Cherwell District Council - September 2026 (ii)

Local Government Reorganisation

Well, 18-months work has just been back-burnered.

The Chief Executive, Gordon Stewart, has expressed his view that LGR likely will not progress this parliament.

The Government has now withdrawn a number of decisions and paused the remainder specifically because of "updated and privileged legal advice", with the new Secretary of State explicitly saying she wants to establish that the process is robust and legally compliant.

The sequence of events strongly suggests that concerns about the legal robustness of the original decision-making process are one of the principal reasons for today's pause, alongside the new Government's desire to reassess LGR politically.

Parish Liaison Meeting- cancelled

The news on LGR has somewhat overshadowed the agenda of this meeting. Kevin Larner will be in touch shortly.

Primary Care expansion

Firstly, a huge thank you to colleagues at both District and County for their support and for the creation of a Primary Care working group to take a deep dive into the future of Primary Care. Thanks also to colleagues at District who nominated me to be the CDC representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny this year and to the committee for allowing me to join this working group to be involved in the completion and delivery of the Primary Care report.

The final report and its supporting documents are agenda item 7, available here: https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=148&MId=8293

The report has to be a commentary on our local ICB and can't set any national policies. It also can recommend things that the ICB look at and in that context its final language is measured and sober.

I'm also delighted to have been appointed to the cross-party Local Government Association Health and Wellbeing committee and intend to take full advantage of this opportunity to keep Primary Care expansion at the front of people's minds of the course of the next 12 months.

Cherwell Local Plan examination

The Inspector, David Spencer, has decided that the Cherwell Local Plan can be examined under the December 2023 version of the NPPF, rather than the newer December 2024 version. This is a significant procedural win for the Council.

More importantly, he has accepted 4,400 homes as Cherwell's contribution towards Oxford's unmet housing need, but he has not yet concluded that the Council's proposed way of delivering those homes is sound.

The Inspector has reviewed the preliminary hearings and evidence and says there is no need to start those hearings again.

Since 25 March 2026, the Duty to Cooperate is no longer legally required. However, the Inspector says that effective cooperation between councils remains important because it forms part of the assessment of whether the Plan is sound.

The examination will proceed on the basis that Cherwell should contribute 4,400 homes towards Oxford's unmet housing need up to 2042.

Also, having established that the plan passes the threshold of delivering housing need and the plan will be examined under the December 2023 NPPF rather than the 2024 NPPF.

The inspector will scrutinise:

- if the 4,400 Oxford homes can actually be delivered
- the housing trajectory
- whether the Plan's 2020 base date remains justified
- whether the spatial strategy works
- whether individual proposed allocations are deliverable
- infrastructure requirements
- housing land supply
- employment land requirements
- plan viability.

He will also examine whether there is sufficient deliverable housing supply for years 1-5, and developable supply for the remainder of the Plan period.

CDC must also complete the Planning Inspectorate's new Local Plan Supply Templates for all the allocations in the new plan.

The Inspector intends to issue the main Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) and hold examination hearings in autumn 2026.

Banbury Area Oversight Group

I attended the Banbury Area Oversight Group (AOG) meeting on Wednesday 5th August, have since circulated the updated Area Priority Plan (APP) for Banbury and the surrounding area which includes this Ward.

The 5th August meeting is the first Banbury 'Area Priority Plan AOG' and was attended by CDC Ward Members only, with supporting officers from OCC and CDC.

After the meeting, there was an incredibly narrow window to submit bids for the remaining £170k which needs to be spent this financial year.

Thank you to those who have managed to submit a bid, I shall certainly champion submissions from the Ward.

Traffic filters in Oxford

Whilst this is very much an OCC issue, may I also share the information on the traffic filters scheme. The more this news can be shared the better.

Oxfordshire residents can apply for permits that have a set number of free day passes for traffic filters.

Additional permits are available for many groups, including Blue Badge holders, unpaid carers, community health and care workers, mobile traders and patients who need frequent hospital appointments in the Oxford area.

If you have a congestion charge permit it will automatically transfer to traffic filters, unless we have written to tell you otherwise. And if you are unable to apply online, you can apply by phone – 01865 519800.

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxford-traffic-filters

Kidlington illegal landfill

I'm delighted that the site has finally been fully cleared.

The illegal waste site, that was larger than the pitch at Wembley Stadium, sat on land near the A34 and was shut down by officers in October 2025, after criminals were found to have dumped waste there.

The clean-up operation has seen an estimated 22,105 tonnes of commercial and household waste, including tyres, shredded plastic, and household rubbish, fully dug up and removed from the site.

Concrete blocks have also now been placed at the entrance preventing access, with the main gate now securely padlocked.

Water quality sampling has been regularly taken at the site to check for any potential significant impact. However, there has been no evidence of impacts to the local environment.

The cleanup bill is being paid by the Environment Agency and reported as £6million

I've asked what impact that will have on their revenue budgets for the next few years.

Fly tipping generally

The number of fly tips reported to CDC has risen from 396 to 772 in the first quarter of 2026.

Baynard's Green appeal hearing

The joint hearing on these applications starts on 22nd September.

The Council has now formally said that it will not defend the reasons for refusal for the Tritax and Albion schemes, subject to an acceptable planning obligation. It nevertheless remains a public inquiry, with other parties able to participate.

As always, if I can help, please do get in touch.

Cllr David Rogers
Cherwell District Council