



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT
July 2020 - September 2020

Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-24

Our Aim

To rebuild the Council so it can be proactive and responsive to the needs of our residents and businesses in a fast changing environment, building for the future whilst respecting our heritage

Our Priorities



Our Principles

- rebuilding trust and confidence in the council by promoting a culture of openness and transparency
- providing value for money for our residents and businesses by using our resources wisely and investing in the district's fabric and future
- listening to the needs of our community and acting on what we hear

Deliver services to the highest standard



The Context

The Council aims to create services that are inclusive and flexible which meet the diverse and changing needs of its residents and communities. To achieve this, it will be important to listen to residents to understand what is important to them, identify the areas in which they need support, and adapt. In the context of reducing budgets over the last ten years and the phasing out of incentivised income streams such as New Homes Bonus, which has been further exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19, the Council will need to take a strategic approach, and make the best use of the available resources.

The Council will work with a range of public and private sector partners to help deliver its aims and objectives and to provide services seamlessly. The emphasis will be on efficiency and effectiveness whilst remaining true to the Council's commitments on climate change and a green economy.

Actions we are taking

One of the Council's aims is to establish financial resilience which will enable investment in our priorities by adopting and implementing an investment and recovery strategy for Cotswold District. In September 2020, the Cabinet and Council agreed to adopt the Recovery Investment Strategy 2020-24 which sets out the framework within which the Council can invest in the infrastructure of the Cotswold District which will deliver on the Council priorities whilst also closing the emerging budget gap set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The strategy identifies the key project opportunities, and updates on progress will be provided as part of this report.

The Council has commenced some of the actions to deliver a simpler, and more efficient and effective way of delivering parking within the District, which will include making the new Whiteway car park operational by the end of December and introducing cashless parking by the end of March 2021.

The new Whiteway car park is currently on schedule to open later in the year. Following statutory public consultation, the parking order (legal paperwork to allow the council to regulate and enforce the car park) has been completed. We are awaiting sign off by Gloucestershire Highways on the materials and specification of the car park entrance and exit. The new car park will offer parking for permit holders only which will remove 150 all day parking spaces from the centre of Cirencester. As each permit holder has a guaranteed space, there will be carbon savings as the need to search for parking is eliminated.

The Council is taking steps to move to cashless parking. It launched a new PayByMobile app on 1 October which is free to use, and includes a number of features such as reminders, and a 24/7 support service. The next step will be to move to card only payments at pay and display machines. Moving to cashless parking has multiple benefits; not only will it support our carbon reduction commitment but it will reduce the costs associated with cash collecting and vandalism of pay and display machines. Customers will no longer need to carry the exact change or touch the pay and display machine when using the app, which reduces the risk of transferring infections.

As part of the Council's aim to provide a trusted, inclusive and transparent planning service, the professional planning team is being restructured so that it can be both more resilient and more responsive to the changing needs of the service. It will help to provide greater clarity on the responsibilities of individual officers so that Members and customers have a clear understanding of who to contact for their varying needs. The service is in the process of recruiting to various roles, and is on schedule to complete the restructure by March 2021.

The pre-application service is being re-launched; a detailed review of the historic charging scheme for pre-application advice will help to inform a service that can respond better to the current economic climate, that is efficient in addressing customer needs, and will ensure that the costs of this discretionary service do not fall upon the council tax payer. The pre-application advice provided will reduce customers' costs by avoiding unnecessary or abortive work on schemes that are unlikely to gain approval, and can have the added benefit of reducing application processing times.

Maximising flood protection measures for residential and commercial properties through the provision of advice and guidance, and the delivery of flood mitigation measures is a Council aim. The Council has retained a flood risk management resource with the aim of achieving a consistent medium to long term defence against increasing risk of localised flooding issues. The flood risk management team (FRM) has been consulted on minor planning applications over a number of years, and the positive cumulative impact of ensuring that new developments do not increase the risk of flooding to their neighbours or themselves is evident by the designs for surface water drainage now routinely submitted by developers for scrutiny. In addition, the FRM team processes applications for any culverting (piping) of watercourses in the District and deals with any watercourse enforcement issues that arise, such as landowners not maintaining watercourses and ditches that are critical to local drainage. The team also responds to ad-hoc flooding incidents to assess the damage and to offer advice on solutions which may require liaison with professional partner organisations such as Gloucestershire County Council, the Environment Agency and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).



