government had advised the media before local authorities. There was still no clarity on what the decision meant beyond local elections taking place in May 2027 as they would have done without LGR.

40 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

41 Local Area Development Funds - Proposal for Allocation

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which set out the next tranche of projects that had been discussed and recommended by Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) for Local Area Development Funding. This funding was agreed as part of the annual budget setting process by Council on 23 February 2026. The report also provided an update on projects previously approved for funding by the Executive in July 2026.

In introducing the report, the Leader thanked the Head of Regeneration and Growth and council officers supporting the work for their comprehensive work and detailed updates.

Councillor Sibley addressed Executive expressing support for the projects in Bicester. In response to a question if the funds could be used to further extend the opening of public convenience at Manorsfield Road from March 2027 to March 2028., the Leader confirmed that the Bicester business case set out the longer-term funding arrangements would be considered by the Bicester AOG in due course.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed to allocate £524k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects for the 2026/27 financial year as discussed and recommended at the respective Area Oversight Group and to agree to add the capital projects to the capital programme:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)		AOG
	RDEL	CDEL	
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation – Look and Feel Phase 2		£100k	Banbury
Pioneer Square Conveniences (Manorsfield Road)	£26k		Bicester
Langford Village Park Improvements		£100k	
Dangerfield Nature Reserve Boardwalk		£60k	
Sports Pavilion – RIBA Stages 2-4	£33k		Kidlington

*Green Spaces Improvements – Yarnton		£110k	
Town Centre Improvements	£30k		
*Oxford-Banbury Road Corridor Options Appraisal	£45k		
Community Insight Fund	£20k		
Total Revenue / Capital Funding	£154k	£370k	
Total Funding Requested	£524,000		
<i>* The allocations for these two projects are for match funding to support delivery of a wider initiative</i>			

- (2) That the use of £47,281 of S106 funds to top up the proposed allocation for Green Spaces Improvements for Yarnton (Appendix 3) be approved to create a total scheme budget of £157,281 in the capital programme.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration and the Assistant Director Finance, to agree final cost plans for the above projects subject to the maximum cost envelope outlined in Figure 1 above.
- (4) That the progress of previously approved projects be noted and it be agreed to receive further updates as project delivery progresses.

Reasons

This report seeks to agree an allocation of £524k of Local Area Development Funds for delivery of specific projects in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.

The proposed projects are supported by the respective AOG and support the council's priorities around delivering economic prosperity and community leadership.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not proceed with projects proposed - Funds have already been allocated as set out in Section 4 and priorities have been agreed by Area Oversight Groups. This report is intended to utilise some of this funding for enhancements identified by ward councillors as representatives of our communities. Doing nothing means that identified priorities will not be funded and commitments made to the district as part of the budget setting process will not be fulfilled.

42

Additional Temporary Accommodation Purchases

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval to add additional funds from grants received to the capital budget for purchases of property for temporary accommodation.

In response to Executive member comments, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Services explained that the additional funding would focus on providing homes suitable for larger households. As it was funded from resettlement grant, the properties must be targeted at assisting families that were intended to benefit from this grant. Using the grant funding in this way is within grant conditions

Resolved

- (1) That the increase to the Council's capital programme of £1,000,000 for additional temporary accommodation purchases, using grant funding from resettlement, be approved.

Reasons

The report will enable more suitable temporary accommodation options within the district. The increase in capacity within the portfolio will also reduce revenue pressures that would otherwise arise.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to use the grant money in this way. The Council could seek to use the grant money in other ways that would be of benefit to the Afghan Resettlement households. However, it is unclear whether other means would be able to prevent their homelessness, as these are the steps we are currently taking. When the households do become homeless, temporary accommodation costs are likely to be incurred and are likely to be significant. Not spending this grant on increasing stock size would create revenue pressure. This is rejected.

Option 2: Spend further grant on nightly charged temporary accommodation. This is an option and the grant would cover the costs of this. However, nightly charge offers no income and no return on investment, which the proposed option does. The income received from property would be Council revenue and would not require repayment. Additionally, families would be in nightly charged accommodation, such as hotels, for periods of over 6 weeks, due to the lack of availability of alternative accommodation. It is not permitted by government for any household with children to be in hotel accommodation for longer than 6 weeks. This is rejected.

43 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report to seek Executive approval for the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, providing a consistent corporate framework for the occupation, leasing, subsidised use and transfer of Council-owned property assets to voluntary, community and charitable organisations. The Policy also established the Council's approach to Community Asset Transfers

and subsidised occupation whilst protecting the Council's strategic property interests.

Resolved

- (1) That the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy be approved.
- (2) That the introduction of a standard subsidy framework whereby occupation of Council assets by eligible voluntary and community organisations will normally be offered at up to a 50% discount to independently assessed market rent, for a maximum period of five years, subject to the requirements of the Policy, be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property & Assets, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to enter into property dispositions and occupation agreements under the VCS and CAT policy and in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation under Part 3 of the Constitution.

Reasons

The Council's community centres provide an important resource for local communities, supporting a wide range of voluntary and community organisations that deliver significant social, health and wellbeing benefits across the district. However, the current arrangements have evolved over many years without a consistent corporate framework, resulting in varying lease arrangements, undocumented occupation, inconsistent subsidy levels and differing approaches to statutory compliance and asset management.

The proposed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy establishes a consistent, transparent and proportionate framework for the occupation, leasing and transfer of community assets. It supports the Council's Corporate Landlord approach by introducing clear governance arrangements, standardising subsidy, strengthening statutory compliance and providing a structured process for Community Asset Transfers where these deliver sustainable long-term community benefit.

The Policy balances the Council's responsibility to safeguard public assets with its commitment to supporting the voluntary and community sector. It does not seek to reduce community provision or remove existing organisations from Council-owned buildings. Instead, it establishes a sustainable funding model that enables the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities as landlord, maintain safe and compliant community buildings, and maximise community benefit whilst continuing to provide significant financial support to community organisations.

Approval of the Policy will enable the Council to progressively regularise existing occupation arrangements, prioritise those assets presenting the greatest compliance and governance risks, improve the utilisation of

community assets and ensure future decisions relating to community occupation are made consistently, transparently and in accordance with an approved corporate policy framework.

Alternative options

Option 1: Continue with existing arrangements

This option has been rejected. The current arrangements have evolved over many years without a consistent corporate policy and have resulted in varying lease structures, undocumented occupation, inconsistent subsidy arrangements and differing responsibilities for repairs, maintenance and statutory compliance. The Council cannot currently demonstrate consistent compliance across its community centre portfolio and continuing with the existing arrangements would expose the Council to ongoing health and safety, governance and financial risks.

Option 2: Require all community organisations to pay full market rent and assume responsibility for statutory compliance

This option has also been rejected. Whilst this approach would reduce the Council's financial liabilities, it would place significant additional financial and operational pressures on voluntary and community organisations and could undermine the valuable services they provide to local communities. The Council also considers that retaining responsibility for key statutory compliance activities provides greater assurance that community buildings remain safe and compliant.

Option 3: Approve the proposed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy

This is the recommended option. The Policy establishes a consistent and transparent corporate framework for community occupation, subsidy and Community Asset Transfers. It enables the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities as corporate landlord, supports sustainable community provision, introduces appropriate governance arrangements and creates a long-term funding model that will enable community buildings to remain safe, compliant and well maintained whilst continuing to provide significant financial support to the voluntary and community sector.

44

Budget Process 2027/28

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Executive of the proposed approach to the 2027/28 Budget Process and provides context and background information on the existing Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and information on latest government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget Process for 2027/28 be approved.

- (2) That the base assumptions to be used for the 2027/28 budget as set out below be approved.