The Context

Thirty years ago, the UK's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) was industry, closely followed by power generation, vehicles, and buildings. Today the story is different. Industrial emissions have dropped significantly – both through greater efficiency, but also because globalisation has pushed a lot of manufacturing overseas; this means that we don't record the (so-called consumption) emissions in this country.

Power generation is now much less carbon intensive, firstly due to replacing coal with gas, and more recently by a huge growth in renewable generation. Emissions from electricity will continue to fall as more renewable generation is added, but will not reach zero in the near future.

The much more difficult sectors are vehicles and buildings. Vehicle emissions have flatlined for thirty years, and is now the biggest single emissions category, both for the whole country and for Cotswold District. Emissions from buildings, i.e. heating, have barely dropped. Energy efficiency is generally poor, and will be expensive to improve, requiring the replacement of gas boilers by high efficiency electric heating, and an increase in insulation.

Leaving to one side the emissions associated with the overseas manufacturing of the goods we consume, the really difficult and expensive part of the UK's emissions reduction task has now started. The legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050 requires a much steeper fall in emissions per year from now onwards, than we have achieved to date.

The Cotswold District Climate Emergency Declaration aims at carbon neutrality, also called net zero carbon – that is, where emissions are drastically reduced but those that remain are balanced by natural sinks, such as trees growing, which remove carbon from the atmosphere. Eventually the world will have to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere so that atmospheric carbon concentration does not merely stabilise, but falls.

Actions we are taking

The climate emergency strategy 2020-30 was unanimously adopted by the Council in September 2020, and progress on the actions will be broadly reported within this quarterly report in addition to periodic reporting to the Council as required.

A major source of GHG emissions from the District is transport (burning diesel and petrol). The Council therefore intends to employ a sustainable transport officer to accelerate the development of a strategy and actions to reduce emissions and promote active travel. In the immediate term the Council is developing an electric vehicle strategy to make it easier for people who live and work in the District to adopt electric vehicles, which in general will have GHG emissions of around one quarter of a typical internal combustion engine car, and zero emissions in use. Provision for charging electric cars across the

District is being assessed, and short term actions include installing electric vehicle charging points in car parks. Four electric vehicle bays with fast charging points have been installed at the Whiteway car park. The car park is expected to become operational by the end of December 2020.

A significant part of both the council's own emissions footprint, and that of the whole District, is heating buildings (homes and workplaces). For homes, improving energy efficiency through better insulation and draught proofing, and then getting off gas or oil and moving to renewable electric heating is a huge challenge, but essential. The Council is taking action to reduce the carbon footprint of the District's housing stock by supporting the retrofitting of energy saving measures. A contract has been agreed with Severn Wye Energy Agency to provide telephone support to able-to-pay householders in the District wishing to access the government Green Homes Grants. In parallel, the Council has entered a partnership with other Gloucestershire District Councils to use central government money to deliver energy efficiency improvements directly to low income occupants of park homes. In addition, the Council is exploring options for offering preferential prices and simplified purchase of rooftop solar PV panels for householders in the District.

In order to support the delivery of low carbon homes, the Council has accessed grant money (coordinated with other Publica councils) to develop practical advice to contractors, architects and builders in the District to deliver low carbon new build and retrofit actions, taking particular account of the challenges of historic buildings in the three districts.

The Council is in discussion with developers of solar farms about potential co-investment opportunities. A workstream has started on assessing the suitability of council-owned sites in the District for rooftop solar PV (across the partnership), and would include our offices and leisure centres. Alongside this work, there is an opportunity to access government decarbonisation funding for council-owned buildings and work on a bid is in progress.

Provide socially rented homes



The Context

The high quality natural and built environment makes the District a desirable place to live. Cotswold District has a high number of properties owned outright (37.8%, vs 30.6% national average) reflecting the attractiveness of the District as a place to retire or to purchase a second home.