The proposed planning assumptions for the updated MTFS period will include provision for inflation on pay, contracts, and fees and charges and council tax. It will assume 3.5 percent pay awards over the MTFS period. Contract inflation will be provided for at 3 percent in all years of the MTFS. Fees and charges will be reviewed and increased by a minimum of 3 percent for in all years of the MTFS (where the fee is set by the council) to reflect cost recovery. Council tax increases will be assumed at the maximum allowable (£5 or 2.99%) without a referendum.

- (3) That a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2031/32 and five-year period for the Capital Programme to 2031/32 be approved.

Reasons

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and ensure it maintains a suitable level of reserves each year. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals that will allow it to meet these legal obligations.

Alternative options

There are no alternative options to consider. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals to meet its legal obligations.

45 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026-2027

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) and Head of Chief Executive's Office submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial, performance, and risk position as of the end of Q1 of the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's finance, performance, and risk management report as at the end of Q1 for the financial year 2026/27 be noted.
- (2) That the reprofiling of projects in the capital programme and the subsequent update to the programme budget for this financial year be approved.
- (3) That the (exempt) debt write offs be approved.
- (4) That the £0.655m treasury savings to be vired to Policy Contingency and made available as general contingency be approved.

- (5) That the release of £0.030m from Policy Contingency for a performance post within Place & Regeneration be approved.
- (6) That the change to the final transfer to reserves reported in the 2025/26 Outturn report as per the Reserves Policy be noted.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the financial, performance, and risk position of the council for the end of Q1 2026-27. 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 Q1 2026-27, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

46 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, 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.

47 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026/2027 - Exempt Appendix 5

The exempt appendix had been agreed as part of agenda item 11, Minute 45 refers.

48 A New Arts Centre for Banbury

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted an exempt report in respect of a new Arts Centre for 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.

49

Utility Contract Procurement - Property Services

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the procurement of a utility contract, property services.

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.

50

Cherwell Futures Programme: Environmental Services Operational Improvement Programme – Full Business Case

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted an exempt report in respect of the Cherwell Futures Programme: Environmental Services Operational Improvement Programme – Full Business Case.

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 6.00 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Council

Record of Portfolio Holder Decisions for the period 10 July 2026 to 9 October 2026

Portfolio Holder	Decision Subject Matter	Decision Date
Portfolio Holder for Leisure	Whitelands Farm Sports Ground Cricket Mitigation	3 September 2026

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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 22 July 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 Alisa Russell
Nelly Lukwo, Independent Person, no voting rights
Sarah Thompson, Independent Person, no voting rights

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Also Present:

Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Frank Ideh, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Mary Denedo, Strategic Finance Business Partner
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer
Sandra Ganpot, Benefits Services and Performance Manager

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16 **Annual Governance Statement 2025-26**

(The Chair advised that he had agreed to amend the order of business and take this as the first item of business).

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report which set out the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the Council for 2025-26 for approval.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance confirmed that the Head of Internal Audit had provided a Reasonable Assurance opinion regarding the Council's core governance arrangements.

In response to a question regarding the impact of the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) outcomes that were announced recently by the Government, the Assistant Director Law and Governance confirmed that the AGS would cover both the existing governance arrangements in addition to any new requirements that arose from the structural changes. The Committee was assured that the Solace and CIPFA Frameworks that underpinned the Council's AGS were used by the other authorities involved in LGR within Oxfordshire.

Resolved

- (1) That the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 be approved.
- (2) That the Portfolio Holder for Finance, as Leader of the Council for the year to which the Statement related, and the Chief Executive be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of Cherwell District Council.

17 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reminded the Committee that Treasury Management Training would take place on Wednesday 23 September at 5.30pm.

18 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

19 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

Housing Management Complaints Report

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing Services submitted the annual report relating to housing complaints performance, in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints handling Code. The appendices including the Complaints Handling Code self-assessment, would be published on the Council's website and would form the basis of the Council's return to the Housing Ombudsman for 2025-26.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities explained that as the Council had a relatively low housing stock, less than 200 directly managed properties, there was a low number of complaints.

In response to a question regarding the high percentage of complaints that had been escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2, the Head of Housing explained that as some of the issues included in the complaints were beyond the scope of the Council's legal responsibilities it was unable to remedy them. The Head of Housing advised that two of the complaints that had been classified as property condition in the report, actually related to issues that were the responsibility of the shared-owner rather than the Council and these were not upheld. One other complaint was upheld.

In response to a question regarding the impact of combining the housing stock in the new North Oxfordshire Unitary Council following the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation, the Head of Housing confirmed that the threshold for the total number of properties in the Household Revenue Account had been increased from 200 to 1,000 units from April 2026. The total housing stock for the new authority would still be under the updated threshold so the existing rules would still apply.

In response to a question regarding the apportionment of liability for costs arising from repairs to shared-owner properties, the Head of Housing confirmed that the details of these responsibilities would be in the lease but the costs would not be split based on the percentage of the ownership.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and appendices be noted and it be further noted that the appendices, including the Complaints Handling Code self-assessment, would be published on the Council's website and would form the basis of the Council's return to the Housing Ombudsman for 2025-26.

Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit 2022/23

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on the final position of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim audit for the financial year 2022/23.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that local authorities reclaim Housing Benefits that have been paid to claimants by submitting annual subsidy claims to the DWP. The Committee was advised that the investment in staffing resources along with relevant training had increased claim accuracy which resulted in a much lower repayment figure than in previous years.

The Committee thanked the officers and staff involved in this work.

Resolved

- (1) That the Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit 2022/23 Report be noted.

22

Treasury Management Report - Quarter 1 2026/27

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2026-27 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The report demonstrated that all treasury management activities undertaken during the first quarter of 2026-27 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 the end of Quarter 1 2026-27, the Council had borrowings of £154M and investments of £28M, which resulted in a net borrowing of £126M.

In response to a question regarding the lower than expected value of capital expenditure, it was explained that this was due to a change in the profile of expenditure rather than a reduction in the capital programme. The Committee was assured that stress testing in relation to the affordability ratio took place as part of the annual external audit process.

In response to a question concerning the security of loans made to other authorities, the Committee was assured that in the event of any financial issues, these were underwritten by Central Government.

Resolved

- (1) That the Treasury Management Quarter 1 Performance report be noted.

23

Draft Statement of Accounts 2025-26

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide an opportunity for review of the draft 2025/26 Statement of Accounts which were published on the council's website on 30 June 2026.

In response to a question regarding the £11.8M reduction in the net pension liability, the Head of Finance explained that this was the result of the annual

re-valuation of the total pension fund by the actuaries and was not within the control of the council.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and publication of the draft Statement of Accounts 2025/26 be noted.

24

Review of Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme.

In response to a question concerning the implications of LGR on the work programme, it was agreed that this would be looked at a later time.

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 7.52 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 30 June 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chair)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Mark Gorman
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Bryonie Wells

Present Virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor Frank Ideh

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Ian Harwood

Officers:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 10 March 2026 and 20 May 2026 were agreed as correct records 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 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027/28

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to enable members to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme for 2027/28.

In introducing the report, as the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Hingley, advised the Committee that the scheme had been introduced in April 2020 following a period of consultation and engagement. In general, the scheme had been well received. The current scheme, uprated for inflation, was proposed for 2027/28.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reported that the CDC Council Tax collection rate for 2025/26 was 97.81%, which was one of the highest collection rates across Oxfordshire authorities.

In response to a question regarding how Local Government Reorganisation would affect the scheme, the Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that the Government had not yet given its decision on the future unitary councils in Oxfordshire. Each new unitary would be responsible for setting its own scheme which would need to be fit for purpose and in accordance with relevant legislation.

It was proposed by Councillor Vaitkus and seconded by Councillor Cherry that, having given due consideration, Budget Planning Committee recommend to the Executive that the current scheme be retained for 2027/28.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, Executive be recommended to agree that the current scheme is retained for 2027/28.