House prices and rents are relatively high; at the end of September 2017, the median property price in Cotswold District was £350,000, over 55% higher than the median property price in England and Wales, while the median monthly rent was £848 in 2017-18, nearly 26% higher than the national median (Private rental market summary statistics - April 2017 to March 2018, Valuation Office Agency).

The high house prices and high rents, coupled with the lower than average earning from local jobs, means housing affordability is a significant challenge for residents in the District which may result in the out migration of young people or alternatively encourage people to commute into Cotswold for work, while living in areas where housing is cheaper.

Actions we are taking

The Council has now received the final version of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA), commissioned in partnership with the other five borough and district councils in Gloucestershire. We have a duty to assess district-wide housing needs every 5 years and this important piece of work is part of the evidence base informing Local Plan policy and negotiations for affordable housing on individual sites coming forward through the development management process. The new LHNA, which replaces the previous 2016 updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) will be published on our website shortly.

In parallel but separate from the Local Plan process, a draft Housing delivery strategy has been prepared and will be finalised following a member workshop in October 2020. To drive forward more strategic provision a member led affordable Housing Board has been set up and had its first meeting July 2020.

During Q2, 49 affordable homes were delivered; a mix of flats and houses for local families and individuals in Cirencester, Ebrington, North Cerney, Tetbury and Moreton in Marsh, which includes 12 new homes for local people at Churnbridge Row, North Cerney, a rural housing development grant funded by the Council. These homes include our first 'Flexi' flats; one bedroom flats that have a larger than usual living room which can be subdivided at a later date to provide an additional bedroom. This means that the property could be adapted to changing circumstances, for example someone having a baby or someone needing a live-in carer, and therefore reduces the need to move home.

All the affordable homes at Elm Grove, Ebrington have now been delivered including a two bedroom bungalow for shared ownership, potentially allowing someone local to buy their first home or downsize to one more appropriate to their needs.

Bromford's redevelopment scheme at Patterson Road, Cirencester, providing flats and family homes for rent and shared ownership, is also now complete. The new homes, built to current standards, represent significant improvements in energy efficiency and thermal comfort, and therefore reductions in running costs, for the residents compared to the homes that were demolished. Those households choosing to return to the scheme, after moving to alternative homes during redevelopment, will be offered their new homes for social rent so as not to be disadvantaged as a result of the redevelopment. New lettings will be at Affordable Rent to help fund the redevelopment.

A report to agree the next steps on the Kemble housing development was presented to Cabinet in September 2020; approval was granted to progress the development of eight units to the planning application stage.

One of the Council's aims is to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast and hotels for emergency homeless accommodation. A property has been secured in Tetbury and will provide nine self-contained units for homeless people. Not only will it reduce the reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation, it will also provide better quality accommodation in a more stable environment for homeless local people. The Council is in process of completing the health and safety measures needed prior to clients moving in early November.

In June 2020, Cabinet approved funding to implement a 'Housing First' model to help reduce rough sleeping within the Cotswold District. 'Housing First' is an approach aimed at people with multiple needs who have faced persistent challenges in sustaining accommodation; they are supported by intensive case management and a personalised approach to live in their own, permanent home. This approach has been well documented in the USA and Sweden for many years. The UK is gradually adopting the approach which is strongly recommended by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The funding will be used to identify and place six individuals with the most complex needs into a permanent tenancy, supported by Housing Benefit and/or Universal Credit. Housing First is in the final stages of the setup process; with service level agreements agreed with Bromford and Aspire (support provider), and recruitment to the post which will provide one to one support for the clients. The next stage will be to identify clients and properties.

Make our local plan green to the core



The Context

In July 2019 the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency and in July this year the Council made a further commitment to the environment by declaring an Ecological Emergency. Key to the commitments made in both emergencies is the partial update to the Local Plan and making it green to the core.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan, in August 2018, the National Planning Policy Framework has introduced new guidance. The guidance increases the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation and the role Planning Policy has to play. In the next few months the Environment Bill and the Agricultural Bill will receive Royal Assent. Along with the Clean Growth Strategy they represent the Government's ambition to combat climate change and give the environment a bigger mandate.