9 End of Year 2025/2026 Finance Report

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

In introducing the report, as the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Hingley, reported that the council's overall year-end position for 2025/26 was an overspend of £0.114m before contributions to / from reserves, after which the overall year end position was balanced.

In response to a question regarding the use of £2.1m reserves to fund a business rates shortfall in 2025/26, the Head of Finance advised that the shortfall was due to a higher levy on growth and lower pooling income than estimated.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

10

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered its work plan. Councillor Cherry requested that the financial aspects regarding security at the council's former office, Bodicote House, be added to the work programme. With Councillor Cherry's agreement, officers undertook to provide a written response to the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.50 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 29 September 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu (Chair)
Councillor Chris Pruden (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor G.A. Popescu
Councillor Michael Wilson

Substitute Members:

Councillor Rob Pattenden (In place of Councillor John Willett)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Dr Lisa Smith
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor John Willett

Also Present:

Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services

Officers:

Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Jan Southgate, Health Protection, Compliance & Licensing Manager
Neil Whitton, Environmental Protection and Enforcement Manager
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4 Minutes

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

5 Chair's Announcements

The Democratic and Elections Team were liaising with the Chair and the licensing team regarding the revised date for the Licensing Acts Committee meeting. This would be confirmed in due course

The Democratic and Elections Team were in the process of arranging training for licensing committee members, which was mandatory for all members to attend to be able to sit on a sub-committee. The date and arrangements would be confirmed in due course.

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business

7 New Mobile Homes Licensing Policy

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report to seek approval from the General Licensing Committee for the updated Mobile Homes Policy for adoption from the 1 November 2026.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager advised that the Policy was last updated in 2015 and had largely focussed on fees. New legislation had subsequently been introduced that meant the Policy needed to be updated to reflect these changes.

In response to a question regarding the implementation of the new requirements regarding fit and proper persons, the Committee was advised that of the nineteen sites in total in the district, nine were licensed park home sites that required a fit and proper person to be registered. The Committee was assured that the process was under way to ensure that relevant individuals were on the Council's online register.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Mobile Homes Policy be approved as the new policy to take effect from 1 November 2026.

8 Contaminated Land Strategy 2026

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report to seek approval from the General Licensing Committee for the reviewed and updated Contaminated Land Strategy.

In presenting the report, the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Manager advised the Committee that the Strategy had been updated to reflect legislative changes that had been introduced since it was last reviewed. The

revised Strategy included updates to the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies with regards to contamination.

Resolved

- (1) That the reviewed and updated Contaminated Land Strategy be approved.

The meeting ended at 6.44 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 18 June 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Brown
Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Linda Ward
Councillor Michael Wilson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Bryonie Wells

Also Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Mark Gorman

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Officers Attending Virtually:

Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Geoff Taylor, Head of Property and Assets
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Appointment of Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor David Rogers be appointed Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

3 **Appointment of Vice-Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Dom Vaitkus be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **Performance Monitoring Report End of Year 2025 - 2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's office that detailed the council's performance position as at the end of the 2025-26 financial year.

Presenting the report, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that the council had broadly performed well, with 29 of the 49 monitored measures reporting green at year end. 12 of the 26 Annual Delivery Plan actions had been achieved, and six of the seven directorate KPIs reported green.

Regarding indicator BP1.2.10A, % of major application overturned at appeal (application determined April 2023 to March 2025), the Leader of the Council

and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that the Council had now been designated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), due to the overall percentage of 11.2% for the relevant period.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration explained that designation meant applicants submitting new major planning applications could choose to submit them directly to the Planning Inspectorate for determination, rather than the Council. Major applications already in progress and minor applications would continue to be determined by the Planning department.

The Council were able to request an exit from designation after two clear quarters, with any request supported by a well-presented case, including evidence of current performance and actions in place to maintain an improved performance. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration added that current figures for major applications overturned at appeal was 5.15%, significantly under the 10% threshold.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP1.2.13, net additional housing completions to meet Cherwell needs, and the 'data not available' status, the Assistant Director Planning explained that the data had been collected and was being verified to ensure it was accurate. Once verification had been complete the figure would be made available.