Actions we are taking

The adopted Local Plan has been reviewed and at a meeting of Full Council in June 2020, members unanimously resolved to partially update the local plan. A review of local plan policies is the first step in the local plan process and reveals which policies can be left as they are and which policies need updating and the options available to update them. Along with international and national pledges made by Central Government, the update will reflect the work being undertaken by other services across the organisation. The Renewable Energy Strategy is a good example of this.

The Local Plan can be seen as the glue that holds various corporate objectives together and provides physical action; it also translates national legislation to a local level. The update of the Local Plan will aid the building of new homes, in the right place, with suitable green infrastructure that promotes the transition to carbon neutrality. It will assist in providing services and opportunities to enhance the area both for the wellbeing of the people living here as well as its visitors. It will also provide the tools to enhance, create and protect the local environment and the biodiversity of the District and its neighbours.

During Autumn 2020, Cabinet took a decision to pause the formal and regulatory plan making process until there is clarity on the White Paper and transitional arrangements from the old system to the new, and consequent change to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council's Local Development Scheme has not been updated due to this uncertainty; specific details are available in the November Cabinet paper and also as part of the Council's response to the government consultations.

This is a short term watching brief. The Council is waiting for greater clarity from the government before the local plan is updated; officers will keep councillors apprised of the situation. We continue to plan for the future but with a focus on short term wins, projects include delivering a masterplan for

Cirencester Town Centre and undertaking a Sustainable Transport Strategy and a Growth Zone study. These studies will help to ensure the Council is well placed to respond to a changing nature of the English planning system.

The Council has updated its Statement of Community Involvement which will support forthcoming consultations. Terms of Reference have also been agreed for the Local Plan and Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan boards, where the purpose of each board is to monitor the programme of work and to provide regular feedback to Cabinet. The refreshed masterplan board is scheduled to meet in November.

Support health and well-being



The Context

Health and Wellbeing of our residents is generally good and above the England and County average in most measures. We are one of the safest districts with very low crime levels and are surrounded by beautiful countryside. However, we do face some challenges. Cotswold District has an ageing population; over the last 10 years, it has experienced greater growth across all 65+ age groups compared to England and Wales. Many of our older residents live alone, and coupled with the rurality of the District, loneliness and access to services are issues for the District.

We also need to take into account the wider determinants of health - social, economic and environmental factors such as unemployment, low income, poor housing, and healthy lifestyles which have an impact on people's health and wellbeing. This means that we need to work with a wide range of partners, to pool resources and to apply a whole systems and asset-based approach to address challenges together.

Actions we are taking

The Council is taking a number of actions to encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing goals including reviewing the community grant scheme to focus on our priorities, hosting regular community forums and raising the profile of the Community Safety Partnership so that residents know where and how to access support.

A review of the community grants scheme over the summer identified an opportunity to procure a crowdfunding platform, to both broaden out the field of projects that might be supported, and improve opportunities for community groups to access other funding. Cabinet agreed to let a contract to 'Spacehive', a crowdfunding platform focused exclusively on civic projects. This new approach should benefit all potential projects, by providing a virtual marketplace for them to promote their proposed activities in order to get buy-in from residents, businesses, other funders and the Council. Moreover, it enables the Council to be less prescriptive in terms of the projects it supports. It also creates more opportunity for civic action, local place shaping, and supports communities to become more connected. This initiative reflects a strength-based/asset-based approach to community development.

The Council hosted two focus groups in the summer with 11 community representatives from different areas including Town and Parish Councils. The aim was to share and listen to people's experiences during lockdown and how people who were shielding or self-isolating were supported. We intend to build on this work to create further opportunities to engage on a regular basis with communities to better understand their concerns and challenges to enable us to provide support to local people/groups to achieve their ambitions.

The Council's investment in and support for youth engagement work is one of the actions being taken to ensure that residents and communities have equal access to quality services. As a partner of the Cotswold Youth Network we have helped to join up providers in the District to raise awareness of the needs of young people locally. In July we commissioned Young Gloucestershire (YG) to deliver detached street youth work in the Cotswolds in the absence of youth provision due to Covid-19. The aim was to gain valuable insight into the challenges and views of young people in the Cotswolds to help inform future youth provision and to give young people a voice. The Council's role is often to facilitate and ensure that stakeholders are connected; we have linked YG with local youth providers, Town and Parish Councils and the Police, and have invited them to Community Safety Partnership meetings as well as Cotswold Youth Network meetings.

Unemployment rates in young people aged 18-24 have doubled over the last months according to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The Council has therefore facilitated meetings with colleagues from the DWP and a wide range of local partners like Cirencester Town Council, Cirencester College, Cotswold Counselling, The Wildlife Trust, Youth Providers and many more to discuss the development of Youth Hubs in the Cotswold District. The Youth Hub idea is part of a number of measures designed to get young people back to work. Other measures, announced by the Chancellor, include work coaches, expanded youth offer, and the Kickstart Programme. There is a recognition that in addition to finding employment there are a number of other challenges that young people are facing. Some of these relate to general trends among young people, some are specific to the Cotswolds and its rural nature, and others are a direct result of lockdown and a consequence of Covid-19. The Youth Hub aims to offer holistic support for young people during this challenging time. A detailed proposal as well a partnership bid to the DWP to receive match funding for the establishment of a Youth Hub is currently being developed.

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the Council. There are fewer reports of domestic abuse in rural areas compared to urban areas as victims don't have the same access to services due to rural isolation; and it often remains undetected for longer. A sub group to the Community Safety Partnership which aims to tackle Domestic Abuse in the Cotswolds is being created as well as a network of Domestic Abuse Champions to increase awareness and give people the skills and tools to detect and report incidents.

In partnership with GDASS we have continued to develop Domestic Abuse Champion Training with the first session in October. A dedicated Domestic Abuse Teacher Training Pack is being developed in partnership with Cirencester 6th Form College and aims to support teachers who are dealing with students who have been exposed to domestic abuse.

We want Cotswold District to be the best in the country for health and wellbeing, and promoting healthy lifestyles and providing opportunities for people of all ages to be active is key. The Council is developing a Leisure Strategy for the District based on Sport England 'Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance'; this will ensure a strategic options appraisal / framework to develop a clear approach (determined by local priorities and outcomes) to providing effective and sustainable physical activity and sport opportunities for local communities via investment in its stock of leisure facilities and other non-facility interventions. There are four key phases; Outcomes, Insight, Interventions and Commitment. The draft report for Stage 1 (Outcomes) and 2 (Insight) has now been

received and is being reviewed by Officers. A Vision statement has also been produced showing three shared local outcomes; Healthier District, Connect Community and Active Environment.

The key strands of work that informed the Outcomes and Insight stages included a review of local strategies and plans, a facilities audit of current provision, an online resident survey as well as stakeholder consultation. The online survey generated 1055 responses about physical behaviour activities and barriers. The next stage is to gather further information on specific groups using a mixture of online surveys and focus groups; and to move into Stage 3 (Intervention), which will establish recommendations for facility requirements and also Service interventions, based on the needs of residents and stakeholders. An additional part of the project is the development of an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy; the first draft has also been received and is currently being reviewed

The Council is also working with Sweatcoin and Active Gloucestershire on a Cotswold specific campaign that targets the least active people as well as those with risk factors like pre-diabetes, diabetes, overweight/obesity by offering local rewards in addition to rewards from online vendors via the Sweatcoin app (Sweatcoin is the fastest growing physical activity app in the world which rewards people for being active). We expect to launch the campaign early next year.

Covid-19 update

The Council is planning for a second wave and the impact of further Covid-19 restrictions over the winter months. The Community and Well-being team has commenced discussions with Voluntary and Community Sector partners, including the 16 community pharmacies about their preparations, potential issues and challenges, and resources; with plans to contact local support groups next. Internally, cross-services meetings have been set up to discuss how people with complex needs can be supported throughout the next wave.

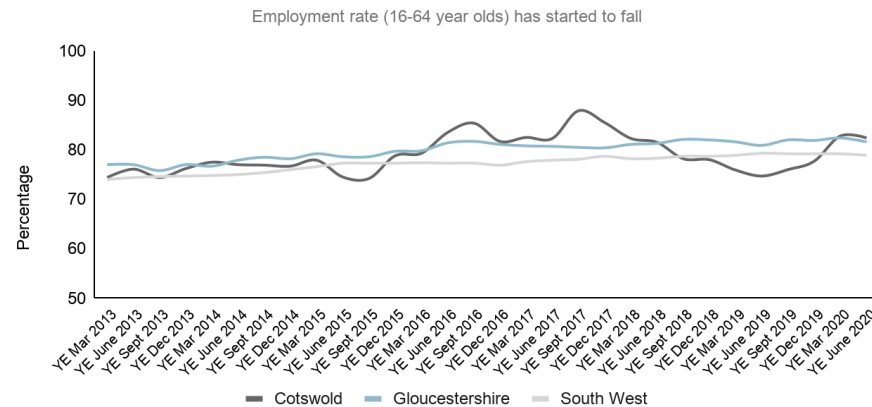
The case management system which is used for recording referrals from the Gloucestershire Help Hub is being improved; and a rota will be set up to cover the Help Hub including cover over the Christmas period.



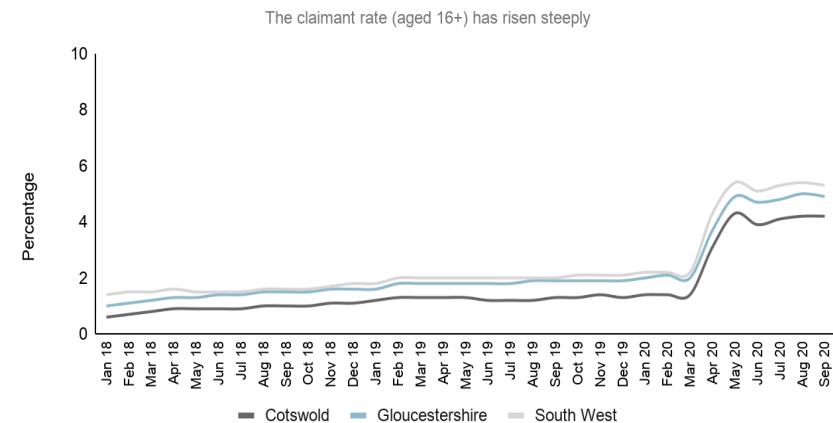
Enable a vibrant economy

The Context

The District supports an economically active population of around 47,700 and has strengths in Finance and Business Services, ICT including Science and Technology, Retail, and Accommodation and Food Services. A large proportion of businesses are small enterprises employing less than 10 people. Median wages for people working in the District are below the national average, and affordability of housing is a significant issue for the District, as a result businesses can face skill and labour shortages. Historically, unemployment has been relatively low but is expected to rise significantly as a result of Covid-19, and to disproportionately affect 16-24 year olds.



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey



Source: ONS, Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

The Cotswolds is well-known as a popular visitor destination and the visitor economy accounts for a significant proportion of the local economy - 7000 jobs or 18% of the total. We also have many companies at the cutting edge of innovation and the opportunity to grow key sectors like agritech, cyber and digital, medical equipment and environmental technologies.

The lack of a reliable broadband connection especially in rural districts can add to social isolation as well as reduce opportunities to be economically active. Openreach has announced that Cirencester will be full fibre by 2025. However, there are still some areas where broadband is poor and even superfast connectivity is not sufficient for some businesses to operate in the way they wish to.

Much of our work to enable a vibrant economy will be done in partnership with key stakeholders ranging from the County Council, GFirst LEP, Chambers of Commerce and other business groups, Town and Parish Councils, institutions like the Royal Agricultural University and Cirencester College and individual businesses.

Actions we are taking

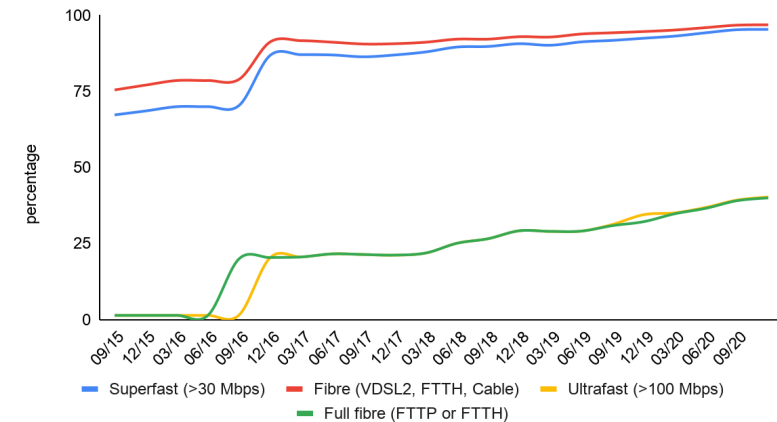
The draft green economic growth strategy was approved for consultation in October 2020, and sets out the challenges and issues for the District, and how they will be addressed, and identifies the key areas that will deliver growth in the District. The Strategy aligns with the Gloucestershire Draft Local Industrial Strategy and the Council's Corporate Strategy, and is informed by the Local Plan 2018; and our climate change and ecological obligations will be at the heart of our decision-making and the actions we take.

During the summer the Council has been supporting local businesses and the tourism sector to re-open. The visitor economy re-opened on 4 July and the tourism team was delighted to showcase the area to the Tourism minister on the very first day, highlighting the difficulties facing the sector especially areas that were still not able to re-open, for example tours and experience. To aid recovery the Council promoted the 'We're Good to Go' accreditation (showing that businesses are Covid secure) and the 'Know Before You Go' campaign to encourage consumers to check on openings and restrictions. The Council worked with parish councils to manage visitor flows in those areas which experienced a surfeit of visitors; and encouraged businesses to make the most of their outdoor areas.

One of the Council's aims is to help our town centres recover from Covid-19, in particular to address changes in shopping habits by supporting businesses to have a greater digital presence, and connecting to residents to encourage them to shop locally.

Source: Think Broadband

Superfast and fibre broadband coverage



Town centres are having to evolve in order to adjust to changing shopping habits; this has been accelerated by the Covid-19 and lockdown. Our local traders have had to become more digitally able in order to survive in a period when physical footfall has been significantly reduced. Town centres and the businesses located there will need to continue to evolve post-pandemic as we become accustomed to the 'new normal'.

The Council is working with tech company Maybe to support businesses to improve their social media presence which is expected to improve sales, and help to offset the losses from a reduction in physical footfall. The project went live in September 2020, initially in Cirencester and Chipping Campden and will now be rolled out to other towns in the District over a 12 month period. The aim, in measurable terms, is to improve the percentage of businesses with a social media account, the percentage of businesses who post daily and the ranking of the towns involved in the digital league table. The percentage of organisations with an active social media account in Cirencester rose from 32% on 1st July to 39% on 30th September and in Chipping Campden from 23% to 28% over the same period.

Work is also being undertaken to improve the online presence of businesses within the visitor economy, with a focus on supporting businesses to provide online bookable services. This is one of the aims of the 'Uncover the Cotswolds' project which is being funded by the Tourism team's successful bid to Visit England (Discover England Funding). Other aims of the project are to spread visitor spend more evenly both geographically and seasonally across the Cotswolds and to encourage the creation of new high quality, year round visitor experiences.

The Council is supporting GFirst LEP's Think Gloucestershire campaign using a number of communication channels to promote and encourage residents to 'Shop Local' while adhering to Government safety guidelines. We are also working with Cirencester Town Council on its Christmas Shoppers Guide and researching other ways in which people can be encouraged to support local traders through apps and online marketplaces.

The Cirencester Town Centre masterplan is being progressed to help the town to evolve in the face of changing shopping habits by introducing different uses and experiences, including residential accommodation, leisure uses like cinemas or restaurants, cultural venues and flexible workspace. A refreshed masterplan programme board meeting will be held in early November to discuss the scope of the project and it will identify immediate priorities of work.

Covid-19 update

Between 1 April - 30 September 2020, the Council paid out:

- £24,310,000 to small businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sector with a rateable value of 15k or below; a total of 2,431 businesses received a grant of £10k;
- £11,410,000 to retail, hospitality and leisure sector with a rateable value of between £15k and £51k; a total of 456 businesses received a grant of £25k;
- £1,781,100 in discretionary grants; 388 businesses/people received grants of £10k and below.