With regard to indicator BP2.2.05, total greenhouse gas emissions for the year, officers agreed to gather detailed information relating to the methodology for calculating the figures, and circulate it after the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's end of year 2025-26 performance report be noted.

8 Work Programme Planning for 2026/27

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year.

The Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead explained that the work programme would be reviewed at each Committee, but Members could suggest items for inclusion at any time.

The Chair encouraged the Committee to read the scrutiny guide appended to the agenda pack, as it gave useful information regarding the different ways of working available to the Committee.

In response to comments from the Committee regarding an item incorporating the various planning elements from the indicative work programme, and

points raised during the previous agenda item in relation to the designation status of the planning service, the Monitoring Officer confirmed he would liaise with relevant officers and the Chair, and report back to the next meeting.

The Committee also requested additional items on progress of the climate action plan, and a follow-up to the fly tipping presentation and discussion at the November 2025 meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the addition of items relating to progress of the Climate Action update, and a follow-up to the flytipping item, the indicative work programme for 2026/27 be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.33 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 8 September 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Brown
Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Rob Packard
Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Michael Wilson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Linda Ward

Also Present:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys
Councillor Lesley McLean - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration.

Also Present Virtually:

Adrian Unitt, Managing Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company
Terry Fuller, Non Executive Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company

Officers:

Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Officers Attending Virtually:

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

9 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

10 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

12 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

13 **Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026-2027**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's office, that detailed the council's performance position as at the end of Quarter one 2026/27.

Introducing the report, Leader of the Council – Strategic Leadership and Regeneration updated the Committee in relation to the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) milestone 'Examination of the local plan', which was reporting as red. As detailed in the commentary for the milestone, a new inspector had been appointed in July and the Council was waiting to hear if the process could proceed. The Leader of the Council updated that the inspector had subsequently confirmed examination could proceed, and the milestone would be updated accordingly.

Officers responded to questions that had been submitted in advance of the meeting, and confirmed that details would also be published as a supplement after the meeting. The supplement would include technical information regarding the methodology for calculating CO2 emissions, as covered by the 'Environmental stewardship' corporate key performance indicators.

In response to comments from the Committee, the Chair agreed to meet with the Monitoring Officer to discuss the possibility of answers to pre-submitted questions being circulated prior to the meeting, similar to the process used for written questions to Full Council.

With regard to ADP action 'make best use of council owned assets', and associated milestone 'conduct financial appraisal and site surveys for the repurposing of Lower Bridge Street', the Head of the Chief Executive's office agreed to come back with further information after the meeting.

In response to comments regarding the commentary for BP1.2.02, number of homeless households living in nightly charged (hotel) temporary accommodation, and the use of the word 'client', the Leader of the Council explained that terminology used to refer to residents in various circumstances was under continual review, and the comments made would be fed back.

Regarding BP2.2.01, waste recycled and composted, the Leader of the Council agreed to request detailed information regarding whether the move to co-mingled recycling collections had had any impact, positive or negative, on the overall percentage of recycling and the price the council received for the recycled material.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's Quarter One performance report be noted.

14

Update on Executive Responses to Previous Scrutiny Recommendations

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer that provided an update on progress of recommendations previously agreed by Executive.

Introducing the report, the Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead explained that this was the first time progress on previous recommendations had been reported to Committee. As the report was for noting only, future progress updates would be circulated outside the formal meeting.

In response to questions relating to the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion recommendations, specifically the inclusion champions, the Performance and Insight Team Leader agreed to circulate more details regarding who the inclusion champions were, and the work undertaken to date.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made on previous recommendations made to the Executive, as detailed in appendices one (Climate Action) and two (Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion), be noted.

15

Work Programme Update

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Following the work programme planning workshop held in July and subsequent discussions with relevant officers, the Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead had updated indicative dates for consideration of various items.

With regard to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and the recent announcement from central government that the programme had been paused, the Executive Director – Resources confirmed that as and when more information was known about the overall status of the reorganisation, an update would be provided to the Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding how much had been spent on LGR so far, the Leader of the Council explained that the figure was £189,569.68, but clarified that this was subject to validation and any additional costs.

In relation to the item 'Performance of S106 delivery – infrastructure focus', listed under 'items to be allocated', it was proposed by Councillor David Rogers, seconded by Councillor Kieron Mallon and agreed by the Committee that a working group be established, involving all members of the Committee, to carry out a scrutiny review via a series of virtual meetings.

With regard to the item 'lessons learnt from Kidlington illegal landfill', also listed under 'items to be allocated', the Committee noted some questions for the Environment Agency at the relevant time, regarding any contamination of the land and associated issues with the water table, and the impact on the Environment Agency budget if it wasn't able to recoup the costs of the clean up from those responsible for the landfill.

Resolved

That:

- (1) The Scrutiny Work Programme update be noted
- (2) A whole Committee working group be established, to consider the subject of Section 106 Delivery.

16

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved

- (1) That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 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.

Update on progression of Graven Hill Village Development Company

The Committee considered an exempt report from the Shareholder Representative, which presented an overview of performance during the 2025/26 financial year, an update on Stage 2 of the development and governance arrangements for Graven Hill Village Development Company (GHVDC).

The Committee received an exempt presentation from GHVDC Managing Director Adrian Unitt, and Chair of the Board Terry Fuller. The presentation summarised the sales figures and reservation levels, and the performance position as at the end of the 25/26 financial year.

In response to a number of questions from the Committee regarding affordable housing and the policy definition of 'affordable', the Shareholder Representative agreed to circulate a briefing note on the subject.

Regarding a preferred social housing provider, the Managing Director GHVDC explained that the current operator had changed their operating demographic, and as a result an alternative partner was currently being sought.

Officers confirmed that the Committee had not previously considered an item on social housing performance, but a request could be made of the current provider at Graven Hill to attend a future committee.

In response to queries regarding primary care provision at Graven Hill, officers confirmed that Oxfordshire County Council were the lead health authority and would be responsible for leading any conversation into site specific GP provision.

Having previously visited the site, the Chair of the Committee highly recommended a visit to new members of the Committee, to see the site in person and understand the scale and type of development taking place. The Managing Director GHVDC confirmed he would be happy to meet with members onsite and answer any further questions.

Resolved

- (1) That the Stage 2 progress, performance in 2025/26, and governance arrangements be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.07 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 24 June 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

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

Substitute Members:

Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Nigel Simpson)
Councillor Simon Lytton (In place of Councillor Frank Ideh)
Councillor Besmira Brasha (In place of Councillor Dr Isabel Creed)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Nigel Simpson

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4 March and 20 May 2026 were agreed as correct records 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 **Policy Review Updates**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources, which presented proposed updates to six policies.

The Assistant Director Human Resources explained that changes to three of the policies – Probation, Standby and on call, and bereavement and compassionate leave – had been required due to legislative changes. Following a change in the HMRC approved mileage rate, the travel and subsistence policy had been updated to reflect the increased rate.

The market supplement and capability policies had had additional clarity added regarding definitions, authorisation steps and formal stages.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the use of market supplements was not widespread, and benchmarking was undertaken against neighbouring authorities with similar vacancies to ensure the CDC offer was competitive.

Resolved

- (1) That the following policies be reviewed and approved for implementation:
 - a. Probation Policy
 - b. Travel and Subsistence Policy
 - c. Standby and On Call Policy
 - d. Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy
 - e. Market Supplement Policy
 - f. Capability Policy

8 **Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 4, 2025-2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources, which detailed workforce data for quarter four of 2025/26, including measuring staff well-being and action required from officers to address any issues.

With regard to apprenticeships and the associated levy, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that recent reform of the scheme had seen 16

apprenticeships defunded. This would mean that levy funding for higher level standards such as team leader, operations manager and chartered manager could no longer be used.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding detailed apprenticeship data, the Assistant Director Human Resources advised that some data was available, which could be included in future workforce data reports.

Following a question in relation to measures taken to help attract applicants to hard to fill vacancies, the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed that flexible working and flexible retirement options were available.

With regard to data relating to applications from Armed Forces Personnel and the Armed Forces Covenant, the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed that data was available and would look to include relevant information in future reports.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce data for quarter 4 of 2025/26, provided in appendix one to the report, devised to provide insight that will enable officers of CDC to address challenges and efficiencies in the workforce more efficiently, be noted.

9 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.23 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay,
Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 16 September 2026 at 6.30 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

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

11 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

13 Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

14 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

15 **Policy Review Updates**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources, which presented proposed updates to three existing HR policies: Criminal Records Checking Policy and Procedure; Exit Interview Policy, and Pensions and Retirement Policy.

The Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the Criminal Record Checking Policy and Procedure had been reviewed and updated in line with current legislation, reflecting that since 28 October 2023, many custodial sentences over four years become spent. There were exceptions for specified serious violent, sexual and terrorist offences as set out in legislation.

The Committee was advised that the review of the Exit Interview Policy had required minimal updates.

The Pensions and Retirement Policy had been refreshed to the new standard policy template and updated to ensure references to Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) regulations were up to date, removed specific dates and referred to 'LGPS Regulations in force at that time' therefore negating the need to keep updating should any regulations change.

In response to a question regarding staff disclosures of potential criminal offences, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that officers and managers should inform and consult with a member of HR at the first available opportunity should such a situation arise.

In response to a question regarding the Council's designated safeguarding lead, the Assistant Director Human Resources advised that the Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing was the designated Safeguarding lead for the Council.

In response to a question regarding whether the Criminal Record Checking Policy and Procedure extended to members, the Assistant Director Human Resources undertook to consult with the Monitoring Officer and agreed to circulate the response after the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the following policies be reviewed and approved for implementation:
 - a. Criminal Records Checking Policy and Procedure
 - b. Exit Interview Policy
 - c. Pensions and Retirement Policy

Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 1, 2026-2027

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources, which detailed workforce data for quarter one of 2026/27, including measuring staff well-being and action required from officers to address any issues.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Human Resources, advised that there were no issues, risks or concerns to highlight.

In response to a question regarding whether the exit interview questionnaire could be shared with Committee members for future reference, the Assistant Director Human Resources agreed to circulate after the meeting.

In response to a further question on exit interviews and how negative feedback was handled, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that all feedback was shared with the relevant managers.

In response to a question regarding high levels of staff absence in Environmental Services, whether it was linked to an ageing workforce and whether the use of apprenticeships could help counter the use of agency staff, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that as part of the Councils Transformation Programme an Environmental Services Operational Programme full business case had been agreed by Executive. The comments from Personnel Committee would be forwarded to the relevant officers.

In response to a question as to whether further information could be provided on potential staff shortages and whether Local Government Reorganisation has played a role, the Assistant Director Human Resources confirmed this would be circulated to Committee members.

In response to questions regarding the compilation of diversity and inclusion data at interview stage, and how the ethnic group categories were decided and whether they were representative of the demographic of the wider district, the Assistant Director Human Resources, advised that the Council used categories and demographics that were used nationally as part of census data. It was therefore not indicative of the demographic of Cherwell as a whole.

In a further question regarding whether diversity and inclusion data was taken into account during the recruitment process, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the Councils recruitment process focused on ensuring the right person was appointed to a vacancy. Demographic data was not used as a deciding factor in the recruitment process.

In response to a Committee request for the format of diversity and inclusion information to be reviewed for future reports, the Assistant Director Human Resources undertook to review.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce data for quarter 1 of 2026/27, devised to provide insight that will enable officers of CDC to address challenges and efficiencies in the workforce more efficiently, be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.42 pm

Chair:

Date: