

Public Document Pack



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Monday, 18 September 2023

Tel: (01285) 623553 or 623181
e-mail - Democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at Council Chamber - Trinity Road on **Tuesday, 26 September 2023 at 5.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Councillors Gina Blomefield, Gary Selwyn, David Cunningham, Roly Hughes, Angus Jenkinson, Dilys Neill, Michael Vann, Tony Slater, Clare Turner and Jon Wareing)

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
2. **Substitute Members**
To note details of any substitution arrangements in place for the Meeting.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members and Officers, relating to items to be considered at the meeting.
4. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023.
5. **Chair's Announcements**
6. **Public Questions**
A maximum of 15 minutes is allocated for an “open forum” of public questions at committee meetings. No person may ask more than two questions (including supplementary questions) and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. The maximum length of oral questions or supplementary questions by the public will be two minutes. Questions must relate to the responsibilities of the Committee but questions in this section cannot relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

The response may take the form of:

- a) A direct oral response (maximum length: 2 minutes);
- b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

7. **Member Questions**
A maximum period of fifteen minutes is allowed for Member questions. Questions must be directed to the Chair and must relate to the remit of the committee but may not relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chair may group together similar questions.

The deadline for submitting questions is 5.00pm on the working day before the day of the meeting unless the Chair agrees that the question relates to an urgent matter, in which case the deadline is 9.30am on the day of the meeting.

A member may submit no more than two questions. At the meeting the member may ask a supplementary question arising directly from the original question or the reply. The maximum length of a supplementary question is one minute.

The response to a question or supplementary question may take the form of:

- a) A direct oral response (maximum length: 2 minutes);
- b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

8. **Channel Choice and Telephone Access (Pages 13 - 18)**

Purpose

The purpose of this report, in light of a continuous decline in demand, is to propose to Cabinet to reduce telephone access hours to the public.

Recommendations

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the report and make any recommendations to Cabinet on 2 October 2023.

Invited

Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation;
Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Residents Services

9. **Establishment of a Public Conveniences Review Group (Pages 19 - 22)**

Purpose

To consider the establishment of a Public Conveniences Review Group.

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny and Committee agree:

- 1) To establishment of a Public Conveniences Review Group;
- 2) Agree the terms of reference;
- 3) Note that political groups have been asked to nominate Members to serve on this review group, and that the names of the nominees will be reported to the Committee once known.

10. **HR Policies and Health and Safety Policies Refresh (Pages 23 - 172)**

Purpose

For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the decision taken by Cabinet in relation to the HR Policies and Health and Safety Policies Refresh.

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

- 1) Note the decision taken on 12 September 2023.

Invited

Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council;
Rob Weaver, Chief Executive;
Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director for Organisational Effectiveness

11. **QI Performance Report (Pages 173 - 250)**
Purpose
To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
- Recommendation
That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and scrutinise the report.
- Invited
Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council;
Rob Weaver, Chief Executive;
Gemma Moreing, Business Information Lead
12. **QI Financial Performance Report (Pages 251 - 276)**
Purpose
This report sets of the latest budget monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year.
- Recommendations
That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and scrutinise the report
- Invited
Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance;
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer;
Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant
13. **Update on the Work of the Performance Task and Finish Working Group**
Purpose
To receive a verbal update on the Performance Task and Finish Working Group.

(END)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11/July2023



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 11 July 2023.

Councillors present:

Gina Blomefield
David Cunningham
Angus Jenkinson
Michael Vann

Gary Selwyn
Tony Slater
Clare Turner
Helene Mansilla

Ian Watson

Officers present:

Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and
Development (Monitoring Officer)
Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant

Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property
and Regeneration
Ciaran Okane, Senior Procurement Business
Partner
Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic
Services Support Assistant

Observers:

Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

OS.261 Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Members, Officers and the public watching online.

The Chair invited the Committee Members to introduce themselves before proceeding.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer confirmed that apologies received from Councillor Neill and Councillor Hughes

OS.262 Substitute Members

The Senior Democratic Services Officer confirmed that Councillor Watson and Councillor Mansilla were the substitutes for the meeting.

OS.263 Declarations of Interest

There were none received from Members or Officers present.

There were comments made regarding OS.254 regarding a briefing note which was to be circulated by the Chief Executive.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer indicated that the Director of Governance would take the briefing note away as an action. This note was subsequently circulated after the meeting.

There was also a point raised regarding OS.258 and an action to circulate the calculations of costings for planning applications.

It was noted that both of these responses would be included in the minutes of the meeting.

It was also clarified by the Senior Democratic Services Officer that the Constitution Working Group would be looking at the process of referring applications to Planning Committee as part of its work plan.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed as an accurate record.

Voting Record

6 For, 0 Against, 3 abstention

OS.265 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair addressed the Committee regarding the timings of the meetings, and asked for succinct questions and responses. The Committee noted that the Chair would intervene if necessary to keep to time.

It was also noted that it was important that Members read the documentation provided. The Chair apologised for the lateness of the arrival of the paper copies due to issues in the print room.

It was also confirmed that Councillor Angus Jenkinson was nominated as the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee representative, and Councillor Patrick Coleman was the substitute.

It was also noted that the Local Plan Item was removed from the Cabinet agenda due to further consultations being required, and it would be brought forward at a later date.

OS.266 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

OS.267 **Member Questions**

There were no member questions.

The Economic Development Lead introduced the report and provided a background to the fund for the benefit of members.

It was noted the fund was £764,000 for the years 2024/25 for capital projects. The officer noted that the fund would be used to increase rural productivity and connectivity within the Cotswold District.

It was highlighted that this would include grants to businesses, village halls and community organisations, active travel, and cultural and heritage buildings.

The Gloucestershire authorities receiving funding are Cotswold, Tewkesbury, Stroud and Forest of Dean. The administration of funds would benefit from a common framework.

It was noted that there would be a joint procurement with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Forest of Dean to appoint a provider who would administer the funds on behalf of the authorities.

It was highlighted that Cabinet was being asked to endorse the overall strategy for the use of funds, it was also asking for the delegation of authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation to enter into a contract with a third party provider to administer the funds.

The Committee then made the following points in discussion of the item;

- There were questions around the monitoring of the 4% administration fee within the report and the makeup of the Assessment Panel. It was noted that the administration fee had been used to jointly fund a Project Manager, who was managing the fund and reporting requirements for CDC as well as FODDC and WODC. On the Assessment Panel, The Director of Governance would check to see how monitoring of the administration fee could be reported.
- There was a question in regards to the match funding. The Economic Development Lead clarified that advice had been sought for the funding amounts that would be offered for grants and the amount of match funding that would be suitable. The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group had advised on the grant funding range for businesses. On the question of match funding, it was noted that businesses would need to make a bigger capital commitment for projects than community organisations or active travel.
- There was a question about what the strategic plan was for developing The Cotswolds through this fund. It was noted by the Economic Development Lead and the Assistant Director for Property and Regeneration, that this was set out in the report for the submission to Government approved by [Cabinet on 7th November](#).
- There was a question around the criteria for the approval of applications. It was noted by the Economic Development Lead that there would be an evaluation framework created by the third party administration organisation. It was also highlighted that there would be flexibility in approving applications within the framework of rules set out by Government.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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- The Chair asked about the type of businesses and organisations applying under the Active Travel criteria. The Economic Development Lead highlighted that applications would come in from all routes including the County Council. The Assistant Director also noted that this would be under the Councils developing Sustainable Transport Strategy which is already identifying opportunities for infrastructure like cycle routes.
- The delegation in the recommendation was noted and there were questions regarding oversight.

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the report

OS.269 **Review of the Cotswold District Local Plan Housing Requirement**

Following the Chair's Announcement, this item was not considered as it was no longer on the Cabinet Forward Plan.

OS.270 **Procurement and Contract Management Strategy - Draft for Consultation**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report.

It was noted that further updates from the Government were expected to follow. This meant that the strategy needed to be an interim update this year.

The Senior Procurement Officer, Ciaran Okane, addressed the Committee on the strategy.

The new strategy was required to be in line with new procurement regulations following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- The procurement strategy in the context of Publica's wider role within Cotswold District Council for providing services. Following a subsequent question about adding an explanation to the document, the Cabinet Member indicated that the request for additional clarity would be considered as part of the presentation or to the minutes of Cabinet and/or Council
- The inclusion of considering social value in procurements.
- The balance between considering environmentally sustainable procurement options and cost.
- Accountability with a need to hold providers to account.

The Chair summarised that it was a timely report, and noted that it was important that public money should always be managed carefully alongside delivering services to residents.

There were no recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but the Chair thanked the officer for the report.

RESOLVED: The Committee NOTED the report.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Evemy, introduced the report on behalf of the Leader.

The Director of Governance was then invited to introduce the report and the key points to Members.

It was noted that there was a lot of data to consider but it was important to monitor the performance of Publica who provided services on the Council's behalf.

It was highlighted that the current cost of living challenge was the main theme, as seen in the increase in call volumes, business rate challenges, inflation of costs. It was highlighted that the Cost of Living Working Group had been re-established in light of the ongoing pressures.

It was noted on page 43 that there has been significant improvement of Development Management and Planning and that this was a key example of the Council working with Publica and other partners to improve services.

It was noted that whilst the Council wished to help affected residents, this had to be balanced against the Council's financial challenges.

It was commented that the report mentions some previous Cabinet Members who held previous portfolios before the May 2023 District Elections. It was confirmed that this report was based on the information from that time, but it would be updated for the future performance reports.

A correction was also noted regarding the Changing Places Toilets in Cirencester Abbey Grounds from 'awaiting to be installed', to now being open.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- The current work of the Performance Task and Finish Group in examining key performance indicators.
- Affordable homes comparisons with Publica partner councils.
- The timetable for the installation of electric vehicle charging points, and the layout of the chargers for the public and council vehicles.
- The addition of contactless payment for public toilet facilities.

In response to questions regarding electric vehicle charging, it was highlighted that these were likely to be 7KW chargers, but that the Assistant Director would come back to the Chair to confirm this.

RESOLVED: The Committee NOTED the report and approved for it to go on to Cabinet.

The Chair handed over to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to introduce the report.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and outlined that the report was referring to the management information of the finances on a revenue and a capital basis. It was noted that the Audit and Governance Committee had specific responsibilities for the accounts.

The following points were noted:

- It was highlighted that the 2022/23 budget approved in February 2022 was affected immediately by the invasion of Ukraine by Russian Forces. This changed budget assumptions and added a number of cost pressures such as rising fuel costs.
- It was also noted that the national pay award in 2022/23 was a 6% rise for Publica staff and 7% rise for Ubico staff in comparison to the 2.5% estimated.
- The Chief Accountant reinforced that the £1.2 million deficit was due to the increases in pay, fuel and energy costs. It was noted that these comparisons would have to be taken into consideration for the 2023/24 budget.
- It was also noted that there was a shortfall in car parking income, and a reduction in income from planning services and land charges.
- However, investment income had continued to perform well with rising interest rates, which led to a £510,000 favourable variable against the budget.
- It was noted in Annex C that there was an underspend in the capital programme of £1.3 million outlined which included a loan to Cottsway Housing, the purchase of vehicles through Ubico, and the changing places toilets scheme, which would be carried forward.
- The Committee was also informed in Section 3 (Table 3) of the General Fund closing balance which had been budgeted as £4.2 million and the outturn was now £1.7 million. This was partly due to the higher than budgeted deficit position and because of a transfer to the newly established Financial Resilience Reserve. There was also a £1.6 million budgeted transfer into the General Fund following the lump sum payment made to the pension fund in 2021 which provided capacity in the budget to increase the general fund.

There were comments made about the introduction of cashless parking and the link to the reduction of car parking income. It was also asked whether the higher cost had been factored in to electric vehicle charging points. The Deputy Leader outlined that the reduction was £24,000 which wasn't felt to be a material deterioration. It was also noted that the 2023/24 revenue was projected to grow without a change in the current tariff.

In response to the question on electric vehicle charging points, the Chief Accountant noted that the increase in energy costs would be counterbalanced by income from chargers.

It was noted for the benefit of new Members that the Medium Term Financial Strategy presented at Full Council looked ahead 4 financial years into the future whereas this report was retrospective. It was noted that with the £861,000 used to balance the 2023/24 budget from reserves, there was a High Risk Budgets report going to Cabinet on 17 July, which would make Members aware of the challenges ahead.

It was also noted that the Cabinet was working closely to deliver the savings needed alongside the Council's partners in Ubico and Publica.

It was commented that a simpler table of reserves might be useful for general reading. The Chief Accountant would take this away for future presentations.

The Committee entered into discussion on the following points:

- The allocation of money into specific funds.
- The future financial position of the Council and how it may increase its revenue and capital receipts.
- The constraints of income from central government.

The Committee asked about the question of the Green Bond and how this was accounted for. The Chief Accountant noted that this would be part of the report to the Audit and Governance Committee on the accounts. It was also noted that the funding could be seen on the Capital Programme as it was used for funding electric vehicle charging points and solar photovoltaic improvements to the Council Offices.

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the report.

OS.273 **Review of Work Plan and Agenda items for September**

The Chair introduced this item and invited the Committee to comment. It was noted that Quarter One Service Performance Reports, Crime and Disorder, and the Review of Local Plan would be included on the Committees September agenda.

The Assistant Director noted that there were two additional items: the Performance Task and Finish Group, which was in regards to benchmarking performance statistics and Car Parking. The scope for car parking outlined by the previous Committee on car parking strategy, electric vehicle charge point implementation, the impact on local businesses, and looking at individual car parks if required.

There was a suggestion that a review of car parking, could be delayed to a later meeting but it was also noted that the expected increase in revenue would need to be scrutinised.

The Committee commented that the Local Plan item would need to be considered at a later meeting but it was not yet known when the report would be ready. It was highlighted that this item would need sufficient time for appropriate scrutiny. It was also noted by the Vice-Chair how pre-decision scrutiny had helped the Committee become more efficient, and the comments by the Chair regarding officer contribution were important to note.

The Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 7.30 pm

Chair

(END)

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Agenda Item 8



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 2 OCTOBER 2023
Subject	TELEPHONE CHANNEL ACCESS - TRIAL
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	<p>Cllr Tony Dale – Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation</p> <p>Email: tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Accountable officer	<p>Jon Dearing – Assistant Director for Resident Services</p> <p>Email: jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>Michelle Clifford – Business Manager for Customer Experience</p> <p>Email: michelle.clifford@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Summary/Purpose	The purpose of this report, in light of a continuous decline in demand, is to propose reduced telephone access hours to the public. This will allow focus to shift to digital channels, where demand is increasing and make the Council more efficient.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Agree the reduced telephone access hours, on a trial basis, with effect from Monday 16th October 2023 for a period of six months, and</i> 2) <i>Receive a further report, detailing the findings and recommendations from the trial, to a Cabinet meeting early in May 2024.</i>
Corporate priorities	Delivering our services to the highest standard of service
Key Decision	NO, as the recommendations are in relation to a trial period.
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	All Internal Departments including agreeing bespoke arrangements for Housing, Dangerous Structures and Elections..



	Members Customer Services Team
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Over the last few years the Council has been introducing new digital channels and improving those that already existed. This activity coincided with the Covid pandemic, where people accepted the use of to use alternative service access channels as a result of national restrictions. The result is that a significant percentage of service requests continue to come through digital channels and this present as opportunity for the council to trial a reduction in the hours of opening for the customer contact centre.
- 1.2 This report makes proposals to better reflect the changing needs of customers and how they prefer to access Services; whilst still retaining telephone access for those that are less able to use digital services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2021 Resident Services restructured at the Business Manager level. One of the objectives of this change was allow for a Business Manager dedicated to improving the customer experience. The resultant post of Business Manager for Customer Experience is responsible for leading the Customer Service Teams, improving digital access, making processes customer focussed and improving performance.
- 2.2 This has led to the formation of a multi-skilled 'Channel Choice Team'. This Team has been working to implement/improve access to digital services. The Team have created and improved digital access around many processes with very high take up rates. Examples include Green Waste sign-up, Bulky Waste, Licensing Applications, Fly Tipping and Abandoned Vehicle reporting, Planning Validation and implementation of the 'Open Portal' where customers can self-serve in relation to Housing Benefit and Council Tax services. CDC now has almost 7,000 households signed up to the 'Open Portal'. This figure increases weekly and that take up will be accelerated as we introduce 'auto sign-up', creating a Portal account when other forms of digital enquiries are made. Digital renewal for Green Waste licences continue to increase year on year. 2023 renewal has a 90% digital take up.
- 2.3 Over the last three years the provision of more and improved digital customer access to services, coupled with the impact of the pandemic, has led to customers changing their service access habits.



- 2.4** The volume of calls (CDC and WODC combined) reduced by over 37058 between 2021 and 2022. During this period the volume of web forms utilised by customers has tripled to over 98000 across the three sites (CDC volume = over 33000). This shift of contact method continues into 2023 when, for the first time, digital access volumes exceed telephone access volumes in the first half of the year.
- 2.5** This report, therefore, recommends that the Council's resources are realigned to reflect the change in customer behaviour.
- 2.6** It is important to note that, due to system configuration, any changes to telephone access would need to be mirror across the two Councils (Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council).

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** As a result of the changing customer needs and the resultant shift from telephone contact to digital contact, the Customer Services Management Team have undertaken extensive analysis of the telephone data. As well as the significant call volume reductions, the data shows, on average:
- a) Telephone lines are busiest earlier in the day, with the busiest period being between 9am and 10am,
 - b) Based on the most recent data, call volumes reduce steadily throughout the day; with the last hour of the day volumes being only 45% of the first hour of the day,
 - c) Mondays and Tuesdays are the busiest days with Wednesdays seeing the least volume of calls throughout the average week, and
 - d) Wait times increase between 12pm and 2pm, as almost 50% of the workforce are taking a lunch break throughout that period.

The conclusions drawn from the increase in digital contact, provide an opportunity to trial a revision to the way the services are provided, namely:

- (a) Telephone access reductions should be in the afternoons when call volumes reduce, and
 - (b) Increasing and improving digital access is where resources should be focussed in the future.
- 3.2** What the data does not show is what the reaction of the customers will be. Based on the experiences of other organisations (public and private sector) it is anticipated that a reduction in telephone access times will result in a further shift to digital channels. In order to test this assumption it is recommended that we enter into the new arrangements as a trial and collect data on demand, waiting times, channel shift, customer satisfaction and customer complaints. This data will then inform a further report around whether the new telephone opening hours should be made permanent.



- 3.3** The data indicates demand falls after 2pm and the recommendation is therefore to close front and back office (i.e. All non-direct dial lines) telephone lines at 2pm every day. This uniform approach will make messaging more straightforward and should improve recruitment opportunities; making posts more attractive to those that need to work around school hours. It will also mean resources can be maximised during the (12pm to 2pm) lunch period.
- 3.4** The intention is that the Out of Hours Service will not change and still commence at 5pm every day. The cost of providing an external Out of Hours service from 2pm every day would outweigh the financial savings and therefore hamper our ability to deliver on our customers' digital access needs. However, there are three services that will need 2pm to 5pm cover. They are:
- Reporting of dangerous structures (and other life threatening events). These are very rare but do need cover,
 - Assisting those who are presenting as homeless or are under the threat of homelessness, and
 - Support for residents in the lead-up to an election.

The first two of these are year-round requirements and will be resolved by introducing an in-house emergency line between 2pm and 5pm. The use of this line will be closely managed to ensure that non-urgent contacts do not take up this resource.

The election issue will be addressed by a separate (temporary) telephone line that will only be available and resourced in the lead-up to an election (Precise timings to be agreed with the Returning Officer and Elections Services Manager). The Customer Service Managers will meet with Elections Teams to draw up a plan specific to each election but resources can be sourced at very short notice for this task, or any emergency event, and the mechanism for this is explained in 3.6 below.

When customers attempt to telephone after 2pm they will be advised of the new opening hours and given information on how to access services on-line. They will also be given information on what to do in an emergency. For non-emergency matters other channels, such as face to face, email and the wide range of digital services will be available as normal.

- 3.5** The implementation of these changes will clearly require a reduction in working hours for some of the Customer Service Officers (some Officers will continue full time as Managers, Reception, Front Office and some technical Officers will be required all day). There has been a commitment to effect this change without any mandatory redundancies and there are three key ways in which this will be achieved:
- i. Where an officer wishes to voluntarily reduce their hours, this will be agreed,
 - ii. Where a vacancy occurs, recruitment to the post will be made for 9am to 2pm, and
 - iii. When future 'back office' vacancies arise, opportunities will be considered to assess how these roles could be filled by customer services staff (where



appropriate) with the 2pm to 5pm Customer Service Officer resource. The approach described in bullet point iii (above) has several advantages:

- Minimises risk of the need to make any redundancies,
- There will be improved customer focus in the back office,
- The Customer Service officers will improve their technical knowledge, and
- Customer Service resources can be seconded (full-time) back in the Telephone Service should they be required. This would mean a temporary reduction in back office capacity but as the back office Services will have gained some capacity from reducing direct telephone access 2pm-5pm, this should more than balance that capacity issue.

- 3.6** During the trial period the excess hours within the Customer Service Team will be used to help other Services reduce their outstanding workloads; in particular Revenues and Benefits and the Housing Service where demand is high as a result of the Cost of Living Crisis. This will reduce the need for customers to make repeat calls and therefore, further, reduce telephone call volumes.
- 3.7** This change is intended to meet the changing needs of our customers. No change to other access channels (including Face to Face) are being proposed. The Trinity Road and Moreton Area Centre receptions will be open 9am to 5pm as normal.
- 3.8** The recommendations propose that a further report be made in May 2024 with details of the outcomes the data collection exercise that will have taken place during the trial. This is the point at which the decision will be made as to whether the change is made permanent or not.
- 3.9** A Communications plan is being developed, so that customers are aware of the changes and the reasoning. This will include amendments to Web pages, documents and signage.
- 3.10** Based on the experiences of other organisations (public and private sector) a reduction in telephone access times is likely to result in a further shift to digital channels. In order to test this assumption the recommendation is to trial the new arrangements and during the trial collect data on elements such as demand, waiting times, continued uptake of channel choice to web based services customer satisfaction and customer complaints. This data will then inform a further report to assist in informing whether the new telephone opening hours should be made permanent.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Excluding the Managers and Face to Face Officers (mentioned above) each of the 30 Customer Service Officers across CDC and WODC (24.93 fte) will have a reduction in hours of 0.32 fte. This reduction across the 30 Officers equates to a total reduction of 7.98 fte. This makes the total efficiency saving £238,100 to be shared equally between CDC and WODC. So the total saving to CDC is £119,050 per annum.



- 4.2 The first £50,000 per annum of this will be delivered in 2023/24 and the remainder (£69,050 per annum) in 2024/25.
- 4.3 The Service has already started to fill vacancies on reduced hours and is holding some vacancies. This will allow the 2023/24 target to be met during the trial period.
- 4.4 As there will be no redundancies, the cost of implementation will be support service resources and will therefore fall within existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no Legal implications associated with the recommendations.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 There is a risk in not agreeing the recommendations, in that the Council would miss an opportunity to make services more efficient.
- 6.2 The reduction in telephone access opening hours could bring a reputational risk. However, the Council would be maintaining all forms of access and better meeting the changing needs of its customers.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 No services or service access channels are being taken away, so the impact is minimal. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and shared with the Council's Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer).
- 7.2 Encouraging a further shift to digital and self-serve channels will create more capacity for Teams to provide support to those customers in the greatest need.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendation does not have any climate change implications.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1 The Council could decide not to reduce the telephone opening hours. However, this would fail to recognise the customer shift to digital access channels and would miss an opportunity to evolve to reflect changing patterns of behaviour as well as generate savings.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.

(END)

Draft Terms of Reference – Public Conveniences Review Group

Membership

The Review Group will have cross-party membership of c. 5 members:

Councillor Tony Slater (Chair)

Councillor Gary Selwyn (Vice-Chair)

Three additional members TBC (groups will be asked to nominate members for appointment by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

Officer Support

Democratic Services will organise and support the meetings of the Review Group and produce any report/recommendations arising from the review.

Resident Services will provide information and advice to inform the Review Group's deliberations.

Background and rationale

Cotswold District Council operates fifteen public toilet sites across the district. During 2007 and 2008, ten of the sites were refurbished, introducing up to date systems and charging. The remaining five sites are still free. Reactive maintenance is dealt with as and when necessary, however no further refurbishments or improvements have taken place. The provision of public toilets is not a statutory duty.

The cleaning and responsive maintenance is contracted to Danfo UK Ltd. At the meeting of Cabinet on 17 July 2023, the decision was made to extend the contract to 31 September 2024. The contract cost is the main expenditure for each site, which has significantly increased over the last year due to wages, fuel, consumables, and cleaning products. Research into alternative service provision has shown there are no significant savings to be made by changing the service provider at this time. The contract extension was negotiated with reduced visits to several sites to enable moderate savings. All sites have one unit which is accessed free of charge with a RADAR key (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation), this is a national scheme sometimes referred to as the NKS (National Key Scheme).

In order to inform the future of Public Conveniences provision, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a task and finish group to review the work and inform a future Cabinet decision.

Purpose of the Review

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been asked to review the current service provision and consider options for the future of service provision. Preliminary research carried out by Officers has identified the following potential options for the assets;

1. Close all sites - Close all sites, followed by sell or re-purpose the assets- where there are viable alternatives in the town/village.

2. Transfer the assets to Town/Parish Councils. – Some of the sites are located in car parks, which should be carefully considered for any future plans.
3. Keep all sites owned and charge all at minimum of 50p (The Chippings is leased).
4. A combination of two or more of the above options.

There are also the following options for service delivery:

1. Retender the contract.
2. Bring the service in house.

The Review Group will produce a report with recommendations to inform a Cabinet decision prior to the expiry of the contract (target: 5 February 2024 Cabinet meeting).

Out of scope

Public Toilets that the Council does not own are outside the scope of the review.

In August 2023, the Government announced a new building requirement to separate all toilets in new buildings by male and female. As the Review Group will be looking the provision of existing toilets, this is also outside the scope of the work.

Method / Approach

The Review Group will hold a series of meetings to consider and interrogate different options for the future of public conveniences in the district. In doing so the Review Group will consider benchmarking data and data on the usage and costs of different sites.

Guest speakers

To be determined – Review Group to consider whether to speak to external organisations or groups as part of this review, which could include a representative of the current contractor or representatives of any external groups e.g. disability groups.

Timescales

26 Sept 2023 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish the review group and appoint members

w/c 9 Oct or w/c 16 Oct 2023 – Initial Review Group meeting to consider the terms of reference.

23 October 2023 – terms of reference published in Overview and Scrutiny agenda.

31 October 2023 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider terms of reference.

November to December 2023 – Review Group meetings to be held every c. 3 weeks.

Early January 2024 – final Review Group meeting to consider draft report/recommendations.

22 January 2024 – report/recommendations published in Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

30 January 2024 – report/recommendations considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5 February 2024 – report/recommendations considered by Cabinet

Background documents

East Devon District Council Public Toilet Review, 2021 – Undertook a similar review where a Task and Finish Group categorised toilets to refurbish and continue to provide, and those that they would no longer seek to provide, leasing some these, and selling some to Town and Parish Councils below Market rate. East Devon Council then consulted with Members of the Public on this work.

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/community-engagement/public-toilet-review/>

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Agenda Item 10



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 12 September 2023
Subject	Employment and Health & Safety Policies
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: Robert.Weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director, Organisational Effectiveness Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update the Cabinet relating to the refresh of all Human Resources and Health & Safety policies for CDC. No changes have been made to employee Terms and Conditions, only to clarify and enable policies to be used concurrently with employee relations matters, giving clarity and usability to both employees and managers alike.
Annexes	Annex A – Updated Employment and Health & Safety Policies.
Recommendation(s)	<i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i> 1) <i>Agree the twenty-eight employment and Health & Safety Policies included in Annex A.</i> 2) <i>Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve subsequent amendments to any Cotswold District Council employment policies that may be necessary in line with legal changes and best practice to ensure the Council's policies remain compliant.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the highest standard of service • Support health and wellbeing
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO



Consultees/ Consultation	<p>A Task & Finish Group was set up to support the Chief Executive in ensuring that the 28 Cotswold District Council employment policies were updated. Publica worked with XpertHR and its recommended legal counsel, Markel LLP in order to update the policies. This approach ensured that all the policies could be used simultaneously and there was cohesion to mitigate future risk.</p> <p>Following this full refresh, in accordance with current employment law and in line with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration (ACAS) Code, Cotswold District Council employed an external HR Consultant, Evelyn Fearon who worked with Publica's HR team, Head of HR, Assistant Director of Organisational Effectiveness with oversight from the Chief Executive to make additional amends to the six core policies and procedures to further clarify. These encompassed the policies identified by Overview & Scrutiny, as needing particular attention, namely: Anti-Harassment and Bullying, Disciplinary, Grievance, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Unauthorised Absence, Sickness Absence and Performance Management, and also Long Term Sickness Absence</p> <p>Publica's HRBP team consulted with trade unions on behalf of Cotswold District Council alongside the Counter Fraud & Enforcement Unit and the South West Audit Partnership before presenting them to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed by the trade unions and Director of Governance and Legal Services.</p>
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At Full Council on 21 September 2022, it was recommended that a Task & Finish Group be set up under the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to oversee the progress and completion of updating and renewing the Council's employment policies.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2022 agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to oversee a review of the Council's key HR policies. These are the policies which apply to those employees directly employed by Cotswold District Council including the statutory officers, the Counter Fraud & Enforcement Unit and those members of staff within Legal Services employed directly by Cotswold District Council. These policies do not apply to Publica employees for which a separate suite of policies exist.
- 2.2 Although outside of the Task & Finish Group's remit, the corporate Health & Safety Policy has also been reviewed and updated for consideration by Cabinet. Unlike the HR policies, the Health & Safety Policy includes elected members in its scope.

Core policies identified for update, but not limited to, included:

- Capability
- Grievance
- Harassment & Bullying
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion
- Performance Management
- Sickness Management
- Unauthorised Absence Management

- 2.3 The Task & Finish Group agreed to the following action plan:

- Terms of Reference were agreed November 2022 for Task & Finish Group with regular reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress.
- Officer oversight would be provided by the Chief Executive
- Publica HR team to work with XpertHR's Lawyers to ensure ACAS compliant, up to date, clear policies developed. XpertHR are an external organisation who offer dedicated HR support including comprehensive employment law and HR practice guidance.
- HR Team to consult CDC's external HR Advisor, Evelyn Fearon, to discuss changes/suggestions.
- Complete 'in-house' amends



- Consult with the recognised trade unions, GMB and Unison.
- Present to Cabinet for final approval
- Implementation
- Training for management on the core policies and requirements of them, working with HR to ensure risk of employee relations matters mitigated

- 2.4 Publica HR engaged XpertHR Lawyers, Markel, November 2022, to support in the production of a suite of 28 human resources policies to ensure consistency and transparency across all policies, mitigating employment risks.
- 2.5 Initial work was completed by March 2023 on a full suite of policies ensuring no employment terms and conditions were altered which conflicted with the Council's existing terms.
- 2.6 Following consultation with the Chief Executive, Evelyn Fearon external HR consultant was employed to review the core six policies.
- 2.7 Further amends and alterations to strengthen/clarified points were made to the policies and procedures in conjunction with Evelyn Fearon, the Chief Executive, and Publica's HR team.
- 2.8 The final, amended policies and procedures were sent to Markel LLP and signed off in August.
- 2.9 Publica's HR Team met with the Trade Unions to respond to comments made on the suite of 28 human resources policies in August.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The review of the Human Resources (HR) Policies was to ensure that the Council's policies reflected and complied with existing / new regulation and case law, reflected best practice and importantly were clear and concise to allow managers to implement them as and where necessary. Updating all policies together, ensures flow and for policies to be used in conjunction when complex cases arise, ensuring matters are dealt with in a timely fashion and thereby mitigating risk for the Council.
- 3.2 HR Policies provide legal protection for the Council. HR policies and procedures give guidance on a range of employment issues and are written guidance on how a wide range of issues should be handled.
- 3.3 HR Policies provide clear guidance that reflects employment law and regulations and can help avoid involvement from employment tribunal claims.
- 3.4 Even when a policy or procedure is not specifically required by law, employers often find it helpful to have a policy in place to provide clear guidance that reflects the legal framework for handling the issue in question and it also helps employees be clear about the Council's stance on a particular subject, setting clear expectations.



- 3.5 HR Policies play a key role in supporting fairness and consistency across the Council, as well as potentially helping to protect the Council against legal claims and costly exit payments.
- 3.6 HR Policies provide general and practical advice and guidance for managers and staff on a range of employment issues and the procedures give a step-by-step account of specific arrangements that apply in particular circumstances.
- 3.7 Clear Health & Safety policies, which are current and in line with legislation are the backbone to strong safety performance and compliance. These bring a variety of benefits including ensuring a safe working environment and places obligations on employers to meet with their legal obligations.
- 3.8 Under 'common law' all employers have a duty of care which is an obligation to protect their employees. A term is implied into all employment contracts requiring employers to take care of their employees' health and safety.
- 3.9 For example, employers must provide a safe place of work, a safe system of work, adequate equipment.
- 3.10 Employees also have responsibilities and should work with their employer to ensure a safe place of work.
- 3.11 Health and Safety Policies help to mitigate risks, through early warning and ensuring sufficient precautions are taken to prevent damage or injury, thereby reducing the risk of claims against the Council.

4. DELEGATING AUTHORITY

- 4.1 Employment legislation and case law can change on a yearly or bi-annual basis. Therefore, in order to maintain a current, up to date, and working set of HR policies, expediting changes to the suite of policies is key to ensure the Council is within the legal framework.
- 4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that a report be made on an annual basis, indicating which policies have been updated in line with changing or updated legislation.
- 4.3 Regular policy review and revision is an important part of procedure management which needs to be carried out on a regular basis and in line with employment law updates in April and October. The HR team now has Employment Legislation update training on this basis to ensure policies can be amended accordingly.
- 4.4 To ensure expedience, it is proposed that delegated authority to make reasonable amends be given to the Chief Executive of Cotswold District Council.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 Retaining existing, outdated policies places the Council at risk of challenge.



6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Further to the Overview and Scrutiny request that all HR policies are updated - this work has concluded. Publica's HR team was supported by XpertHR, external lawyers and an HR consultant to develop a clean and clear set of policies that mitigate risk for the Council. This suite of policies are up to date and legally compliant.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst there are no financial implications arising directly from this report, it is important that the Council's HR policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they comply with relevant legislation and best practice guidance.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Adopting up to date policies will help the Council manage employees more effectively. In addition, if subject to any legal action, will help to demonstrate that the Council has complied with the law.
- 8.2 The Health & Safety policy statement is written for the activities that are carried out by our staff and incorporates the organisation and arrangements, which are in place to meet the requirements of the legislation. This is in accordance with section 2.3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 By not updating and implementing the new suite of policies, the Council may fail to comply with new laws and regulations and leave itself exposed to costly employment law cases.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 Each policy has been considered to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. These policies apply equally across the Cotswold DC workforce.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annex A

(END)



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

Employment and Health & Safety Policies

Annex A

HR & Health and Safety Policies

1. Agile Working Policy
2. Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
3. Compassionate Policy
4. Disciplinary Policy
5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
6. Expenses Policy **(no longer being considered)**
7. Flexible Working Policy
8. Flexi-time TOIL and Overtime Policy **(no longer being considered)**
9. Grievance Policy
10. Health & Safety Policy
11. Long Term Sickness Absence Policy
12. Maternity Leave Policy
13. Menopause Policy
14. Parental Bereavement Policy
15. Parental Leave Policy
16. Paternity Leave Policy
17. Performance Improvement (Capability) Policy
18. Probation Policy
19. Recruitment Policy **(no longer being considered)**
20. Redundancy Policy
21. Reserved Forces and Voluntary Emergency Responders Policy
22. Shared Parental Leave (Adoption) Policy
23. Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Policy



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 24. Sickness Absence Policy
- 25. Supporting Bereaved Employees Policy
- 26. Supporting Employees through Pregnancy Loss Policy
- 27. Time off for Dependents Policy
- 28. Unauthorised Absence Policy

Amendment to recommendation for Agenda Item 9

That Cabinet resolves to:

- 1) Agree the twenty- three employment policies and the Health & Safety Policy for consideration in Annex A.
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve subsequent amendments to any Cotswold District Council employment policies that may be necessary in line with legal changes and best practice to ensure the Council's policies remain legally compliant
- 3) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve subsequent employment policies that come forward for approval.

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Agile Working Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This agile working policy builds upon previous flexible working policies and supports a culture of working wherever, whenever and however is most appropriate to get the work done.

Adopting this approach means that desk space is better utilised, with the office plans setting out the new layouts. The new office layout will be more focused on collaborative working and desk space will be shared.

It is important that individuals work with their colleagues and line manager to agree agile working arrangements that meet the needs of both the team and service delivery.

Our approach to agile working also links to our vision to address the climate emergency.

This policy sets out our approach to agile working, which allows employees flexibility between attending the office and working remotely. Agile working is an important element of our:

- Strategy for adapting to, and thriving in the new working environment
- Meeting our climate change commitments
- Commitment to supporting a positive work-life balance for our employees

We wish to support employees to do their best work, have a good work life balance, work flexibly whilst staying connected and getting the job done.

What is Agile Working?

Agile working is about more choice in deciding how, when and where you work best, balancing the needs of CDC, your team and yourself. Where, when and how you choose to work will depend on your role and discussions with your manager.

Key principles of agile working

- We acknowledge that agile working is not suitable for all roles. Each employee should discuss this with their line manager and establish how they work.
- Our Business Conduct policy applies in every location you work from, whether in one of our offices, at home or on site. Please familiarise yourself with this Policy.
- Agile working is open to everyone who has a suitable role regardless of how long they have worked with CDC.
- We commit to providing you with the necessary technology and equipment.
- Community and collaboration are part of who we are and we know they are important for our wellbeing. We will continue to provide safe office spaces for you to collaborate and connect with others.

- There will be times when being on site is important, e.g. when you first start working for us, or when you take on a new role. We would encourage you to visit one of the offices to familiarise yourself with the way we work and the support available.
- Working in this way will not change your contractual terms and conditions of employment in respect of working hours or work location. Agile working is an informal arrangement that may be changed from time to time depending on business needs.
- The expenses you can claim will be un-changed, that is if you claim mileage, you will be required to deduct your normal home to office from your claim even if you go to wherever you are going directly from your home.
- If you want to make a more permanent change to your hours, location, place of work and/or working pattern, you will need to request this separately through the Flexible working policy. (Please note a request under the Flexible Working Policy can only be made every 12 months)

Practical Considerations

The number of days per week each employee spends attending the workplace/office compared with working remotely will vary, depending on:

- Their individual circumstances
- The nature of their role
- What is happening within their role and team at any particular time; and
- The needs of our organisations, including the space we have available at our work locations

We expect that most staff will spend some of their working time in the office and some at home.

CDC recognises the benefits of flexibility but also that for some employees working at home may have its challenges. For example, you might:

- Live a significant distance from the office and it would be more efficient for you to spend more time working remotely or
- Have challenges with your working environment at home that mean that remote working is difficult for you and you would like to attend the office more often

Please speak to your line manager who will be supported by the HR Business Partner, if you think that you would benefit from working more at home or more in the office.

Being Flexible

Given the degree of flexibility that our agile working arrangements provide, we expect our people to be flexible.

You may be required to attend the office on particular days at the request of your line manager/head of department, for example for in-person training and for meetings that your line manager/head of department has determined are best conducted in person.

Similarly, there may be circumstances in which we ask you to work remotely, or to work from such other place as we may reasonably require, when you would otherwise expect to attend the workplace/office, for instance:

- For operational needs, for example if we have too many employees attending the workplace/office on specific days; or
- In the event of a lockdown/government guidance that employees should work from home if they can.

In such cases, you will be given as much notice as possible.

Arrangements while Attending the Office

Workspaces

Each team has a number of desks allocated to them; however it may be that if all the team are in the office at the same time, you may not be able to access a desk in your area. If this is the case, please use a desk in another part of the building. Some teams may decide to work on a rota basis. Please work with your line manager and the rest of your team to ensure you have the necessary desk space.

At the end of each day on which you are attending the office, please ensure that you leave the desk clean and tidy. Your laptop, any other equipment and any personal items should not be left on desks overnight. Please ensure that your laptop and other equipment are either taken with you or secured away.

Health and Safety - Working Measures

The health, safety, wellbeing, and security of our colleagues in all locations is paramount. Please:

- Familiarise yourself with the risk assessment relating to your work and meet the standards required whilst carrying out your work activities
- Familiarise yourself with the Emergency Evacuation Procedure, the First Aid Arrangements and the Accident / Incident reporting procedure for each site you may be working at.
- Complete a DSE (Display Screen Equipment) self-assessment for office and home workstations. A Working from Home Assessment might also need to be completed. Please see DSE guidance on the Health and Safety Support portal page, in the working from home guidance, and ensure you complete the iHasco online training.
- Keep your workstation tidy, ensure personal belongings or computer wires do not present a trip hazard. You should not bring in electrical equipment from home to use at work.
- Work with your team to ensure that you have appropriate lone working arrangements in place.

Let us know if you have any concerns, have identified any potential risks, or have any suggestions for further adaptations we can make. You can do this by raising concerns or making suggestions to your line manager.

You have a role to play in ensuring all our staff can work in a safe environment and you must follow our safe-working instructions. Failure to do so may be a disciplinary offence and dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. More detailed information can be found in the Health and Safety Support section on the portal.

Arrangements while Working Remotely

Working hours and keeping in touch

We want to empower you to choose the times you work so you can balance your home life and the needs of your role. We trust you to manage your own time and work the hours you are contracted to do.

There are some key areas we would like you to be aware of:

While working remotely, you must be available and working during your normal hours of work. You should agree your normal working hours with your line manager.

You must ensure regular contact with your team / manager using mobile phone, telephones and email. Follow the control measures identified in your risk assessment relating to home and lone working.

We ask you to be mindful that you are not overworking. "Downtime" from work is essential. To help maintain your wellbeing, please make sure that you take adequate rest breaks:

- Take time off for lunch each day.
- Even if you are busy, it is essential that you find the time to take a break of at least 30 minutes during each working day that lasts more than six hours.

Please be as clear as possible with your line manager and colleagues about your hours of work for days on which you are working remotely. Making use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging can help colleagues to be aware of your availability on these days.

We may ask you (with enough notice) to be available at certain times to meet the needs of the business, to physically be in the office to collaborate or attend training.

Flexing your working times should not result in extra work for other members of your team.

We know life can be complicated and that working in this way can help you balance your home and work life. However, agile working is not a way of dealing with emergency leave or for long-term childcare if it has an impact on your ability to carry out your day-to-day role.

We know that collaboration, connection and having a sense of belonging are important to your wellbeing. We encourage you to actively make time to connect with your colleagues. To find out what other support is available, please visit the Staff welfare and support page on the CDC Portal.

Sickness

When working remotely, you should not work if you are unwell. If you are sick and unable to work, our Sickness absence policy applies.

You should notify your line manager by telephone or by message as soon as reasonably practicable on the first day of absence, preferably before you are due to start work and, in any event, no later than one hour after you are due to begin work.

Technology and equipment

To assist you to work remotely, you are provided with:

- A laptop computer
- A mouse
- A keyboard
- Any additional equipment required as identified in your Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment

You must take care of any equipment we provide you with and notify your line manager/the IT department of any faults with the equipment.

If you need any additional equipment, please speak to your line manager.

You must complete the DSE iHasco online training which will assist you in setting up your workstation correctly.

When working at home you must ensure you have a secure, private and appropriately lit and heated space to work in, with a reliable and secure Internet connection.

Care Commitments

When working at home you will be required to work the hours you are contracted. You should ensure you have the appropriate arrangements in place for childcare or other caring responsibilities, so that you can work undisturbed or distracted by such caring responsibilities. However, if for any reason there are challenges, please discuss any support you may require with your line manager.

Data Protection, Security and Confidentiality

Maintaining the security of information we work with is vital and when we work away from the office we are responsible for the security of the data we have. Please ensure that you know your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and our security policies.

Please ensure:

- That you do not send work related emails of sensitive data to your home email address
- Do not store work related information on your personal computer
- If you work from a CDC office space, please be mindful of any IT security risk or confidentiality; position your laptop so others cannot see the screen and avoid having sensitive conversations in public
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have access to any work information or personal information either on paper or as electronic records.

Working Elsewhere

At times there may be a request to work outside the UK. There are significant legal and logistical issues with allowing staff to work abroad for weeks at a time. These include tax, employment law and data protection. For this reason, we are unable to support long term arrangements or requests for permanent relocations outside the UK. Please discuss any requests with your line managers and your HR Business Partner.

Costs and Expenses

Your contractual normal location of work will not change, so that your entitlement to claim expenses will remain the same. Please see our Expenses policy.

Employees may be able to claim tax relief for any household expenses incurred as a result of working from home, provided the expenses are solely work related. If you wish to benefit from this tax relief, see the Government's '*Claim tax relief for your job*' expenses guide ([link](#)).

Appendix

Requesting Flexible Working

This Policy focuses on how our organisation operates agile working, but there are many other forms of flexible working.

If you have 26 weeks' service with us, you retain the right to make a formal request for flexible working, whether or not agile working is available for your role/in your team.

Examples of other types of flexible working that can be requested are:

- Reducing the number of hours that you are working
- Changing your start and finish times
- Compressing your working hours into fewer days (for example moving to a nine-day fortnight)

If you would like to request another form of flexible working, or if we do not currently offer you agile working but you would like to request it, you can make a formal request under our Flexible Working Policy.

Version Control:	
Document Name:	Agile Working Policy

Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer:	
Approved by:	
Date First Approved:	
Next Review Date	
Retention Period:	

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council (CDC) prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. CDC has a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Employees are an organisation's most valued asset and as such we seek to ensure that all our policies and procedures reflect the very best in good practice. Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, creating an environment where employees can deliver their best in a culture free of bullying or harassment. Having a culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive is core to everything that we strive to achieve and to the organisational environment we wish to protect.

We will not tolerate any instances of bullying or harassment, victimisation, or discrimination at CDC, with all forms being dealt with effectively. Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals and may cause stress, affect their health, impact their families and social relationships, as well as affecting their ability to perform their role and progress their careers. For organisations the impact can be low morale, poor work performance, high attrition and damage to the organisation's reputation. Therefore, any employee who is found to have harassed or bullied a colleague or stakeholder could face disciplinary penalties up to and including dismissal. Victimisation of a person making allegations of harassment and bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Key to protecting an inclusive and positive culture is seeking to eradicate bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination at work. This policy and procedure support this aim by setting out the steps that will be taken to investigate and deal with complaints of bullying or harassment, and how we support those affected, as no one should have to suffer bullying or harassment in the workplace.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for Cotswold District Council. This includes employees, contractors, volunteers, interns, and apprentices. The policy also relates to job applicants and is relevant to all stages of the employment relationship. The policy also applies to bullying or harassment by third parties.

Our Commitment to You

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation and Partner Councils but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

A toxic workplace culture, where bullying or harassment is tolerated, is harmful to the wellbeing of the workforce as well as the wider organisation.

We adopt a zero-tolerance approach to instances of bullying or harassment. Our commitment to you is to ensure that all forms of harassment, bullying, and victimisation are dealt with effectively.

What we expect From You

We expect you, and every one of our people, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting, and applying this policy. Whatever your job is, this is part of your role.

Any dealings you have with third parties, including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants, must be free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

If anyone in the employ of CDC is found to have committed, authorised, or condoned an act of bullying or harassment, we will take action against them (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary Procedure up to and including dismissal.

There is no justifiable reason to bully or harass anyone. For example, observing a particular religion is not a legitimate reason for bullying or harassing a colleague, neither is their sexual orientation. Even if you do not intend to bully or harass anyone, this does not legitimise your behaviour as it is the impact on the recipient that is important.

You should be aware that you can be personally liable for harassment.

If you experience bullying or harassment, we encourage you to speak up without delay and to ask for appropriate support.

Who is Protected from Harassment?

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These include:

- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- age
- pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

As well as the protected characteristics covered above, we consider harassment on any ground to be unacceptable.

Meaning of Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating someone else's dignity; or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

Harassment can occur where someone perceives another person to have a protected characteristic, for example a perception that someone is transgender even if they are not.

Harassment can also arise by association, where someone is harassed because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic, for example having a family member of a particular religion.

Examples of harassment

Harassment can occur in many forms and can take place either at work or outside work. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:

- "banter", jokes, taunts or insults that are sexist, racist, ageist, transphobic, homophobic or derogatory against any other protected characteristic
- unwanted physical behaviour, for example, pushing or grabbing
- excluding someone from a conversation or a social event or marginalising them from the group
- derogatory comments about pregnancy, maternity leave or IVF treatment
- mimicking or making fun of someone's disability
- derogatory or offensive comments about religion
- unwelcome comments about someone's appearance or the way they dress that is related to a protected characteristic
- "outing" (i.e., revealing their sexual orientation against their wishes), or threatening to "out", someone
- consistently using the wrong names and pronouns following the transition of a person's gender identity
- displaying images that are racially offensive
- excluding or making derogatory comments about someone because of a perceived protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

Harassment can arise where the perpetrator did not have the intention of causing offence but does cause offence by what they say. For example, this can happen in respect of banter and jokes.

Meaning of Sexual Harassment

Harassment may be sexual in nature. The law defines sexual harassment as:

- conduct, including verbal, comments, of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

Examples of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can occur in many forms. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:

- physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome physical contact, or intimidation
- persistent suggestions to meet up socially after a person has made clear that they do not welcome such suggestions
- showing or sending offensive or pornographic material by any means (e.g., by text, video clip, email or by posting on the internet or social media)
- unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, suggestive remarks, or gender-related insults
- offensive comments about appearance or dress, innuendo, or lewd comments
- leering, whistling, or making sexually suggestive gestures and
- gossip and speculation about someone's sexual orientation or transgender status, including spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent in nature, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online (cyber-bullying) or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work.

If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

Examples of bullying

While this is not an exhaustive list, bullying may include:

- physical, verbal or psychological threats
- excessive levels of supervision
- spreading rumours, malicious or offensive
- constantly putting someone down, undermining, criticising, showing a lack of respect and
- inappropriate and derogatory remarks about a person's performance.

It is important to understand that legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a person's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to people in the course of their employment, will not of themselves amount to harassment or bullying. **Micro-aggressions**

Micro aggressions - sometimes called micro-incivilities - are statements, actions, or incidents that are regarded as indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority. They are sometimes referred to as "death by a thousand cuts". Micro-aggressions generally take one of three forms:

- **Micro-assaults:** Conscious and obvious insults made verbally or non-verbally to a marginalised individual or group, for example directing limp-wristed hand gestures towards a gay colleague and saying, "It's just a joke".
- **Micro-insults:** Unintentionally insensitive remarks or assumptions based on stereotypes, for example saying to a person with a disability "You don't look disabled to me".
- **Micro-invalidations:** Where a person denies, or seeks to cancel, the feelings and lived experiences of a marginalised individual or group, for example a white person saying, "I don't think the UK has a problem with racism - some people are just too sensitive".

Serious micro-aggressions can amount to unlawful harassment, bullying or discrimination but even less serious micro-aggressions can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of the person experiencing them.

What to do if you are being Bullied or Harassed

Informal route

Bully/harasser is a colleague

If you feel able to, and where you believe there is a reasonable prospect of resolution, you may decide to raise the issue with the individual themselves, to make clear that their behaviour is not welcome and to ask them to stop. They may not be aware that their behaviour is offending you or it may be unintentional on their part.

Alternatively, if you do not feel up to speaking directly to the individual, you may consider asking your line manager, or an alternative manager for support. If the individual causing offence is your line manager or a someone senior in the work structure, you may wish to speak with Human Resources for further guidance.

You may or may not want them to talk to the individual on your behalf and, where possible, we will respect your wishes. However, if the welfare or safety of you or others is at risk or where your allegations are particularly serious, we may have to approach the individual and instigate a formal investigation. In such a case we will, where possible, discuss this with you first.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process and if you do not wish to take part in mediation, you do not have to. The mediator will be impartial, neutral and fully trained to conduct mediation whether they be an internal or an external resource. Mediation can help to mend workplace relationships by: -

- Finding solutions that everyone agrees to.
- Improving communication.
- Allowing everyone involved to have control of what is finally agreed.

Mediation can be used at any stage in a disagreement but the earlier the disagreement is dealt with, the less chance there is of things becoming more difficult and entrenched.

Bully/harasser is a third party

If you are experiencing bullying or harassment by a third party, for example a client or a supplier, we encourage you to report this to your line manager without delay so that they can consider what action it may be possible to take or how you should respond taking account of the fact this is a third party.

Formal route

If you are not happy with the outcome of an informal process, or if you feel it is not appropriate to approach the issue informally, you may decide to raise your complaint formally.

To make a formal complaint, you should discuss this first with your line manager. If your complaint is about your line manager, you should raise this with another appropriate manager. If you have any queries you should refer to your HR Business Partner. Under the formal procedure within this policy,

- We will usually ask you to set out your complaint in writing or via email. Please include as much detail as possible, for example:
 - the alleged bully/harasser's name
 - the nature of the bullying/harassment
 - the dates of the alleged acts of bullying/harassment
 - names of any witnesses
 - and details of any action taken to address the matter so far;
 - any other information that you feel is directly relevant
- you may be asked to discuss this in more detail with the investigating officer
- you can expect the matter to be investigated, which may include meeting with the alleged bully/harasser to ascertain their response to the allegations. It may also include interviewing potential witnesses who we will instruct to keep the matter confidential
- expect the manager chairing the matter to carry out further investigations of the complaint where necessary
- invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint in full. You will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative
- hold a meeting with you to enable us to ask you further questions in light of any information we have gathered from the alleged bully/harasser and/or witnesses
- the chair will consider all the evidence in full and make a decision and

- inform you of the decision (this will normally be in person without unreasonable delay) and, if we uphold the complaint, instigate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal against the bully/harasser. You will be notified of the timescales involved and any decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

We will investigate fully every formal complaint in an objective and confidential way, ensuring that we respect your rights as well as the rights of the alleged bully/harasser. You are of course welcome to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Representative to any investigatory meetings held.

We will use every effort to complete an investigation into bullying or harassment as quickly as possible.

Where the alleged bully/harasser is a third party, we may need to adjust the procedure under this policy to ensure we conduct appropriate investigations and we will discuss this with you.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal hearing, you have the right to appeal.

Should you wish to appeal, you should write to the Manager referenced in the outcome letter setting out what aspects of the decision you are unhappy with and the reasons why. Appeals should be submitted without unreasonable delay and usually no longer than five working days after we inform you of the decision.

The manager or delegated person will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your appeal in full and to try and reach a satisfactory solution. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting and you may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. If you cannot attend for a genuine reason the matter will normally be rescheduled at least one time (thereafter it may be held in your absence).

The manager or delegated person will write to you to confirm the outcome of the appeal, which will be final.

Support for those Affected or Involved

We understand that anyone affected by, or involved with, a complaint of bullying or harassment may feel anxious or upset and we will do what we can to support you.

If you feel you cannot continue to work in close contact with the alleged bully/harasser, we will seriously consider any requested changes to your working arrangements during our investigation into the matter.

Anyone who complains or takes part in good faith in a bullying or harassment investigation must not suffer any form of detrimental treatment or victimisation. We take such matters very seriously, if you feel you have suffered any victimisation, please inform your line manager as soon as possible. Equally, making malicious, vexatious or false allegations will not be tolerated and is a disciplinary offence.

Regardless of the outcome of your complaint, we will consider carefully how to best approach any ongoing working relationship between you and the individual concerned. For example, depending on the specific circumstances, it may be possible to consider amending the job duties, location or reporting lines of either you or the other person. For example, where the roles in question mean that this is possible to manage

without disrupting the work. Alternatively, we may propose that workplace mediation or counselling is appropriate if this can be agreed voluntarily by the parties.

Sensitivity and Confidentiality

Anyone involved with an informal or formal complaint about bullying or harassment, including witnesses, must keep the matter strictly confidential and act with appropriate sensitivity to all parties.

If you are found to have breached confidentiality or acted without due care or sensitivity in a case of bullying or harassment, we may take [disciplinary action](#) against you up to and including dismissal (or other appropriate action for non-employees).

Consequences of Breaching this Policy

If, following a formal investigation, we find that you have committed, authorised or condoned an act of bullying or harassment, we will deal with the issue as a possible case of misconduct or gross misconduct.

We may take disciplinary action against you, up to and including dismissal (or other appropriate action for non-employees).

Anyone who complains or takes part in good faith in a bullying or harassment investigation must not suffer any form of detrimental treatment or victimisation. If we find that you have victimised anyone in this way, we will instigate disciplinary action against you up to and including dismissal (or other appropriate action for non-employees).

We will also offer support for all those affected as we seek to encourage a positive work environment free of harassment and bullying where employees are confident to speak out and use this policy should it ever be required.

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Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

At CDC, we provide compassionate leave to help employees to come to terms with the death of a loved one, a serious illness or injury involving a loved one, or serious personal relationship problems.

We also have separate policies to cover parental bereavement leave, supporting employees experiencing pregnancy loss and the statutory right to take time off for dependants, where you may have an emergency situation to deal with. This policy does not affect employees' statutory right to take time off for dependants or parental bereavement leave. Unless there is an overlap with this clause, any time off granted as compassionate leave is in addition to the time off available under the statutory right.

Definitions

Immediate family member: In this policy, immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild.

Dependant: In this policy, dependant is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, child or parent, and any person who lives at the same house as the employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee) or who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance or arrangements for care in the event of illness or injury.

Bereavement

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, the employee will be granted up to 5 days' paid leave in any 12-month period. Each case will be viewed sympathetically, and the amount of leave granted will depend on the individual's circumstances. The line manager will consider matters such as the employee's relationship with the deceased, domestic responsibilities and travel requirements.

In the case of the death of another close relative, for example an aunt, uncle, cousin or parent-in-law, or a close friend, the employee may be granted leave to attend the funeral.

The employee should inform their line manager of the need to take compassionate leave as soon as reasonably practicable or, at the latest, on the first day on which they are absent.

If the employee wishes to take further leave, they should request annual leave in the usual way

Other Circumstances where Compassionate Leave is Available

Compassionate leave is available to take care of a dependant or to come to terms with a critical illness or injury of an immediate family member or serious personal relationship problems.

Employees in these circumstances may be granted up to 5 days paid compassionate leave as a one-off period. Each case will be viewed sympathetically, and the amount of leave granted will depend on the employee's circumstances. The line manager will take into account factors such as the nature of the incident and, if applicable, the closeness of the relationship.

The employee should inform their line manager of the need to take compassionate leave as soon as reasonably practicable or, at the latest, on the first day that they are absent.

If the employee wishes to take further leave, they should request annual leave in the usual way.

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Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return, we seek to support our workforce by ensuring they always have a positive and pleasant working environment, where all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

Valuing our workforce ensures having policies and procedures in place to manage any behaviours that do not reflect our vision and values and the high standards we set, ensuring any issues are managed promptly and reasonably.

This policy outlines the disciplinary procedure, the roles of those involved and the support that is available. This policy also covers issues relating to poor attendance and timekeeping.

If we have any concerns about your conduct, we will usually attempt to talk to you about this on an informal basis. An early conversation may be enough to identify the issue and take steps to resolve it. Most minor conduct-related issues can be resolved informally.

However, where an informal approach is unsuccessful, or the allegations are so serious that an informal approach is inappropriate, we will follow a formal disciplinary procedure.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees of CDC, other than the Chief Executive and the statutory officers for whom separate arrangements exist as detailed in their contract of employment. It does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for CDC.

Grievances

If you have a grievance that relates to ongoing disciplinary proceedings, you should raise this during the disciplinary procedure with reference to the grievance procedure (for example during the disciplinary hearing or appeal stage). The reason for this is so that the grievance can be addressed in the context of the relevant disciplinary proceedings to which it is related and so that any correction which is applicable can be made quickly and with the least disruption.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. [Add hyperlink](#)

If you raise a grievance during disciplinary proceedings that is unrelated to those proceedings, the disciplinary proceedings and grievance procedure could continue to run independently.

We recognise that a disciplinary procedure can be stressful and upsetting. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect.

We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in a disciplinary procedure and treat any such behaviour as further potential misconduct. Making malicious, vexatious, or false allegations will not be tolerated and is a disciplinary offence.

Remote proceedings

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure (for example in respect of incapacity or practical difficulties in holding the hearing or as a reasonable adjustment), we will conduct the process remotely. We will ensure that you and your representative have access to the necessary technology for participating. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Adjustments to proceedings

If you have a disability that may have an impact on your ability to participate fully in this procedure, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should let us know by contacting the relevant person holding the meeting, who will make appropriate arrangements for you. **ED&I hyperlink – extend it to reflect the wider EDI statement – not reflective of current EDI**

Recording of meetings and hearings

For the avoidance of doubt and for the benefit of all parties, the process will include the digital recording/tape recording of investigatory meetings and hearings where this is agreed by all parties. The record of the meeting, whether written or digital, will be shared with you. The recording of interviews and hearings facilitate full and more accurate records for the investigating officer as well as for the interviewee(s) and, in the case of hearings, the panel members. It is intended to use the facility of recording only for the transcribing of interviews being conducted as part of a formal investigation and, where appropriate, subsequent hearings. This is to aid in the production of accurate records of interviews and hearings. Recording can be suspended at the request of either party for a break in the interview/hearing.

You will be informed that investigatory interview or hearings will be digitally recorded when arrangements are made to set up the meeting if this will be case. Once the equipment is set up for use, a check will be made to test that it is fully functional. At the start of any interview or hearing the date, time and location will be recorded. All parties present will be asked to introduce themselves to enable later voice identification. Once the recording for the investigatory meetings have been transcribed, the transcript will be forwarded to you and if there is a concern regarding accuracy of the transcribing you will be given the option to listen to the recording. Recordings of interviews will be held securely until the conclusion of the investigation and subsequent hearing if required. The recording produced as part of an investigation will not go forward to a hearing; the transcript will be used.

If the matter under investigation is also a possible criminal offence the council reserves the right for the investigatory interview to be an interview under caution, to protect your legal rights and also to protect the integrity of any further criminal investigation.

You, or any person acting on your behalf, are not permitted to record electronically any meeting that we hold under this procedure. This is to encourage openness and full participation. Any breach of this provision may lead to further disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

In certain limited circumstances, we may permit or arrange for a meeting to be recorded electronically, for example where it is a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability. Where we permit or arrange for a meeting to be recorded electronically, we will take responsibility for making the recording.

Where we intend to record meetings held remotely, we will comply with our data protection obligations and obtain prior consent from all attendees.

Change of circumstances

Sometimes circumstances prevent parts of this procedure from being followed in full. For example, employees may be too ill to participate in a disciplinary hearing (if one is required) or a specified line manager may be unavailable to chair the hearing. When this happens, we will do our best to ensure that you fully understand the proceedings so that your response is fairly and carefully considered at the Hearing.

In the case of an investigatory interview then we will always seek to start by rearranging the interview in the first instance where it cannot be attended through an employee being too ill to participate. When this happens, we will do our best to ensure that you fully understand the allegations and are given a proper opportunity to respond to them.

Postponement of meetings

We will make every effort to ensure that any meeting we hold under this procedure is scheduled for a time and place that is reasonable and within your normal working hours. You are therefore required to attend the meeting if it is possible for you to do so. If you are unable to attend, then we will normally reschedule the meeting once to a new time when your attendance should reasonably be possible.

However, it is important to ensure that disciplinary procedures are completed within a reasonable timescale. We reserve the right to proceed with a meeting in your absence when it has not been possible to arrange a meeting that you are able to attend. In that case, we will make every effort to ensure that you are able to make representations in writing or through a representative.

Employees may bring either a work colleague or a Trade Union representative to a hearing and something we allow for fact finding investigation meetings. Please note there is no right to legal representation for internal meetings. If your work colleague or Trade Union representative is not available to attend the meeting, we will agree to postpone and seek to agree a mutually convenient time. However, any such postponement must be short, and we reserve the right to proceed with the original meeting if no new date can be found that is within five working days of the scheduled date.

Conduct and behaviour

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is conduct that is so serious that it justifies dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice, although we will always consider the circumstances of any case before deciding on the appropriate penalty.

Examples of gross misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- theft and dishonesty
- fraud and corruption
- physical violence
- serious instances of bullying or harassment (whether it takes place in person or online)
- acts of discrimination against fellow staff members, clients or customers
- deliberate damage to company property

- any conduct that negatively affects our reputation
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- serious breach of our rules, including, but not restricted to, health and safety rules and rules on computer use
- consuming alcohol or unlawful drugs during working hours or in the workplace
- smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) in any unauthorised area
- unauthorised use of computer equipment
- misuse of company passwords or log-in details
- deliberate breach of procedures on the handling of personal data
- deliberate refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- accessing obscene or pornographic material while at work or on equipment that we provide
- breach of cash-handling procedures
- breach of requirements relating to safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults
- deliberate breach of professional standards relevant to your employment and
- offering or accepting a bribe within the meaning of the Bribery Act 2010.

Misconduct

Examples of misconduct for which disciplinary action is appropriate include (but are not limited to):

- persistent poor timekeeping
- breach of our absence reporting procedures
- general disobedience
- careless work
- time-wasting
- disruptive behaviour and
- insulting or offensive behaviour towards others, not amounting to serious harassment or bullying.

Where any actions constitute possible criminal offences, a referral will be made to the appropriate body or organisation for investigation and any criminal investigation may be conducted concurrently.

In some circumstances, other agencies may also be involved in parallel investigations. In situations where the allegations raise safeguarding concerns, these will be referred to the lead safeguarding officer for the council (or their deputy) and may then be referred to the adult safeguarding team (for allegations relating to adults) or the local authority designated officer in the county council (for allegations relating to children).

Where the allegations relate to suspected criminal offences including fraud, theft or corruption, HR will liaise with the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit. In such circumstances, a joint investigation may be necessary.

Where the police, counter fraud and enforcement or the county safeguarding teams may also be investigating, the council will liaise with these bodies to ensure that the council investigation does not jeopardise any criminal investigation. Wherever possible, the council will progress its internal investigation alongside any other external investigation

Actions outside work

We may consider your actions outside work (including your use of social media) to be gross misconduct, or misconduct, if they affect your ability to carry out your job or have a negative effect on our reputation.

Procedure

Allegations of Gross Misconduct / Misconduct

Where an allegation is made against you that cannot be resolved informally, or it is not appropriate to do so, the allegation will be explained to you by your line manager (or, where appropriate, a different line manager). The details of the allegation will also be confirmed to you in writing, together with a copy of this disciplinary procedure.

Suspension

On occasions it may be necessary to consider suspending an employee (on full basic pay) from duty, assign the employee to amended duties, or temporarily redeploy them to an alternative work base or role during the course of the investigation process.

The decision to suspend an employee will be made by management and will only be considered where:

- there is a serious allegation of misconduct and working relationships have severely broken down
- the employee could tamper with evidence, influence witnesses and/or sway the investigation into the allegation
- there is a risk to other employees, property or customers
- the employee is the subject of criminal proceedings which may affect whether they can do their job.

Suspension will also be considered in other circumstances if it is reasonably believed that the suspension of the employee will enable a fair investigation to be completed.

Suspension is in no way intended to indicate guilt on your part, but is an administrative measure designed to protect the business or ensure the smooth running of the disciplinary procedure. Any period of suspension will be regularly reviewed, kept as short as possible and will be on a fully paid basis.

Stage 1 - Investigation

We will investigate the allegations to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to justify taking the matter further.

An appropriate person, who may be an external independent investigator, will be appointed to conduct the investigation and will talk to you at an early stage to hear your response to the allegations and will talk to anyone else who may have relevant information such as the line manager, colleagues and witnesses to the event being investigated etc.

Where appropriate, the investigation may also include the examination of documents, including emails and other forms of electronic communication and you are invited to bring or any relevant documents to the meeting (or send the documentation afterwards) as the purpose of the investigation is to establish the facts so that a decision can be made about any disciplinary action and whether or not an act of misconduct has been committed. It is important that you cooperate fully with the investigation process as this is the best way to ensure a fair outcome.

Once the investigation is complete, management will decide whether to proceed to a formal disciplinary hearing or whether the matter can, in fact, be resolved informally or without any further action.

Stage 2 - Disciplinary Hearing

Invitation to a disciplinary hearing

If we consider that it is necessary to hold a disciplinary hearing, we will confirm this to you in writing. You will usually be given at least five days' notice of any hearing, depending on the complexity of the case, to allow you to prepare and to arrange for a work colleague or Trade Union representative to accompany you.

You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union representative. The responsibility for finding a work colleague or Trade Union representative rests with you. If your chosen work colleague or Trade Union representative is not a fellow employee, we reserve the right to check their credentials as an accredited trade union representative.

We will give you a copy of any evidence/investigation report collated during the investigation in advance of the disciplinary hearing, and you will be invited to submit any further evidence that you consider to be relevant.

The disciplinary hearing

The disciplinary hearing will be conducted by the chair. Details of the chair will be given in the invite letter.

The evidence gathered during the investigation will be presented at the Disciplinary Hearing by the Investigating Officer or a Manager and you and your work colleague or Trade Union representative will be given an opportunity to confer and to respond. You may also let us know if you are seeking to call on witnesses to give evidence on your behalf if it is relevant to the issues being considered to the meeting.

The chair of the disciplinary hearing may choose to adjourn the meeting so that further evidence can be obtained. If this happens, the hearing will be reconvened once this is done, and you will be given an opportunity to respond to any new evidence. Before the hearing closes, you (or your work colleague or Trade Union representative) will be given an opportunity to make a closing statement. Once closing statements are made, no further comments will be accepted.

The outcome

The chair of the hearing will usually adjourn for a period to consider the outcome. The outcome will usually be communicated when the hearing is reconvened but will, in any case, be confirmed to you in writing as soon as possible and usually within seven working days after the hearing.

Disciplinary penalties

If the allegations are upheld to any extent, formal disciplinary action may be taken. This will usually take the form of a first written warning for a first offence. However, we reserve the right to implement this procedure at any stage depending on the circumstances and misconduct.

A first written warning is appropriate for instances of misconduct that are sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action, but where there is no current warning in place. The warning will set out the nature of the misconduct and explain that any further misconduct (similar or otherwise) will be likely to result in further disciplinary action.

A final written warning is given in cases of serious misconduct or where there is a live first written warning in place and the circumstances justify it. It will set out the nature of the misconduct and make it clear that any further misconduct (similar or otherwise) will be likely to result in dismissal.

There may be some cases where it is appropriate to give you a final written warning as a first sanction in consideration of the seriousness of the offence (this could be an alternative to dismissal in a potential gross misconduct situation).

If you are found to have committed misconduct while subject to a live final written warning, the outcome may be that you are dismissed with notice.

If you are found to have committed gross misconduct, the outcome may result in you being dismissed without notice as a summary dismissal. In these circumstances, your contract of employment will end immediately, although this will not affect your right of appeal.

In exceptional circumstances (for instances where you are likely to continue to commit misconduct even if subject to warning), you may be summarily dismissed even if no warning of dismissal has been given. Depending on the terms of your contract, this may involve being given a payment in lieu of notice.

If you are dismissed with notice, we reserve the right to instruct you not to work for the duration of your notice period. This may include a payment in lieu of notice, garden leave and you being asked to take your holiday.

Stage 3 - Appeal

Appealing against the outcome

If you consider the disciplinary process and/or outcome are unfair you are entitled to appeal.

You should appeal in writing to an appropriate line manager or senior manager within five working days of receipt of the disciplinary outcome letter.

You should also set out in writing the grounds on which you believe the outcome of the original hearing to have been unfair or flawed and why you feel it to be flawed.

Appeal hearing

Following receipt of your appeal, we will arrange an appeal hearing within five working days. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay.

You are entitled to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a fellow employee or a trade union representative.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a senior employee or another delegated person who will consider the grounds that you have put forward and review the conclusion reached in the original disciplinary hearing.

At the hearing you will be given the opportunity to explain why you feel the initial hearing reached the wrong conclusion.

Outcome of appeal

Following the appeal hearing, the relevant line manager will inform you in writing, usually within seven working days, of the outcome. The outcome may result in the original decision being upheld, the original decision being overturned, or a lesser sanction. The appeal will not result in the sanction being increased.

If the result of the appeal is that a decision to dismiss you is overturned, you will be reinstated with immediate effect. You will be reimbursed in full for any wages lost since your dismissal.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

Duration of warnings

When you are given a warning, we will tell you how long it will remain live. This will depend on the specific circumstances. However, in general:

- a first written warning remains live for up to six months and
- a final written warning remains live for twelve months.

Warnings may be live for a longer period depending on the seriousness of the misconduct and the wider circumstances of the case.

Once a warning has expired, it will no longer be considered when determining the level of any further disciplinary action.

Trade union representatives

If you are an accredited representative of a recognised trade union, we will endeavour to take no action under this procedure (except for suspending you in a case of alleged gross misconduct) until we have had an opportunity (with your agreement) to discuss the matter with a full-time official of the union.

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference.

At CDC we want to treat people fairly, value differences and remove all the barriers to preventing our people from fully participating in public life. We all have different backgrounds, strengths, personal characteristics, perspectives, and attributes that when harnessed and used collaboratively, are incredibly powerful. An inclusive and diverse culture helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of these different perspectives, experiences, and skills, creating opportunities and reducing the barriers for everyone. Our aim is to create an inclusive and diverse workforce, however creating an inclusive and diverse culture, with equality for all, is a process of continuous improvement, we never stop learning!

To support this inclusive culture, this policy:

- outlines our commitment throughout the employment lifecycle to equality, diversity and inclusion and sets out how we put this commitment into practice
- explains the behaviours we expect of our people in support of this commitment and
- sets out the key steps we take to make our culture as inclusive as possible, and how we ensure equality of opportunity throughout the employment lifecycle.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices. The policy also relates to job applicants and is relevant to all stages of the employment relationship.

Our Commitment to You

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

We ensure that our recruitment, promotion and retention procedures do not treat people less favourably because of their:

- disability
- gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status

- marital status
- race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- age
- civil partnership status
- pregnancy or maternity
- paternity
- educational background
- socio-economic background
- caring responsibilities
- part-time status or
- fixed-term status.

What we Expect from You

We expect you, and every one of our people, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy. Our culture is made in the day-to-day working interactions between us so creating the right environment is a responsibility that we all share.

Developing this culture does not happen by accident but requires ongoing commitment and nurturing. The reality is that we live in a world where areas of difference (whether gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or others) often translate to biases, challenges and barriers that may not be faced by others. And the more areas of difference a person brings, the more this effect can be compounded. In this way, the experiences of a black woman with a disability may be very different to the experiences of a black woman without a disability and also very different from the experiences of a white woman. This way of looking at diversity and inclusion is known as "intersectionality".

We expect you to treat your colleagues and third parties (including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants) fairly and with dignity, trust, and respect. Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.

By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture.

Any dealings that you have with colleagues, or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

If any of our people is found to have committed, authorised, or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or bullying, we will take action against them including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary procedure.

We are liable for discrimination and harassment as an organisation, and you should be aware that you can also be personally liable for discrimination and harassment.

Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These are:

- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- race

- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- age and
- pregnancy or maternity.

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception under the Equality Act 2010.

There are also two specific types of discrimination that apply only to disability: "discrimination arising from disability" and "failing to make reasonable adjustments" under the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination is not always obvious and can be subtle and unconscious. This stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people (known as "unconscious bias"). Such assumptions or prejudices may cause them to apply requirements or conditions that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage. Examples include:

- steering employees into particular types of work on the basis of stereotypical assumptions without considering the particular attributes and abilities of individuals
- recruiting or promoting individuals into particular roles because of assumptions about the reactions or preferences of other employees or clients and
- using different standards for different groups of employees to judge performance.

Different Types of Discrimination under the Equality Act 2010

- **Direct discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic (for example choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled and you think they "wouldn't fit in" to the team).
- **Indirect discrimination:** Where a policy, procedure or way of working that applies to everyone puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, unless there is a good reason to justify it. An example is introducing a requirement for all staff to finish work at 6pm. It is arguable that female employees, who statistically bear the larger share of childcare responsibilities could be at a disadvantage if the new working hours prevent them from collecting their children from school or nursery.
- **Associative discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example because their partner is transgender.
- **Discrimination by perception:** Treating someone less favourably because you perceive them to have a protected characteristic even if they do not, for example choosing not to promote someone because you mistakenly perceive them to be gay.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with that person's disability and where such treatment is not justified. Examples include:
 - dismissing or failing to pay a bonus to someone because of their disability-related absence or
 - disciplining someone for losing their temper where such loss of temper was out of character and was due to severe pain caused by them having cancer.
- **Failing to make reasonable adjustments:** Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:
 - allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague
 - changing their working hours or place of work
 - adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates and
 - modifying Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating someone else's dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

Sexual harassment is:

- conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

Victimisation

Victimisation is treating another person detrimentally either because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint, for example by giving a witness statement that supports the allegations.

Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating, or injuring the recipient.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work.

If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

More information around Harassment & Bullying can be found in the attached policy [INSERT HYPERLINK](#)

Equality of Opportunity

Recruitment

We take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications from as diverse a range of people as possible.

We will ensure anyone making a decision about recruitment does not discriminate in any way and has attended appropriate training.

Every decision-maker should challenge themselves, and other members of the recruitment selection panel, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias, or prejudice do not play any part in recruitment decisions. For example, question and check the basis of your decisions and ensure that you are making a decision on an objective criterion for the role.

Please refer to the Recruitment policy for more information. [HYPERLINK](#)

Disability Inclusion

Recruiting people with a disability

The recruitment team and our HR Team will consider disability in advance of a recruitment campaign so that advertising, application forms and assessments, arrangements for interviews, job descriptions and employee specifications, and selection criteria are appropriate and as inclusive as possible.

We will ask applicants at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process. These may include ensuring easy access to the premises for an interview/adapting psychometric tests/replacing psychometric tests with an alternative option/providing an alternative to a telephone interview for a deaf candidate/providing a suitable chair for an interview with a candidate suffering from back problems/list other relevant examples.

If you are involved in the interview process, you must not ask job applicants about their health or disability. If you have any concerns, please seek advice from your HR Business Partner. Such approval is given only in exceptional circumstances and where there are specific legal grounds for doing so.

Talking about Disability

We understand that some people find it hard to discuss their disabilities and that disability can be invisible.

Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is paramount to ensuring disability inclusion.

However, this is only possible if we treat people with dignity, trust and respect and we expect everyone to uphold these values.

We do not tolerate ableist language in our organisation. Ableist language is language that is negative, inappropriate or offensive towards people with a disability and may take the form of jokes or "banter". If you adopt such language, we will take action against you including (where applicable) under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, you do not have to tell us. However, we would encourage you to let us know so that we can support you, for example by making reasonable adjustments to our premises or to aspects of your role, or to our working practices.

If you are experiencing difficulties at work because of your disability, please contact your line manager to discuss potential reasonable adjustments that may alleviate or minimise such difficulties. We may need to discuss your needs with you and your medical adviser to help us get the right support in place. You will have a documented framework of the agreed reasonable adjustments, which will be reviewed on a regular basis, but will remain in situ for the duration of employment.

For colleagues who are returning from long-term disability-related absence, we have a return-to-work support programme in place.

Support

If you have a disability, or you care for someone with a disability, and need emotional support or help with practical issues, please contact your line manager in the first instance. You can also seek support & advice by contacting HR or your Trade Union representative.

Training

All staff must attend the mandatory training provided for the whole workforce via iHasco, our online training portal. If you are involved with making decisions about a person's employment, you must attend appropriate equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training. All managers are required to attend EDI training.

All new starters must attend equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training as part of their onboarding programme.

Every current employee must attend regular equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training on at least an annual basis.

Monitoring and review

We analyse diversity and inclusion data (in compliance with our data protection obligations) on an ongoing basis to assess the impact of this policy and our equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. We would look to address any issues identified by this data.

You are also responsible for ensuring the data we hold for you is correct, please take the time to regularly check your business world data and notify us if you have any questions, queries or concerns.

Promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace

We are continually looking at ways to promote ED&I in the workplace, not only through training but also through the online portal and welcome suggestions from our employees at any time.

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Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

We are committed to attracting and retaining the very best people and utilising all the talent and experience available. We recognise that our employees and potential employees have responsibilities, interests and aspirations outside of the world of work which impact on their time and appreciate that the standard Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 working week is no longer compatible with increasing demand for a better work-life balance.

This policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory procedure.

Eligible Employees

All employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the statutory right to request flexible working. Under the statutory procedure, you can make one request in every 12-month period.

However, we recognise the importance of providing flexible working for all employees. Therefore, if you are not eligible to make a formal request for flexible working under the statutory procedure, you may submit an informal request and we will consider this on an informal basis.

Types of Flexible Working

Examples of flexible working include:

- hybrid working (sometimes referred to as "blended working"), which allows you to split your time between attending the workplace and working remotely
- reducing the number of hours that you are working
- changing your start and finish times
- compressing your working hours into fewer days (for example moving to a nine-day fortnight); and
- working flexitime.

Making a Request for Flexible Working

All requests must be made in writing by email or letter. This should be submitted to your line manager in the first instance.

Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application

- the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions of employment
- the date on which you would like the terms and conditions to come into effect
- what effect you think the requested change may have on your organisation, your colleagues and the ability to deliver the service
- how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with
- a statement that this is a statutory request
- whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if you have made a previous request, when you made that application.

Where a request for flexible working does not contain all the required information, you will be asked to resubmit your request with the necessary additional information. Requests that are incomplete or contain errors will not be automatically rejected.

Timescales

Once you submit your flexible working request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, all requests will be dealt with within three months, from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.

The timescales within this policy may be extended where this is mutually agreed.

If you fail to attend a meeting to discuss your flexible working request, including an appeal meeting, and then fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, your application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Meeting to Discuss a Flexible Working Request

Your line manager will usually arrange a meeting to discuss your request. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about your proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both you and the organisation. Be prepared to suggest solutions which will help your case.

Your line manager should aim to hold the meeting to discuss your request within 28 days of receiving it.

You may, if you wish, ask a work colleague or a Trade Union representative to attend the meeting with you.

Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved in the terms set out in your written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Considering your Request

After the meeting, your line manager will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up:

- the potential benefits to both you and the organisation; and
- any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis - agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working patterns.

Notifying you of the Decision

Your line manager should aim to notify you of the decision as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the meeting.

Your request may be granted in full or in part. For example:

- we may propose a modified version of your request
- your request may be granted on a temporary basis; or
- you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

Reasons for Rejecting a Request

Your request for flexible working will be rejected only because of:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- a planned structural change to the business.

Your request will not be rejected for any other reason.

Your Right to Appeal

You have the right to appeal if your request for flexible working is rejected or only agreed in part.

Your appeal should be sent in writing to the appropriate line manager or senior manager within 14 days of receiving our decision. Your letter should set out the grounds on which you are appealing. An appeal meeting will be held within 14 days of you lodging your appeal.

You may, if you wish, ask a work colleague or Trade Union representative to attend the appeal meeting with you.

You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the appeal meeting.

Flexible Working Requests that are granted

If your request is upheld, you and your line manager should discuss how and when the changes will take effect.

Any changes to your terms and conditions of employment, whether permanent or temporary, will be put in writing and sent to you as an amendment to your contract of employment.

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Grievance Policy and Procedure

Introduction

At CDC, we encourage a culture in which you can raise any workplace problems, complaints or concerns in a supportive framework and we will ensure that all grievances are dealt with quickly and fairly. The basic premise that every employee has the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect at work sits at the heart of this policy and is governed by the principles of natural justice.

We would strongly encourage employees and managers to resolve grievances informally, wherever possible. Most issues can be resolved informally. However, if an informal approach does not resolve matters, or is not appropriate, you may choose to raise a formal grievance.

This policy outlines the grievance process, the roles of those involved and the support that is available to you. At all stages of the procedure, all parties will observe confidentiality and act with sensitivity. When dealing with grievances and complaints, managers must ensure that equality and diversity considerations are taken into account at every stage of the process.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to all CDC employees. It does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for CDC.

If you have a grievance that relates to ongoing disciplinary proceedings, you should raise this during the disciplinary procedure with reference to the grievance procedure (for example during the disciplinary meeting or appeal stage). The reason for this is so that the grievance can be addressed in the context of the relevant disciplinary proceedings to which it is related and so that any correction which is applicable can be made quickly and with the least disruption. No individual will suffer a detriment for raising a grievance. An individual may close a grievance at any time.

If you raise a grievance or you whistle-blow during disciplinary proceedings that is unrelated to those proceedings, the disciplinary proceedings and grievance procedure will normally run independently.

Fairness and Respect

We recognise that a grievance procedure can be stressful and upsetting. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect.

We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in a grievance procedure and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under our disciplinary procedure. Making malicious, vexatious or false allegations will not be tolerated and is a disciplinary offence.

Remote Proceedings

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, we will conduct the process remotely. This could happen if you are physically not able/incapable to attend the meeting or if there are practical reasons as to why a face-to-face meeting cannot go ahead. We will ensure that all those participating have access to the necessary technology. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

Adjustments to Proceedings

If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty because of a disability, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language for instance, you should raise this with your line manager or the person holding the meeting, who will make appropriate arrangements for you. **ADD HYPERLINK to ED&I**

Recording of Hearings and Investigation Meetings

We will take a written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure. This will be done either by the person holding the meeting, a member of the HR Team or by an additional person arranged by us to take notes.

You, or any person acting with you or on your behalf, are not normally permitted to record electronically any meeting that we hold under the grievance procedure. This is to encourage openness and full participation. Any breach of this provision may lead to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

In certain limited circumstances, we may permit a meeting to be recorded electronically, for example where it is a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability. Where we permit a meeting to be recorded electronically, we will take responsibility for making the recording.

Where we intend to record meetings held remotely, we will comply with our data protection obligations and obtain prior consent from all attendees.

Raising an Informal Grievance

In the first instance, you should raise any grievance that you may have informally with your line manager. If your grievance is about your line manager, you should raise this with another manager or HR Business Partner if unsure who to approach.

The relevant manager will meet with you to give you the opportunity to explain your grievance and seek to identify whether the issue can be resolved informally. Many concerns can be resolved informally.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process and if you do not wish to take part in mediation, you do not have to. The mediator will be impartial, neutral, and fully trained to conduct mediation whether they be an internal or an external resource. Mediation can help to mend workplace relationships by: -

- Finding solutions that everyone agrees to.
- Improving communication.
- Allowing everyone involved to have control of what is finally agreed.

Mediation can be used at any stage in a disagreement but the earlier the disagreement is dealt with the less chance there is of things becoming more difficult and entrenched.

However, while we encourage the informal resolution of complaints through informal meetings or an agreement to take part in mediation, we recognise that this is not always possible or appropriate, for example if your grievance relates to a serious issue such as discrimination. Therefore, if the informal process does not resolve matters such that you are not satisfied with the outcome or is not appropriate or does not work, you should raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

Raising a Formal Grievance

Where your grievance has not been resolved informally, or if your grievance is serious in nature, you should raise the matter formally in writing. Grievances can be about: -

- Bullying and Harassment (normally dealt with under the Anti-harassment and Bullying policy - [hyperlink](#))
- Communication problems
- Personality clashes
- Relationship breakdowns

To make a formal complaint, you should discuss this first with your line manager. If your complaint is about your line manager, you should raise this with another appropriate manager. If you have any queries about this procedure you should refer to your HR Business Partner. Under the formal procedure within this policy:

- we will ask you to set out your complaint in writing or via email. Please include as much detail as possible, for example:
 - the respondents name (who is/are the key people involved in your complaint)
 - the nature of the complaint
 - the dates of the alleged acts of your complaint
 - names of any witnesses
 - and details of any action taken to address the matter so far
 - any other information that you feel is directly relevant
- you may be asked to discuss this in more detail with the investigating officer,
- we would usually expect the matter to be investigated, which may include meeting with the alleged bully/harasser to ascertain their response to the allegations. It may also include interviewing potential witnesses who we will instruct to keep the matter confidential
- we would usually expect the manager chairing the matter to carry out further investigations of the complaint where necessary
- we would invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint in full. You will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative
- we would hold a meeting with you to enable us to ask you further questions in light of any information we have gathered from the alleged bully/harasser and/or witnesses
- the chair will consider all the evidence in full and make a decision
- we will inform you of the decision (this will normally be in person without unreasonable delay) and, if we uphold the complaint, instigate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal against the bully/harasser. You will be notified of the timescales involved and any decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

Your complaint should be in writing or on email and sent to your line manager. If your complaint relates to your line manager, you should send your written grievance to another manager (their line manager).

Stage 1 - Investigation

Your grievance will be kept confidential as far as possible. Other people being questioned will be asked to keep the matter confidential.

However, before proceeding to a grievance hearing, we may have to carry out a fact-finding investigation. This will usually be conducted by the same manager who will hear your grievance. The relevant manager will write to you confirming that they are conducting the investigation and the timescale for completion. You have the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or TU representative or official to any investigatory meeting that takes place,

The level of investigation and time this will take will vary depending on the nature of your grievance.

You will be given a copy of any evidence, reports produced etc, collated during the investigation in advance of the grievance hearing. However, in some cases, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, we will provide you with an appropriate summary of the evidence.

Stage 2 - Hearing your Grievance

The Grievance Hearing

The grievance hearing will be held within five working days of receiving your written complaint. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative or official.

The grievance hearing will be conducted by your line manager, unless your grievance relates to your line manager, in which case it will be conducted by another manager.

The purpose of the hearing is for you to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. If more information comes to light, it may be necessary to adjourn the grievance hearing to conduct a further investigation and reconvene the hearing when this has been done.

If you are unable to attend the grievance hearing because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the line manager conducting the hearing as soon as possible and explain the circumstances. We will reschedule the hearing at least once but if you fail to attend the rescheduled hearing, the grievance hearing may take place in your absence, based on your written grievance statement and any other documentation available.

The Outcome

Following the hearing, the chair will inform you in writing, usually within seven working days after the hearing, of the outcome and any action that will be taken as a result of your complaint.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Stage 3 - Appeal

Appealing Against the Outcome

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your grievance, you may submit a formal appeal.

You should appeal in writing to the senior manager, named in the grievance outcome letter within seven working days as specified and if you have any questions about the process you should raise them with your HR Business Partner

Your letter should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you consider that your grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Appeal Meeting

We will then arrange an appeal meeting within seven working days to consider the matter. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay.

You are entitled to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a workplace colleague or a trade union official.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by the appointed manager, a member of the HR Team or delegated person, who will consider your grounds for appeal and review the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing.

If you are unable to attend the appeal meeting because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the manager conducting the meeting as soon as possible and explain the circumstances. We will reschedule the meeting at least once but if you fail to attend the rescheduled meeting, the meeting may take place in your absence, based on your written grievance statement and any other supporting documentation available.

Outcome of Appeal

Following the appeal meeting, the relevant manager who was appointed as chair will inform you in writing, usually within seven working days, of the outcome. The outcome of the appeal is final.

Collective Grievances

If you and another employee (or more than two of you) have identical grievances and you all wish to have it addressed in one grievance process, you can raise a collective grievance. We retain the right to hear your grievances individually if your grievances are not identical, or there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are raising a collective grievance, the requirements set out in this policy are varied as follows.

Raising a Formal Grievance

Your written complaint should still be submitted as an individual document and be headed "Formal collective grievance". You and your colleagues will need to nominate one of you to act on behalf of all of you throughout the grievance process. Your grievance letter must identify whom you have appointed to be the nominated representative.

If you and your colleagues are all members of the same trade union, your trade union representative may raise the collective grievance on your behalf.

Stage 2 - Hearing your Grievance

If you have been appointed to be the nominated representative, you will be invited to attend one collective grievance meeting. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official. Following the meeting, there will be one identical outcome. You and your nominated representative will be notified of the outcome in writing and any action that will be taken as a result of your collective complaint. Where the nominated representative wishes to be accompanied at the grievance meeting by one of the other employees taking out the grievance, they may request this from the chair of the meeting.

Stage 3 - Appeal

If you, or any of your colleagues, are not satisfied with the outcome of your collective grievance, you may submit a formal appeal, your appeal should be headed "Formal collective appeal". You should appeal individually in writing to the Senior Manager named in your outcome letter within seven working days of receipt of the collective grievance outcome letter.

If you have been appointed to be the nominated representative, you will be invited to attend one collective grievance appeal meeting. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official. Following the appeal meeting, there will be one identical outcome. You and your nominated representative will be notified of the outcome in writing. Where the nominated representative wishes to be accompanied at the grievance meeting by one of the other employees taking out the grievance, they may request this from the chair of the meeting.

The outcome of the collective appeal is final.

If only one employee wishes to appeal, the normal grievance procedure will apply to the appeal.

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Health and Safety Policy

Statement of Intent

Cotswold District Council recognises employees are a valuable resource and the health, safety, wellbeing and security of our colleagues is paramount:

Our commitment to managing health and safety:

- Encourage a positive health and safety culture where employees, councillors, suppliers, contractors and other stakeholders respect and support each other, stepping in where necessary to maintain a safe working environment.
- Comply with all applicable legal (and other) requirements appropriate to our businesses.
- Consider health and safety in our business decisions, ensuring all risks are properly assessed and managed.
- Elected councillors of Cotswold District Council understand that the health and safety implications of decisions, particularly budget and target setting must be considered alongside other decision-making criteria. Councillors acknowledge the key part they must play in the monitoring and review of health and safety performance and support the principles of this policy in the council's approach to managing health and safety.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to employees and others as is necessary to implement and maintain high standards of health and safety.
- Require everyone who works for and with us to take responsibility for their own health and safety, consider how their actions may impact on others and empower them to stop work when an unsafe condition arises.
- Ensure we provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and has appropriate facilities.
- Ensure we provide and maintain safe plant and equipment.
- Involve and listen to employees in matters relating to their health and safety to secure their commitment and participation at all levels.
- Develop appropriate health and safety procedures to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health and ensure we learn from our experiences.
- Implement emergency procedures, including evacuation in case of fire or another significant incident.

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the council's business requirements and legislation.

Signed

Cllr Joe Harris
Leader of Cotswold District Council

Date:

Signed

Robert Weaver
Chief Executive Officer

Date:

1. Legislation

Health and Safety Legislation is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive, with the main piece of legislation being the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which places general duties on employers in protecting employees and others in the workplace. To support the Health and Safety at Work Act, various regulations have been developed that place more specific responsibilities on employers, compliance with which must be demonstrated.

To support this policy and the council's overall health and safety management, specific policies and statements have been produced by Publica Group (Support) Ltd which demonstrate compliance with the statutory duties placed on Cotswold District Council.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Elected Councillors

- Ensure that suitable and adequate resources and strategic direction are available to discharge the Council's health and safety responsibility
- Monitor, the overall performance of the Council's health and safety management system
- Have a duty to conduct their business and make decisions in conformity with health and safety legislation and the council's own policies.
- Agree all new or amended policies and statements as they are updated or developed

2.2 Chief Executive Officer

- Take overall responsibility for health and safety across the Council and lead in setting policy and direction.
- Take responsibility for ensuring that the overarching Health and Safety Policy is in place and that it is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- Ensure that suitable and adequate resources and strategic direction are available to discharge the council's health and safety responsibility.
- Monitor the overall performance of the council's health and safety management system.
- Ensure health and safety is a regular agenda topic at LMT meetings and that the LMT attendees are kept informed by the health and safety business partner of significant health and safety developments and performance matters.

2.3 Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Governance and Development

- Ensure that this policy is put into practice.
- Provide strategic direction and oversight of health and safety policies.
- Ensure that robust health and safety management arrangements and organisation exist.
- Support the Chief Executive Officer by meeting their health and safety responsibilities.

2.4 Managers

- Ensure that robust health and safety arrangements exist in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure staff are aware of and comply with health and safety arrangements.
- Report and investigate all accidents and incidents as required.



2.5 Health & Safety Business Partner (Publica Ltd)

- Be the 'Competent Person' as set out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Keep up to date with current legislation and best practice and provide appropriate and timely advice and support to employees.
- Report injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive.
- Support incident investigations as appropriate and liaise with enforcing authorities.

2.6 Employees / Councillors / Volunteers / Contractors

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy, Publica statements and guidance that relate to their work and meet the standards required of them whilst carrying out their work activities.
- Attend any specific health and safety training required to enable them to carry out their job/role safely.
- Work with due regard to the health and safety of themselves and others affected by their work activities.
- Draw attention to any health and safety hazards or deficiencies to an appropriate person.
- Provide relevant documentation as required with regard to matters of health and safety, including insurance and competency certificates.

3. Arrangements for Health and Safety

3.1 Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare)

Property Services (Publica Ltd.) will:

- Ensure the relevant legislative requirements are met including the display of the Health and Safety Law Poster and Public Liability Certificate.
- Ensure working areas and arrangements meet the minimum standard as set out in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.
- Ensure a suitable and sufficient assessment is carried out to identify adequate health, safety and welfare provision for the premises.
- Ensure the premises are inspected, tested and maintained for safe use as necessary.
- Ensure that appropriate records are kept of all risk assessments and information, training and instruction given to staff, maintenance records and inspection sheets.

3.2 Risk Assessments

Managers will ensure that suitable risk assessments are implemented, and relevant action taken. Risk Assessments will be reviewed when work or working conditions change.

3.3 Training

All staff receive a full induction and online refresher training where necessary. Specific training needs can be addressed via Publica’s Learning & Development Team. Suitable arrangements are in place for employees who work remotely.

3.4 Consultation

Managers will consult with employees on all matters affecting their health and safety, including risk assessments. The council will also consult with staff representatives (including unions) as appropriate.

3.5 Monitoring and audit

Monitoring will be by way of inspection of workplaces and properties occupied by Publica, other clients and owned by Cotswold District Council.

Audits will be carried out by the Health and Safety Business Partners on a regular basis and the results communicated at the appropriate level (Audit and Governance Committee) for consideration and if necessary, action on an annual basis.

3.6 Evacuation

The Chief Executive, who is the responsible person under the RRFSO (Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order), has overall responsibility for fire safety. The Evacuation Plan applies to everyone working on or visiting the premises. The plans are tested regularly and updated if necessary.

3.7 Support

Publica guidance documents support the arrangements in place to achieve the statement of intent. (Available via the staff portal) These documents are reviewed on a regular basis, to take into account legal requirements and best practice guidance.

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Long Term Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

Having a culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive is core to everything that we strive to achieve and key to the creation of a positive organisational environment. CDC is also committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees and we wish to offer supportive and effective management of absence due to ill-health and a positive healthy culture that empowers managers to handle sensitive situations in the correct way.

Cotswold District Council is committed to dealing fairly and sympathetically with employees who are absent from work for long periods because of ill health and aim to assist them with their rehabilitation and eventual return to work.

CDC will always treat employees fairly and sensitively during times of sickness and ill health, it must also pay due regard to its operational needs. By implementing this policy, CDC aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its operational needs and the genuine need of employees to take time off work because of ill health.

This policy recognises CDC is under a legal duty to consider making reasonable adjustments, and will do this in collaboration with the employee who becomes disabled or their disability worsens. This is to enable the employee to continue to carry out their role and to support any identified disadvantage being removed.

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the management.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Absence management stages" our step by step process for managing frequent Short-term sickness absence.

"Period of sickness absence" or **"instance of sickness absence"** means any continuous period of sickness absence, of whatever length, during which the employee does not work.

"Short-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting one to 27 calendar days.

"Long-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting 28 calendar days or more.

"Formal review period" means a defined period during which an employee is required to show an improvement in their sickness absence levels.

Scope

This policy covers long-term sickness absence, which is defined as an absence lasting at least 28 calendar days. CDC operate a separate policy on short-term sickness absence, which is defined as an absence lasting one to 27 calendar days. - [hyperlink to the Sickness Absence policy](#).

Where an employee is on long-term sickness absence, but returns to work for short periods, we reserve the right to continue to manage their sickness absence under this policy, even in the case where an employee has returned to work for a short period.

This policy assumes that, if misconduct is suspected, our separate disciplinary procedure will apply, for example if there is evidence that:

- absence is not genuine or not for the reason provided
- the employee is undertaking inappropriate activities while off sick, such as carrying out work for another employer or
- the correct sickness absence notification and evidence procedure has not been followed.

Under our absence policy in cases of capability where an individual may be unable to fulfil their substantive role because of sickness or a disability, it may be appropriate to consider alternative action under the performance improvement and capability policy. Alternatively, there may be cases under our Absence management stages where the disciplinary procedure applies.

This policy applies to employees only and does not apply to contractors, consultants, agency workers or any self-employed individuals working for us.

Employees' Responsibilities

Employees are expected to:

- provide medical evidence for sickness of more than seven calendar days (with sickness of seven calendar days or less being self-certified)
- continue to keep in touch with their manager while unable to attend work. How frequently this is should be agreed in advance with your line manager
- share as much information with their manager about the reason (i.e., the nature of the illness or injury) why they cannot attend work and how long they think the absence will last
- do what is possible to enable a return to work, for example by following medical guidance, taking steps recommended by healthcare professionals during rehabilitation, and not undertaking any activities while on sick leave that could exacerbate the health problem
- tell their manager of any extenuating circumstances, for example personal or family problems or an unmanageable workload
- bear in mind that we may seek a medical report, for example from their doctor or our occupational health advisers
- cooperate with the possible implementation of any adjustments to job duties, hours or working conditions, particularly those suggested by a healthcare professional and
- attend a return-to-work meeting when returning to work following long-term sickness absence.

Medical Evidence

All sickness that lasts longer than seven calendar days requires medical evidence (with sickness of seven calendar days or less being self-certified). This medical evidence will normally be in the form of a fit note, also known as a "statement of fitness for work".

As well as being issued by doctors, fit notes can be issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists who have assessed their fitness for work. Fit notes cannot be issued on request or via over-the-counter services without an assessment.

If the employee is absent for eight calendar days or more, their line manager must ensure that they provide a fit note as soon as possible. A fit note may state that the employee:

- is "not fit for work", in which case the employee should remain off work or
- "may be fit for work", if the recommendations are followed (for example, a phased return, amended job duties, altered hours of work, or workplace adaptations).

While there is no legal obligation to follow the recommendations, managers should take the recommendations seriously and give fair consideration - in consultation with the employee and Human Resources - as to whether any of the changes recommended can be accommodated.

The fit note will state the period that it covers, with a section for a start and end date. An employee on long-term sickness absence who is not returning to work on the next working day after the end date must obtain a new fit note.

Long term absence management stages

The following procedure aims to provide a consistent approach to managing long term absence initially through informal interventions, and where attendance does not improve/attendance targets are not met and concerns continue, through a formal process.

Managers are expected to keep in touch

It is important that managers maintain contact with an employee on long-term sickness absence to:

- monitor the employee's progress in terms of their return to health
- support the employee and actively maintain their engagement with us
- provide information to the employee so that they may make informed decisions (for example, in relation to sick pay entitlement)
- provide practical support from our occupational health advisers
- encourage a return to work as early as possible
- facilitate a phased return to work if required, by making appropriate temporary or permanent adjustments and
- ensure that the employee remains informed about events in the workplace.

It is the joint responsibility of both the line manager and the employee to maintain contact. Once the employee is on long-term sickness absence (i.e. once the employee has reached 28 days' continuous absence), the employee's line manager should contact the employee to agree the method and frequency of contact. Contact should be on a regular basis and the frequency of this contact should be agreed mutually, but no less than monthly.

Home visits

In some circumstances, contact with an employee on long-term sickness absence can be maintained via home visits. Home visits will take place only with the prior consent of the employee at mutually agreed times.

Home visits will usually be conducted by the employee's line manager. The line manager will normally be accompanied by a representative from Human Resources. Where the employee is female, at least one of

the visitors should always be female. The employee may be accompanied during the visit if they wish, for example by a family member or an employee representative.

If the employee would prefer our representative not to visit them in the home, another location near the employee's home (such as a local cafe or leisure centre) could be mutually agreed.

Sick Pay

CDC operates a contractual sick pay scheme that supplements Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident, or assault.

Providing you follow the correct procedure as detailed in this document, you will normally receive:

Year 1 of service	1 months' full pay (after 4 months' service)
Year 2 of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
Year 3 of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During Year 4 and Year 5 of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

The Employee is required to cooperate fully with CDC when a medical referral to the Occupational Health Advisor is required.

The employee may be entitled to receive SSP if contractual sick pay is withheld or suspended, this may be in cases where we are not satisfied that the employee is ill, and no evidence of sickness is provided, or they remain within their probationary period for example.

Sick pay under our contractual scheme is subject to the usual deductions for PAYE, national insurance, pension contributions, etc.

Payments under our contractual scheme will be calculated by reference to the employee's salary only and any payments made under our contractual scheme are inclusive of any entitlement to SSP for the same period of absence.

Holiday during Sick Leave

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their holiday entitlement and will be given the opportunity to take this at a later date, including in the subsequent leave year, if they do not take the holiday entitlement due to being on sick leave.

An employee may wish to use annual leave to support their gradual return to work following a period of absence. The manager will seek to accommodate any requests where possible.

An employee on sick leave may apply to take their holiday entitlement while on sick leave. The holiday dates must be approved by the line manager, in accordance with internal procedures.

Medical Advice

Occupational health referrals

At various stages of managing the employee's sickness absence, a manager may want to obtain advice on the employee's fitness for work from occupational health advisers. The manager should liaise with their HR Business Partner for support on this process.

Examples of when a line manager might refer to occupational health include:

- seek a medical report on the employee
- establish when the employee might be able to return to work
- ask for guidance on the employee's condition, for example if there is a possibility that the employee is disabled or where there is ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition
- seek guidance on a referral for counselling or some other therapeutic support and
- discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate the employee's disability, if the employee is disabled.

CDC will treat personal data about you collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy / policy on processing special categories of personal data (this may include medical certificates or information given by you about your sickness). Information about how an employee's data is used and the basis for processing their data will be provided in the privacy notice which contains the data protection information. Where CDC is relying on its legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing an employee's data, you can object to the processing.

Report from a medical practitioner who has been responsible for the employee's clinical care

Occupational Health may request a report from the employee's medical practitioner where necessary. The employee will be fully informed of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and their permission will be sought for the report to be obtained.

The employee's permission will be sought to contact the medical practitioner on the relevant consent form, available from Human Resources.

The employee has the right to access the report before we see it. If the employee wishes to see the report, they should inform us of this, so that it can inform the medical practitioner. The employee will then have 21 days from the date of making the application for the report to contact the medical practitioner to see the report. If the employee does not contact the medical practitioner within this period, the medical practitioner can pass the report on to us.

When requesting a report, we will provide the medical practitioner with as much information as possible on the role of the employee and explain why the report is being sought. We will provide the medical practitioner with:

- a copy of the employee's signed form consenting to the request to seek a medical report
- confirmation that the employee is aware of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and
- details of the major features of the employee's job.

We will ask the medical practitioner to identify:

- the nature of the employee's illness or injury
- when the employee is likely to be fully fit to resume their normal duties

- if the employee is unfit to resume their normal duties, what alternative duties they might be fit to undertake
- when the employee is likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties
- what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or work premises to facilitate a return to work and
- the likelihood of recurrence of the illness or injury once the employee has returned to work.

Where the employee refuses us permission to contact their medical practitioner, we will explain to the employee the reasons behind the request and inform the employee that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports. The same procedure will be followed where the employee delays in giving their consent.

Where the employee feels that the report is misleading or incorrect, they may ask the medical practitioner to amend it. If the medical practitioner does not agree with the employee and does not alter the report, the employee may attach a statement to the report to reflect their views.

Alternatively, having seen the report, the employee may request that access to the report be withheld from us. The employee will be informed that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Report from a medical practitioner who has not been responsible for the employee's clinical care

The Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 does not apply where we are seeking a medical report from a medical practitioner who has not been responsible for the employee's clinical care, typically our own chosen specialist or occupational health adviser.

When seeking additional medical advice we will explain to the employee in writing what information we are seeking on the employee's health, why we are seeking additional information and how the information will be used. The letter should explain to the employee:

- that we intend to obtain a medical report and why we wish to do so
- from whom the report will be obtained
- what we will do with the report
- how we will treat personal data collected when obtaining the medical report and
- their right to object to the processing of their personal data.

We will write to the medical practitioner to request the report. The letter should explain to the medical practitioner why we are requesting the report and ask any specific questions that we wish the practitioner to answer.

Where the employee objects to the processing of their personal data when we are seeking to obtain a medical report to which the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 does not apply, we will explain to the employee the reasons behind the request and inform the employee that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Occupational Health Referral

Once an employee has been absent for 28 calendar days, or as soon as it is confirmed that they will be absent for at least 28 days (for example, a fit note has signed them off for that period), their manager should contact the occupational health department.

The line manager should also contact the employee to advise them that the occupational health department will be in touch, with a view to us seeking medical advice on the employee's prognosis.

Return-to-Work Arrangements

Employees who have been on long-term sickness absence should be supported to return to their former post and way of working, but we recognise that this is not always possible. We see the value of phasing employees back to work, temporarily adjusting their duties, or redeploying them permanently if they cannot return to their previous role.

CDC understands that employees are more likely to remain at work and not go off sick again if they initially return to work on reduced hours and gradually build up their number of hours. We will always arrange a return-to-work meeting for an employee returning from long-term sickness absence. This may be during the period immediately prior to their return or on the first day back in work. Either way this will be discussed and agreed with the employee.

When the employee returns to work, the employee's line manager should arrange to reintroduce the employee back into the workplace and ensure that arrangements are made to support the employee on their return. These arrangements should include any agreed adjustments and (where necessary) a risk assessment.

Phased return to work

A phased return to work could involve a variation in work hours, a gradual increase in hours, or an initial period during which the employee works from home on certain days. This would be to support an employee to transition from ill-health absence back to full (or sometimes permanently amended) work duties.

The phased return to work will usually arise following medical advice, which could be:

- a doctor's letter or medical report (such as an Occupational Health report) recommending a phased return; or
- one of the options on a fit note.

The line manager, with the support of Human Resources, should discuss how best to manage a phased return to work and what if any reasonable adjustment will be required. A phased return to work should not be considered where the employee remains unfit for any work.

Next steps:

- The employee's line manager should invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the medical advice and the possibility of a phased return to work.
- The invitation, which should be in writing, should inform the employee in advance of the arrangements for the meeting, including who is to attend on our behalf.
- Issues such as mobility or work related stress will be taken into account when deciding on where the meeting will be held.

The meeting should focus on:

- reviewing any risks prohibiting a phased return to work
- determining a start date, initial scope of work and hours
- whether there will need to be any changes to the employee's work environment or workplace during the phased return to work and/or once the phased return to work is completed
- when and how the employee's work and hours will develop during any phased return to work
- what arrangements will be put in place to monitor the employee's progress during any phased return to work
- the employee's pay during any phased return to work and

- to whom the employee should report if there are any difficulties with their return to work.
- what risk assessments, if any need to be undertaken for workplace adjustments
- notes should be taken as to what has been discussed and agreed at the meeting and what review has been agreed in a return-to-work plan.
- the review period will require a further meeting, and the date and arrangements for the next meeting should be agreed at the end of the first meeting.
- The individual should be made aware of any impact to their salary. If sick pay has been exhausted consideration might be given to leave accrual for example.

Temporary reassignment

Where an employee has been on long-term sickness absence, but is unfit to return immediately to their substantive role, even on a phased basis, their line manager should consider temporarily reassigning the employee to another role.

The possibility of a temporary role will depend on:

- the availability of work elsewhere and the employee's agreement to undertake the role.
- The employee's line manager should initially consider whether a different role is available within their department and, if it is not, widen the search to include other departments.
- The line manager should do this by liaising with HR about available vacancies in other departments in areas in which the employee's skills could be utilised.

The employee's existing rate of pay will be protected during the temporary reassignment and their salary will be paid by the department in which the employee normally works. Temporary placements to help an employee on long-term sickness absence will normally last no longer than six months and would be regularly reviewed during this period. Any reassignment should be discussed in full with the individual and a return to work plan documented.

Permanent redeployment

We will consider redeployment where it appears unlikely from the medical advice that an employee on long-term sickness absence will be able to return to their existing role.

Any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at our discretion. Such an offer will be made only where we are confident that the employee is no longer able to continue to work in their current role and will be able to perform well in the redeployed role.

If you have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 you will have 'at risk' status. This means that you will have priority when we consider an alternative role with us. We will take a positive approach to redeployment. A trial period, on a four week basis, will be offered for alternative roles, to enable the employee and the new manager to assess whether the job is suitable. With the support of the HR Business Partner, the manager will be supported in identifying if there is a need to make reasonable adjustments to assist you to continue in work.

While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available will usually be dismissal. If we believe that there is no suitable alternative role available for the employee, we may be left with no option but to dismiss.

Should the employee choose to accept permanent redeployment, they will be asked to agree to a variation of contract that could impact existing contractual arrangements such as pay. However, continuous service should not be affected.

Before an employee is dismissed due to no suitable role being available or because they unreasonably refuse an offer of redeployment, a formal sickness absence meeting with the employee at risk of dismissal will be held. The employee has the right to be accompanied to such meetings by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. Such action may be considered with reference to the performance improvement and capability policy, or the disciplinary procedure.

If the employee is dismissed, they should be given the opportunity to appeal against the dismissal.

Any dismissal will be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Return-to-Work Meetings

When an employee is returning to work following long-term sickness absence, their manager should:

- arrange to meet informally with them.
- ideally, the return-to-work meeting will take place prior to the employee's return to work, to allow time for any necessary adjustments to be made to the employee's working arrangements and conditions.
- if this is not possible, the return-to-work meeting should take place on the employee's first day back at work.
- the return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions between the employee and the manager will be deemed private and confidential.
- the return-to-work meeting could take place off-site at a location of the employee's choosing, should the employee be more comfortable with that approach.

During a return-to-work meeting after long-term sickness absence, the manager and employee should discuss:

- the arrangements for the employee's return to work, including any adjustments that are being made such as a phased return or homeworking
- what work the employee will be doing on their return to work, including an outline of work during the employee's first week back
- any medical issues of which the employer is not already aware, such as any updated guidance from a healthcare professional
- what arrangements will be put in place to monitor the employee's progress and
- to whom the employee should report if they have any difficulties with the arrangements.

At the end of the return-to-work meeting, the line manager and employee should

- agree their next meeting to monitor the employee's progress.
- if the return-to-work meeting takes place before the employee's return, this should be a short meeting on their first day back.
- if the return-to-work meeting takes place on the employee's first day back at work, this meeting should be at the end of the employee's first week back.
- during any of these return-to-work meetings you may, should you wish, choose to be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union representative.

Special Cases

Pregnancy-related absences

Pregnant employees who are off work because of pregnancy-related ill health must abide by our absence reporting procedure. For example, a pregnant employee is subject to the usual notification and evidence requirements and should be asked to attend a return-to-work meeting when returning to work.

However, any sickness absence by a pregnant employee for a pregnancy-related reason should not be taken into account when checking the need for formal action.

If the manager is in any doubt as to whether a pregnant employee's absence is related to their pregnancy, the manager should contact Human Resources for clarification.

Disability-related absences

Where an employee gives as the reason for absence an underlying health issue that could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the manager should discuss the case with Human Resources. This includes where the employee states that they are suffering from stress or anxiety.

Managers should remember that we are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

Ill-health retirement

Retirement on the ground of ill health will be considered where:

- it appears unlikely from the medical advice that an employee on long-term sickness absence will be able to return to their role; and
- they are entitled to a pension/lump sum under their pension scheme.

If ill-health retirement is raised as an option, the employee's line manager should advise the employee in the first instance to contact Human Resources. This will allow the employee to find out if they qualify for, and the financial implications of accepting, ill-health retirement.

Where an employee is suffering from a terminal illness, we will endeavour as far as possible to accommodate their wishes and to provide the most financially advantageous arrangements for them and their family. This includes discussion of the possibility of ill-health retirement or the termination of employment with a lump-sum payment under their pension scheme.

While we will support employees who wish to continue working, employees with a terminal illness should be aware that there may come a time when they will be unable to continue working. In this case, the employee's line manager will discuss the options with the employee, with the support of Human Resources.

Terminally ill employees who choose to continue working should consider that, while there is no obligation to inform CDC or any of their colleagues about the illness, it is normally better to do so to allow the proper support to be provided.

CDC provides an employee assistance programme so that the employee can access the support that they might need.

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Maternity Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the rights of employees who are pregnant or have recently given birth, including time off for antenatal appointments and entitlement to maternity leave and pay.

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Expected week of childbirth" means the week, starting on a Sunday, when your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth.

"Qualifying week" means the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth.

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees employed by CDC. It does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

Entitlement to Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to take 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave followed immediately by 26 weeks' additional maternity leave.

You can decide how much maternity leave you wish to take. However, you must take at least two weeks of compulsory maternity leave immediately after your child is born.

To exercise your right to take maternity leave, you must comply with the notification procedure set out in this policy.

Ideally, you should notify your line manager as soon as possible that you are pregnant so that you may take paid time off to attend your antenatal appointments. This will also help us to ensure that we are able to address any health and safety concerns in a timely manner.

Time Off for Antenatal Appointments

Once you have told us that you are pregnant, you will be entitled to reasonable paid time off work to attend your antenatal appointments. This may include relaxation and parent craft classes that your doctor,

midwife or nurse has advised you to attend, in addition to medical examinations, screening tests and any midwife appointments.

After your first appointment, we may ask you to provide proof of your further antenatal appointments such as an appointment card or an equivalent document confirming your booking.

You should give your line manager as much notice as possible of your antenatal appointments and, wherever possible, try to arrange them outside your core hours/as near to the start or end of the working day.

Any individual who has a qualifying relationship with you (which includes your spouse, civil partner and the father of your expected child), has a statutory right to unpaid time off to accompany you to up to two antenatal appointments. They would need to contact their employer to request time off in these circumstances.

Health and Safety

We have a duty to take care of the health and safety of all our employees.

We have an additional duty to carry out an individual risk assessment as soon as we receive written notice that an employee is pregnant, has given birth in the last six months or is breastfeeding where the work is of a kind that could pose a risk to their health or their baby.

Where we carry out an individual risk assessment, we will inform you of any risks that we have identified and the steps that we propose to take to eliminate or reduce them. This may mean altering your working hours, changing your working conditions, or offering you suitable alternative work.

In certain cases, we may have to suspend you from work until the risk to you or your baby has been removed. If you are suspended, your employment will continue during any period of suspension. You will also be entitled to your normal salary and contractual benefits, unless you have unreasonably refused an offer of suitable alternative employment.

Sickness Absence

If you are absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness, you will receive sick pay in the same way as you would during any other sickness absence.

However, if you are absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness in the four weeks immediately before your expected week of childbirth, your maternity leave will start automatically. You must notify your line manager as soon as reasonably practicable that you are absent for a pregnancy-related illness and the date that your absence began.

Notice to take Maternity Leave

You can start your maternity leave at any time from the Sunday at the beginning of the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth.

To take maternity leave, you need to give your line manager notice in writing by the end of the qualifying week, or as soon as possible afterwards, of:

- the fact that you are pregnant
- your expected week of childbirth and
- the date on which you wish your maternity leave to start.

You will also have to provide your line manager with your MAT BI form, which is a certificate from your doctor or midwife confirming your expected week of childbirth.

Failure to give the required notice and provide us with your MAT BI form may affect your entitlement to maternity leave and pay.

We will write to you within 28 days of receipt of your notice confirming the date on which you are expected to return to work if you take your full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave.

Changing your Maternity Leave Start Date

If you wish to bring forward your maternity leave start date, you must inform your line manager in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

The date that you select as your maternity leave start date cannot be before the Sunday at the beginning of the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth.

If you wish to postpone your maternity leave start date, you must inform your line manager in writing at least 28 days before the original proposed start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

If you change your maternity leave start date, we will write to you within 28 days of the start of your maternity leave confirming the revised date that you must return to work if you take your full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave.

Starting your Maternity Leave

Your maternity leave will usually start on the date that you have chosen, unless:

- your child is born before your chosen maternity leave start date, in which case your maternity leave will start on the day after you give birth; or
- you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason (for example, if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related illness or suspended on health and safety grounds) in the four weeks before your expected week of childbirth, in which case your maternity leave will start on the day after your first day of absence.

If you give birth before your intended maternity leave start date, you must notify your line manager in writing of the date that you have given birth as soon as reasonably practicable.

Maternity Pay

Statutory maternity pay is payable for up to 39 weeks of your maternity leave.

The first six weeks is payable at 90% of your average weekly earnings. The remaining 33 weeks is payable at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

You will qualify for statutory maternity pay if :

- you have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks at the end of your qualifying week
- you are still pregnant 11 weeks before the start of your expected week of childbirth (or have already given birth)
- you have provided us with a MAT BI form confirming your expected week of childbirth
- you have stopped working and

- your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions.

If you become eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of your maternity leave, your statutory maternity pay will be recalculated to take account of your pay rise, regardless of whether statutory maternity pay has already been paid. This means that your statutory maternity pay will be recalculated and increased retrospectively, or that you may qualify for statutory maternity pay if you did not previously. In these circumstances, you will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between statutory maternity pay already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

Statutory maternity pay is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions.

Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

You may be entitled to receive Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

To qualify for OMP you must:

- Have at least one year's continuous service at the beginning of the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).
- Declare that you intend to return to work at the end of your maternity leave.

At what rate is OMP paid and for how long?

- For the first 6 weeks, you will receive 9/10 of a week's pay (this will be offset against any entitlement to SMP or Maternity Allowance receivable during those 6 weeks)
- For the following 12 weeks you will receive half pay plus SMP (if you qualify). The sum of the half pay plus the SMP must not exceed your normal full pay. If it does, your pay will be adjusted accordingly.
- The 12 weeks' half pay is paid on the understanding that you return to work for a period of at least 3 months. If you do not return for a 3-month period, you will have to pay the money back
- If you are unsure about returning, you can opt not to receive the half pay whilst you are on maternity leave. If you do subsequently return (providing it is for at least 3 months), the half pay can be paid retrospectively as a lump sum. You can choose to have the half pay spread evenly over the 33 remaining weeks of paid Maternity Leave rather than paid over 12 weeks

Both SMP and OMP are subject to the usual deductions for Income Tax, National Insurance and, where applicable, Superannuation.

Payment of enhanced maternity pay includes any entitlement to statutory maternity pay that may be due to you for the same period.

Maternity Pay will be paid in the usual way on your normal pay day.

Maternity Allowance

If you are not entitled to statutory maternity pay, you may qualify for maternity allowance from the Government. If this is the case, we will provide you with an SMP1 form so that you are able to pursue a claim for maternity allowance.

Your Rights During Maternity Leave

During ordinary maternity leave and additional maternity leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your pay will be replaced with statutory maternity pay if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

Holiday Entitlement

You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement during your maternity leave.

You should make every effort to take any outstanding holiday entitlement before commencing maternity leave or immediately after your maternity leave has ended. Any holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of maternity leave may be carried over into the next holiday year with the agreement of your line manager or a director.

Pension Contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on your normal pay during ordinary maternity leave and any period of paid additional maternity leave. The contributions that you make will be based on the actual pay that you receive during your maternity leave.

Our pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid additional maternity leave.

Contact during Maternity Leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your maternity leave. This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Keeping-in-Touch Days during Maternity Leave

You can agree to work (or attend training) for up to 10 days during your maternity leave without that work bringing your maternity leave or statutory maternity pay to an end. These are known as "keeping-in-touch" days. Any work carried out on a keeping-in-touch day will count as a whole working day and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your maternity leave. Any work undertaken on keeping-in-touch days is entirely a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.

Notice for Ending Maternity Leave

You may take your full period of maternity leave entitlement and return to work at the end of the additional leave period without having to provide notice.

If you wish to return to work earlier than the end of your additional maternity leave period, you must give at least eight weeks' notice in writing to your line manager confirming the date on which you intend to return.

If you have notified us of an early return date, but subsequently change your mind about returning to work on this date, you must give notice in writing to your line manager at least eight weeks before the earlier of the date on which you intend to return and the date on which you had previously given notice to return.

Returning to Work after Maternity Leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions if returning to work from a period of ordinary maternity leave. If you have taken a period of additional maternity leave, you have the right to return to the same job wherever possible. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

We will write to you as the end of your maternity leave approaches to remind you of your expected date of return and the arrangements for your first day back.

We recognise that returning to work from maternity leave after a significant period of time away from work can be challenging. We will take steps to ensure that your return to work is as smooth as possible and work will be handed back to you on a gradual basis.

What do you need to do if you decide not to come back to work?

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work, you must give written notice of resignation as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment. You should note that:

- if you have been paid Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP), you will have to pay it back
- depending on the timing of your maternity leave, you may have used up more of your annual leave entitlement than has been accrued at the time of resignation so you may have to pay that back
- if you have been paid SMP, that does not have to be repaid.

Requests for Flexible Working

If, following a period of maternity leave, you feel that you would benefit from a change to your working arrangement, you should make a request for flexible working in accordance with the policy in place. Although we will take all reasonable steps to accommodate a request for flexible working, the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the organisation.

Shared Parental Leave

If you and your partner meet the eligibility and notice requirements, you may choose to end your maternity leave and pay early and take shared parental leave instead. This will enable you and your partner to take it in turns to have periods of leave to care for your child, return to work while your partner takes leave, or take leave at the same time as each other.

Further information can be found in our shared parental leave policy.

Experiencing Loss

If you experience a miscarriage or sadly the loss of a child after 24 weeks or at birth, separate policies to cover parental bereavement leave are in place, supporting employees experiencing pregnancy loss and the statutory right to take time off for dependants.

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Menopause Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

CDC is committed to creating an open and supportive culture. We want you to feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting you at work and be able to ask for the support that you need to help you manage your symptoms.

This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

In this policy, where we refer to the menopause, we also mean the perimenopause.

Symptoms of Menopause

The menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.

For some it will be medically induced. For others, it usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years.

However, each person's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. A person may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Symptoms vary greatly and can be both physical and psychological. For around a quarter of women, they are severely debilitating. Each woman will be affected in different ways and to different degrees over different periods of time. Menopausal symptoms can often indirectly affect their partners, families and colleagues as well.

- hot flushes
- night sweats
- anxiety
- dizziness

- fatigue
- memory loss
- depression
- headaches
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- joint stiffness, aches and pains
- reduced concentration and
- heavy periods.

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to ensuring that all line managers and Directors are provided with adequate training so that they are able to support individuals experiencing adverse menopausal symptoms.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of everyone throughout the business to familiarise themselves with this policy and to play a part to ensure its successful implementation.

Requesting Support

If you are finding it difficult to cope at work because of menopausal symptoms, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to a Director.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or Director will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Working Flexibly on a Temporary Basis

For employees eligible to request flexible working, who require a permanent change to working arrangements, they can make such a request through their manager.

However, we recognise that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, changing your start and finish times, changes to your work allocation or taking more frequent breaks. This is not a definitive list.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because of sleep deprivation or other symptoms that may be impacting on your performance, you should discuss and agree these with your line manager supported by the HR Business Partner.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.

Working Environment

If you feel that your working environment is exacerbating your menopausal symptoms, you should raise this with your line manager or director.

There are a range of practical adjustments that we can implement to make your working life easier, such as moving your workstation to a cooler area or providing you with a fan. If you are required to wear a uniform, we will allow flexibility where reasonable.

Quiet Place to Work

If you need time out to relax, a short break to manage any symptoms or take medication, or a quiet space to work, you should speak to your line manager who will try their best to accommodate this.

Sanitary Products

We will ensure that sanitary products are available in toilet and shower facilities.

Sickness

There is no expectation on you to work if you are unwell because of menopausal symptoms.

Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in our sickness absence policies.

You do not have to disclose that your absence is related to the menopause if you wish to keep this private. However, we want you to feel that you can be open about the reason for your leave.

Occupational Health

In some cases, we may refer you to occupational health so that they can advise on how your symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate. Occupational health may also signpost you to external sources of help and advice.

External Sources of Help

There are various organisations that provide help and support on the menopause, including:

- [Menopause matters](#), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- the [Daisy Network](#) charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency and
- the [Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.
- NHS information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- My Menopause Doctor - empowering women with the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding the treatment options that are available. <https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk>
- The Menopause Charity - a charity on a mission to bust myths, overcome ignorance and make menopause symptoms history. Supporting women and healthcare professionals with fact-based menopause research and access to the safest treatments. <https://www.themenopausecharity.org>

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Parental Bereavement Leave Policy

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

At CDC, we recognise that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face.

This policy sets out our commitment to supporting bereaved parents through their grief by ensuring they can take parental bereavement leave.

The policy applies to employees who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18. This includes parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

We have a separate policy that highlights further steps we take to help bereaved employees.

Who can take Parental Bereavement Leave?

Whatever your length of service, you can take this type of leave if you are the parent of the child who has passed away, or the partner of the child's parent. In general, you can take this type of leave if you have parental responsibility for the child. This includes adoptive parents.

If you have suffered a bereavement but are unsure if you are entitled to parental bereavement leave, please contact your line manager for clarification.

What Leave a Bereaved Parent can take

You can take two weeks of parental bereavement leave. You can take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

You cannot take the leave as individual days.

You can take the leave at the time(s) you choose within the 56 weeks after your bereavement. You might choose, for example, to take it at a particularly difficult time such as your child's birthday.

If you have lost more than one child, you have a separate entitlement to bereavement leave for each child who has passed away.

Notice to take Parental Bereavement Leave

If you need to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after your bereavement, you can take the leave straight away. You do not have to provide any notice. Please let your line manager know no later than when you are due to start work on the first day on which you wish to take leave or, if that is not feasible, as soon as you can.

To take leave more than 56 days after your bereavement, please give your line manager at least one week's notice.

Changing your Mind about taking Parental Bereavement Leave

You can cancel your planned leave and take it at a different time (within the 56 weeks after your bereavement). Where your planned leave was due to begin during the first 56 days after your bereavement, please let your line manager know you no longer wish to take it before your normal start time on the first day of the planned leave.

Where your leave was due to begin more than 56 days after your bereavement, please let your line manager know at least one week in advance that you wish to cancel it.

You cannot cancel any week of parental bereavement leave that has already begun.

Pay During Parental Bereavement Leave

Parental bereavement pay will be paid at the statutory minimum rate

To receive statutory parental bereavement pay, you must have:

- at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us by the week before the one in which your child passed away (and still be employed by us on the date of the bereavement); and
- normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before your bereavement of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes.

If you are unsure if you are entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay, please contact your HR Business Partner who will be able to advise you.

If you qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay, you will be paid during your leave at the rate set by the Government, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings where this figure is lower. If you are not eligible, your leave will be unpaid.

You need to give us notice of the weeks for which you wish to claim statutory parental bereavement pay, via a form that [your line manager/the HR department] will ask you to sign.

You must normally sign and return the form to your line manager within 28 days of the first day for which you are claiming. However, if that is not possible, please sign and return the form as soon as you can.

All benefits will remain in place.

Rights during Parental Bereavement Leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay as set out above will continue.

This means that all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Your HR department will notify you of any paperwork that needs to be completed to ensure payments are made in accordance with this policy.

Returning to Work after Parental Bereavement Leave

When you return to work after some time on parental bereavement leave, you generally have the right to return to the same job.

However, a slightly different rule applies if you return from time on bereavement leave that follows on immediately from some maternity, adoption, paternity leave or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the child who has passed away), and your total time on leave is more than 26 weeks.

In these circumstances, you have the right to return to the same job, unless this is not reasonably practical - in which case you have the right to return to a suitable and appropriate job on the same terms and conditions.

This rule also applies if your leave includes more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave (taken in relation to any child), regardless of the total length of the leave.

If you are taking parental bereavement leave, but are unsure where you stand on your return, please contact your line manager for clarification.

External Support

External sources of help and support for bereaved employees include:

- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) / [Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland](#), which offers support to bereaved people, for example via a telephone helpline
- [Child Bereavement UK](#), which offers support to families when a child passes away, for example via a telephone helpline
- [Marie Curie](#), which supports families living with a terminal illness.

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Parental Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the circumstances where employees who have parental responsibilities may take unpaid time off work to look after their children who are under 18.

CDC are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with children is important. If you are eligible (see below), you can take ordinary parental leave to care for your child - this may be to look after your child during school holidays, be with them when they are unwell, or enjoy more quality time with them.

This type of parental leave may be particularly useful if you require time off to care for your child but have used up, or are not entitled to, other types of family-friendly leave (see below).

Other Types of Family-friendly Leave

Ordinary parental leave should not be confused with:

- maternity, paternity and adoption leave; or
- shared parental leave, which enables employees to end their maternity or adoption leave early, and share the untaken balance with their partner.

Who can take Ordinary Parental Leave?

You can take ordinary parental leave to care for your child if you:

- have a minimum of one year's continuous service with us by the time you take the leave; and
- have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child.

If you are unsure if you are entitled to ordinary parental leave, please contact your line manager.

Amount of Ordinary Parental Leave you can take

You can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, subject to a maximum of four weeks' leave for each child in any one-year period.

You must take ordinary parental leave in blocks of at least one week. However, if your child has a disability, you can take the leave one day at a time (please speak to your line manager to arrange this).

Your entitlement to ordinary parental leave carries over from your previous employment. This means that, if you have taken ordinary parental leave with a previous employer:

- you can take the balance with us, but you must wait until you have worked for us for at least one year; and
- we will ask you about the amount of ordinary parental leave already taken for your child with your previous employers.

If you are unsure how much ordinary parental leave you can take, please contact your line manager in the first instance.

Notice to take Ordinary Parental Leave

To take ordinary parental leave, you normally need to give your line manager at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the date on which the leave is to start. You should set out the dates on which you wish to take ordinary parental leave.

Fathers (or others who will have parental responsibility) requesting leave to begin when their child is born

You can ask for your leave to begin when your child is born, whether this is earlier or later than expected. In these circumstances, you should give your line manager at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the beginning of the expected week of childbirth.

Your notice should set out the expected week of childbirth and the length of leave you are requesting.

Adopters requesting leave to begin on the child's placement

You can ask for your leave to begin when the child is placed with you for adoption, whether this is earlier or later than expected. In these circumstances, you should give your line manager at least 21 days' notice, counting back from the beginning of the week in which the placement is expected to occur. If 21 days' notice is not possible, please give us notice as soon as you can.

Your notice should set out the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the length of leave you are requesting.

Paternity leave

If you are considering taking ordinary parental leave on the birth of your child (or if you are an adopter, the placement of the child with you for adoption), you should bear in mind that you may also be entitled to two weeks' paid paternity leave.

Paternity leave must normally be taken within 56 days of the child's birth or placement with you for adoption - please see our separate paternity leave policy.

Evidence to take Ordinary Parental Leave

Your line manager or a director will ask you for evidence to support your request for ordinary parental leave. They will normally ask to see evidence of your child's birth certificate or certificate of adoption.

Postponing your Ordinary Parental Leave

While our aim is to agree to your request for ordinary parental leave, there are circumstances in which we may need to postpone the start date. We will do this only if your absence would cause undue disruption to our organisation and will give you written notice of the postponement no more than seven days after we received your request.

However, we will never postpone your period of ordinary parental leave if the leave starts on the birth of your child or your child's placement for adoption.

If we postpone your period of ordinary parental leave, your line manager will discuss alternative dates with you to take that period of leave within six months of the first day the postponed leave was due to start.

While you are on Ordinary Parental Leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract, except normal pay, will continue and your continuity of employment is not affected.

This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. Annual leave will continue to accrue in the normal way.

During your leave, you continue to be bound by the terms and conditions of your employment. In particular, you should remember that you must not disclose any confidential information/are required to obtain our written consent before working for any other employer.

Returning to work after Ordinary Parental Leave

If you take an isolated period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less, you are entitled to return to the same job you were doing before your absence.

You can also return to your previous job if you take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods) of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that did not last more than 26 weeks.

You are entitled to return to your previous job or, if that is not practical for our organisation, to another job that is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances if you:

- take a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks; or
- take a period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less following on immediately from a period (or consecutive periods) of maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the same child) that lasted more than 26 weeks.

If you are taking ordinary parental leave, and are unsure where you stand on your return, please contact your line manager.

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Paternity Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the rights of employees to paternity leave and pay.

We are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with your children is important.

Who can take Paternity Leave?

You can take paternity leave if you:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth
- are the biological father of a child, or the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother and
- have, or expect to have, the main responsibility (apart from any responsibility of the mother) for the child's upbringing.

This means that paternity leave is available to an eligible female employee who is married to, or is the civil partner or partner of, the child's mother.

Paternity leave is also available to the spouse, civil partner or partner of an individual who has adopted a child. Where a couple adopt a child jointly, one may take adoption leave and the other paternity leave. They are entitled to choose for themselves which adoptive parent takes which type of leave.

To be eligible for paternity leave for a child adopted within the UK, you must have you: have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adoption agency formally notifies the adopter that they have been matched with the child.

Length and timing of Paternity Leave

An eligible employee can take either one week's leave or two consecutive weeks' leave. You cannot take paternity leave in instalments (for example as part weeks or individual days).

You can take just one period of paternity leave per pregnancy or adoption, regardless of the number of children born as a result of the pregnancy or the number of children placed under the same adoption arrangement.

You must take paternity leave within 56 days of the child's birth or, if the child is born earlier than the expected week of birth, within 56 days of the first day of the expected week of birth.

For an adopted child, you must take within 56 days of the child's placement for adoption with you (or in the case of a child adopted from overseas, within the period of 56 days beginning with the date the child entered Great Britain).

If you wish to take shared parental leave, you must take your paternity leave first. You cannot take paternity leave if you have already taken a period of shared parental leave in relation to the same child.

Notice to take Paternity Leave

To take paternity leave for a birth child, you need to give your line manager supported by the HR Business Partner at least 15 weeks' written notice of:

- the date on which your partner's baby is due
- the length of paternity leave you wish to take and
- the date on which you wish your paternity leave to start.

To take paternity leave for an adopted child, you need to give your line manager, supported by the HR Business Partner, written notice of your intention to take paternity leave no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. The notice must specify:

- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption
- the length of paternity leave you wish to take and
- the date on which you wish your paternity leave to start.

Changing your Paternity Leave Plans

If you wish to change the timing of your paternity leave, you must give your line manager at least 28 days' written notice of the revised start date.

Rights during Paternity Leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your Salary will be replaced by statutory paternity pay if you are eligible for it.

This means that all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Returning to work after Paternity Leave

Following your leave, you have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable to you than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent.

Your continuity of employment is not affected.

Maternity Support Leave – what is this?

This is a benefit that applies to employees of the Company who will be providing support to a pregnant woman around the time that they are giving birth (see below for details).

Such employees are defined as being expectant fathers; partners or nominated carers. As an expectant father, you will be able to take five days' maternity support leave, paid at normal pay.

This must be combined with Paternity Leave. Therefore, you can take one week of Maternity Support Leave at full pay and one further week of Paternity Leave (if you qualify), paid at the statutory paternity pay rate. There is no required qualifying period for Maternity Support Leave.

Time off for Antenatal Care

In addition to your paternity leave, you have the right to take time off to accompany a pregnant woman with whom you are having a child at up to two antenatal appointments. You are eligible if you're the pregnant woman's husband, civil partner, or if you're living together in a long-term relationship, if you are the biological father of the expected child you are also eligible. You may be asked to make up some or all of the time taken off.

To make a request for time off to accompany someone at an antenatal appointment, you should contact your line manager.

The antenatal appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife, or nurse. We expect that normally no more than half a day is needed for an antenatal appointment, but the leave includes the time needed to travel to the appointment and any waiting time needed at the appointment and can be for a maximum of six-and-a-half hours on each occasion.

You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of time off required for the antenatal appointment and, wherever possible, arrange for them to be as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

Time off to attend Adoption Appointments

If you are adopting a child, you are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments, which enable contact with the child (for example, to bond with them before the placement) or for any other purpose connected with the adoption (for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the care of the child).

Where you are part of a couple jointly adopting a child, the couple can elect for one of them to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other can elect to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

To make a request for time off for an adoption appointment, you should contact your line manager.

The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with the employee.

You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the adoption appointment and, wherever possible, arrange them for them to be as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

Experiencing Loss

If you experience a miscarriage or sadly the loss of a child after 24 weeks or at birth, we also have separate policies to cover parental bereavement leave, supporting employees experiencing pregnancy loss and the statutory right to take time off for dependants.

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Performance Improvement (Capability) Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference.

As such we seek to support and empower our employees to be motivated to deliver their best. Continuous improvement and learning is incredibly important for all of us and is actively supported. So too is our value of delivering services to a consistently high standard. We do this through a variety of ways, including one to ones, team meetings, setting work-based objectives that include our strategic and operational priorities. Performance management should be a continuous cycle, not an isolated event. Employee objectives should be reviewed and amended in line with changing organisational priorities, and feedback and reviewing performance should be a regular occurrence.

Sometimes, however, for a number of reasons, performance may fall below an acceptable level. This policy should be used when improvements in performance are not achieved following informal discussions and regular feedback. Its purpose is to provide a framework for resolving poor performance in a fair and supportive manner.

Where poor performance is believed to be the result of unacceptable behaviours, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of CDC, we may decide to use our disciplinary procedure instead.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, we will conduct the process remotely. We will ensure that you and your representatives have access to the necessary technology for participating. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

We will take a written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure. This will be done either by the person holding the meeting, a member of the HR Team or by an additional person arranged by us to take notes. We may digitally record any meeting conducted remotely under this procedure, provided that all parties agree. We will ensure that any such recording is made in line with our data protection obligations.

Stage 1 - Informal Meeting

Your line manager will inform you of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. You will be invited to an informal meeting to discuss concerns regarding your performance. The meeting will be conducted by your line manager.

Following the informal meeting, your line manager may choose to:

- take no further action
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure or
- issue guidance to you on what you need to do to improve your performance. For example, timekeeping, setting objectives etc. and agree a reasonable timescale within which improvement is

expected. A review meeting will be held after the agreed time has elapsed to assess if there has been sufficient improvement.

Stage 2 - Performance Improvement Meeting

Where stage 1 does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in your performance, you will be invited to a performance review meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your performance and decide what measures should be taken to help you to improve your performance to an acceptable level. The meeting will be conducted by your line manager. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative or official.

At the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and put forward any explanation you may have for the matters identified by your line manager as amounting to poor performance.

The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action
- a decision to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure; or
- the implementation of a performance improvement plan (see below).

Where the decision is made to carry out further investigation under the disciplinary procedure, we will provide you with the reasons for such action.

Performance Improvement Plan

A performance improvement plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help you to improve your performance. We will seek to agree each measure with you but reserve the right to insist on any aspect of the performance improvement plan if agreement cannot be reached.

Each plan will be tailored to the particular situation but will cover the following elements and will be recorded in a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): ([hyperlink to the management portal](#)). The plan will take into consideration any reasonable adjustments the employee may need and the provision of additional support, for example IT providing a screen to support a neurodiverse employee with reading on screen.

Targets

The PIP will cover the particular areas in which improved performance is needed and state the criteria on which your performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, we will set specific targets that will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it. The PIP will form the basis of the ongoing discussions with you and will be an active management record in determining if the required acceptable performance standards have been reached.

Timescale

The overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved should be agreed with the individual and followed up in writing. Whilst timescales may be variable, they should be realistic in terms of the task that has been set and achievable with the right support. We envisage that no performance improvement plan (PIP) should last beyond six months, unless there is good reason for it and your manager will seek guidance from the HR Business Partner throughout the process, if required.

Measures

The measures we will take to support you in improving your performance. This may include:

- training
- additional supervision
- the reallocation of certain duties and
- the provision of additional support from your colleagues. This may include coaching or mentoring from a colleague or manager or external support such as an Access to Work Assessment and the implementation of recommendations as far as feasible.

Feedback

You will be given regular feedback from your line manager indicating the extent to which you are on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan.

If, at any stage during the plan, your line manager feels that your performance is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with you to discuss this, and where appropriate, your plan may be amended and/or extended.

Review

At the end of the plan, typically no longer than six months, your performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made, we will confirm this in writing. If your line manager feels that satisfactory progress has not been made, your performance improvement plan (PIP) may be extended and/or amended by a further three months. Alternatively, you may be asked to attend a formal hearing under stage 3 of this procedure (see below).

Ongoing review

Following the successful completion of a performance improvement plan, your performance will continue to be monitored. If, at any stage during the following 12 months, your performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, your line manager may decide to initiate stage 3 of this procedure. The informal stage includes a review period and close supervision to help support you as we would like to see you achieve a satisfactory improvement in your performance.

Stage 3 - Formal Hearing

Where stage 2 does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in your performance, you will be invited to a formal performance management hearing.

You will be informed in writing of the grounds on which the hearing is being convened. The letter will set out sufficient information and examples of why your line manager believes your performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by a suitable manager or delegated person. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and to put forward any explanation you may have for the matters identified by your line manager as amounting to poor performance.

The outcome of the meeting may be a decision to:

- take no further action
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure
- possible redeployment
- institute another performance improvement plan or
- issue a formal warning
- Or if appropriate, ill health retirement may be considered, if you are permanently unable to do your job, and you are not immediately capable of undertaking gainful employment.

A formal warning will be issued if it is concluded that reasonable steps have been taken that should have allowed you to perform to an acceptable standard, but that these measures have not succeeded. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement required in your performance and state the timescale for making these improvements. It will also explain that, if the necessary improvement does not take place, you may be dismissed.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which it will cease to have effect.

Where you are issued with a formal warning in accordance with this procedure, you will have a right of appeal.

Stage 4 - Dismissal Hearing

If you have been issued with a warning under stage 3 that remains live and your line manager believes that your performance is still not acceptable, the matter may be referred to a performance dismissal hearing.

You will be informed in writing of the grounds on which the hearing is being convened. The letter will set out sufficient information and examples of why your line manager believes your performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by a senior manager or another delegated person. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union representative or official.

At the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and to explain any issues around your performance or mitigating circumstances.

The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action
- the issuing of another performance management warning
- an offer to redeploy the employee to alternative work or
- a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any offer to redeploy you will be entirely at our discretion. Such an offer will be made only where we are confident that you will be able to perform well in the redeployed role. It will only be offered as an alternative to dismissal in circumstances where we are satisfied that you should no longer be allowed to continue to work in your current role. While you are free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available will usually be dismissal.

If we believe that there is no alternative role available and suitable for you and that you have not met an acceptable standard of performance, you may be dismissed. A decision to dismiss will only be taken by a senior manager who has the authority to do so.

The decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to you. Any dismissal will be with full notice, or a payment in lieu of notice.

Where you are dismissed in accordance with this procedure, you will have a right of appeal.

Appeal

You have a right of appeal against a sanction issued under stages 3 or 4 of this procedure. A request for an appeal should be sent in writing to a senior manager within five working days of being informed of the sanction. Your letter should set out the grounds on which you believe that the decision was flawed or unfair.

An appeal hearing will be convened to consider the matter. It will be chaired by a senior manager or delegated person. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, the decision to impose the sanction will be reviewed and you will be entitled to make representations about the appropriateness of that decision.

The result of the hearing will be either to confirm the sanction or substitute an outcome that was available to the panel conducting the hearing at which the sanction was imposed on you.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to you in writing, usually within seven working days, explaining the grounds on which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

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Probationary Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

At CDC, we aim to create a positive working environment where everyone can fulfil their potential and perform to the best of their ability to deliver excellent service. As a new employee, we want you to thrive in your new role and we will provide you with the support and training you need to get you up to speed in your role as quickly as possible. When you start, your manager and the team will provide you with support and induction into the organisation.

This policy is intended to allow both the employee and the line manager to assess objectively whether the employee is suitable for the role. CDC believes that the use of probationary periods increases the likelihood that new employees will perform effectively in their employment.

The relevant line managers are responsible under this policy for ensuring that all new employees are properly monitored during their probationary period. If any problems arise, the line manager should address these promptly. This will ensure that the employee is aware that some aspect of their performance or conduct is unsatisfactory and prevent the problem from escalating.

Length of Probation

CDC's standard period of probation is six months. During this time your manager will have regular meetings to review how you are progressing so you will know that you are on the right track. If you aren't sure about how to do something or think you need a bit more training or support, you can ask your manager at any time. Within your first week, you will be invited to a mandatory virtual CDC welcome session.

After successful completion of your probationary period, your employment in your role will be confirmed.

Extending Probationary Periods

CDC reserves the right to extend an employee's period of probation at its discretion. This will be limited to one extension and the total period of probation will be no longer than 9 months.

An extension may be implemented in circumstances where the employee's performance during probation has not been entirely satisfactory, but it is thought likely that an extension to the probationary period may lead to an improvement, or where the employee or line manager has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during probation.

Before extending an employee's probationary period, the line manager must consult with Human Resources. If an extension to the probationary period is agreed, CDC will confirm the terms of the extension in writing to the employee, including:

- the length of the extension and the date on which the extended period of probation will end
- the reason for the extension and, if the reason is unsatisfactory performance, details of how and why performance has fallen short of the required standards
- the performance standards or objectives that the employee is required to achieve by the end of the extended period of probation
- any support, for example further training, which will be provided during the extended period of probation; and
- a statement that, if the employee does not meet fully the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, their employment will be terminated.

Terms of employment during the Probationary Period

During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment with the exception of those terms noted below:

The amount of notice that an employee must give to CDC if they wish to resign, and the amount of notice that CDC must give to the employee of dismissal are different during probation. During probation, either party may terminate the employee's contract of employment by giving one week's notice. If CDC decides to terminate the employee's employment, their employment will come to an end immediately and the employee will receive pay in lieu of the one week's notice together with any outstanding holiday pay.

Once the probationary period has been completed, the notice periods will be as defined in the employee's contract of employment.

In the case of existing employees who have been transferred or promoted into different roles, the amount of notice that the employee must give to the organisation if they wish to resign, and the amount of notice the organisation must give to the employee of dismissal will be as defined in the employee's contract of employment.

Line Managers' Responsibilities

Under this policy, the line manager has responsibility for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during the probationary period. The line manager must ensure that the employee is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during probation, for example the required job outputs or standards of performance.

Reviews during Probation

The line manager should review and assess the employee's performance, capability, and suitability for the role on at least a monthly basis during the employee's probation, and again at the end of the probationary period. A clear record should be made of each review meeting. A copy of the record should be passed to the employee and the original forwarded to Human Resources. CDC processes any personal data collected during the probationary period in accordance with its data protection policy.

Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of operating the probationary period. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the CDC's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

During an employee's probation, the line manager should provide regular feedback to the employee about their performance and progress, and should there be any problem areas, raise these with the employee as

soon as possible with a view to resolving them. The line manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary training or coaching.

Irregularities Discovered during the Probationary Period

If, during an employee's probation, it is suspected or established that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience, or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, CDC will terminate the employment.

End of Probation

Shortly before the end of the probationary period, the line manager should conduct a final review of the employee's performance and suitability for the job. This will involve a meeting with the employee to discuss their performance and progress throughout the period of probation. There should be no surprises at this meeting as there have been regular reviews. If the employee's performance is satisfactory, the line manager should notify Human Resources to issue a letter of confirmation of appointment to the employee.

If the employee's performance has not met the standards required by CDC, the line manager should discuss the matter with Human Resources before any decision is made to terminate the employee's employment.

Termination of Employment

If an employee's performance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from their line manager), and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment will be terminated at the end of the period of probation.

It is CDC's policy to allow the employee to complete the designated period of probation rather than terminating employment before the probation has come to an end. This is to give the employee a full opportunity to come up to the required standards. If, however, there is clear evidence prior to the end of the period of probation that suggests the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the line manager should consult Human Resources with a view to terminating the employee's contract early.

Where a decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, the employee must be interviewed and informed of the reason for the termination. CDC will write to the employee confirming the termination and the reason for it. The employee will be given an opportunity to appeal the decision.

If an employee's employment is terminated after the expiry of the probationary period, or if the employee is an existing employee who has been transferred or promoted into a different role, CDC's normal capability/dismissal procedure must be followed in full.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

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Reserved Forces and Voluntary Emergency Responders Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

CDC embraces and supports the Armed Forces Reservists (Reservists) and those who volunteer as Emergency Service Responders (Volunteers) working within our organisation. For the purpose of this policy, CDC recognises the following roles. This list is not exhaustive:

- Volunteer Reservists - civilians recruited into the Royal Naval Reserves, Royal Marines Reserves, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force.
- Regular Reservists - ex-regular servicemen/women who may retain a liability to be mobilised depending on how long they have served in the Armed Forces.
- Volunteer Emergency Services Responders - Community First Responder / St John's Ambulance / Special Police Constables / Search & Rescue Services/Retained Fire-Fighters.

Purpose and Scope

CDC has pledged its support for employees who are members of or those wishing to join the Reserve Forces and/or Volunteer Emergency Services and acknowledges the training undertaken by Reservists and Volunteers enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to both the individual and the organisation.

This policy defines CDC's obligations towards all employees who are Reservists and/or Volunteers. We will not disadvantage those Reservists and/or Volunteers who notify the Company of their Reserve or Volunteer status.

We shall, subject to the provisions set out in Section 4, agree to release Reservists and Volunteers for attendance at training events where these take place on an employee's normal contracted working day. We shall, subject to the provisions set out in Appendix 1 - Mobilisation of Reservists Guidance agree to the release of all employees mobilised for Reservist duties.

Reservists and Volunteers Notification Requirement

Reservists and Volunteers are required to inform their employer that they are a member of the Reserve Forces and/or Emergency Services and the specific force/organisation that they belong to. This is so that CDC can provide the appropriate level of support to the individual.

We also recognise the additional skills and experiences that being a Reservist or Volunteer can bring to the organisation and therefore it is useful for CDC to understand where these particular skills and experiences exist.

Reservist employees are also required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write directly to their employer. This is known as 'Employer Notification' and ensures the Company is made aware that the employee is a Reservist and of the benefits, rights and obligations that apply.

It is the responsibility of the Reservist and Volunteer to ensure their personal details are kept up to date e.g. if they change employer or leave their respective Reserve Force or Emergency Service.

The individual will not be disadvantaged as a result of notifying CDC of their Reserve status.

Training Commitments and Time Off

CDC recognises the importance of the training undertaken by Reservists and Volunteers that enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to their respective Reserve Force, community, the individual and the organisation.

This includes any period of training. Typical training may involve:

- Weekly training - most Reservists/Volunteers train at their local centre for around two-and-a-half hours, one evening a week.
- Weekend training – most Reservists/Volunteers are expected to attend a number of training weekends which take place throughout the year.
- Annual training – all Reservists are expected to attend a 1–2-week annual training course sometimes referred to as 'annual camp'. This may take place at a training establishment, as an attachment to a Regular Unit, as a training exercise or a combination of any of these. Training normally takes place within the UK, although each year some Reservists train overseas.

Legally employers are not obliged to grant leave for attending training, however, CDC is committed to granting additional paid leave of up to two weeks (10 days) pro-rata per year to employees who are Reservists and/or Volunteers specifically to enable them to attend their annual camp and/or training days throughout the year.

Reservist and Volunteer employees are asked to give as much notice as possible to their Line Manager of the training commitments to allow appropriate planning for absences. Permission once given will not be rescinded unless there are exceptional circumstances. The permitted time off will be recorded on Business World against reason code RESFORCE.

Appendix One - Mobilisation of Reservists Guidance

Mobilisation is the process of calling Reservists into full time service with the Regular Forces to make them available for military operations. The maximum period of mobilisation will depend on the scale and the nature of the operation and is typically no longer than 12 months.

The Call-out papers for mobilisation are sent by post to the organisation or sometimes delivered in person by the Reservist to their line manager. The documentation will include the call-out date and the anticipated timeline. Whenever possible, Defence aims to give at least 28 days' notice of the date that a Reservist will be required to report for mobilisation, although there is no statutory requirement for a warning period prior to mobilisation.

A period of mobilisation comprises three distinct phases:

- Medical and pre-deployment training
- Operational tour
- Post-operational tour leave

Pre-mobilisation

- Meet with Reservist to ensure all mobilisation paperwork is completed (including pay, benefits and pension arrangements)
- Make a claim for financial assistance as appropriate (see s.10 of policy)
- Discuss any handover of work and return of equipment
- Arrangements for keeping in touch
- Refer to checklists in Line Manager and Reservist Guidance document

During mobilisation

- Keep in touch with Reservist as arranged post-mobilisation
- Ensure both employer and reservist fulfil their return-to-work obligations ([include link to template letters](#))
- After care and support requirements

Applying for Exemption/Deferral/Revocation

In all cases of mobilisation, CDC will release the Reservist to report for duty unless there are exceptional circumstances, whereby the decision and reasoning will be explained to the Reservist.

In such circumstances, line managers have the right to seek exemption and should refer the matter to the appropriate director for a decision if the Reservist's absence is considered to cause serious harm to service delivery.

Definitions of 'harm' will vary from case to case, but may include;

- loss of reputation, goodwill or other financial harm
- impairment of the ability to produce goods or provide services
- harm to the research and development of new products, services or processes (which could not be prevented by the granting of financial assistance under sections 83 and 84 of The Reserve Forces Act 1996).

Details of how to apply for exemption are included in the call-out pack. The application must reach the Adjudication Officer within 7 days of the Company receiving a call-out notice. If this timescale is not met permission to make a late application will need to be obtained from the Adjudication Officer. The Reservist also has the right to apply for exemption or deferral if the call-out papers arrive at a difficult time

If an unsatisfactory decision is received following the application for a deferral, the Company can appeal for a hearing by the Reserve Forces Appeals Tribunal. Appeals must reach the Tribunals Secretary within 5 days receipt of written notice of the decision. If the tribunal rejects the application for exemption or deferral, the Company will be required to release the Reservist for mobilisation.

Treatment of Terms and Conditions during Mobilisation

CDC will continue to treat the contracts of employment of employees mobilised for Reserve Service as operable throughout the period of such service. There will be no loss of continuous service or service-related benefits, although some other benefits may be suspended. Under The Reserve Forces Act (Safeguarding of Employment) Act 1985, an employee's service is terminated on mobilisation, but providing the employee follows the correct notification procedure under the Act, he or she can return to employment and their continuity of service will be restored.

Pay

The MoD will assume responsibility for the Reservist's salary for the duration of their mobilisation. They will pay a basic salary according to the Reservist's military rank. If this basic element is less than the salary the

Reservist receives from CDC, it is the Reservist's responsibility to apply to the MoD for the difference to ensure that they suffer no loss of earnings. This is known as a Reservist Award.

Where mobilisation occurs, the employee will be given special unpaid leave of absence.

CDC is not required to pay the Reservist's salary during the period of mobilisation.

Benefits

Contractual benefits that are suspended by the Company during mobilisation can be claimed by the Reservist as part of their Reservist Award. Example benefits include:

- All those benefits available at the time on the Portal

The Line Manager and Reservist should discuss benefit arrangements during the pre-mobilisation meeting.

This should cover those benefits that will be suspended and for any continuing benefits, arrangements should be made as to how these are paid.

Pension

If the Reservist is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) CDC will continue to run the pension scheme and make the employer contribution. If the Reservist decides to stay in the scheme and contributes personally, the MoD will contribute as the employer during the mobilization time, as long as the Reservist also keeps contributing.

Annual Leave

Reservists should be encouraged to take any accrued annual leave before mobilisation. CDC is not obliged to accrue annual leave for a Reservist employee during the period of mobilisation. Reservists accrue annual leave with the MoD whilst they are in full time service. When they demobilise, Reservists are entitled to a period of post-operational leave (POL). During this period, they will continue to be paid by the MoD.

CDC employees are entitled to carry over up to 5 days leave from one holiday year to the next i.e. the annual holiday year is from 1st April to 31st March.

Dismissal/Redundancy

A Reservist's employment cannot be terminated on the grounds of their military duties or their liability to be mobilised. To do so would be a criminal offence under s.17 of The Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment) Act 1985.

Reservists can be included in the redundancy pool if this is necessary due to a downturn in business or closure of a department. However, all employees should be treated consistently, and redundancy criteria should not discriminate against Reservists on the grounds of their Reserve service or call-up liability.

Sick Pay

During the period of mobilisation, the Reservist will continue to accrue any rights to service-related CDC sick pay. Should a Reservist become sick or injured during mobilisation they will be covered by Defence Medical Services and any financial assistance will continue to be received (including pay) until demobilised. If the sickness or injury continues and this results in early demobilisation, the Reservist will remain covered by Defence until the last day of paid military leave.

After this time the Reservist will be covered by the current CDC Sickness arrangements (in line with local policy).

If the Reservist becomes ill post mobilisation, and a notional return to work date has been agreed, they will be covered by CDC Sickness arrangements as per the CDC Sickness Policy.

Return to work

Both the Reservist and their employer have obligations under The Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment Act) 1985 regarding the return-to-work process.

Reservist

The Reservist must write to their employer by the third Monday after their last day of military service making their request to return to work and suggesting a date which should fall within 6 weeks of their last day of full-time service. This letter formally starts the return-to-work process.

They are also encouraged to informally contact the employer, via a letter, a meeting or a telephone call to discuss their return to work at the earliest opportunity, The formal application must be made in writing for it to be valid under the Act.

If a Reservist is not happy with the offer of alternative employment, they must write to the employer stating why there is reasonable cause for them not to accept it. If a Reservist believes that an employer's response to their application denies their rights under the Safeguard of Employment Act 1985, an application can be made to a Reinstatement Committee for assessment. This committee will consider the Reservist's application and can make an order for reinstatement and/or compensation.

Employer

CDC has an obligation under Reserve Forces (Safeguarding of Employment) Act 1985 to reinstate the Reservist, where possible to their former role, and if not, to a mutually acceptable role on the same terms and conditions prior to mobilisation.

The Reservist should be reinstated within 6 weeks of the last day of their full-time service. They must be reinstated for a minimum period of 13, 26 or 52 weeks, depending on their length of service prior to mobilisation.

Sometimes Reservists may need refresher training when they return to work or be given time to familiarise themselves with processes and procedures in the workplace. Financial assistance may be available for retraining if it is required as a direct result of their mobilisation, although applications cannot be made for training courses that would have taken place anyway. Evidence of costs will be required in addition to evidence that the Reservist could not reach the required standard by any other means, such as workplace experience.

Aftercare

A Reservist returning to work will benefit from a smooth reintegration into the workplace/team. The following should be considered as part of this process:

- The need to update on changes and developments in the organisation.
- The need to offer specific refresher training where it is sought/considered necessary.
- Where the job duties have changed since mobilisation a period of skills training may be required to assist with new aspects of the job.
- Whether the reservist can meet up with colleagues informally or socially before or after their return to work to prevent any feeling of dislocation, if this is sought.
- Reasonable time off to seek therapeutic treatment if required.

Performance Review

Line managers who carry out Performance Review meetings with a Reservist should be aware that Reserve Forces activities undertaken by an individual (either through training or mobilisation) bring essential skills into the workplace such as leadership, communication, team working and organisational ability, which ultimately lead to improved performance in the workplace.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance for employers in the event of an employee who is a Reservist being mobilised is governed by the Reserve Forces (Call out and recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005. These cover additional costs above the normal earnings of the called-up Reservist associated with replacing that employee. There are 3 types of awards available:

One-off Costs

- Agency fees, if a recruitment agency or employment agency is used to find a temporary replacement; or advertising costs
- No financial cap on claims, but any claim must be supported by relevant documentation

Recurring Costs

- Overtime costs, if other employees work overtime to cover the work of the Reservist [by the amount that such costs exceed earnings of the Reservist]
- Costs of temporary replacement [by the amount that such costs exceed earnings of the Reservist]

The maximum claim available is £110 per day (£40,000 per annum correct at 2/09/2021, but may be subject to change). Claims can be made for every normal working day that the Reservist is away on service. An application for one-off costs and recurring costs must be made within 4 weeks of the end of full time Reservist service.

Training Award

If a returning Reservist has to undertake additional training as a direct result of their mobilisation (routine training excluded), then the Company can make an application for the financial assistance.

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Shared Parental Leave (Adoption) Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best

This policy sets out the rights of employees to shared parental leave and pay following the adoption of a child. If you or your partner is pregnant or has recently given birth, please refer to our Shared parental leave (birth) policy.

Shared parental leave should not be confused with ordinary parental leave, which is the separate entitlement to up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave.

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Adopter" means the person with whom the child has been or is to be placed for adoption, or where two people have been matched jointly, whoever has elected to be the child's adopter for the purposes of adoption leave.

"Partner" means the person who is married to, or the civil partner or the partner of, the adopter at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain). This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Matched for adoption" means an adoption agency deciding that a person would be a suitable adoptive parent for a child either individually or jointly with another person. A person is notified of having been "matched for adoption" with a child on the date on which the person receives notification of the adoption agency's decision.

"Placed for adoption" means placed for adoption under UK adoption laws, including placement with a local authority foster parent who is also a prospective adopter ("foster to adopt").

"Official notification" means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant domestic authority, that it is prepared to issue, or has already issued, a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of the child, confirming that the adopter is eligible to adopt and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees employed by us, whether they are the adopter or the partner. It does not apply to contractors, volunteers or interns working for CDC.

How does Shared Parental Leave Work?

Shared parental leave enables an adopter to end their adoption leave early and share the remaining weeks of leave with a partner. It is aimed at giving parents more flexibility over how they share childcare between them during the first year of their child's adoption.

Shared parental leave can be taken at the same time as an eligible adopter/partner or separately.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

You can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block, in which case we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements.

Alternatively, you can request to take shared parental leave in a number of discontinuous blocks of leave, separated by periods of work, in which case your line manager's agreement should be sought in advance.

Entitlement to Shared Parental Leave if you are the Adopter

If you are an adopter, you are entitled to Shared Parental Leave if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the week in which you were notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, at the end of the week in which you received the official notification)
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement apart from the partner (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain);
- you are entitled to statutory adoption leave in respect of the child
- you have brought your statutory adoption leave to an end by giving an adoption leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of your statutory adoption leave period) and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter was notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, the week in which the child enters Great Britain)
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks and
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement apart from the adopter (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain).

Entitlement to Shared Parental Leave if you are the Partner

If you are a partner, you are entitled to Shared Parental Leave if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the week in which the adopter was notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, at the end of the week in which the adopter received the official notification)

- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement apart from the adopter (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain) and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which they were notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, the week in which the child enters Great Britain)
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement apart from the adopter (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain)
- be entitled to statutory adoption leave or statutory adoption pay in respect of the child and
- have brought their statutory adoption leave to an end by giving an adoption leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of their statutory adoption leave period).

Amount of Shared Parental Leave available

The amount of shared parental leave that you can split between you is 50 weeks, minus the amount of adoption leave taken by the adopter.

If you are an adopter, you cannot start a period of shared parental leave until at least two weeks of adoption leave has been taken by you.

If you are a partner, you can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, at any time from the date on which the child enters Great Britain). However, you are entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the adoption of your child, which you will lose if shared parental leave is taken first.

All shared parental leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks of the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, within 52 weeks of the date on which the child enters Great Britain).

Notice Requirements

If you wish to take shared parental leave, you must ensure that you submit the required notices to your line manager within the timescales set out in this policy. The notices are:

- adoption leave curtailment notice (if you are the adopter);
- notice of entitlement and intention; and
- period of leave notice.

The notice periods set out in this policy are the minimum required by law. However, the earlier you inform us of your intentions, the more likely it is that we will be able to accommodate your wishes, particularly if you want to take periods of discontinuous leave.

If you have already decided the pattern of shared parental leave that you would like to take, you can provide more than one type of notice at the same time.

Adoption Leave Curtailment Notice

If you are the adopter who is employed by us, you must give your line manager an adoption leave curtailment notice (unless you have already returned to work from adoption leave). This is for you to confirm the date on which you intend to end your adoption leave.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you or your partner intend to start the first period of shared parental leave.

You should submit your notice using Form for adopter [Inset link](#) to curtail adoption leave.

Additionally, you must at the same time submit either:

- [Form for adopter \(link\)](#) to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption within UK) / Form for adopter to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption from overseas) - if you intend to take the first period of shared parental leave, or you and the partner intend to take it together (see Notice of entitlement and intention below) or
- [Form for adopter \(link\)](#) to provide declaration of consent and entitlement - if your partner will be taking the first period of shared parental leave alone.

If you are the partner who is employed by us, you cannot take shared parental leave until the adopter has given an adoption leave curtailment notice to their own employer or returned to work before the end of their statutory adoption leave period.

Revoking your adoption leave curtailment notice:

We urge you to think carefully before submitting your adoption leave curtailment notice.

Once an adoption leave curtailment notice is submitted, you can only revoke it if:

- you discover that neither you nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and you withdraw your notice in writing within eight weeks of the date on which it was submitted or
- the partner has died.

If you wish to revoke your notice, you will need to complete Form for adopter to revoke notice curtailing their adoption leave for purpose of shared parental leave and give this to your line manager.

Notice of Entitlement and Intention

Before you can book a period of shared parental leave, you must give your line manager a notice of entitlement and intention. This is for you to declare that you are entitled to shared parental leave and confirm that you intend to take it.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you intend to start the first period of leave.

If you are the adopter who is employed by us, you should submit your notice using Form for adopter to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption within UK) or Form for adopter to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption from overseas).

If you are the partner who is employed by us, you should submit your notice using Form for partner to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption within UK) or Form for partner to provide notice of entitlement and intention (adoption from overseas).

These forms contain declarations that will need to be signed by both the adopter and the partner.

Varying or cancelling the dates in your notice of entitlement and intention

You can vary or cancel the proposed shared parental leave dates set out in your notice of entitlement and intention by providing us with written notice.

To do this, you will need to complete Form for employee to vary notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave (adoption) and give this to your line manager.

Limit on number of variations in the notice of entitlement and intention

There is no limit on the number of variations that you can make as a notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until you submit a period of leave notice.

Period of Leave Notice

Once you have provided a notice of entitlement and intention, you must also provide your line manager with a period of leave notice. This is for you to book each period of shared parental leave that you wish to take.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you start the first period of leave. It may be given at the same time as your notice of entitlement and intention.

You should submit your notice using Form for adopter to provide period of leave notice (adoption within UK) or Form for adopter to provide period of leave notice (adoption from overseas).

Your period of leave notice may state the start and end dates for each period of leave that you wish to take. If your child has not yet been placed for adoption, your notice may state that you would like your shared parental leave to start either on the day on which your child is placed for adoption, or a specified number of days after the child's placement. Likewise, for adoptions from overseas, if your child has not yet entered Great Britain, your notice may state that you would like your shared parental leave to start either on the day on which your child enters Great Britain, or a specified number of days after your child enters Great Britain.

Shared parental leave must be booked in blocks of at least one week. You can book one continuous period of leave; in which case we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements. Alternatively, you can book discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work, in which case we will consider your request but reserve the right to refuse it (see booking discontinuous leave below).

Varying or cancelling the dates in your period of leave notice

You can vary or cancel the shared parental leave dates in your period of leave notice by providing us with notice at least eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled is due to start.

To do this, you will need to complete Form for employee to vary period of leave notice to take shared parental leave (adoption) and give this to your line manager.

Limit on number of period of leave notices

You can submit three period of leave notices per adoption. However, any notice to vary or cancel the dates in your period of leave notice will count towards this total.

Booking Continuous Leave

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting a continuous period of leave, we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements.

Booking Discontinuous Leave

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work, we will consider your request but reserve the right to refuse it.

In such cases, your line manager will start a two-week discussion period with you.

Your line manager may agree to your request, refuse your request, or propose alternative dates.

If agreement cannot be reached within that two-week period, you may take the leave as one continuous period of leave on:

- the start date given in your original period of leave notice or
- a new start date that is at least eight weeks after the start date given in your original period of leave notice (in which case you must notify your line manager of that new start date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period).

Alternatively, if you withdraw your period of leave notice on or before the 15th day after the notice was submitted, it will not count towards the limit on the number of period of leave notices that you are entitled to submit and you may submit a new period of leave notice.

Request for Further Information

We may, within 14 days of receiving your notice of entitlement and intention, ask you to provide:

- evidence in the form of one or more documents issued by the adoption agency confirming the name and address of the agency, the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child, and the expected date of placement; or
- a copy of the official notification; and
- the name and address of the adopter or partner's employer (or a declaration that they have no employer).

You must provide this information within 14 days of our request.

Shared Parental Pay

Statutory shared parental pay is available for an eligible adopter and partner to share between them while on shared parental leave.

The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available will depend on how much statutory adoption pay the adopter has been paid when their adoption leave or pay period ends.

A total of 39 weeks' statutory adoption pay is available to the adopter. The first two weeks of adoption leave are allocated to the adopter. This means that an adopter who ends their adoption leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' statutory shared parental pay with a partner.

Any statutory shared parental pay due during shared parental leave will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

It is up to the adopter and partner as to who is paid the statutory shared parental pay and how it is allocated between them. If you intend to receive statutory shared parental pay, you should give notice at the same time that you submit your notice of entitlement and intention.

Entitlement to Shared Parental Pay if you are the Adopter

If you are an adopter, you are entitled to Shared Parental Pay if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the week in which you were notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, at the end of the week in which you received the official notification)
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental pay begins
- your average weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which you were notified of being matched with the child (or for adoptions from overseas, ending with the week in which you received the official notification) are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain) apart from the partner
- you are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which you receive statutory shared parental pay
- you are entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter was notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, the week in which the child enters Great Britain)
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks and
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain) apart from the adopter.

Entitlement to Shared Parental Pay if you are the Partner

If you are a partner, you are entitled to Shared Parental Pay if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the week in which the adopter was notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, at the end of the week in which the adopter received the official notification)
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental pay begins
- your average weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which the adopter was notified of being matched with the child (or for adoptions from overseas, ending with the week in which the adopter received the official notification) are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions

- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain) apart from the adopter
- you are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which you receive statutory shared parental pay and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which they were notified of being matched with the child for adoption (or for adoptions from overseas, the week in which the child enters Great Britain)
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's placement (or for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain) apart from the adopter and
- be entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced.

Your Rights during Shared Parental Leave

During shared parental leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your pay will be replaced with statutory shared parental pay if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

Holiday Entitlement

You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement during your shared parental leave.

You should make every effort to take any outstanding holiday entitlement before commencing shared parental leave or immediately after your shared parental leave has ended if your leave is likely to extend into the next holiday year. Any holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of shared parental leave may be carried over into the next holiday year with the agreement of your line manager or director.

Pension Contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on your normal pay during any period of paid shared parental leave. The contributions that you make will be based on the actual pay that you receive during your shared parental leave.

Our pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid shared parental leave.

Contact during Shared Parental Leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your shared parental leave. This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Shared Parental Leave Keeping in Touch Days

You can agree to work (or attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave without that work bringing your shared parental leave period or statutory shared parental pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

SPLIT days are in addition to the 10 keeping-in-touch days available to an adopter during adoption leave. Any work carried out on a SPLIT day will count as a whole working day and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your shared parental leave. Any work undertaken on SPLIT days is entirely a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.

Returning to Work following Shared Parental Leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory adoption or paternity leave taken by you in relation to the child is 26 weeks or less.

Whenever feasible, you can go back to your original job after taking shared parental leave. This applies if your total leave, including shared parental, statutory maternity, or paternity leave, is over 26 weeks. But if this isn't practical, we'll provide a suitable alternative role with terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work, you must give written notice of resignation as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

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Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the rights of employees to shared parental leave and pay following the birth of their child. If you are adopting a child, please refer to our shared parental leave adoption policy.

Shared parental leave should not be confused with ordinary parental leave, which is the separate entitlement to up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave.

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Mother" means the mother or expectant mother of the child.

"Partner" means the father of the child, or the person who, at the date of the child's birth, is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of the mother. This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the mother's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Expected week of childbirth" means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the mother's doctor or midwife expects them to give birth.

"Qualifying week" means the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees employed by us, whether they are the mother or the partner. It does not apply to contractors, volunteers or interns working for us.

How does Shared Parental Leave Work?

Shared parental leave enables a mother to end their maternity leave early and share the remaining weeks of leave with a partner. It is aimed at giving parents more flexibility over how they share childcare between them during the first year of their child's life.

Shared parental leave can be taken at the same time as an eligible mother/partner or separately.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

You can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block, in which case we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements. Alternatively, you can request to take shared parental leave in a number of discontinuous blocks of leave, separated by periods of work, in which case your line manager's agreement should be sought..

Entitlement to Shared Parental Leave if you are the Mother

If you are a mother, you are entitled to Shared Parental Leave if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week;
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the partner)
- you are entitled to statutory maternity leave in respect of the child
- you have brought your statutory maternity leave to an end by giving a maternity leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of your statutory maternity leave period) and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks and
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the mother).

Entitlement to Shared Parental Leave if you are the Partner

If you are a partner, you are entitled to Shared Parental Leave if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the mother) and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the partner)
- be entitled to statutory maternity leave, statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child and
- have brought their statutory maternity leave to an end by giving a maternity leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of their statutory maternity leave period).

Amount of Shared Parental Leave Available

The amount of shared parental leave that you can split between you is 52 weeks, minus the amount of maternity leave taken by the mother.

If you are a mother, you must take compulsory maternity leave immediately after the child is born. This means that you cannot start your shared parental leave until two after the birth of your child.

If you are a partner, you can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date of the child's birth. However, you are entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the birth of your child, which you will lose if shared parental leave is taken first.

All shared parental leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks following the birth of the child.

Notice Requirements

If you wish to take shared parental leave, you must ensure that you submit the required notices to your line manager copied to the HR Team within the timescales set out in this policy. The notices are:

- maternity leave curtailment notice (if you are the mother)
- notice of entitlement and intention; and
- period of leave notice.

The notice periods set out in this policy are the minimum required by law. However, the earlier you inform us of your intentions, the more likely it is that we will be able to accommodate your wishes, particularly if you want to take periods of discontinuous leave.

If you have already decided the pattern of shared parental leave that you would like to take, you can provide more than one type of notice at the same time.

Maternity Leave Curtailment Notice

If you are the mother who is employed by us, you must give your line manager a maternity leave curtailment notice (unless you have already returned to work from maternity leave). This is for you to confirm the date on which you intend to end your maternity leave.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you or your partner intend to start the first period of shared parental leave.

Additionally, you must at the same time submit either:

- **Form for mother** (link) to provide notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave - if you intend to take the first period of shared parental leave, or you and the partner intend to take it together (see Notice of entitlement and intention below) or
- **Form for mother** (link) to provide declaration of consent and entitlement - if your partner will be taking the first period of shared parental leave alone.

If you are the partner who is employed by us, you cannot take shared parental leave until the mother has given a maternity leave curtailment notice to their own employer or returned to work before the end of their statutory maternity leave period.

Revoking your maternity leave curtailment notice

We urge you to think carefully before submitting your maternity leave curtailment notice.

Once a maternity leave curtailment notice is submitted, you can only revoke it if:

- you discover that neither you nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and you withdraw your notice in writing within eight weeks of the date on which it was submitted
- notice was given before the birth of the child and you withdraw your notice in writing within six weeks of the child's birth or
- the partner has died.

If you wish to revoke your notice, you will need to notify your line manager, with a copy to the HR Team as soon as possible.

Notice of Entitlement and Intention

Before you can book a period of shared parental leave, you must give your line manager a notice of entitlement and intention. This is for you to declare that you are entitled to shared parental leave and confirm that you intend to take it.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you intend to start the first period of leave.

If you are the mother who is employed by us, you should submit your notice using Form for mother to provide notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave.

If you are the partner who is employed by us, you should submit your notice using Form for partner to provide notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave.

These forms contain declarations that will need to be signed by both the mother and the partner.

Varying or cancelling the dates in your notice of entitlement and intention

You can vary or cancel the proposed shared parental leave dates set out in your notice of entitlement and intention by providing us with written notice.

To do this, you will need to complete a 'Form for employee' to vary notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave and give this to your line manager.

Limit on number of variations in the notice of entitlement and intention

There is no limit on the number of variations that you can make as a notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until you submit a period of leave notice.

Period of Leave Notice

Once you have provided a notice of entitlement and intention, you must also provide your line manager with a period of leave notice. This is for you to book each period of shared parental leave that you wish to take.

Your notice must be received by us at least eight weeks before you start the first period of leave. It may be given at the same time as your notice of entitlement and intention.

Your period of leave notice may state the start and end dates for each period of leave that you wish to take. Alternatively, if your child has not been born yet, your notice may state that you would like your shared parental leave to start either on the day on which your child is born, or a specified number of days after the child's birth.

Shared parental leave must be booked in blocks of at least one week. You can book one continuous period of leave; in which case we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and

meet the notice requirements. Alternatively, you can book discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work, in which case we will consider your request but reserve the right to refuse it.

Varying or cancelling the dates in your period of leave notice

You can vary or cancel the shared parental leave dates in your period of leave notice by providing us with notice at least eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled is due to start.

To do this, you will need to complete a relevant form and return it to your line manager, copied to the HR Team.

Limit on number of period of leave notices

You can submit three period of leave notices per pregnancy. However, any notice to vary or cancel the dates in your period of leave notice will count towards this total.

Booking Continuous Leave

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting a continuous period of leave, we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements.

Booking Discontinuous Leave

If you submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work, we will consider your request but reserve the right to refuse it.

In such cases, your line manager will start a two-week discussion period with you.

Your line manager may agree to your request, refuse your request or propose alternative dates.

If agreement cannot be reached within that two-week period, you may take the leave as one continuous period of leave on:

- the start date given in your original period of leave notice or
- a new start date that is at least eight weeks after the start date given in your original period of leave notice (in which case you must notify your line manager of that new start date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period).

Alternatively, if you withdraw your period of leave notice on or before the 15th day after the notice was submitted, it will not count towards the limit on the number of period of leave notices that you are entitled to submit and you may submit a new period of leave notice.

Request for Further Information

We may, within 14 days of receiving your notice of entitlement and intention, ask you to provide:

- a copy of the child's birth certificate (or a signed declaration stating the date and place of birth if the birth certificate is not available); and
- the name and address of the mother or partner's employer (or a declaration that they have no employer).

You must provide this information within 14 days of our request.

Shared Parental Pay

Statutory shared parental pay is available for an eligible mother and partner to share between them while on shared parental leave.

The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available will depend on how much statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance the mother has been paid when their maternity leave or pay period ends.

A total of 39 weeks' statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance is available to the mother. There is a compulsory maternity leave period of two weeks. This means that a mother who ends their maternity leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' statutory shared parental pay with a partner.

Any statutory shared parental pay due during shared parental leave will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

It is up to the mother and partner as to who is paid the statutory shared parental pay and how it is allocated between them. If you intend to receive statutory shared parental pay, you should give notice at the same time that you submit your notice of entitlement and intention.

Entitlement to Shared Parental Pay if you are the mother

If you are a mother, you are entitled to shared parental pay if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental pay begins
- your average weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the qualifying week are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the partner)
- you are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which you receive statutory shared parental pay and
- you are entitled to statutory maternity pay in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period has been reduced and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks and
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the mother).

Entitlement to Shared Parental Pay if you are the Partner

If you are a partner, you are entitled to Shared Parental Pay if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week
- you remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental pay begins
- your average weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the qualifying week are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- you have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the mother)

- you are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which you receive statutory shared parental pay and
- you have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth (apart from the partner)and
- be entitled to statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period or maternity allowance period has been reduced.

Your Rights during Shared Parental Leave

During shared parental leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your pay will be replaced with statutory shared parental pay if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

Holiday Entitlement

You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement during your shared parental leave.

You should make every effort to take any outstanding holiday entitlement before commencing shared parental leave or immediately after your shared parental leave has ended if your leave is likely to extend into the next holiday year. Any holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of shared parental leave may be carried over into the next holiday year with the agreement of your line manager.

Pension Contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on your normal pay during any period of paid shared parental leave. The contributions that you make will be based on the actual pay that you receive during your shared parental leave.

Our pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid shared parental leave.

Contact during Shared Parental Leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your shared parental leave. This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Shared Parental Leave Keeping in Touch Days

You can agree to work (or attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave without that work bringing your shared parental leave period or statutory shared parental pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

SPLIT days are in addition to the 10 keeping-in-touch days available to a mother during maternity leave. Any work carried out on a SPLIT day will count as a whole working day and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your shared parental leave. Any work undertaken on SPLIT days is entirely a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.

Returning to Work following Shared Parental Leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory maternity or paternity leave taken by you in relation to the child is 26 weeks or less.

You have the right to return to the same job, wherever possible, if you have taken shared parental leave and the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory maternity or paternity leave taken by you in relation to the child. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work, you must give written notice of resignation as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

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Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

Having a culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive is core to everything that we strive to achieve and key to the creation of a positive organisational environment. CDC is also committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees and we wish to offer supportive and effective management of absence due to ill-health and a positive healthy culture that empowers managers to handle sensitive situations in the correct way.

Cotswold District Council aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work whilst recognising that there may be occasions when employees may be unable to attend work due to their own ill-health.

CDC will always treat employees fairly and sensitively during times of ill health, but it must also pay due regard to its operational needs. Persistent absence can damage efficiency and productivity and place an additional burden on colleagues.

By implementing this policy, CDC aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its operational needs and the genuine need of employees to take time off work because of ill health.

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the management.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Absence management stages" our step-by-step process for managing frequent Short-term sickness absence.

"Period of sickness absence" or **"instance of sickness absence"** means any continuous period of sickness absence, of whatever length, during which the employee does not work.

"Short-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting one to 27 calendar days.

"Long-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting 28 calendar days or more.

"Formal review period" means a defined period during which an employee is required to show an improvement in their sickness absence levels.

Scope

This policy covers short-term sickness absence. CDC operates a separate policy on long-term sickness absence. Once an employee's sickness has lasted 28 calendar days, CDC's long-term sickness absence policy applies.

Where an employee's absences are being managed under this policy and they then go off on long-term sickness absence, management of their sickness absence will be switched over to CDC's separate policy on long-term sickness absence.

This policy is formulated on the assumption that, if CDC suspects there to be misconduct, its separate disciplinary procedure will apply. For example, CDC may take disciplinary action if there is evidence that:

- absence is not genuine or not for the reason provided
- the employee does not provide satisfactory reason for the absence
- the employee is undertaking inappropriate activities while off sick, such as carrying out work for another organisation or
- the correct sickness absence notification and evidence procedure has not been followed.

Under our absence policy in cases of capability where an individual may be unable to fulfil their substantive role because of sickness or a disability, it may be appropriate to consider alternative action under the performance improvement and capability policy. Alternatively, there may be cases under our Absence Management stages where the disciplinary procedure applies.

This policy recognises CDC is under a legal duty to consider making reasonable adjustments and will do this in collaboration with the employee who becomes disabled or their disability worsens. This is to enable the employee to continue to carry out their role and to support any identified disadvantage being removed.

This policy applies to employees only and does not apply to contractors, consultants, agency workers or any self-employed individuals working for CDC.

Responsibilities:

Guidelines for line managers

When an individual is off sick, a line manager should:

- take responsibility for managing and reviewing their staff's attendance and absence; the manager should ensure that the sickness record is up to date and reflective of an individual's absence.
- maintain a record of each employee's sickness absences ensuring the records clearly identify the reasons for the employee's various absences.
- take responsibility for applying the Attendance management stages under this policy when the relevant absence triggers are met.
- after speaking to them on the first day of absence, maintain contact on at least the fourth day of absence and at regular intervals thereafter. You should agree the frequency with that individual with consideration to the nature of the absence and the duration of any fit notes should the absence extend beyond seven calendar days.
- ensure all records of absences, including discussions and medical certificates remain confidential.

When an individual returns to work the line manager should:

- ensure the employee completes a self-certification form for sickness of seven calendar days or less and provides medical evidence for sickness of more than seven calendar days
- conduct a return-to-work meeting on the first day back
- speak to the employee about the absence and the reason for it in a fair and factual way, understanding that the absence could be sensitive

- be alert to patterns of absence, for example frequent absences on Fridays or Mondays, or immediately before or after bank or public holidays
- be particularly sensitive when absences are caused by personal or family problems
- be mindful of any reference to anything work related, for example, workplace stress.

Concerns around high levels of absence or patterns:

- speak with the individual and highlight any concerns around high levels of absence and be ready to apply the attendance management stages where the absence requires
- try to establish any underlying reasons for frequent absences and, where the underlying cause is identified, take steps to help the employee to manage the cause
- be aware of the potential for discrimination when managing absence, particularly where the employee's ill health is related to pregnancy or disability
- keep in mind CDC's legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people when managing absence
- consult with your HR Business Partner if unsure about anything or special circumstances arise, for example if it appears that the employee may have a disability
- bear in mind that CDC may seek a medical report on an employee, for example from the employee's doctor or CDC's occupational health advisers the individual's consent is required to obtain this information;

Guidelines for employees

If they are unable to attend work because of ill health, all employees should:

- notify their manager by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable, preferably before they are due to start work on the first day of absence. If the manager is unavailable, the employee should contact the next most appropriate manager - it is important that the reporting procedures are followed at all times.
- continue to notify on the fourth day and keep in touch with their manager at regular intervals after this while unable to attend work. The frequency of such contact should be agreed between the manager and the employee with consideration to the nature of the absence and the duration of any fit notes should the absence extend beyond seven calendar days.
- be prepared to give their manager a clear reason (i.e., the nature of the illness or injury) why they cannot attend work and estimate as to how long they think the absence will last.

Upon a return to work an employee should:

- complete a self-certification form for sickness of seven calendar days or less and provide medical evidence for sickness of more than seven calendar days
- attend a return-to-work meeting with their manager each time the employee returns from a period of sickness absence
- be open with their line manager about the reasons for their absence, to give the manager the opportunity to provide support where possible
- tell their manager of any extenuating circumstances, for example personal or family problems or an unmanageable workload

Concerns around high levels of absence or patterns:

- bear in mind that CDC has attendance management stages to help support and manage high levels of absence or patterns
- bear in mind that CDC may seek a medical report, for example from the employee's doctor, and

- co-operate with CDC regarding the possible implementation of any adjustments to job duties, hours or working conditions, particularly those suggested by a healthcare professional.

Attendance review management stages

The following procedure aims to provide a consistent approach to managing short term absence initially through informal interventions, and where attendance does not improve/attendance targets are not met and concerns continue, through a formal process.

Consideration will be given to an employee who needs time off for reasons related to their disability such as:

- too ill to work
- attending medical and hospital appointments
- having treatment or therapy
- recovering from treatment

Some adjustment to the trigger points for absence due to disability will be made by either

- not counting some or all the sickness absence related to a disability towards any trigger point
- increasing the number of absences that trigger a review

Informal Stage (1): Initial attendance review meeting

You will be required to attend an initial attendance review meeting with your manager if you have:

- Three separate occurrences of sickness absence in a 12-month rolling period; or
- More than 20 working days of sickness absence in a 12-month rolling period; or
- A pattern of absence that is of concern (e.g., Mondays/Fridays or absence following holidays or bank holidays)

The initial attendance review meeting should aim to:

- Check on your wellbeing
- Discuss the reasons for the absence
- Identify any contributing issues and how these may be resolved
- Establish whether there is an underlying medical condition or disability (this may involve seeking further medical advice)
- Consider what other support may be needed
- Advise you of what improvement is expected in your attendance
 - Show immediate and sustained improvement
 - Meet an attendance target
 - Follow reporting procedures at all times during the attendance review period
- Or inform you that there will be no further action

You may be advised that if attendance does not improve you may be subject to disciplinary action

Formal Stage (2): Formal attendance review meeting

You will be required to attend a formal review meeting which will be held with you if your attendance remains of concern and/or there is no underlying medical condition. Reasons for a formal meeting include

- A fourth absence occurs in a 12-month rolling period; or
- Sickness absence has reached 30 working days; or
- The pattern of absence remains a concern

At this meeting your manager will:

- Check on your wellbeing

- Discuss the reasons for the continued absence
- Review your attendance and set a clear timeframe for improvement
 - Show immediate and sustained improvement
 - meet an attendance target
- Discuss how this may be improved
- Consider a referral to occupational health
- Discuss any management support or other needs
- Or inform you that there will be no further action

You may be advised that your absence will be considered a disciplinary issue and managed under the disciplinary or performance improvement or capability procedure and a letter will be sent to you to inform you of the outcome. Any further absences at this stage could then result in a formal procedure being further invoked which may ultimately lead to dismissal.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Notification and Evidence of Sickness Absence

Reporting absence

On the first day of sickness absence, the employee must inform their manager as soon as reasonably practicable that they will not be working because of illness or injury. Preferably, the employee should notify their manager of non-attendance by telephone before they are due to start work and, in any event, as soon as reasonably practicable. If the employee's manager is unavailable, the employee should contact the next most appropriate manager.

The employee should provide a clear reason (i.e. the nature of the illness or injury) why they cannot attend work and estimate how long they think the absence will last. The employee should also be prepared to briefly discuss any consequences of their absence, for example if customer appointments need to be cancelled or any essential work needs to be covered.

Notification of sickness absence must be via telephone, not by text message, email or social media. In exceptional circumstances where the employee is unable to telephone (for example, because of hospitalisation), another person such as a friend or relative can contact CDC on their behalf.

If an employee comes to work but needs to leave during the day because of ill health, they should inform their manager before leaving work. If the manager is unavailable, the employee should inform the next most appropriate person within the department.

Sickness absence that begins part way through the day will count as half a day's sickness absence if the employee leaves before completing 50% of their working day. Where sickness absence begins after the employee has completed 50% of their working day, no absence will be recorded for that day.

After the first day of absence, the employee should generally telephone their manager on the fourth day and at regular intervals thereafter. This should be as agreed with your manager and in line with fit note.

Self-certification of sickness absence

If sickness is for seven calendar days or less, on the first day of the employee's return to work/at a return-to-work meeting, they must obtain, complete and sign a self-certification form, setting out the dates of absence and the nature of the illness or injury.

The line manager should countersign the form and pass it on to Human Resources.

Statement of fitness for work (fit note)

While the first seven calendar days of sickness can be self-certified, all sickness that lasts longer than seven calendar days requires medical evidence. This medical evidence will normally be in the form of a fit note, also known as a "statement of fitness for work".

As well as being issued by doctors, fit notes can be issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists who have assessed their fitness for work. Fit notes cannot be issued on request or via over-the-counter services without an assessment.

If the employee's sickness lasts for eight calendar days or more, the employee's line manager must ensure that the employee provides a fit note as soon as possible. A fit note may state that the employee:

- is "not fit for work", in which case the employee should remain off work or
- "may be fit for work", if the healthcare professional's recommendations are followed (for example, a phased return, amended job duties, altered hours of work, or workplace adaptations).
- where a phased return is recommended this will typically be for a period up to 6 weeks.
- in exceptional circumstances a longer period of reduced hours (recommended by Occupational Health) may be agreed. However, a feasibility review will take place at 3 and 6 months to explore whether any adjustments need to take place i.e. with regards temporarily redeploying into a suitable role or a temporary decrease to working hours.

While there is no legal obligation on CDC to follow the recommendations, managers should take the recommendations seriously and give fair consideration - in consultation with the employee and Human Resources - as to whether or not any of the changes recommended can be accommodated.

Sick Pay

CDC operates a contractual sick pay scheme that supplements Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.

Providing you follow the correct procedure as detailed in this document, you will normally receive:

Year 1 of service	1 months' full pay (after 4 months' service)
Year 2 of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
Year 3 of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During Year 4 and Year 5 of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay

After 5 years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay
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Contractual sick pay is calculated over a 12-month rolling period. Employees are required to co-operate fully when a medical referral to the Occupational Health Advisor is required. Decisions around capability / reasonable adjustment will be made based only on the medical information available .

Sick pay under CDC’s scheme is subject to the usual deductions for PAYE, national insurance, pension contributions, etc.

Payments under the CDC’s scheme will be calculated by reference to the employee's salary only and any payments made under CDC’s scheme are inclusive of any entitlement to SSP for the same period of absence.

Medical Appointments

CDC recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments.

Employees should endeavour to arrange medical appointments in their own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to CDC, such as first thing in the morning or at the end of the working day.

However, because CDC accepts that it is not always possible to arrange medical appointments outside working hours, it is CDC’s policy to permit reasonable time off work for such appointments.

Provided that the employee gives their line manager reasonable notice of the date and time of an appointment, time off with pay will normally be granted, although this is subject to the discretion of the employee's line manager and you may be asked to make the time up.

Where time off for medical appointments becomes frequent or regular, or starts to cause difficulties for the employee's department, the line manager has the discretion either to require the employee to make up for the time off by working extra time on another occasion, or to grant any further time off without pay.

Employees must obtain approval from their line manager in advance of any appointment. The line manager reserves the right to ask the employee to reschedule an appointment if its timing would cause disruption to CDC business. The line manager may also, at their discretion, ask the employee to produce confirmation of the appointment.

Employees who are pregnant have the statutory right not to be unreasonably refused paid time off work for antenatal appointments where the employee's attendance has been recommended by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse. Paid time off in such circumstances will automatically be granted, although employees should endeavour to arrange appointments outside working hours. Nevertheless, the employee should give reasonable notice of the date and time of the appointment to their line manager where possible and the line manager will still have the right to request to see the confirmation of the employee's second appointment and any subsequent appointments.

A prospective partner of a pregnant woman, has the statutory right to take unpaid time off to attend up to two antenatal appointments up to a maximum of 6.5 hours

Special Cases

Pregnancy-related absences

Pregnant employees who are off work because of pregnancy-related ill health must abide by CDC's absence reporting procedure. For example, a pregnant employee is subject to the usual notification and evidence requirements and will be asked to attend a return-to-work meeting when returning to work.

Disability-related absences

Where an employee gives as the reason for absence an underlying health issue that could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the manager should seek advice from their HR Business Partner to determine how best to support the employee to improve their attendance. This includes where the employee states that they are suffering from any ill-health related to anxiety or stress.

Holiday during sick leave

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their holiday entitlement and will be given the opportunity to take this at a later date, including in the subsequent leave year, if they do not take their holiday entitlement due to being on sick leave.

An employee on sick leave may apply to take their holiday entitlement while on sick leave. The holiday dates must be approved in accordance with CDC's holiday procedure.

Medical Advice

At various stages of managing the employee's sickness absence, a manager may want to obtain advice on the employee's fitness for work from occupational health advisers.

Examples of when a line manager might refer to occupational health include to:

- seek a medical report on the employee
- establish when the employee might be able to return to work
- ask for guidance on the employee's condition, for example if there is a possibility that the employee is disabled or simply where more information is required as to the exact nature of the condition and
- if the employee is disabled, discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate the employee's disability.

CDC will treat personal data about you collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy / policy on processing special categories of personal data (this may include medical certificates or information given by you about your sickness). Information about how an employee's data is used and the basis for processing their data will be provided in the privacy notice which contains the data protection information. Where CDC is relying on its legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing an employee's data, you can object to the processing.

Report from a Medical Practitioner who has been Responsible for the Employee's Clinical Care

Where a report from the employee's medical practitioner is necessary, the employee will be fully informed of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and their permission will be sought for the report to be obtained.

The employee's permission will be sought to contact the medical practitioner on the relevant consent form, available from Human Resources.

The employee has the right to access the report before CDC sees it. If the employee wishes to see the report, they should inform CDC of this, so that it can inform the medical practitioner. The employee will

then have 21 days to contact the medical practitioner to see the report. If the employee does not contact the medical practitioner within this period, the medical practitioner can pass the report on to CDC.

When requesting a report, CDC will provide the medical practitioner with as much information as possible on the role of the employee and explain why the report is being sought. CDC will provide the medical practitioner with:

- a copy of the employee's signed form consenting to the request to seek a medical report
- confirmation that the employee is aware of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and
- details of the major features of the employee's job.

CDC will ask the medical practitioner to identify:

- the nature of the employee's illness or injury
- whether or not there are any underlying medical conditions that explain the employee's pattern of absences and
- what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or work premises to facilitate a return to work.

Where the employee refuses permission for CDC to contact their medical practitioner, CDC will explain to the employee the reasons behind the request and inform the employee that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports. The same procedure will be followed where the employee delays in giving their consent.

Where the employee feels that the report is misleading or incorrect, they may ask the medical practitioner to amend it. If the medical practitioner does not agree with the employee and does not alter the report, the employee may attach a statement to the report to reflect their views.

Alternatively, having seen the report, the employee may request that access to the report be withheld from CDC. The employee will be informed that a decision relating to employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Report from a medical practitioner who has not been responsible for the employee's clinical care

The Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 does not apply where CDC is seeking a medical report from a medical practitioner who has not been responsible for the employee's clinical care, typically its own chosen specialist or occupational health adviser.

In these circumstances, CDC will explain to the employee in writing what information it is seeking on the employee's health and how the information will be used. The letter should explain to the employee:

- that CDC intends to obtain a medical report and why it wishes to do so
- from whom the report will be obtained
- what CDC will do with the report
- how CDC will treat personal data collected when obtaining the medical report and
- their right to object to the processing of their personal data.

CDC will write to the medical practitioner to request the report. The letter should explain to the medical practitioner why CDC is requesting the report and ask any specific questions that it wishes the practitioner to answer.

Where the employee objects to the processing of their personal data when CDC is seeking to obtain a medical report to which the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 does not apply, CDC will explain to the

employee the reasons behind the request and inform the employee that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

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Supporting Bereaved Employees Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

We recognise that dealing with a bereavement can be among the biggest challenges of an employee's life. This policy sets out our commitment to supporting staff through their grief by providing bereavement leave, keeping in touch with staff while they are off work, and supporting staff on their return to work.

We acknowledge that every bereavement is different, and grief impacts everyone in different ways. This policy is intended to cater for a wide range of circumstances and the differing impacts that a bereavement can have, while also recognising the needs of the business.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of the death of an immediate family member (other than a child where the employee is eligible for parental bereavement leave), you will be granted up to 5 days' paid bereavement leave. Additional bereavement leave may be granted by the manager based on individual circumstances. This may be classed as unpaid leave.

For the purposes of this policy, an "immediate family member" is defined as a:

- spouse or civil partner
- partner (including same-sex partner)
- parent (including step-parent)
- adult child (i.e., who is aged 18 or over, meaning that the employee is not eligible for parental bereavement leave)
- sibling (including step-sibling)
- grandparent; or
- grandchild.

Where there is a loss of a child, and that child is under 18. This is a legal entitlement for bereaved parents to be absent from work for up to two weeks where their child passes away. We are fully committed to supporting staff coping with the loss of a child by ensuring that bereaved parents can take parental bereavement leave.

Whatever your length of service, you can take parental bereavement leave if you have lost a child (i.e. under the age of 18) and are the:

- parent of a child who has passed away or
- partner of the child's parent, where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent or

- "parent in fact" of a child who has passed away, which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child passed away, they have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but who is not being paid to look after the child).

Individual who is not an Immediate Family Member

We recognise that you may be grieving following the death of an individual who is not an immediate family member, but with whom you nevertheless have a close relationship, for example an aunt, an uncle, a cousin or a close friend.

If this is the case, you can request bereavement leave and it will be up to your line manager, to decide whether to grant bereavement leave and, if so, how much bereavement leave to grant. The decision will depend on the circumstances, taking into account issues such as:

- the closeness of your relationship with the deceased
- your obligations towards the deceased (for example if you are responsible for arranging the deceased's funeral)
- travel required (for example if you need to travel a significant distance to be with relatives) and
- any bereavement requirements in relation to religion, such as an extended period of mourning (with the onus on you to tell your line manager about these requirements).

The employee can be granted up to 3 days' paid bereavement leave.

Support during Bereavement

If you have suffered a bereavement and cannot attend work, you should inform your line manager of what has happened by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable. This will allow us to support you.

You should inform your line manager of what you would like colleagues to know about the situation and of any urgent tasks that other staff can pick up or meetings that need to be cancelled or rearranged.

Following the initial contact, you and your line manager should keep in touch. The level of contact is a matter for agreement between the two of you.

External Support

External sources of help and support for bereaved employees include:

- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) / [Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland](#), which offers support to bereaved people, for example via a telephone helpline;
- [Child Bereavement UK](#), which offers support to families when a child passes away, for example via a telephone helpline;
- [Age UK](#), which has a website that includes [guidance and support](#) on coping with bereavement;
- [WAY Widowed and Young](#), which specialises in supporting people aged 50 or under whose partner has passed away; and
- [Marie Curie](#), which supports families living with a terminal illness.

Other Types of Leave

Where you have exhausted bereavement leave, or you are not entitled to bereavement leave under this policy you can still apply for annual leave under our holiday policy in the usual way.

Employees who are not entitled to bereavement leave under this policy may be able to take unpaid time off under our separate time off for dependant's policy. Employees can take unpaid time off work to take action necessary "in consequence of" the death of a dependant. However, the right is limited to the death of an employee's spouse, civil partner, child or parent, or someone who lives in the employee's household (not as a lodger, tenant or employee).

If you are taking sickness absence as a result of ill health brought on by a bereavement, our usual sickness absence policy applies. Under the sickness absence policy, you must:

- complete a self-certification form for sickness of seven calendar days or less; and
- provide medical evidence for sickness of more than seven calendar days.

Return to Work

Once you are back at work, you can discuss with your line manager what further support we can provide.

We recognise that a bereaved employee may not be able to return immediately to their full duties or way of working. It sees the value of temporarily adjusting a bereaved employee's duties or phasing the employee back to work when it is appropriate to do so.

We will consider requests to make temporary changes to working arrangements, such as allowing you to work reduced hours; work from home on certain days; or be reassigned to another role (for example away from a customer-facing role).

Depending on the nature of the temporary changes, your line manager may agree to the temporary adjustments informally with you, or you may need to make a formal request for flexible working.

We recognise that some bereavements will result in an employee being permanently unable to return to their full duties or way of working. For example, an employee with children whose partner passes away may have increased childcare responsibilities. Permanent changes that could be requested include moving to part-time working; working from home on certain days; or being reassigned to another role, if such a permanent position is available.

Should we agree to permanent changes that impact on your terms and conditions of employment, you will be asked to agree to a variation of contract.

Health and Safety

A bereavement can result in an employee experiencing lapses in concentration, impaired decision-making, fatigue, and depression or anxiety. If you are concerned about your fitness for work, you should discuss this with your line manager.

We reserve the right to require an employee who is unfit for work to go home on sick leave or to adjust their duties temporarily. It may be appropriate to seek a medical report on the employee or carry out a risk assessment.

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Supporting Employees through Pregnancy Loss Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the rights of employees affected by a miscarriage, stillbirth or termination for medical reasons (TFMR) and explains the emotional and practical support that we can provide.

We empathise when an employee experiences pregnancy loss as we know it is extremely distressing, regardless of how early in pregnancy the loss occurs. Pregnancy loss can have significant physical and emotional consequences, which may affect an employee's attendance or performance at work.

We are committed to supporting employees who are affected and encourage you to discuss your situation with us if you are comfortable doing so.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Miscarriage" means the loss of a baby before the end of the 24th week of pregnancy.

"Stillbirth" means the loss of a baby after 24 complete weeks of pregnancy.

"Termination for medical reasons" (TFMR) describes the ending of a wanted pregnancy after a prenatal diagnosis of a condition with the baby or because of a risk to the mother's health. In this context, the word "termination" is preferred to abortion to make clear that the pregnancy was wanted. A TFMR can occur at any stage of pregnancy, following findings from ultrasound scans or other investigations.

"Ectopic pregnancy" means a pregnancy that develops outside the uterus, most often in the fallopian tubes.

"Molar pregnancy" is where a fertilised egg implants in the uterus but cannot develop because it does not contain the correct genetic material.

References to a miscarriage in this policy include an ectopic pregnancy and a molar pregnancy.

How a Miscarriage or Stillbirth may affect an Employee at Work

Having a miscarriage, stillbirth or TFMR can affect an employee in a number of different ways, which can in turn affect their work or performance. These include:

- physical symptoms, such as pain, bleeding, lactation, tiredness or a loss of appetite;

- difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- loss of confidence and motivation
- finding social interaction more difficult
- mood swings, irritability or tearfulness
- feelings of guilt and fear of judgement from others and
- mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Telling us about your Miscarriage

You do not have to tell us that you have had a miscarriage.

However, if you would like to do so, we encourage you to tell your line manager, the HR Team or any member of management at an early stage, so that we can provide any necessary support.

Any information given to line managers and any other management is confidential. Colleagues will only be told about the miscarriage if this is what you want. Your line manager will discuss your wishes with you.

If you do not want to tell your line manager about your miscarriage, you can access support by approaching another manager or director for support.

Telling us about your Stillbirth

We encourage you to tell your line manager about your stillbirth at an early stage, so that we can provide any necessary support.

Telling us about your TFMR

You do not have to tell us that you have had a TFMR.

However, if you would like to do so, we encourage you to tell your line manager at an early stage, so that we can provide any necessary support.

You should bear in mind that a TFMR after 24 weeks must be registered as a stillbirth and statutory maternity rights apply in these circumstances. In this situation, we strongly urge you to inform us so that we can advise you of your right to take maternity leave.

Any information given to managers is confidential. Colleagues will only be told about your TFMR if this is what you want. Your line manager will discuss your wishes with you.

If you do not want to tell your line manager about your TFMR, you can access support by approaching another member of management or a director for support.

Time Off

Employees who have experienced a pregnancy loss may need time off work to recover from the physical and emotional consequences.

The amount of time off that is needed will vary from individual to individual. Your right to time off and the type of leave that you can take depends on whether you have had a miscarriage, stillbirth or TFMR.

Miscarriage

If you are unwell and unable to attend work following a miscarriage, we will handle this under our sickness absence policy. You will need to self-certify absences of up to seven days or provide a GP's fit note for longer periods of absence in accordance with the policy.

Your certificate or fit note should confirm that the absence is pregnancy related. Your right to sick pay is also covered by the sickness absence policy.

You may want to consider taking a period of annual leave if you do not qualify for paid sick leave. You should request this in the usual way. We will consider any request sympathetically. We are also willing to consider requests for periods of unpaid leave. You should discuss this with your line manager.

Under our compassionate leave policy, employees are also entitled to 5 days' paid leave. Further information about how to request compassionate leave is contained in the policy.

Stillbirth

Employees who have had a stillbirth can take statutory maternity leave and (if eligible) receive statutory maternity pay. Maternity leave starts on the day after a stillbirth.

If you would like to take maternity leave, you should tell us about the stillbirth as soon as possible and provide a copy of your MAT B1 certificate if you have not already done so. Further information can be found in our maternity policy.

Employees can also take up to two weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave after their statutory maternity leave, and (if eligible) receive statutory parental bereavement pay. Further information can be found in our parental bereavement leave policy.

TFMR

If you are unwell and unable to attend work following a TFMR, we will handle this under our sickness absence policy. You will need to self-certify absences of up to seven days or provide a GP's fit note for longer periods of absence in accordance with the policy.

Your certificate or fit note should confirm that the absence is pregnancy related. Your right to sick pay is also covered by the sickness absence policy.

A TFMR after 24 weeks must be registered as a stillbirth and the right to take maternity leave applies in these circumstances.

You may want to consider taking a period of annual leave if you do not qualify for paid sick leave or maternity leave. You should request this in the usual way. We will consider any request sympathetically. We are also willing to consider requests for periods of unpaid leave. You should discuss this with your line manager.

Practical and Emotional Support

Our intranet signposts employees and line managers to external sources of help and support, including:

- [The Miscarriage Association](#), which provides support and information to those affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy and offers a pregnancy loss helpline
- [Sands](#), which provides support to anyone who has been affected by stillbirth or neonatal death

- [Tommy's](#), a charity that carries out research and supports those who have lost babies
- the [Mariposa Trust](#), a charity that provides support to those affected by baby loss and bereavement
- [Petals](#), a charity providing counselling to parents bereaved after pregnancy loss, including TFMR
- [Antenatal Results and Choices \(ARC\)](#), a charity providing support to those who decide to terminate a pregnancy for medical reasons
- the [Dad Still Standing](#) podcast, in which two fathers share their experiences of baby loss and provide advice and guidance to those who reach out to them
- the [Time to Talk TFMR](#) podcast, which deals sensitively with all aspects of TFMR and
- [Mind](#), which provides support and information to those experiencing mental health issues for any reason.

Returning to Work

Your line manager will keep in touch with you during any period of leave after pregnancy loss to discuss:

- what information, if any, you want to share with colleagues before you return to work and how that information should be provided
- any additional support you need to return to work, such as a phased return/temporary changes to your duties, hours or location of work/a period of homeworking/additional breaks and
- any adjustments recommended by a health and safety risk assessment.

Your line manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss these issues before your return to work if you would find that useful.

Your line manager will also have regular meetings with you after your return to work so that we can continue to provide adequate support.

Rights of Partners and Fathers/Parents

We recognise that the loss of a baby is a distressing experience for both parents. Therefore, an employee whose partner has a miscarriage, stillbirth or TFMR, or the father or parent of the baby who has passed away, may also need support or be eligible for time off.

The sources of practical and emotional support listed above are also open to fathers and partners and we encourage employees to access these. The Miscarriage Association has published guidance [Partners Too](#), which they may find helpful. They should discuss any additional support that they need with their line manager.

The right to time off for partners and fathers/parents depends on how long the pregnancy lasted.

Miscarriage

Employees can take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off, also known as time off for dependents, to provide assistance if their spouse or civil partner falls ill. Employees should tell us the reason for their absence as soon as possible and say how long they expect to be off work.

Stillbirth

Employees can take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off, also known as time off for dependents, to provide assistance if their spouse or civil partner falls ill. Employees should tell us the reason for their absence as soon as possible and say how long they expect to be off work. Further details are set out in our time off for dependant's policy.

In addition to unpaid time off, the partner of the individual who has a stillbirth, or the father/parent of the baby who has passed away, may be eligible for:

- either one- or two-weeks' statutory paternity leave and pay further information is set out in our paternity leave policy
- up to two weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave and pay, which can be taken as two separate weeks or a single period of leave further information is set out in our parental bereavement leave policy and
- 5 days paid leave under our compassionate leave policy.

TFMR

Employees can take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off, also known as time off for dependents, to provide assistance if their spouse or civil partner falls ill. Employees should tell us the reason for their absence as soon as possible and say how long they expect to be off work. Further details are set out in our time off for dependant's policy.

Under our compassionate leave policy, employees are also entitled to 5 days paid leave. Further information about how to request compassionate leave is contained in the compassionate leave policy.

A TFMR after 24 weeks must be registered as a stillbirth and the right to take paternity leave applies in these circumstances.

The role of other Employees

If a colleague is experiencing a miscarriage while they are at work, employees should respond sympathetically and supportively.

Practical steps that you can take include:

- ensuring that they have privacy and access to a toilet
- providing a wrap or covering if they are bleeding heavily
- arranging transport home or to a hospital as appropriate (including calling an ambulance if this is necessary and arranging for someone to accompany them)
- calling their partner or a friend to notify them of the situation, if this is what they want and
- reassuring them not to worry about work and that arrangements to cover their work will be made.

We recognise that an employee whose partner is having a miscarriage or stillbirth may need to leave work at short notice and arrangements will be made to accommodate this.

If a colleague has chosen to share information about a miscarriage or stillbirth, when they return to work employees should offer them sympathy and support and acknowledge their loss. The Miscarriage Association has published [Supporting someone you know](#), which contains guidance on how to talk sensitively about miscarriage in the workplace.

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Time off for Dependants Policy & Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy takes the following approach to emergency situations involving employees' dependants. The policy explains the right to take time off to manage unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

Circumstances in which Right to Time off for Dependants Applies

Irrespective of your length of service, and whether you are part time or full time, you can take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to take necessary action:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for an ill or injured dependant
- in consequence of the death of a dependant
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant; and
- to deal with an incident that involves their child and occurs unexpectedly while the child is at school/school/another educational establishment.

A dependant is:

- a spouse
- a civil partner
- a child
- a parent
- a person who lives with you other than as your employee, tenant, lodger or boarder
- any other person who would reasonably rely on you for assistance if they fell ill or was injured or assaulted, or who would rely on you to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury or
- in relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependant, any other person who reasonably relies on you to make arrangements for the provision of care.

What you should do if you need Time off for Dependants

If you need to take time off for dependants, you should contact your line manager at the earliest opportunity. If you become aware of an emergency situation while at work, you should immediately speak to your line manager about leaving work early. You should explain:

- the reason for the absence and
- how long you expect to be absent from work.

If your line manager is unavailable, you must speak to an equivalent or more senior manager.

If you are unable to contact with a line manager or suitable alternative person before taking time off for dependants, you should contact your line manager as soon as possible.

You must inform your line manager as soon as possible of any change in the anticipated date of your return to work.

Pay

There is no statutory entitlement to receive pay while taking time off for dependants. Therefore, we do not pay you for any time off for dependants.

How much Time off can be Taken?

The right to time off for dependants will, in most cases, be one or two days. You must actively seek alternative longer-term arrangements for the care of a dependant as soon as possible after the emergency occurs. If you are unable to make alternative arrangements, you must contact your line manager and explain why further absence is required.

Other Types of Leave

Time off under this policy is intended to be for you to deal with emergency situations involving dependants. Once the immediate emergency has been taken care of, you are expected to return to work or, if further time off is necessary, request to take it as annual leave under our holiday policy.

We have a separate policy on compassionate leave, which is to help you to come to terms with the death of a loved one, a serious illness or injury involving a loved one, or serious personal relationship problems.

Should you find yourself dealing with the loss of a child, you should refer to the Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.

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Unauthorised Absence Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees to give their best.

Having a culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive is core to everything that we strive to achieve and key to the creation of a positive organisational environment. CDC is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees, we wish to offer supportive and effective management of unexpected absence and would emphasise the importance of always contacting your employer.

Cotswold District Council aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health or some other reason.

CDC will always treat employees fairly and sensitively during times of sickness and ill health, it must also pay due regard to its operational needs. If an employee is persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden on the employee's colleagues.

By implementing this policy, CDC aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its operational needs and the genuine need of employees to take time off work. However, it should be noted that all absences from work need to be authorised.

This policy on unauthorised absence applies to all employees. It applies if an employee fails to comply with CDC's sickness absence reporting procedure (or provide the necessary evidence within the required time period), fails to attend work or return from holiday, or is absent from work for any other reason without notification and/or agreement.

If an employee is absent from work without good cause and/or fails properly and effectively to notify CDC of their absence, this may be treated as a serious disciplinary offence, potentially constituting gross misconduct. ([add hyperlink to policy to finished document](#))

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the management.

Action on First Day of Absence

On the first day of the employee's absence, their line manager will attempt to contact them, making a note of the means used and keeping a record of the time. If the employee does not answer the telephone, the manager will attempt to leave a voicemail asking them to return the call. The manager can also try any other methods to contact the employee, including text message to a private mobile phone, if available.

If the manager is unable to contact the employee, they may attempt to contact the employee's next of kin or listed emergency contact.

Action on Second Day of Absence

On the second day of absence, if nothing has been heard from the employee and the manager has again been unable to contact them and has not received a satisfactory explanation from the employee's next of kin or emergency contact, the manager will write to or email the employee detailing their absence and the attempts to make contact them.

The letter will say that no satisfactory explanation for the absence has been received and will require that the employee make contact with the manager as soon as possible, but no later than three days after the date of the letter (or email). The letter (or email, with the relevant read receipt notification) will warn the employee that, if they fail to make contact by the deadline, the organisation may take serious disciplinary action.

Further Action after Second Day of Absence

If, following the deadline, the employee has still not contacted their manager, the manager will send the employee a letter inviting them to attend a disciplinary hearing to explain their absence. The letter should warn the employee that the lack of an adequate explanation could result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Disciplinary Action

If the manager contacts the employee and/or the employee returns to work, a further investigation may be carried out into the reasons for their absence and their lack of contact with CDC.

If the employee can give an adequate explanation for their absence and lack of contact, the manager can conduct a return-to-work interview. If the employee is unable to provide an adequate explanation for their absence and lack of contact, CDC will treat the absence and the failure to follow the reporting procedure as disciplinary matters.

If the employee claims to have been sick (to the extent that this also precluded contacting CDC), the manager can ask for reasonable evidence of this, this may be in the form of a fit note for instance. If the employee is unable to provide sufficient evidence, CDC may consider whether the claimed sickness absence was genuine.

If the manager considers the employee's failure to attend work to be potential gross misconduct, CDC will conduct any disciplinary hearing in accordance with its disciplinary procedure- [hyperlink?](#)

Unauthorised Annual Leave

If an employee has been refused a request for annual leave but declares that they intend to take the time off anyway, the employee's manager should write to or email the employee instructing them to attend work. The letter should confirm that:

- the leave request (for the specific dates) was legitimately declined, with the reason given
- the employee is expected to attend work as usual and
- failure to do so will be unauthorised absence, be unpaid and may result in disciplinary action, which could result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

The letter should invite the employee to reconsider their expressed intention to be absent.

If, having sent this letter (or email), the employee fails to attend work, the manager should treat the absence as unauthorised. If an employee has been refused a request for annual leave and fails to attend

work (either by saying that they are sick or by making no contact), CDC will investigate this as a potential unauthorised absence. Should the employee have been prevented from contacting work due to serious circumstances, this should be made known at the earliest convenience.

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Agenda Item 11



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2023
Subject	COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2023-24 QUARTER ONE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Gemma Moreing, Business Intelligence & Performance Lead Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation(s)	<i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i> <i>1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2023-24 Q1.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver the highest standard of service ● Respond to the climate crisis ● Provide socially rented homes ● Make our local plan green to the core ● Support health and wellbeing ● Enable a vibrant economy
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** A high-level commissioning statement was approved by Cabinet in January 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica must ensure that it provides the necessary information to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. In essence, Publica as contracting agent for the Council must ensure that the Council has sufficient information to challenge the performance of services provided by Publica and others. A similar approach is taken in relation to financial performance data, which will be presented to the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Finance Officer; and where it will be for the Chief Finance Officer to advise in terms of assurance.
- 1.2** The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 2.1** The Council adopted the Corporate Plan 2020-24 ('the Plan') in September 2020, A spring 2022 'refresh' of the Plan was completed and approved by Council at its meeting in May 2022. The refresh sought to reflect key achievements since the introduction of the Plan and clarify the priorities over the remaining period of the Plan (to April 2024).
- 2.2** Progress on actions in the Corporate Plan for Q1 include:
- A welcome letter & newsletter has been emailed to new and returning Town & Parish councillors. Virtual social media training is booked for August with the next face to face forums to be held in September.
 - The main works are finished on the new footpath cycle link to Neigh Bridge in the Cotswold Water Park and discussions are underway to deliver cycle stands in Fairford, Lechlade and South Cerney. A new section of bridleway has been commissioned under Wildmoor Lane and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) have requested Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for the Spine Road crossing.
 - Meetings are scheduled with West Oxfordshire Council and Thames Water to discuss flood mitigation strategies. A new Lead Flood Officer has been recruited by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) and they will start in July. GRCC have organised two Countywide Flood Forums to be held in Q2.
 - Following budget allocation for engagement support for the public engagement plan surrounding carbon reduction and climate change, the exact nature of the role is being finalised with senior officers and members before going out to recruit.
 - A proposal for Solar PV on Trinity Road Council offices went to Cabinet on 17 July and then on to Full Council for approval of funding.
 - Works have started on creating the community and wildlife sanctuary at Chesterton Cemetery.



- The Collaboration Agreement entered into by the Council and Bromford Housing to deliver the Down Ampney housing development has been delayed due to drainage concerns, but progress is now underway with a planning application due to be submitted in September.
- Meetings have been arranged with social housing partners Oxplace and Cottsway in July to understand different models for the provision of affordable housing.
- A meeting held in June has resulted in a Sewage Summit Event being arranged in Q2 to discuss minimising the risks associated with flooding.
- Community Building projects including rural crime talks and Community Growing Schemes have taken place across the district along with Group Visits to various societies and clubs.
- The Cotswold Community Network membership has increased, and positive feedback has been received.
- Shortlisting of Safer Streets Cotswolds proposals has been completed. The next stage will be to visit the shortlisted areas. After the visits and more local engagement, the decision will be taken on which areas will receive the improvements to make them safer.
- Further events and classes have been well received as part of the Active Cotswold Action Plan. The partnership agreement with Mr Motivator will start in July.
- The Holiday Activity Food programme continues to be a success and GCC have suggested (not confirmed yet) that the Council has reached the highest percentage of Free School Meals (FSMs) children, then any other district
- Cotswold Chat Mental Health Support Programme will benefit from a £50k investment from the Strengthening Local Communities (SLC) funding secured last quarter following work with the Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP). The remaining funding (£99k) will be used to support families and young people.
- The Dementia Friendly Bourton Group has branched out successfully and is now known as Dementia Friendly North Cotswolds.
- The Changing Places Toilet Facilities are complete at Cotswold Farm Park. Abbey Grounds, Cirencester is almost complete. Birdland and Cotswold Country Park and Beach are in the planning and procurement stages and will be delivered early in 2024.
- Additional promotion for mental health activities and initiatives continued in Q1 through the Cotswold Community Network.
- The Council has taken the lead for the Rural Domestic Abuse Champions Network. The contract has been completed and started in June. Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) have started recruitment and the advert is now live. It is hoped that the new postholder will start in September 2023.



2.3 Off target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at Q1 include:

- **Develop and implement an Asset Management Strategy.**
Update: Discussions are underway with the Procurement Team to appoint a consultant to prepare the Asset Management Strategy
- **Develop support to owner-occupiers to invest in energy efficiency, retrofit and decarbonisation works.**
Update: A report was presented and approved at Cabinet on 17 July for decision to set up district wide owner occupier rooftop PV scheme.
- **Install EV charging points across the District and Provide electric vehicle charging points at all Council premises.**
Update: There have been significant delays due to the previous supplier and more recently the Distribution Network Operator SSE. Final installations under phase one should be installed in the coming weeks at Rissington Road Bourton on the Water and at Trinity Road Cirencester.
- **Complete an options appraisal of community energy generation, Support community-led and community-owned renewable energy projects, and Support neighbourhood-wide climate action.**
Update: Options to support this being considered as part of work to refine priorities over the next four-year term
- **Adopt and implement the ecological emergency action plan.**
Update: There has been some progress with the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) with a mitigation strategy for North Meadow in place so planning applications can be determined. A briefing note for HRA issues is being drafted and should be completed in August. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project is moving forward but the main issues arise from lack of government guidance and secondary legislation.
- **Deliver a sustainable transport strategy.**
Update: Recruitment to replace the Sustainable Transport Lead has not been successful. Following feedback from applicants that declined to further their application, options are being considered on how to move forward. These options will be costed and presented to the Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder by the end of August.
- **Develop an updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) to inform planning and investment in pitch-based facilities.**
Update: The final version of the updated PPS has been received and signed off by Sport England. The intent is to bring this to September Cabinet for approval and adoption.
- **Work with our partners to ensure our young people have the skills they need to secure employment in the district.**



Update: Cirencester College T level building now completed. Discussions being held with Cirencester College about linking with sustainable aviation businesses in the district in terms of skills and training. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding includes provision in Year 3 (2024/25) to support those furthest from the labour market.

- **Develop and implement an action plan to improve digital inclusion.**

Update: Work is progressing through partnership activity, although there is limited collective capacity to make headway. A headline report outlines eight recommendations to help tackle the digital divide and frames a range of questions revolving around next steps. This is supported by digital exclusion risk mapping, community asset mapping (what's out there already) and a 'what we know about closing the digital divide report. Focus on competing priorities, such as UKSPF and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) has slowed progress on this.

- 2.4 An overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex A and the Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex B.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

3.1 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (33.93% against a target of 23%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected (29.81% against a target of 25%)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.85 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.26% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (98% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90.1% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (100% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (84.21% against a target of 80%)
- Number of visits to the three leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (3090 memberships against a target of 2838 memberships and 128512 visits against a target of 125000)

3.2 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (29.63 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (12.02 days against a target of 4 days)



Q1 started with a backlog of work for new claims and change of circumstances cases. The team have worked hard to get this backlog more under control. However, a large number of applications from residents as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis continues to be received.

(Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events however remains well within the target of 5 days.)

The Resolution: To improve performance, investigations were made into the automation capability. On speaking with other councils, who were able to achieve 70% of processing automation as opposed to the 40-45% that the service was achieving, it became apparent that the same capability was possible, but processes had to change to maximise on the capabilities of the system. Improved automation means that the team will have more capacity to both clear any backlogs and prevent their recurrence.

This way of working will continue to be tested and monitored but week-by-week, the processing stats are reducing. By being up to date, the service will be able to stay on top of the processing stats and keep reducing them.

July's figures show that Council Tax New Claims are being processed in 19.68 days against the target of 20 days and Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance are being processed in 7.59 days against a target of 4 days.

At the time of writing, there are 34 outstanding cases for Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance, the oldest of which is 3 days old. There is one Council Tax New Claim that is one day old (10 August 2023).

Publica remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and is actively investing in the development and implementation of automation and self-serve options for customers. By providing accessible and efficient self-help tools, customers can address their queries and concerns independently, leading to a decrease in the need for repeated interactions with services. Publica will continue to monitor, assess, and report on the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

Missed Bins per 100,000 (88 against a target of 80)

The number of missed bins per 100,000 increased from 75 in Q4 to 88 in Q1. This is above target and higher than both last quarter and this time last year. This has been attributed to issues with one of the crews not completing their rounds for garden waste. This has now been rectified.

The Resolution: Additional training with crews and supervisors to bring the misses down. Performance will be continuously under review by the Contract Monitoring Team.

Percentage of official Land Charges searches completed within 10 days (86% against a target of 90%)

The Council's performance has improved since last quarter and dramatically since last year. Although it is still below target.



The Resolution: A monthly performance meeting has now been set up with the Assistant Director responsible for most of the answering teams, where issues will be discussed to ensure the process runs efficiently and teams where delays are occurring can be identified and action taken to ensure targets are met going forward. Tweaks to the current escalation process, has improved responses times so reducing delays and sessions lead by the Land Charges Team Leader has raised the awareness of the importance of responding to requests within the timescales set.

The service would benefit from all searchable records being digitised and standard procedures being in place for system use. This would in turn streamline searches. Further training and discussions with internal consultees are planned to ensure good practice.

Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (11 against a target of 25)

Eleven affordable rent properties have been delivered in Cotswold at Upper Rissington and South Cerney against a forecast of 68. Having contacted one of the Registered Providers (RPs), the service report that 17 of the forecast properties for Q1, should have been forecast for Q1 2024-25.

The Resolution: Following changes within the team, the Project Specialist for Strategic Housing is contacting the Registered Providers (RPs) to develop relationships and to assess why those properties forecast have not been completed. Ultimately the Developers are responsible for delivering completed properties and the Strategic Housing Project Specialist will contact the RPs about the schemes that are currently off track to find out when they will be delivered in addition to the properties forecast for the rest of the year.

The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years.

- 3.3 A full report is attached at Annex C and should be looked at in conjunction with this report.
- 3.4 As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where benchmarking data is not currently available or outdated, this is noted, and further investigations will be undertaken to look at options.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 September 2023; and any comments from the Committee will be recorded and shared with relevant Cabinet Members.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS



6.1 None specifically because of this report. However, a failure to meet statutory deadlines or standards in some services may expose the Council to legal challenge and/or financial liability.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 Contained in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 None.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Contained in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

(END)

Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 Update: Progress by end of Q1 2023-2024

Green	On target
Amber	Off target but action being taken to ensure delivery (where this results in a reviewed target date, this is made clear in the table)
Red	Off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation
Complete	Action completed
Cancelled	Superseded/cancelled
On Hold	Action on hold

Deliver the highest standard of services

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Ref.	Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating	Comment for Q1
SS1	Ensure that road and street cleaning across the district is undertaken proactively and to a high standard, as part of the 'Clean and Green Cotswolds' initiative.	Maintain verges	November 2020	April 2024	Bill Oddy/Scott Williams	Joe Harris	On Target	Linked to Clean & Green
SS2		Improve road sweeping regimes	November 2020	April 2024	Bill Oddy/Scott Williams	Joe Harris	Complete	
SS3		Replace worn and damaged street nameplates	September 2020	167 replaced by April '22 Approx. 120 scheduled for replacement summer/autumn 2022	Claire Locke/Alfred Tolley	Joe Harris	Complete	A new project plan for street signs, setting out number, location, cost and timescales is being prepared for the 2023/24 roll out.
SS4		Keep areas of open space tidy	April 2021	April 2024	Andy Barge/Scott Williams	Joe Harris	On Target	Linked to Clean & Green
SS5	Deliver an excellent Town and Parish Council engagement programme	Maintain contact with all town and parish councils through a regular newsletter	October 2020	Achieved	Angela Claridge	Joe Harris	Complete	
SS6		Deliver programme of engagement for town and parish councils	October 2021	April 2024	Angela Claridge	Joe Harris	On Target	Welcome letter & newsletter emailed to new and returning Town & Parish councillors June 2023. Virtual social media training booked 10.08.2023 with next face to face forums in September.
SS7	Roll out cashless car parking to our car parks across the district, including an exemplar car park at Bourton on the Water	Introduce cashless parking in all car parks	July 2020	March 2023	Frank Wilson/ David Stanley	Tony Dale	Complete	
SS8		Determine the feasibility of 'pay on exit' parking, and implement if appropriate	March 2021	May 2022	Jon Dearing/Maria Wheatley	Tony Dale	Complete	
SS9		Review charging periods at all car parks	March 2021	April 2022	Jon Dearing/Maria Wheatley	Tony Dale	Complete	
SS10		Make the Whiteway car park operational	January 2020	Achieved	Jon Dearing/Maria Wheatley	Tony Dale	Complete	
SS11		Deliver Improvements to Rissington Road Car Park, Bourton on the Water	November 2022	March 2023	Claire Locke/Andrew Dike	Tony Dale	Complete	
SS12	Develop, implement and deliver a	Produce a strategy on a page	November 2021	Achieved	Andy Barge/Philippa Lowe	Juliet Layton	Complete	
SS13		Produce Actions Plans for each of the 4 Strategic Elements, holding stakeholder engagement as appropriate.	November 2021	April 2022	Andy Barge/Philippa Lowe	Juliet Layton	Complete	

SS14	Develop, implement and deliver a strategy for the Cotswold Water Park	Deliver on funded projects	November 2021	March 2023	Andy Barge/Philippa Lowe	Juliet Layton	On Target	The new foot/cycle path Neigh Bridge - whilst works were finished there are issues around detail of the works which are still be pursued with GCC in liaison with the Cotswold Lakes Trust. - Meeting held with contractors to discuss installation works and progress against agreed delivery of 46 new cycle stands in Fairford, Lechlade and South Cerney. Next meeting with contractors in 4 weeks. A new section of bridleway under Wildmoor Lane is commissioned and being delivered by GCC Rights of Way team. Site meeting held, they know what is required and have done specification and land is being dedicated. - Spine Road Crossing: GCC has made a request for CIL funding . Need to establish if it is just a reinvigoration of work already done. Efforts by Officers are being made to maintain the momentum in terms of the desire to deliver
SS15	Establish financial resilience to enable investment in our priorities	Adopt and implement a clear financial strategy that reflects the changing economy and our identified needs	September 2020	Refreshed annually	David Stanley	Mike Every	On Target	
SS16		Adopt and implement recovery investment strategy	September 2020	Refreshed annually	David Stanley	Mike Every/Tony Dale	Cancelled	
SS17		Develop and implement an asset management strategy	March 2021	December 2022	David Stanley/Claire Locke	Mike Every	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	David Stanley liaising with procurement team on appointment of consultant to prepare Asset Mgt Strategy
SS18	Create maximised flood protection measures for residential and commercial properties	Provide advice and guidance Promote and deliver flood mitigation measures, where appropriate	September 2020	April 2024	Phil Martin/Laurence King	Lisa Spivey	On Target	A meeting between the Portfolio holders at CDC and WODC is in the process of being arranged to share knowledge around the workshops that have been held with TW, where their SWT capacity and ability to deal with current and future demands have been discussed and their data analysed. An initial meeting with Thames Water has been set up for the 7th July.
SS19		Roll out the Cotswold Flood Warden Programme	November 2021	November 2022 for the initial pilot year.	Robert Weaver	Lisa Spivey	On Target	Progress has been limited in quarter 1, due to the lead officer leaving GRCC. The post was advertised, and filled in late June, with the new officer due to start on 24 July. GRCC have also organised two Countywide Flood Forums, which take place on 10 July and 2 August.
SS20	Provide a trusted, inclusive and transparent planning service	Restructure our team to ensure resilience	September 2020	Achieved	Frank Wilson	Juliet Layton	Complete	
SS21		Relaunch our pre-application service	September 2020	June 2022	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	Complete	
SS22		Improve communication with residents	January 2021	April 2024	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target	No Change
SS23		Develop an ICT enabled proactive approach to planning enforcement	April 2021	April 2024	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target	No Change
SS24		Maximise external funding opportunities	December 2020	April 2024	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	Complete	
SS25	Provide an efficient and competitive building standards service	Compare local markets	March 2021	Monthly, to understand market share	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target	No Change
SS26		Maximise opportunities for income generation	April 2021	Ongoing, as an iterative review process.	Charlie Jackson/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target	No Change
SS27	Provide modern and clean public toilets	Reviewing our estate	April 2022	September 2022	Jon Dearing/Mandy Fathers	Mike Every	Complete	
SS28		Explore opportunities for 'comfort partnerships'	April 2021	September 2022	Jon Dearing/Mandy Fathers	Mike Every	Complete	
SS29		Develop a strategy for the provision of public toilets	April 2022	September 2022	David Stanley/Jon Dearing/Susan Hughes	Mike Every	Superseded	
SS30	Review how the Council commissions its Legal Services	Complete the review of legal services	March 2022	May 2022	David Stanley	Joe Harris	Complete	
SS31		Implement Council decision, following review	May 2022	April 2023	David Stanley	Joe Harris	On Target	

Responding to the climate crisis

Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating	
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CC1	Tackle the climate crisis at home	Develop support to owner-occupiers to invest in energy efficiency, retrofit and decarbonisation works	September 2021	March 2023	Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Report taken to Cabinet on 17th July for decision to set up district wide owner occupier rooftop PV scheme
CC2	Develop, facilitate and deliver an exemplar public engagement programme in relation to carbon reduction and climate change	Develop a public engagement campaign, building on training delivered to the communications team, councillors and the Local Plan Issues and Options engagement.	April 2022	April 2024	Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	On Target	Discussions have progressed regarding alternative roles that the funded post could undertake. Focus is on retrofit. Now being finalised in discussion with senior officers and members before recruitment commences..
CC3		Promote the opportunity to invest in the Cotswold Climate Investment, CMI, launched in partnership with Abundance Investment	April 2022	June 2022	David Stanley/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Complete	
CC4		Work with partners to establish a Climate Action Network in the District, to support locally driven initiatives	May 2022	April 2024	Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	On Target	
CC5		Prepare and agree an EV Charging Point Delivery Plan	October 2020	Achieved	Rob Weaver Claire Locke	Mike McKeown	Complete	A refreshed plan for next stage delivery will now be developed.
CC6		Install EV charging points across the District	October 2020	Phase 1 Completion Autumn 2022 Phase 2 Costings Spring 2022, Rollout Winter 2022	Rob Weaver Claire Locke	Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Significant delays due to previous supplier and more recently the Distribution Network Operator SSE. Final installations under phase one should be installed in the coming weeks at Rissington Road Bourton on the Water and at Trinity Road Cirencester
CC7		Help businesses embed climate change objectives within their operations	September 2020	April 2024 Race to Zero event at Growth Hub in May 2022	Claire Locke/Paul James/CCF	Mike McKeown/Tony Dale	On Target	
CC8	Reduce carbon emissions from our own operations	Work with Ubico to adopt ultra-low emission vehicle technology	March 2021	April 2024	Rob Weaver Scott Williams/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike Evely/Mike McKeown	On Target	Vehicle technology is not yet viable for rural district use. Situation is being kept under review.
CC9		Improve energy efficiency of council premises	March 2021	Phase 1 complete - higher efficiency gas boilers installed at Trinity Rd, LED lighting completed at Moreton Area Centre. Due December 2023	Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike Evely/Mike McKeown	On Target	Proposal for Solar PV on Trinity Road Council offices taken to Cabinet on 17th July and then on to Full Council for approval of funding.
CC10		Secure energy-efficient, 100% green energy for all Council premises, using renewable energy where possible	March 2021	Achieved	Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike Evely/Mike McKeown	Complete	
CC11		Complete Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme at our Leisure centres	March 2021	Achieved	Claire Locke/Chris Crookall Fallon	Mike McKeown/Paul Hodgkinson	Complete	
CC12		Provide electric vehicle charging points at all Council premises	September 2020	Phase 1 completion due autumn 2022 April 2024	Claire Locke	Mike Evely/Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	See CC6
CC13	Achieve a reduction in carbon emissions for the district	Adopt our climate change strategy	September 2020	September 2020	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Complete	
CC14		Deliver our climate change action plan	September 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	

CC15	Increase renewable energy generation within the district	Complete an options appraisal of community energy generation	September 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Off Target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation	Options to support this being considered as part of work to refine priorities over the next four year term
CC16		Secure investment in renewable energy such as photovoltaic farms and electricity generation from our own estate and in partnership with others	April 2024	Investment options considered at Council July 2022	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Cancelled	
CC17		Support community-led and community-owned renewable energy projects	September 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	On Target	As for CC15
CC18		Support neighbourhood-wide climate action	September 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver Claire Locke/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	As for CC15
CC19	Take a leadership role on the ecological emergency and nature recovery in the Cotswolds	Adopt and implement the ecological emergency action plan	July 2020	Plan approved July 2020 Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan published February 2022	Rob Weaver Jon Dearing/Sophia Price	Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Some progress on HRA - mitigation strategy for North Meadow in place so planning applications can be determined. Briefing note on HRA issues across Publica in draft, out for comment at present. Should be completed in August. BNG project moving forward, but main issue is the lack of govt guidance and secondary legislation.
CC20		Create a community and wildlife sanctuary at Chesterton Cemetery	December 2021	March 2023	Claire Locke/Andrew Turner	Mike Evemy	On Target	Works have started although initially delayed due to weather. Some planting is seasonal so the full project won't be completed for sometime.
CC21	Reduce the carbon footprint of our waste and recycling service	Identify the true carbon footprint of our waste and recycling service	April 2022	March 2023	Bill Oddy/Scott Williams	Mike Evemy	On Target	Ongoing
CC22		Consider changes to the waste and recycling service	April 2022	March 2023	Bill Oddy/Scott Williams	Mike Evemy	On Target	Ongoing

Providing socially rented homes

	Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating	
SH1	Deliver social rented and affordable rented accommodation across the district	Deliver a Council led, carbon neutral social housing scheme on the Down Ampney site	January 2022	June 2023	Rob Weaver/Claire Locke/Andrew Turner	Joe Harris	On Target	Delays due to drainage concerns however now progressing with Planning application due to be submitted in September
SH2		Progress a Council led, carbon neutral social housing on Council owned sites in Kemble and/or Southrop	October 2022	March 2024	Rob Weaver/Claire Locke/Andrew Turner	Joe Harris	Cancelled	
SH3		Explore direct delivery options Work with partners to increase the supply of social rented accommodation Investigate the feasibility of setting up a housing company	September 2020	April 2024	Charlie Jackson/ Claire Locke	Joe Harris	On Target	Meetings held with Oxplace and Cottsway housing in July to start to understand different models for providing additionality. Further meetings to be arranged with portfolio holders. Draft job spec for new Housing Strategy role being reviewed and considered as wider review of Planning & Sustainability Team.
SH4	Provide more affordable housing with the emphasis on social rented accommodation	Adopt an affordable housing delivery strategy that sets out clear aims and objectives	June 2020	Achieved	Rob Weaver Claire Locke	Joe Harris	Complete	
SH5	Embed a Housing First approach to tackling homelessness	Maximise the opportunities of the 'housing first' model	July 2020	April 2024	Jon Dearing/Caroline Clissold	Joe Harris	On Target	The initial Support Provider, Aspire have now withdrawn from the project. This element has now been picked up by P3 ensuring the continuation and longevity of the scheme.
SH6		Acquire the property approved in July 2020, and put this to use	July 2020	Achieved	Jon Dearing/Caroline Clissold	Joe Harris	Complete	

SH7		Participate in a joint Gloucestershire bid for additional government funding	August 2020	Achieved	Jon Dearing/Caroline Clissold	Joe Harris	Complete	
SH8		Examine our existing assets and identify opportunities for housing delivery	September 2020	Achieved	Rob Weaver Claire Locke	Joe Harris	Complete	
SH9	Work with housing providers to improve the affordability and sustainability of developments across the district	Identify opportunities to acquire properties for homeless accommodation	July 2020	April 2024	Claire Locke	Joe Harris	On Target	
SH10		Identify and consider sites for delivery of affordable housing	July 2020	April 2024	Charlie Jackson	Joe Harris	On Target	
SH11		Explore modern methods of construction in the context of our rural setting	April 2021	First site (Stockwells, Moreton-Marsh) approved December 2021	Charlie Jackson	Joe Harris	On Target	
SH12		Support young people through a 'rent to buy' scheme	April 2021	April 2024	Jon Dearing	Joe Harris	Superseded	

Make our local plan green to the core

	Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating	
LPI	Develop an updated local plan that delivers our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure	Identify and allocate land for future housing and businesses.	July 2020	Submit in 2023; Examination 23/24; and adoption 23/24	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
LP2		Draft new policies and updating existing policies to give effect to new council strategies, such as the economic recovery strategy, the climate and ecological emergency action plans and the renewable energy strategy.			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
LP3		Explore the potential of natural capital and the Community Infrastructure Levy in relation to delivering natural resilience to mitigate or minimise the risks associated with flooding across the district			Phil Martin/Laurence King Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Lisa Spivey	On Target	A meeting was held 16th June to discuss arranging a sewage summit event in the autumn and a number of actions were agreed to progress this.
LP4		Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds			Charlie Jackson/James Brain Jon Dearing/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target	No Change
LP5	Develop a coordinated strategy for Cirencester town centre that	Deliver Cirencester town centre masterplan	2020/21	Framework masterplan has been commissioned and is due to be delivered during	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
LP6		Work with Cirencester Town Council to deliver Cirencester neighbourhood development plan			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
LP7		Enable appropriate changes of use			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	

LP8	responds positively to the changing nature of the high street	Identify sustainable transport options	2022; this will include community and stakeholder engagement	Charlie Jackson/Hannah Fountain	Juliet Layton	On Target	Sustainable Transport Lead Hannah Fountain has left the business. Vacancy was advertised by unfortunately recruitment at the end of July was unsuccessful with a limited number of applicants applying. Candidates that were identified as adequate to take forward to interview declined to progress their application, feeding back that reasons for this related to the salary offered and fixed term nature of the role. Recruitment is temporarily paused to reflect on feedback and review options to move forward. These include exploring secondment opportunities at Gloucestershire County Council, short term contractor use or reviewing the original job role/package initially advertised in order to attract a larger pool of candidates. Options to be costed and presented to Chief Exec and Portfolio
LP9	Create a programme of work that demonstrates our commitment to public consultation and engagement in the planning process	Update our local development scheme	August 2020	SCI updated November 2020; LDS updated on May 2021; Commonplace online consultation system procured November 2021	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	Complete
LP10		Update our statement of community involvement		Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	Complete	
LP11	Deliver a sustainable transport strategy	Promote sustainable methods of transport to reduce reliance on car usage for short journeys	To be confirmed in the publication of our local development scheme	April 2024 planning and implementation	Charlie Jackson/Hannah Fountain	Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery See LP8.
LP12		Work with Gloucestershire County Council to provide better sustainable transport routes and options	September 2020	April 2024 planning and implementation	Charlie Jackson/Hannah Fountain	Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery See LP8.
LP13		Develop a Sustainable Transport Strategy	November 2020	2023, as part of the Local Plan Submission	Charlie Jackson/Hannah Fountain	Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery See LP8.

Support health and wellbeing

	Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating
HW1		Review and revise our community grants scheme to focus on our priorities	May 2020	Agreed September 2020 Launched February 2021	Rob Weaver Andy Barge/Joseph Walker/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey	Complete
HW2		Continue to support, develop and communicate the Crowdfund Cotswold Spacehive programme.	September 2020	Programme launched February 2021	Rob Weaver Andy Barge/Joseph Walker/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey	On Target

HW3

Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing goals

HW4

<p>Coordinate an asset based community development approach</p>	<p>September 2020</p>	<p>April 2024</p>	<p>Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright</p>	<p>Lisa Spivey</p>	<p>On Target</p>	<p>Community Building - held Community Afternoon Tea for the CHEQS villages (Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop, Eastleach, Quenington and Southrop) to which we also invited the local PCSF. 20 people came along and were pleased to see a police officer to discuss any concerns they have with rural crime. Everyone interacted well and connected with people they didn't know, some had lived in the village more than 15 years and didn't know each other. We went a way with some great idea for the village that we will follow up with residents. - Continued work on 'Grow Your Own' scheme and Community Growing Schemes, sourced potential partners and researched established schemes for ideas. Visited Down to Earth Stroud who then agreed to supply volunteers and teachers - connected them with 3 potential localities for Community Growing Scheme. - Requested basic 6 weeks course for growing own food to be funded by Cirencester College Adult Education, which has now been agreed and aiming for a September start. - Visit to Roots and Seeds organised and Glos Wildlife trust meeting to discuss GYO/CGS plans and ideas to get them on board. - started more community engagement/door knocking in Sherborne and tour of the estate. GROUP VISITS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton Senior Citizen Club talk about CB. • Attended Getting Connected final session in Bourton. • Dementia café in Stow to discuss role as a CB. • Visited the GRCC Wellbeing café in Morton and viewed community allotment. • Attended the GRCC wellbeing café in Stow and spoke to Pets as Therapy. • Attended Tetbury Friendship café to deliver chair workout, discussed Digital Inclusion course possibly in the autumn. - Thursday night Table Tennis group - Northleach - club set up for teenagers by some enthusiastic Mums - Wake and Shake morning sessions in June at the primary school in Northleach - GP connections, social prescribers - giving support for some patients. - Engaged with a resident to set up a Womens Circle in Northleach - Encourage Northleach Facebook plant swap - Growth and development of One Moreton group - SUMMER GO WILD EVENT</p>
<p>Host regular community forums with community groups and community leaders</p>	<p>July 2020</p>	<p>April 2024</p>	<p>Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright</p>	<p>Lisa Spivey/Claire Bloomer</p>	<p>On Target</p>	<p>Cotswold Community Network • Facilitated, organised and chaired CCN group/meetings, distributed prompt and relevant communications, made introductions for partnership working, promoted community activity and opportunities and shared details about CDC Community Wellbeing activity. Actively increased the membership number to 114 individuals and over 60 organisations. • New Logo and design of CCN comms produced. • Organised Guest speakers to attend CCN including Barnwood Trust, National Trust, Recovery College, Cirencester community development team and Fear-Less. and linked them in to other organisations for collaborative work in the community on a variety of projects - several 'thank you' emails have been sent and excellent feedback about the CCN</p>

HW5

	Continue to raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the fear of crime and ensure residents know how, and where, to get support	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey/Claire Bloomer	On Target	<p>Safer Streets Funding</p> <p>Shortlisting of Safer Streets Cotswolds proposals has been completed. The next stage will be to visit the shortlisted areas. After the visits and more local engagement, we will decide which areas will receive the improvements to make them safer. We have already supported one proposal, which will install several CCTV cameras in the North of the district in Weston Sub-Edge. The area has seen an increase in crime recently and the additional cameras will also be useful for the police to monitor who is coming in and out of the district. The police will have access to the cameras.</p> <p>The first of three community events has taken place on 31st May in Cirencester, St Michael's park. Colleagues from Trading standards, Bromford housing, GDASS, GRCC, Town and Parish councils, Clean and Green Team, Early Help, The Churn and other local organisations attended the event. World Jungle provided workshops on circus skills, drumming, giant bubbles, graffiti, crafts etc. There was a climbing wall, Sportily offered mini sports games and activities and Bloodhound engineering workshops. Parents/family members were engaged whilst they were in queues for activities about the community safety survey that the CSP has launched, its purpose and asked approx. 40 people to complete it via their mobiles. Discussion around safer streets and the results from the public consultation. Over 100 families joined the event. Over 40 adults agreed to complete the survey. Anecdotally families were thoroughly engaged in the activities, very happy to have a free event during half term and were generally happy with where they lived. Some were able to compare with other places they had lived such as Birmingham and London which they felt were much less safe. Deputy PCC Nick Evans and his daughter joined the event. Partner agencies felt that the event was very helpful and successful. Cirencester Town Council have approached us since the event about running a joint event in 2024 combining community health and wellbeing agendas. A meeting has been arranged to explore this.</p> <p>The review of CSP priorities will be done in Q2.</p> <p>We have launched a community safety survey which will be live until End of September 23 https://cotswold.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ab7a7e62881dc95c541265556&id=1cd3e8a14f8e=4841ad6a32</p>
HW6	Complete a review of our leisure services	July 2020	May 2022	Rob Weaver / Scott Williams	Paul Hodgkinson	Complete	
HW7	Deliver the Council's Leisure strategy.	November 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver / Scott Williams	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	Captured in Active Cotswolds Programme
HW8	Deliver capital programme to replace fitness equipment across the Leisure estate	March 2022	September 2022	Bill Oddy/Stuart Wilson	Paul Hodgkinson	Complete	
HW9	Undertake a Leisure and Culture management options appraisal to inform decision on future service delivery, and implement the agreed model(s).	May 2022	July 2023	Bill Oddy/Scott Williams	Paul Hodgkinson	Complete	
HW10	Develop a updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) to inform planning and investment in pitch-based facilities	February 2022	December 2022	Scott Williams/Rachel Biles	Paul Hodgkinson	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Final version received and signed off by Sport England, aiming to bring to September's Cabinet meeting for approval and adoption.

HW11	Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages	Improve referrals into physical activity and fitness based programmes, both in our Leisure Centres but also in the community.	February 2023	April 2024	Andy Barge/Rachel Biles/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	<p>Updates are captured as well in Active Cotswold Action Plan.</p> <p>Currently exploring additional resource in form of an instructor who can deliver more regular classes to existing groups. WE have found that the easiest way of getting people to move more is to go where they are already meeting for other activities. At the moment we only have capacity to deliver taster sessions. Groups would be keen for the classes to continue but we would need more manpower to enable this.</p> <p>Partnership agreement with Motivator will start in July- we will have a district membership to access his Motivation Club online content. Currently working on an access scheme.</p> <p>Active Cotswold event planned for 1st October at Bingham hall in Cirencester. Mr Motivator will attend the event as headliner. The event will also bring together local instructors, clubs and specific schemes like Falls prevention and will offer taster sessions on the day.</p> <p>Other programs in place: WELLBEING WALKS COMMUNITY FIT KIT CHAIR EXERCISE GROUPS YOU CAN MOVE WALKING SPORTS- WALKING NETBALL WALKING FOOTBALL LIFE CARDS FI DATABASE EXERCISE REFERRALS</p>
HW12		Use targeted initiatives to tackle both childhood poverty and food poverty in the district, so more children and vulnerable families have access to nutritious food	September 2020	Holiday food scheme from Summer 2021, April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Claire Bloomer	On Target	<p>Have run another successful HAF programme at Easter and GCC have suggested (not confirmed yet) that we have hit the highest percentage of FSM's children, than any other district at 72% - our target is 50%. Making great inroads to increasing engagement with schools, in partnership with Bloodhound Cots Community Connectors, also reaching out to more partner organisations, to promote the HAF project to their clients.</p> <p>Cotswold Food Network</p> <p>Continued to work and meet with a small working group to develop our thinking about a possible Food Network for the district. Have supported Feeding Glos with their district launch in June where we have presented on Community Wellbeing and Climate Action work (Jacqui Wright and Chris Crookall-Fallon). Attendees have considered a possible network and we will take all the feedback and consider next steps in July. Link have been made with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West who will support us with the 'row your own' scheme (see update above).</p>
HW13	Improve equal access to quality services across the district	Work with relevant services and organisations to provide more – and better – quality healthcare services	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	<p>We have worked with the ILP on a plan to spend the SLC funding that we have received last Q (£149k). It has been decided to support the Cotswold Chat mental health support programme for young people delivered by Young Gloucestershire (just under £50k). The remaining funding will be used to support families and young people and work is underway to identify specific interventions. This work includes several workshops with service providers (public sector and voluntary sector) to build better relationships, map current services, identify gaps and increase partnership working leading to new interventions/projects. The first workshop was held in June, with two more to follow in October.</p>
HW14		Continue to invest in dementia-friendly communities, improve understanding and communication, and reduce loneliness and isolation	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Claire Bloomer	On Target	<p>Supported Dementia Friendly Communities - DF Bourton group and DAA. Encouraged DFB to branch out successfully and they are now known as 'Dementia Friendly North Cotswolds' and have set up a Dementia Cafe in Stow. I forward them regular updates about DAA and Dementia training opportunities.</p>
HW15		Work with the Cotswold Youth Network to increase investment in, and support for, youth engagement work	July 2020	March 2023	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	<p>The ILP work is focussing on support for young people (update above (row 112)). Ongoing work with the youth network and HAF. No other specific updates.</p>

HW16		Work with partners to implement four Changing Places Toilet facilities	September 2021	April 2023	Paul James	Claire Bloomer	On Target	Cotswold Farm Park completed. Abbey Grounds, Cirencester almost complete. Birdland and Cotswold Country Park and Beach are in the planning and procurement stages and will be delivered early in 2024.
HW17		Increase the number of people trained in mental health first aid and suicide prevention	September 2020	March 2023	Rob Weaver Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	
HW18		Provide targeted mental health campaigns and support	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Distributed Mental Health communications re: MH Awareness Week and Stress Awareness. Promotion of Men's mental health courses from Cirencester college and Leisure centre men's group. •Represented CDC in MHELO group and undertook relevant action points from meetings - encouraged more involvement from Cotswold residents and promoting their work through CCN. •'Cotswold Chat' funded for one more year through SLC grant to provide MH support to local young people delivered by Young Gloucestershire
HW19	Promote both mental and physical health equally, to increase awareness of mental health issues and improve the community response to people in crisis	Promote mental health activities and initiatives	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	
HW20		Continue to deliver the 'hidden harm' project and targeted work to raise awareness of domestic abuse, in partnership with Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey/Claire Bloomer	On Target	
HW21		Work with the DWP, businesses, education and the voluntary sector to create more employment and learning opportunities for young people	September 2020	March 2023	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	Complete	
HW22		Plan places with active travel and high-quality green infrastructure	October 2020	April 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain/Hannah Fountain/Sophia Price	Juliet Layton	On Target	
HW23	Ensure our housing and built environments enable residents to live healthy lives	Develop design codes that focus on climate change and protect people from overheating risk	October 2020	April 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain/Chris Crookhall Fallon/Sophia Price	Juliet Layton	On Target	
HW24		Develop policies for dementia-friendly homes	February 2021	April 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
HW25		Review local plan policies to facilitate healthy place shaping	October 2020	April 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
HW26		Deliver health and wellbeing initiatives through the local plan	October 2020	April 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	
HW27	Support residents through the 'cost of living crisis', recognising the disproportionate impact on low income households	Roll out the new £150 Council Tax rebate promptly	April 2022	November 2022	Jon Dearing/Mandy Fathers	Mike Evemy	Complete	

Enable a vibrant economy

Our aims	Our actions	Commencement	Date due, Achieved	Officer	Cabinet Member	RAG Rating	
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VE1	Use our investments and assets to boost the local economy	Accelerate the Recovery Investment Fund to bring large scale investments to the Capital Investment Programme Board in order to reach our £1m Revenue target	December 2021	Strategy goes to Council in May 2022 Investment decisions July 2022	David Stanley/ Paul James/Chris Crookall-Fallon	Tony Dale	Cancelled	
VE2		Focus on growing commercial revenues in the Council that underpin a 'Green Evolution'	December 2021	Car Parking fees revised for 2022/23 April 2024	David Stanley	Tony Dale	On Hold	
VE3		Invest in local projects and development opportunities	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Investment opportunities, including in Cirencester town centre, continue to be looked at on a case by case basis.
VE4		Use our assets to generate jobs locally	April 2021	April 2024	Claire Locke/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Several potential opportunities for Trinity Road being considered. Position with the Old Station and OMH as per Q4.
VE5	Support successful businesses in the visitor economy with higher visitor spend and footfall spread across the District rather than just the 'honeypot' locations	Deliver against the six priorities set out in the Cotswold Tourism destination management plan	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Chris Jackson	Tony Dale	On Target	
VE6		Help to develop high quality visitor experiences	September 2020	April 2024 'Days Out' published March 2022	Andy Barge/Chris Jackson	Tony Dale	On Target	
VE7		Increase tourism's contribution to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of our communities	April 2021	April 2024 19 Training videos created April 2021 Business survey February 2022, to inform actions in 2022/23	Andy Barge/Chris Jackson	Tony Dale	On Target	
VE8	Develop strong networks, collaboration and partnerships with businesses and organisations	Work with partners to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups	July 2020	April 2024	Rob Weaver Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Cabinet approved funding for the Growth Hub in March 2023. The legal agreement with them requires them to focus on start-ups and provide an outreach service across the District and includes a target for the number of new businesses created.
VE9		Build a reputation as a business-friendly council	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Business Matters continues to be issued monthly. Business Engagement visits have restarted post-election.
VE10	Develop a high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact economy that includes agritech, digital/cyber, medical equipment and environmental technologies	Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Farm491 funding for new offices agreed from UKSPF. Proposals for a Centre for Sustainable Aviation appear to be gathering momentum. Rural England Prosperity Funding has now been agreed, so will create more opportunities.
VE11		Secure the provision and occupation of new commercial space	March 2021	visions agreed for Local Plan special policy areas by March 2023	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	No significant update. Steadings employment land planning application awaiting resubmission to take into account the comments from planning officers. RAU Innovation Village moving forward but still some way from delivery.
VE12	Help our town centres recover from COVID-19 and in the face of changing shopping habits	Help towns create long-term plans where needed, such as the Cirencester town centre masterplan	September 2020	April 2024 Masterplan due for completion December 2022	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Tony Dale/Juliet Layton	On Target	
VE13		Support businesses to enhance their digital presence	July 2020	March 2022	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	Complete	Completed.
VE14		Develop a 'shop local' campaign to encourage residents to support local businesses	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	Complete	Completed.
VE15	Attract investment in infrastructure	Work with Fastershire to address broadband market failure	Rolled forward from previous Corporate Plan	April 2024	Robert Weaver/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	County Council Digital Household Scheme has gone out to tender.

VE16	Attract investment in infrastructure	Support completion of the A417 'missing link'	September 2020	April 2024: Development Consent Order hearing underway January 2022	Jon Dearing/Phil Shaw	Tony Dale	On Target	
VE17	Offer better qualifications for our young people	Work with our partners to ensure our young people have the skills they need to secure employment in the district	September 2020	April 2024 Cotswold New Start launched October 2021	Andy Barge/Paul James/Jacqui Wright	Tony Dale	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Cirencester College T level building now completed. Discussions being held with Cirencester College about linking with sustainable aviation businesses in the district in terms of skills and training. UKSPF funding includes provision in Year 3 (2024/25) to support those furthest from the labour market.
VE18		Work with GFirstLEP to improve the Growth Hub provision in the North Cotswolds	January 2021	April 2024 Innovation Lab opening in Chipping Campden Spring/Summer 2022	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	Legal agreement for UKSPF funding for Growth Hub requires them to operate an outreach service covering the whole district. It is anticipated that for the north of the district, the Moreton Area Office will be used as a base.
VE19	Ensure the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are accessible to everyone in the district	Establish needs	October 2020	December 2020	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	Complete	Completed.
VE20		Identify partners that can deliver improvements	January 2020	March 2021	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	Complete	Completed.
VE21		Develop and implement an action plan to improve digital inclusion	June 2021	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Work is progressing through partnership activity, although there is limited collective capacity to make headway. A headline report outlines eight recommendations to help tackle the digital divide and frames a range of questions revolving around next steps. This is supported by digital exclusion risk mapping, community asset mapping (what's out there already) and a 'what we know about closing the digital divide report. Focus on competing priorities, such as UKSPF and REPF has slowed progress on this. https://www.digitaldivides.co.uk



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT
April 2023 - June 2023

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

Executive Summary Highlights

- Cabinet approved funding for the Growth Hub in March 2023. The legal agreement requires them to focus on start-ups and provide an outreach service across the District and includes a target for the number of new businesses created.
- The Holiday Activity Food programme continues to be a success and GCC have suggested (not confirmed yet) that we have hit the highest percentage of FSM's children, than any other district
- The Changing Places Toilet Facilities are complete at Cotswold Farm Park. Abbey Grounds, Cirencester is almost complete. Birdland and Cotswold Country Park and Beach are in the planning and procurement stages and will be delivered early in 2024.
- The Council and Bromford Housing have entered into a Collaboration Agreement to deliver the Down Ampney housing development. There have been delays due to drainage concerns however now progressing with Planning application due to be submitted in September
- The A417 Missing Link scheme was approved in November 2022; and Kier Highways has been appointed as the main contractor. The £460m project is designed to reduce congestion and improve road safety on this important link between Cirencester and Gloucester and, more widely, the M4 and M5 motorways. Kier have started on site with various preparatory works and are presenting to the next meeting of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group in September.
- Welcome letter & newsletter emailed to new and returning Town & Parish councillors in June 2023. Virtual social media training booked for August with next face to face forums in September.
- Tender process for Cirencester Access and Movement Study closed 24th April.
- Shortlisting of Safer Streets Cotswolds proposals has been completed. The next stage will be to visit the shortlisted areas. After the visits and more local engagement, we will decide which areas will receive the improvements to make them safer.
- A new project plan for street signs, setting out number, location, cost and timescales is being prepared for the 2023/24 roll out.

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

Following a refresh and public consultation of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023-24 last quarter, a summary of results was presented to Cabinet in January 2023. The results from this consultation were taken into consideration prior to agreement of the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and MTFS agreed on the 15 February 2023.

The key strategic aim of 'Clean and Green' is to reduce enviro-crime within the District, and deliver the benefit of a high quality environment where economic growth is supported and where the Council positively engages with the community to not only solve immediate issues, but to prevent further recurrences. During Q1, there were 25 requests for litter picks from communities with litter picks taking place across the district with over 136 people involved. Quarter One saw the start of the anti-dog fouling campaign including distributing dog waste bag dispensers to parishes. Work has been continuing to prevent anti-social behaviour at the Water Park building relationships with the manager of Cotswold Beach and the police.

Phase Two elements of the Water Park Strategy include projects to make it easier for people to walk and cycle around the area, which disperses visitors more widely and enables people to be more physically active.

Funded projects include a new foot/cycle path Neigh Bridge that is largely complete but outstanding issues are still being pursued with GCC in liaison with the Cotswold Lakes Trust. Work is also underway to deliver 46 new cycle standings in Fairford, Lechlade and South Cerney. Contractor is working closely with local organisations and with Parish and Town Council representatives to agree suitable locations.

A new section of bridleway under Wildmoor Lane has been commissioned and will be delivered by GCC Rights of Way team following agreement from landowner to dedicate required land take.

The on-going objective to deliver a crossing on the Spine Road is still seen as a critical project and efforts are focused on maintaining the momentum gained on key steps already achieved. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) have made a request for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding which is currently being evaluated for compliance with CIL rules.

Work is also under way to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Wiltshire Council regarding both Cotswold and Wiltshire Council's approach to local plan policy development which takes an holistic approach to the Water Park area.

Whilst the provision of toilets is not a statutory function, the Council provides 15 public conveniences across the District which support shoppers and tourism, and prevents negative environmental health impacts from lack of accessibility. At the cabinet meeting 6 February 2023 the decision was made to increase the 10 charged units to 40p to start 1 April as a result of current income only providing one third of the required budget to maintain the facilities. In addition, Cabinet delegated the decision to install cash and card payment facilities on a site-by-site basis to the Assistant Director for Resident Services. Work is underway to install card readers at all of the charged public toilets. Two out of the 10 charged sites already have card readers with a future eight sites planned in the next few months.

The overarching aim of the improvement work in the Planning service is to provide a trusted, inclusive and transparent planning service. In that regard performance has improved markedly over the last year or so. Following the work already undertaken to the pre-application service, validation checklist, fee schedule, communication with applicants and the timeliness of the communication at key stages of the process the recent priority has been the reduction in backlogs in the enforcement function. This work is preparatory to implementing the new processes in that element of the service starting with improvements in the front end for registering enforcement issues and then a series of customer touch points and a customer journey to help keep customers informed. This project is expected to deliver a reduction in repeat customer contact/chasing, as well as a reduction in the number of non-breach cases from improved online reporting facilities and back office triage.

The further improvement works arising from the PAS report were agreed by Cabinet in June and will be added to the action plan with delivery scheduled to be completed late 2023/early 2024. The next main piece of work following completion of the PAS related elements will be improving the IT platform.

Respond to the climate crisis



The Context

Q1 2023/24 did not feature much development in national policy, but there were developments relating to national climate performance which are relevant to the Council's climate action ambitions.

Following on from the Committee of Climate Change's annual report in June, there are two items of particular relevance to the Council; a coherent public engagement strategy on climate action is long overdue and needed to empower and inform households and communities to make low-carbon choices and; planning policy needs radical reform to support Net Zero, including the overarching requirement that all planning decisions must be taken giving full regard to the imperative of Net Zero.

Actions we are taking

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 identified the Council's different spheres of influence over carbon emissions in the District. These range from relatively easier interventions with lower impact (e.g. direct and indirect control of the Council's own operations), through to relatively harder interventions with potentially much higher impact (e.g. enabling District-wide action and engaging with all stakeholders).

'Direct Control' actions

Changes now underway at Trinity Road will increase space efficiency reducing the Council's office's physical and carbon footprint. The business case and Council investment decision for solar PV and battery storage at Trinity Road and one other tenanted site is being brought to Cabinet and Council in July. If successful other viable business cases should come forward for other Council-owned premises. The recruitment of a sustainable transport specialist is underway, whose duties will focus on policy development for the Local Plan partial update, but who will also complete the sustainable travel plan for the Trinity Road office. This plan aims to help staff, and by extension the Council itself, to reduce both the cost and carbon emissions of commuting.

'Indirect Control' actions

Waste and recycling collection, aside from being the Council's single largest source of emissions, presents all councils with huge challenges and potential opportunities in environment, the climate emergency, and digital services. The Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP), a partnership between Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils, Publica and Ubico, has reducing carbon emissions as one of six main priority areas for shared innovation projects. The leisure and cultural services provider procurement which completed in Q4 2022 will see the new service provider taking over in Q2, and Council staff are working to ensure that low carbon energy systems (solar, heat pumps) installed under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Programme in March 2022 are ready to be taken over by the incoming service provider to ensure their optimal performance.

‘Place Shaping’ actions

Work is underway to build the necessary evidence base for draft climate policies for the Local Plan (LP) partial update, taking account of feedback from the Regulation 18 public consultation, as well as the results of recent examinations of other authorities’ Local Plans which contain ambitious climate policies. Sustainable transport consultants are drafting LP policies in line with the findings of the district-wide Sustainable Transport Strategy research. Consultants have been selected to deliver an updated evidence base and policies for renewable energy in the district, and procurement is being prepared for consultants to deliver an evidence base and policies for sustainable construction, a key plank of the updated LP. A district-wide carbon emissions ‘pathways’ study, which builds on similar work already undertaken for the Cotswold National Landscape, is due to report at the start of Q2. The study will establish how steeply emissions need to fall in each sector of the District’s economy in order to meet international and national net zero carbon commitments. In addition the updated Cotswold Design Code will be procured during Q2.

The electric vehicle charge point business case was agreed by Cabinet in March 2022 for Council-owned car parks providing 20 charging connections. Following the replacement of outdated EVCPs at Old Market Way car park, Moreton-in-Marsh and The Beeches car park, Cirencester, further installations are currently running behind schedule due principally to delays in responses from electricity distribution network operators (DNOs) and extreme pressures on all EVCP installers who are trying to keep pace with the rapid growth of the EVCP market. It is now expected that the Rissington Road and Trinity Road car park charge points will be installed at the start of Q2, and funding secured from the DfT’s On-Street Residential Charging Scheme will enable local residents without off-street parking to charge overnight and outside of office hours.

‘District-wide enabling’ actions

Retrofitting homes to reduce costs, energy consumption and carbon emissions is an essential component of national emissions reduction, but remains a huge challenge. The announcements of the energy security strategy (Powering up Britain) include some measures that support home energy retrofit, but the national retrofit strategy, such as it is, remains the preserve of a non-statutory body (the Construction Leadership Council) and the national retrofit hub is in a very early stage of development.

The Stroud District Council-led county partnership developing retrofit support is now unlikely to result in a delivery vehicle, as had been originally intended. This changes the debate over how Cotswold District Council should proceed with retrofit support to residents.

The provision of support to residents for selecting and purchasing rooftop solar PV systems and related equipment is being taken to Cabinet and Council in July, and a communications and promotion campaign is in development.

‘Engaging’ actions

This remains a very important part of the Council’s overall climate crisis response, and there is much work to do to help build confidence and momentum among all District-wide stakeholders, from residents to businesses and public sector bodies. We are now working on the creation of a District-wide network of individuals and organisations motivated by the climate challenge, and researching user needs in order to provide real value, and aiming to replicate the success of West Oxfordshire District Council’s ‘Green Light’ communications platform.

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.

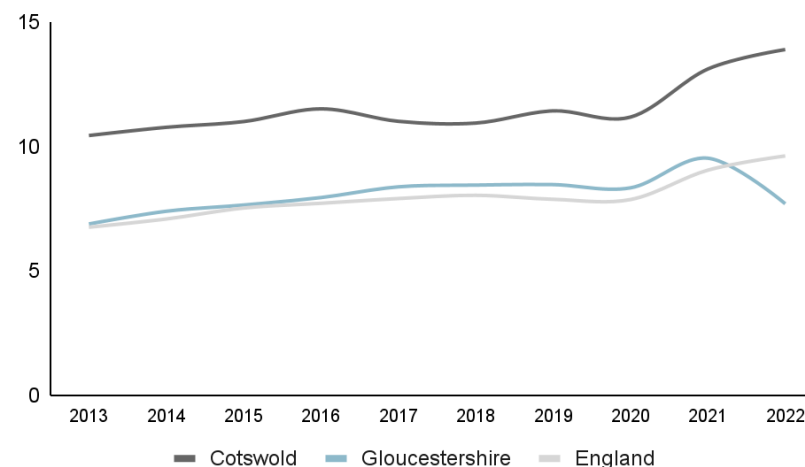
House prices and rents are relatively high. At the end of September 2022, the median property price in Cotswold District was £400,000 compared to £275,000 in England. House prices are falling due to the cost of living crisis, while rents are increasing. There is a shortage of good quality rented accommodation that is genuinely affordable. Affordable housing helps to meet the District's housing needs and can include low cost home ownership or rented accommodation which typically has a discount of around 20% on the market rent, however this may still not be truly affordable for some residents. Social rented homes have a rent that is lower than affordable rent and therefore provides homes for those on lower incomes or in receipt of full Housing Benefit.

The relatively high house prices and increasingly high rents, coupled with the lower than average earnings from local jobs, means housing affordability is a significant challenge for residents in the District and is being made worse by the cost of living crisis.

Actions we are taking

The Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy and action plan was adopted by Cabinet on 8 February 2021 and sets out the delivery strategy for the Council to accelerate provision of social rented and affordable homes for local people. The current focus is to facilitate the affordable housing identified within the Local Plan and through rural exception sites and community-led housing opportunities, and to work with Housing Associations to maximise affordable housing delivery. The Council plans to go further and bring forward additional affordable homes through enabling and direct intervention which may include provision of land and other funding. In addition, any development the Council acquires or builds must be carbon zero in support of the Council's Climate Change emergency commitment. Although this will increase the cost of affordable housing, it will reduce ongoing revenue costs for tenants. Based on the outcomes from the councillor workshop in October 2020,

Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings



discussions with local Registered Providers (RPs), and a review of delivery options, Officers recommended that the Council establish a formal partnership with one lead Registered Provider.

An expressions of interest exercise resulted in Bromford being selected as the preferred RP, with the Kemble site to be taken forward via a Contractual Joint Venture (JV). Due to challenges with the site including ecological challenges, the Kemble site was paused, and an alternative scheme on the derelict Broadleaze site at Down Ampney is being prepared for delivery first. Following a review of the Kemble site in the context of the cost of living crisis, the substantial subsidy that would be needed to deliver these homes and the ecological constraints, it was concluded that housing development on this site is not viable. In January 2023, Cabinet agreed to lease the land for use as allotments and community gardens. A revised valuation of the land based on its redesignation to community gardens has been undertaken to facilitate a lease agreement.

The Council and Bromford are continuing to work in partnership to deliver carbon zero affordable homes on the Down Ampney site and formally entered into a Collaboration Agreement in November 2022. A communication strategy has been developed to ensure appropriate engagement with all stakeholders including the Parish Council and local residents and people. A planned programme of consultation commenced on 10 October 2022 and a second round of consultation to share the detailed designs, house types and layouts took place in March ahead of a planning application being submitted. It has previously been highlighted that the planning application would be affected by the Habitat Regulations Assessment requirements as the site is within the Zone of Influence for North Meadow, Cricklade. This means the planning application could not be determined until a Mitigation Strategy was in place. Swindon Borough Council have now completed the mitigation strategy so applications in the affected area can now be processed. There have been some delays with the submission of the Planning Application as concerns regarding drainage were raised during the public consultation. It has taken some time to work through these issues. However a solution has now been identified and it is hoped Bromford will be submitting the planning application shortly.

The Old station, Sheep street was previously assessed for service provision such as homelessness accommodation and other housing options but the conversion was found to be unaffordable. In December 2022, Cabinet agreed to develop the Old Station and Memorial Cottages for cultural and community use, working with local organisations to produce detailed designs, obtain quotations for the renovations and seek external grant funding. If sufficient external funding can be secured a report will be brought back to Council for agreement to proceed. However, if insufficient funding can't be secured to achieve a minimum break even position for the Council, then the Council will need to consider other options such as the sale of the property. The Council is currently working with local organisations who are applying for external grant funding to support the delivery of this renovation and conversion and some funding has now been secured although there is currently a funding gap. New Brewery Arts have developed a couple of alternative designs for the renovation and conversion of the building and Listed Building Consent has been applied for. A structural survey revealed a gable end wall was unstable and therefore structural scaffolding has been installed to render the wall safe until building works can take place. Procurement of the wall repair works is due to commence in July.

The Stockwells regeneration scheme is being delivered by Bromford Housing Association and represents an opportunity for the Council and Bromford to create the first social rented, Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) net zero homes within the District. With funding support from the Council, Air Source Heat Pumps will replace traditional gas boilers, reducing CO2 emissions from heating and hot water by around 80%. In addition, the introduction of a large solar PV system will reduce net carbon emissions of the development to zero. Developers started on site in Q2 2022-23 and expect to complete during the summer 2023.

In March 2021, the Council allocated commuted sums grants to two projects to deliver low carbon affordable housing. A sum of £478,500 was allocated to provide 100% social rent on a scheme of 15 units at Davies Rd, Moreton in Marsh; previously an open market scheme with 40% affordable housing only. A further allocation of £102,000 will be used to enhance the environmental sustainability of the homes. Cottsway Housing Association successfully submitted an application to Homes England for match funding.

The second project has an allocation of approximately £332,000 from commuted sums grants for a scheme of 14 homes at Sunground, Avening, a rural exception site which will be 100% low carbon affordable housing. The scheme has received Homes England funding through Bromford which is developing the scheme on behalf of Gloucestershire Rural Housing Association (GRHA). The scheme will provide nine social rented and five shared ownership homes for local people, incorporating rainwater harvesting, air-source heating, solar panels and biodiversity measures.

Make our local plan green to the core



The Context

In July 2019 the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency, and a year later 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 government's National Planning Policy Framework has introduced new guidance that increases the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation and the role that Local Plans play. This is in addition to the Clean Growth Strategy, Environment Act (2021) and UK Net Zero Strategy, which represent the Government's ambition to combat climate change and give the environment a bigger mandate.

The Government is currently reforming the English planning system, through its Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This will radically alter how the Council will prepare future local plans. These reforms are subject to the Bill achieving Royal Assent which is expected in late 2024. The Government has explained that it will put in place arrangements to smooth the transition from the existing plan making process and the new process, therefore allowing the Council sufficient time to update its Local Plan before embarking on a full local plan update under the new planning system from 2025.

Actions we are taking

At a meeting of Full Council in June 2020, members unanimously resolved to partially update the Local Plan 2011-2031. 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 are likely to need updating. The process of updating the Local Plan will consider the options available to the Council and local communities. Along with international and national pledges made by the Government, the update will reflect the work being undertaken by other services across the organisation.

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 partial update of the Local Plan will aid the building of new homes, in the right places, 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.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is published on the Council's website, and sets out key stages in the local plan making process. This document will be updated in Autumn 2023 which will set out the next milestones and will indicate when the next formal public consultation will be held. A Local Plan Programme Board, that has membership of all political parties, is monitoring the progress of the Local Plan partial update.

An early stage Local Plan was consulted on in 2022. Overall, the consultation was a great success with approximately 7,500 individual respondents making 2,900 responses, more than any previous Local Plan Regulation 18 (issues and options) consultation that the Council has undertaken. The consultation generated useful remarks that are helping to shape the emerging Local Plan, as well as ideas as to how to make the next consultation even better. A summary of the consultation responses was presented to Cabinet at its meeting in July 2022.

The online consultation was carried out on Commonplace, the Council's new consultation system, funded by a government scheme to promote digital engagement. This resulted in a significant shift in people including town and parish councils choosing to submit comments online, and generated responses from all sectors of the community but notably the Council was able to target the District's younger people which was a shortcoming of previous consultations. In November 2022, the government awarded additional funding of £230,000 (together with West Oxfordshire) to further develop and promote digital engagement tools.

Officers are continuing to update the evidence base and studies to support the partial update of the Council's Local Plan, including:

- **Cotswold District Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy.** The GI Strategy forms part of the Local Plan evidence base and responds to the Council's climate and ecological emergencies and corporate priorities to improve health and wellbeing. A summary of comments received together with a final edit of the Strategy is now underway and will be presented later this year together with the draft Local Plan Partial Update;
- **Sustainability Appraisal** - this is a statutory and iterative process in the production of the Local Plan; it helps to ensure policies promote sustainable patterns of development;
- **Habitats Regulation Assessment** - like the Sustainability Appraisal this is a statutory and iterative process; it will examine the effect of proposed development on protected habitats.;
- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessments** - a key piece of evidence that helps to ensure proposed development is located away from areas that flood.
- **Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)** - which seeks to identify land that could be suitable for allocation in the updated Local Plan). The latest version was published in October 2021 and local communities have had the opportunity to comment on the document through the Local Plan consultation. An update is due to be published later this year.
- **Carbon impact and evidence base** - a joint project with West Oxfordshire will provide evidence to support zero carbon policies. Officers met prospective consultants in late 2022 to discuss the project brief, establish indicative costs and confirm capacity to deliver this project;

- **Transport assessments in Cirencester** (including Kemble Very Light Railway) – the Council’s consultants, ITP, have produced a final draft, findings of which were presented to the funding body (GEGJC) in March 2023. A project brief for Transport and Access Study for Cirencester, which will also examine parking needs, is currently being set up. The project is expected to be fully commissioned in April 2023 for delivery by the end of August;
- **Design Code** – a broad document covering all aspects of design within a Cotswold context including architectural, urban, landscape, ecological and sustainable design. This project is expected to be commissioned in Spring 2023;
- **Housing Strategy** - a draft strategy will be published for public consultation in Autumn 2023. With the aim of adopting the strategy in early 2024.

An internal review of the first drafts of Local Plan policies commenced in October 2022. Looking further ahead, submission to Cabinet and Council of the draft Local Plan for the next stage of consultation is expected at the end of 2023 / early 2024. In August 2023 the council published a review of its local plan housing requirement which concludes that housing needs have not changed significantly and therefore it can continue to demonstrate over five years supply of housing land.

Work continues on the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan project which was officially rebooted in January 2021. The project is split into two discrete parts, (1) feasibility assessments; and (2) Framework Masterplan.

(1) There are various town centre issues that need exploring to support the production of a masterplan, for example, the changing nature of uses in the high street, parking demand and capacity and the future impact on transport modes of achieving zero carbon. The Council has already completed an assessment of possible changes to uses in the town centre and an updated Cirencester Town Centre Health Check. Both documents are available on the Council’s website. Further feasibility assessments were carried out in 2022 including two transport studies which were completed in Autumn 2022. The first of these evaluates potential locations for a transport interchange in the town centre. The second – a component of the Sustainable Transport Strategy (see below) - establishes a possible trajectory to zero carbon transport in Cirencester by 2045, helping to inform the vision of the town’s future transport and movement needs, including future parking requirements. Officers will continue to work on these assessments during 2023.

(2) In April 2022, the Council commissioned consultants, Mace, to prepare a Framework Masterplan which will bring the whole project to life and invite local communities to engage and shape the future of their town centre. Councillor workshops were held in July and September 2022 to consider the preferred options for the draft Masterplan. Work continues on drafting the Framework Masterplan along with preparations for stakeholder engagement and communication later this year. The Masterplan project aligns and supports the Council’s Local Plan partial update and Cirencester Town Council’s emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

In March 2021, the Council appointed its first Sustainable Transport Strategy Lead officer, who is responsible for developing and delivering a new Sustainable Transport Strategy to support the partial update of the Local Plan and the transition to a carbon zero future. The first stage of work on the Sustainable Transport Strategy has been concluded with the latest results presented to informal Cabinet in December 2022, and shared with other

partners and stakeholders. The initial phase established future “do nothing” transport carbon forecasts for Cotswold District and quantified the difference between that forecast and the trajectory we need to meet to achieve our aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2045. The next phase explored options to close that gap, identifying high level targets for vehicle mileage reduction to 2045 and interventions to achieve this shift in both rural and more urban areas. In broad terms, the District needs to achieve:

- an overall per capita reduction in total trip mileage of 25%;
- reduction of around one third of car mode share of remaining mileage;
- tripling of both active travel and public transport mileage; and
- electrification of remaining vehicle trips.

These framework targets were approved by Cabinet in March 2023 and will now be used to direct the next stage of work focusing on identifying the optimum implementation of measures/interventions to deliver these targets. This is likely to include a number of studies such as the District-wide access and movement study, transport attitudes and behaviours study and work-related transport study.

The outcomes from the developing Sustainable Transport Strategy are currently being used to inform the update to the Local Plan update and in the preparation of other planning policies, such as the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan. They are also aligning with similar studies and schemes being progressed by Gloucestershire County Council – including the new Local Transport Plan, expected next year - to ensure a unified and cooperative approach.

Support health and well-being



The Context

The health and wellbeing of our residents is generally good and above the England and the county average in most measures. Cotswold District is one of the safest districts with very low crime levels and is surrounded by beautiful countryside. However, there are 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 older residents live alone, and coupled with the rurality of the District, loneliness and access to services are issues for the District.

The wider determinants of health also need to be taken into account - social, economic and environmental factors such as unemployment, low income, poor housing, and lifestyles which have an impact on people's health and wellbeing. This means that the Council needs 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

Page 207 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. A Leisure Strategy determined by local priorities and outcomes was developed with the aim of providing effective and sustainable physical activity and sport opportunities for local communities via investment in our stock of leisure facilities and other non-facility interventions. In March 2021, Cabinet authorised officers to work in partnership with other organisations on the feasibility of the projects in the Strategy. Specialist Leads for each of the three themes (Healthier District, Connected Community and Active Environment) have developed action plans for each area. Progress on the projects are being monitored by the Active Cotswolds Programme Board and are reported to the Portfolio Board.

The leisure management options appraisal including the Corinium Museum has been completed to determine the most suitable delivery model, contract scope and contract terms for the Council's leisure facilities when the current contract expires on 31 July 2023. The procurement process to appoint a new external Leisure and Culture Management Contractor is now complete and work has commenced on the mobilisation of the new contract with Freedom Leisure for the new Contract to commence 1 August 2023.

Another project in the Leisure Strategy is the development of a Playing Pitch Strategy which will include an assessment of the District's current and future needs for playing pitches for football, rugby, hockey, tennis and polo. Consultants, KKP are undertaking the project, and have now completed both the winter sport assessment and the summer sport assessment. Both assessments were informed by consultation (1-2-1, telephone and online) with town and parish councils, educational establishments and sports clubs, and have been reviewed by sporting governing bodies with KKP and council officers. The National Governing Bodies have reviewed both assessment reports and signed them off. KKP is pulling together the final action plan which will accompany the report for sign off by Sport England. The report will be the evidence base for current, unmet and future demand for playing pitches and will be used to support developer contribution requests and external funding

bids. Once signed off, a report will be prepared for Cabinet. All National Governing Bodies of the relevant sports have signed off the report, just awaiting feedback from Sport England, A steering group is due to meet at the end of March 2023. Final report was received June 2023 and is anticipated to go to Cabinet in September 2023.

The Council was awarded £162,500 by the Government to assist with installing Changing Places toilets in locations across the District. The toilets are larger and accessible to people who cannot use standard accessible toilets, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches, and space for carers. The venues in our bid were Cirencester Abbey Grounds, Birdland at Bourton-on-the-Water, the Cotswold Country Park and Beach at South Cerney and Cotswold Farm Park at Guiting Power. Cotswold Farm Park has been completed, the three other venues will not now be completed until the 2023/24 financial year..

The Spring funding round closed to applications on 26 April. There were relatively few projects which came forward this round, perhaps due to lower public awareness because of the Pre-Election Period, but we are aware of a number of projects being developed that are waiting on permissions such as planning, before they are able to come forward. At the time of writing, there are two projects campaigning for support on Crowdfund Cotswold. At the end of quarter 1, work started on promoting the Autumn Round, with a deadline of 13 September – much of this activity focuses on a project creator workshop due on 17 July.

The council has brought together a small working group to look at improved food equality, a 'good food economy' and the development of a possible Cotswold Food Network to jointly work towards these two outcomes. As part of that work we have supported Feeding Gloucestershire with their Cotswold District launch in June.

The event has explored the Food Network and is summarised in this video. The working group will regroup to take all the feedback into account and to look at next steps. Cotswold District Council has committed £40k towards the proposed Food Network. This funding is part of the Cotswold Connected Community and Food Programme the Council launched in December 2022 (<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/ConnectedCommunityProgramme/>)

The Active Cotswold programme has seen a lot of activity during the last months to improve physical activity levels and opportunities locally. After the 'Fit Kit' launch in February, 5 kits have been installed across the district:

- Bromford Housing at Chesterton, Cirencester
- Tetbury Friendship Café
- Dementia Café Stow (also used by the Stow Wellness Café)
- Bromford Housing at Bourton on the Water (also used by Cotswold Friends Wellness Café)
- Bromford Housing Morton in Marsh (Cotswold Friends Wellness Café and The Churn job club are also going to use this kit).

We have set up an informal Wellbeing Walk in Chesterton with the Bromford Housing group, where we arranged the route and took the group (6 people) for the first walk and they plan to continue this on their own. We are joining the 'Ramblers Wellbeing Walk Scheme' (<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-wellbeing-walks.aspx>) in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council. Our officer Kate will train volunteers to become walk leaders across the district with the first training date to take place in the summer at Sherbourne Estate. We have also created a workout card and demonstrated a resistance band workout at a number of existing groups across the districts like the Barton Senior Citizen Group, Working 4 Wellbeing Lechlade,

Parkinsons UK in Cirencester, Dementia café in Stow and Friendship Café in Tetbury. YOU CAN MOVE- is a new outdoor movement class to support people to become more active, which will start in September in Fairford.

The Council, on behalf of the Cotswold Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has secured £50k from the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund administered by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, which includes interventions aimed at tackling neighbourhood crime, anti-social behaviour and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), improving the safety of public spaces for all. After the public consultation in March where we encouraged communities to help us identify areas in the district that feel unpleasant, unsafe and may attract anti-social behaviour, we have shortlisted possible projects. These could be alleyways, under paths, parks and others. Over the summer months, the shortlisted areas will be visited and the local community will be engaged to develop a plan for the improvements. We aim to complete this process by October 2024 and for works to commence in November. The CSP is also in the process of bidding for further funding from the Safer Streets Round 5.

In partnership with World Jungle, we have delivered another successful Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF). The infographic below shows the impact the programme has had. We are making great progress to increase our engagement with schools, in partnership with Bloodhound Education who are our Community Connectors for the programme. We have also reached out to more partner organisations that are supporting families, to promote the HAF project to their clients.

Cotswold District - Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Spring HAF 2023



Feedback from Children & Parents:

"I wish I could come 1000 times (Jaxi),"
 "Building a Den was amazing (Max, 7),"
 "I loved Max the dog he made me less anxious (Gracie 7),"
 "I loved learning about the trees and fuel - especially fire starting (Art 8)"

"Just getting to be with my friends, I was actually too old to attend but due to no shows I got to attend and although I am 13 I enjoyed doing the crafts"

"Thank you so much for these tickets, we went last week and it was really great. The centre was brilliant and we saw lots of beautiful birds."

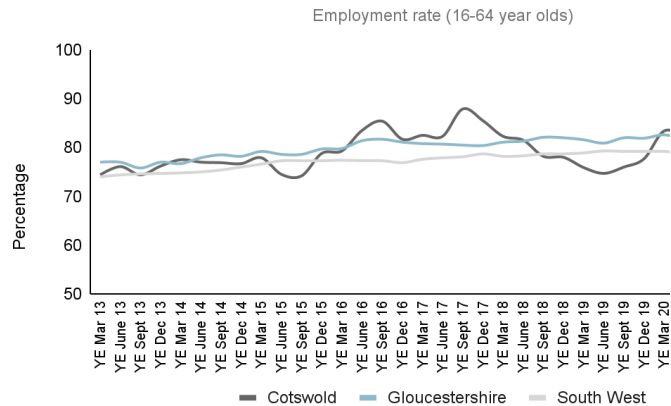
"Thank you so much I really appreciate all you do. I've got 5 here with disabilities so can't do a lot but appreciate the vouchers and food boxes. The children love making the meals, we have great fun making those."



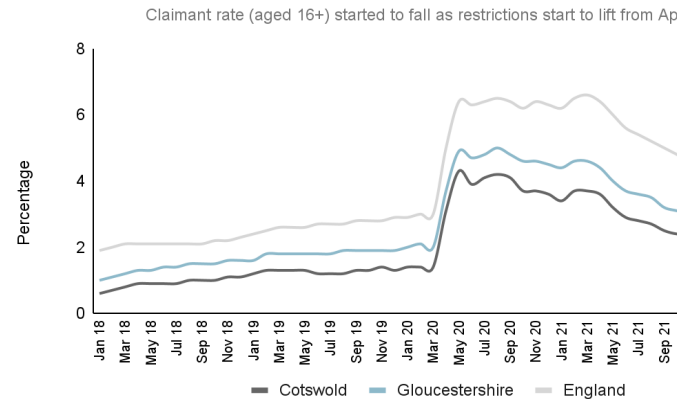


The Context

The District supports an economically active population of around 47,700 and has strengths in finance and business services, ICT including science and technology and food services. Around 90% of businesses are small enterprises employing fewer than 10 people. Median wages for people working in the District are below affordability of housing is a significant issue for the District, which can result in skill and labour shortages. Historically, unemployment has been relatively low but has fallen back significantly to 1.6% - the lowest in the county, but still slightly above the pre-pandemic level. The national and global economies have faced the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sharply rising prices, particularly for energy and fuel, which is impacting on disposable income and living standards. Although dropped back, they are still significantly higher than prior to the invasion and food inflation continues to run at very high levels.



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey



Source: ONS, Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

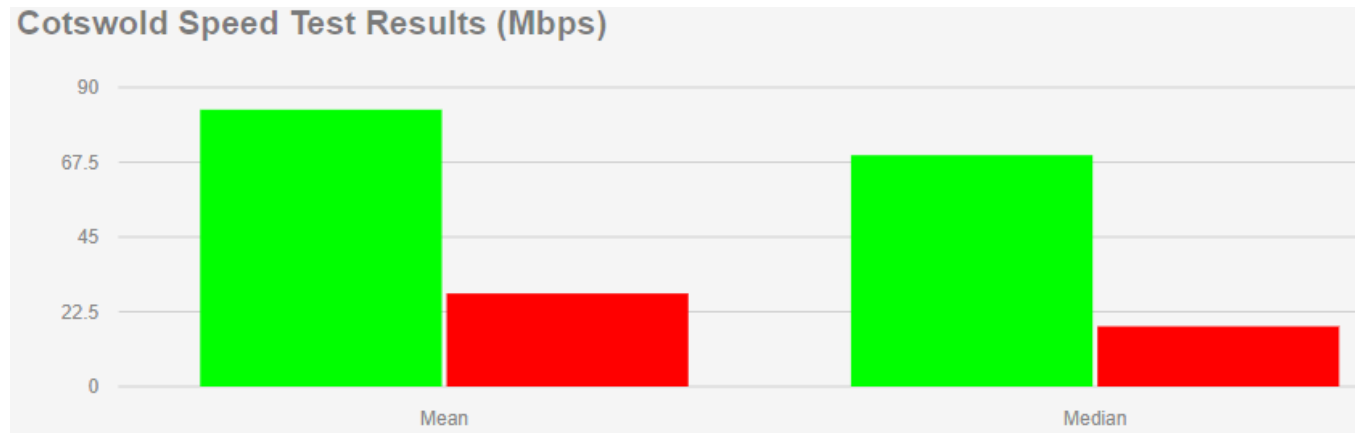
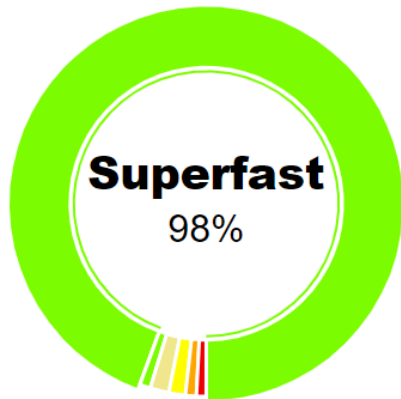
Businesses within the visitor economy, particularly within hospitality, continue to face a particularly challenging scenario: huge increases in wage costs – not only to recruit and retain staff amid continuing labour shortages, but also with the increase in the minimum wage; significant, continuing increases in costs,

particularly for food and drink purchases; and all against the backdrop of a major squeeze on customer spending. The rising cost of living has impacted consumer behaviour and spending with shorter staying trips, less day trips and an increased interest in cheaper or free options for things to do.

Despite the reappearance of many high spending overseas visitors, particularly from the United States, overseas visitor numbers are still expected to be 8% down on pre-pandemic levels this year. The Asian markets, particularly China, are proving slow to recover.

The number of job postings remains high, reflecting difficulties in recruitment. There are 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 been working in Cirencester and has announced plans to deliver full fibre to Tetbury, South Cerney, Lechlade, Northleach, Fairford and Bourton-on-the-Water by 2026 at the latest. A detailed timetable is awaited, but work in Bourton-on-the-Water is due to start in 2023. Gigaclear are on site at Moreton-in-Marsh and were due to connect 700 premises by the end of 2022 and 1700 by September 2023. Fairford, Tetbury, Bourton-on-the-Water, South Cerney and Stow-on-the-Wold are due to be delivered in 2023. 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. The Council is working with the Fastershire Project to address these areas. The County Council has recently taken a decision to increase the level of the Fastershire Community Broadband Grant to make it more attractive to the infrastructure providers and is also introducing the Gloucestershire Digital Household Scheme to use 4G technology to deliver connectivity in remote locations where fibre is not practical or is prohibitively expensive. A Fastershire Business Grant of up to £20,000 is also being introduced. The coverage of superfast (>30mbps) has increased slightly and ultrafast (>100mbps)/full fibre has moved up quite quickly according to figures on the ThinkBroadband website.



Much of our work to enable a vibrant economy will be achieved 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 Green Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25 sets out the challenges and issues for the District, and how they will be addressed. It identifies the key areas that will deliver growth in the District, as well as a recovery plan for the local economy. The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group which was set up to advise, oversee and challenge the implementation of the Strategy; and provide a link to the main institutions and the wider business community in the District continues to meet regularly and provide valuable advice and assistance. The group has representation from key stakeholders including Cirencester College, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cotswold Airport, Fairford and Lechlade Business Group, the Federation of Small Businesses and GFirst LEP. Most recently, the Group received a presentation from Peter Carr of Gloucestershire County Council on employment and skills and Adam Vines of the Cirencester Chamber of Commerce on the Together Gloucestershire ethical procurement initiative.

In 2022, the Council was awarded £1 million over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. The Council's Local Investment Plan, which sets out how the Council proposes to use the money, was approved by the government in early December 2022. The fund has three themes – Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and, in year three, People and Skills. Year one projects have largely been completed, including 'Clean and Green' initiatives and a feasibility study for the Old Station building in Cirencester. Cabinet in March agreed to allocate up to £135,000 to the Growth Hub in Cirencester to provide business support. One positive benefit of this funding is that the Growth Hub will be able to expand its outreach programme across the District, particularly in the north in areas like Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Campden. Decisions will be taken on the remaining 2023-24 projects to be funded shortly and an open call will be run for 2024-25 projects, which represents the majority of the funding.

A further £764,292 was allocated to the Council from the Rural England Prosperity Fund for financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. This is a capital-only fund to support rural businesses to diversify with new products and services and to provide new community infrastructure. An addendum to the Local Investment Plan was submitted to the government at the end of November 2022 and it was approved in early April. The proposed approach has been to allocate funding for business grants, for active travel and for community projects, including assisting village halls with sustainability-related improvements. A report is going to Cabinet in July setting out the proposed approach and the application process will be opened as soon as possible after that.

Town centres are important from both an economic and civic pride perspective. The number of vacant town centre retail units is a measure of a town centre's health and how the Council is meeting its objective of helping town centres to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. A survey undertaken in August 2021 showed Cirencester had a town centre vacancy rate of 11%, three percentage points below the national average. The vacancy rate improved further in April 2022 to just under 6% and in October 2022 to just under 5%. The latest count at the end of March 2023 showed the vacancy rate edging up to just above 5%, with a number of the remaining units either under offer or undergoing refurbishment. The smaller towns within the District generally have lower vacancy rates and none of these are of concern at this time, although we need to be mindful of the pace of change on the high street and the potential impact of the cost of living crisis. In some of the smaller towns, a loss of retail space to residential is of more concern as it can affect the town's 'critical mass' and therefore its ability to attract visitors

Cotswolds Tourism have been successful in attaining Visit England accreditation for a new Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), Cotswolds Plus. Led by Cotswolds Tourism the LVEP sees all the local destination organisations (Marketing Cheltenham, Visit Gloucester, Visit Gloucestershire, Visit DeanWye) and the Cotswolds National Landscape working together to support and improve the local visitor economy.

Cotswolds Plus will not be consumer facing but will work 'behind the scenes' to shape and deliver national strategy and activities, as well as to bring a coordinated, strategic approach on key issues such as sustainability, business support and research. LVEP status ensures increased support, training, and collaboration with Visit England and Visit Britain in core areas such as accessibility, business support and engagement with travel trade operators and event planners. Any future Visit England funding streams will also be channelled through the LVEPs.

One of Cotswolds Tourism's ongoing priorities is supporting visitor economy businesses to improve their online presence in general but in particular to encourage them to become more widely bookable online. We have run several workshops focussed on the new Visit England campaign with the National Lottery and Visit Britain shop which requires businesses to use the Tourism Exchange Great Britain (TXGB) system. These efforts were recognised at the Visit England Awards for Excellence where Cotswolds Tourism received an award for its efforts in driving online bookings through the TXGB platform.

We have submitted a small bid to the GWR community fund focussed on promoting sustainable travel around Moreton in Marsh. We will know by the end of August if this bid has been successful and, if so, will work closely with the town council and local businesses.

The tourism team continue to work with the Council, Bourton Parish and Bourton Business Network to seek solutions for Bourton coach parking, as well as keeping tour operators informed of developments.

There continues to be a steady flow of travel trade, press, media and filming requests with one recent media visit to Cirencester & the Cotswold Water Park focussed on accessibility.

The Council is working with partners to bring sites forward which will support the Council's ambition to grow high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact businesses in key areas including agritech, digital/cyber, medical equipment and environmental technologies, and to enhance the opportunities available for local people, particularly young people so that they have the skills they need to secure employment in the District. The Council is working with:

- The Royal Agricultural University to bring forward their Triangle/University Gate site. The Council's Chief Executive, the Cabinet Member for Economy, the Business Manager for Localities and the Economic Development Lead have held a number of meetings with the new Vice Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer and Director of External Relations at the RAU. The RAU has come up with a concept of an 'Innovation Village' which will help to address global challenges around sustainable farming and food security. The plans include teaching and research space, incubator and grow-on business units, a conference centre, hotel and hospitality space. The Council assisted the RAU to secure £100,000 from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Strategic Economic Development Fund to assist with the cost of project management over the next two years. The project management resource has now been put in place. It is anticipated that a planning application for the site will be submitted at some point before the end of 2023. A public launch of the project took place on 20 January 2023 and attracted considerable media attention.

- the new owners of the former Mitsubishi site in Cirencester, now renamed Watermoor Point. The office element is now over 90% let. The owners have also introduced an innovative and flexible co-warehousing solution, offering businesses a private, secure space within the warehouse, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 square feet. Businesses also benefit from shared mechanical handling equipment and an on-site qualified forklift driver. Watermoor Point has been granted planning permission to install an additional 310 PV solar panels in addition to its existing 50kWh array, demonstrating its commitment to sustainability.
- ZeroAvia which has relocated from Cranfield to Cotswold Airport. ZeroAvia is a leading innovator in decarbonising aviation, and is developing a hydrogen-electric powered aircraft. The Council is working with the Inward Investment Team at GFirst LEP to support ZeroAvia which has increased its staff numbers from 15 to 150 onsite, with the plans to continue to grow significantly. The Council and GFirst will continue to support ZeroAvia in its continued growth. Other sustainable aviation businesses, such as Vertical Aerospace and S&C Thermofluids, are already based at Cotswold Airport and we are working with the airport's owners and others to promote it as a hub for such innovative businesses.
- Bathurst Developments in relation to the first phase of employment land at The Steadings development. They have appointed a developer partner. A reserved matters planning application has been submitted for this phase and is awaiting resubmission to reflect the comments made by the Council's planning officers.

The Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College was officially launched at an event held in May 2022. The new centre will give the District a great opportunity both to develop a workforce with the digital skills needed in the 21st century, and also to grow its digital and cyber sectors. The Council continues to work closely with the College, particularly to identify partnerships with business which would be mutually beneficial. The College was also awarded £4m of funding from the Government for a new T-level building which will help to provide high level skills in the District. T Levels are based on the same standards as apprenticeships, designed by employers and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. It is equivalent to 3 A-levels and involves an industry placement. The Economic Development Lead has met with staff from the College to assist them with identifying potential placements for students. The College has most recently been awarded £3.5 million, in June, to create a Student Wellbeing Hub.

On infrastructure, the Development Consent Order (effectively the planning application) for the A417 Missing Link was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by Highways England in June 2021. The examination finished in May 2022 and the scheme was approved by the Secretary of State in November 2022. Kier Highways has been appointed main contractor. The project, which at around £460m, is the biggest infrastructure investment in the District and indeed the whole county for a generation, is designed to reduce congestion and improve road safety on this important link between Cirencester and Gloucester and, more widely, the M4 and M5 motorways. While new road building projects can be seen as environmentally damaging, much effort has been focused on delivering opportunities for environmental improvements as well as economic benefits. There will be opportunities for local suppliers, contractors and skills. Kier have started on site with various preparatory works and are presenting to the next meeting of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group in September.

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COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
April 2023 - June 2023

Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of Council Tax Collected	Green	6
Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected	Green	7
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Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events	Green	9
Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances	Red	10
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Customer Satisfaction - Telephone	Green	12
Customer Satisfaction - Email	Grey	13
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KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		17
Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		18
Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		19
Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice		20
Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed		21
Percentage of household waste recycled	TBC	22
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Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days	Red	27
(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties	Grey	28
Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action	Grey	29
Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales	Orange	30
Number of affordable homes delivered	Red	31
% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day	Red	32
Complaints	Grey	33

A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking).

When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. It does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

Benchmarking has been included wherever possible and additional investigations are underway to provide it for those metrics that are missing comparisons.

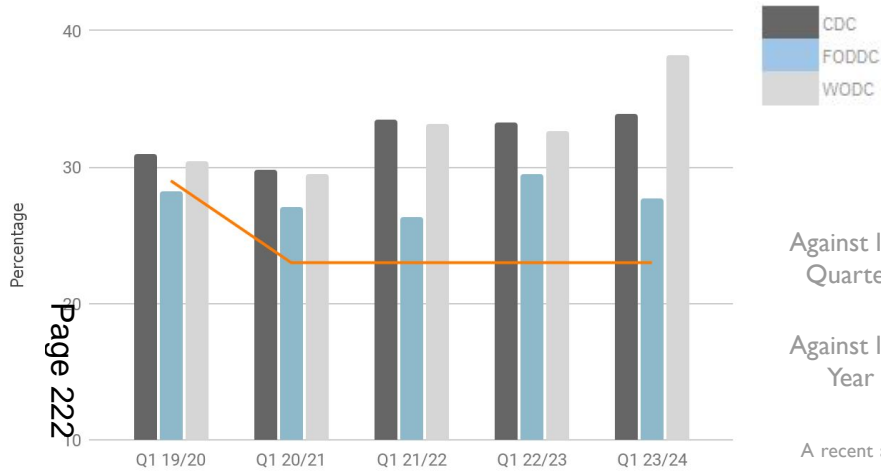
Overall Performance

The Council's performance has been mixed, with commendable progress in Tax Collection Rates and Planning Determination Times. However, the cost of living crisis continues to result in increased customer contact for certain services. The challenging economic situation has put additional strain on residents, leading to an upsurge in queries and concerns.

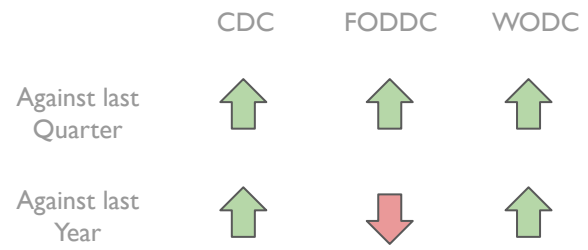
There are some indicators that are exhibiting a negative trend including the Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed and Missed Bins per 100,000.

The Council remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and actively investing in the development and implementation of automation and self-serve options for customers. By providing accessible and efficient self-help tools, customers can address their queries and concerns independently, leading to a decrease in the need for repeated interactions with services. It will continue to monitor and assess the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

Percentage of Council Tax Collected



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

23%

Target for 2023/24

99%

How do we compare?

Council tax collected by 31 March 2023 as a % of amount collectable - SPARSE
There are 181 district councils in England. All 3 councils are predominantly rural

2022-23 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	97.97	52/181	3/6	32/72	Second
Forest	97.76	70/181	4/6	40/72	Second
West	97.12	94/181	4/5	49/72	Third

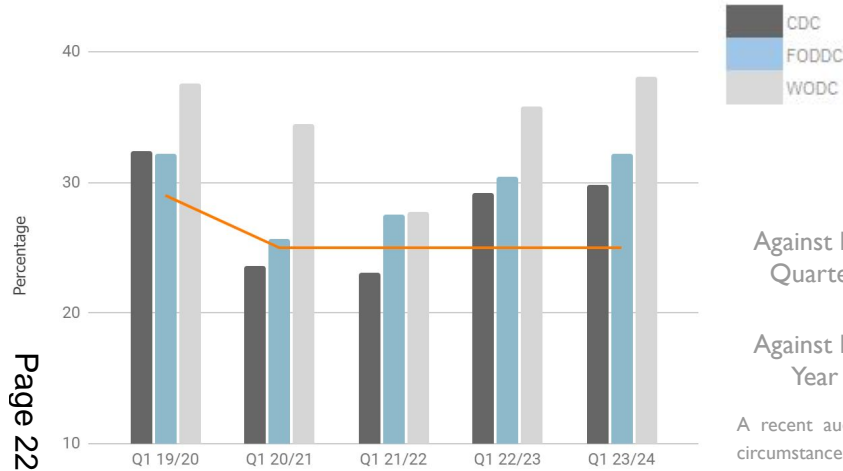
A recent audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. The recovery of these arrears had been suspended to support customers in difficult financial circumstances and to facilitate the adoption of a new Council Tax platform enabling self service payments. The recovery process has now been reinstated and the current cycle is up to date, resulting in significant improvements in the collection of those arrears through manageable payment schedules for those residents affected. The service reports progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
CDC	10.28%	12.29%	11.78%	£3,543,590

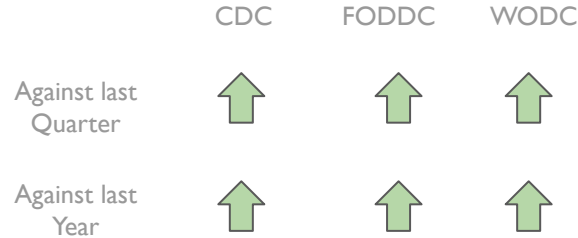
By the end of March 2023, authorities in England had collected £35.7 billion of council tax that related to 2022-23 (plus an additional £800 million of aged debt) and achieved an average in-year collection rate of 96.0%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over 2021-22.

The collection rate for Q1 is well above target and the highest it has been since prior to 2019/2020..As the target has been consistently hit in Q1, reinstating the previous target of 29% and investigating adjusting the targets for Q2 and Q3 respectively should be considered.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

25%

Target for 2023/24

99%

A recent audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. The recovery of these arrears had been suspended to support customers in difficult financial circumstances and to facilitate the adoption of a new Council Tax platform enabling self service payments. The recovery process has now been reinstated and the current cycle is up to date, resulting in significant improvements in the collection of those arrears through manageable payment schedules for those residents affected.

The service reports progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
CDC	13.40%	13.32%	12.07%	£438,045

The arrears outstanding for previous year's debts for Business Rates include some data where the amount outstanding now is more than that brought forward at the beginning of the financial year. There are some processes which can increase the amount that needs to be collected, such as Rateable Value changes and amendments to liability. As Business Rates deals with large amounts of money, the outcome can outweigh the amount that has been collected.

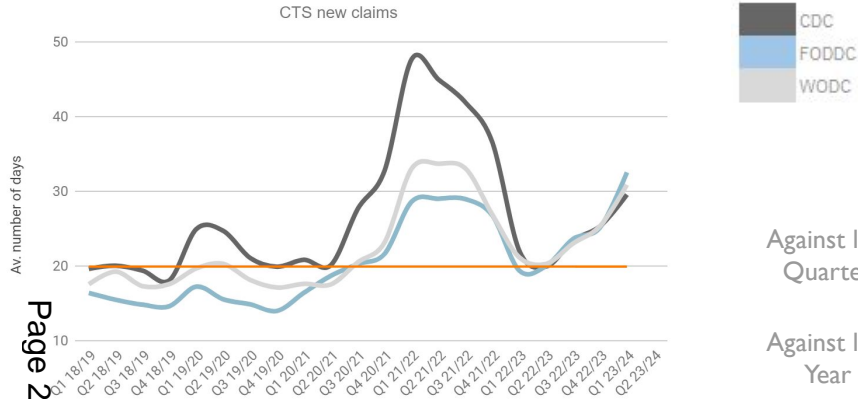
The collection rate Q1 is just shy of being back to pre-pandemic standards by 2.5%. The recommendation is to reconsider the targets in line with Council Tax.

How do we compare?

Non Domestic Rates collected by 31 March 2023 as a % of amount collectable - SPARSE
There are 181 district councils in England. All 3 councils are predominantly rural

2022-23 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	94.07	177/181	6/6	71/72	Bottom
Forest	95.97	161/181	5/6	67/72	Bottom
West	98.39	53/181	2/5	20/72	Second

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



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Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	20	20	20

How do we compare?

Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of March 2023 and the percentage change from Q4 2022 for each authority, plus the data for all authorities in England

	Number of Claimants at end of March 2023	Percentage Change since March 2022
Cotswold	1,926	-0.7%
Forest	2,240	-4.1%
West	1,745	-2.0%
England	1,393,323	-1.9%

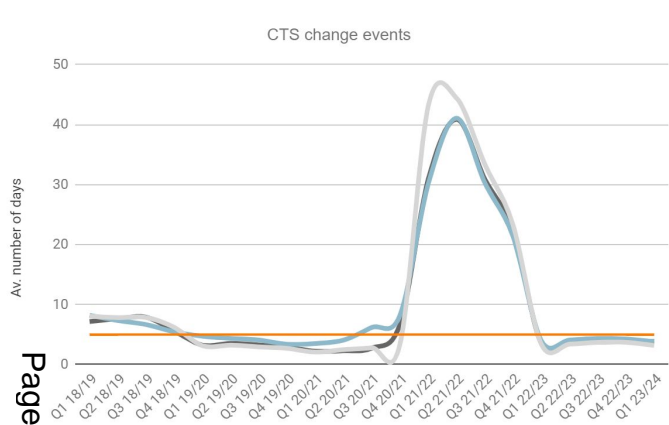
Q1 started with a backlog of work for new claims and change of circumstances cases. The team have worked hard to get this backlog more under control. However, a large number of applications from residents as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis continues to be received. Initial changes to procedures to place more reliance on the customer to provide supporting documentation, have not been as successful as anticipated.

In order to improve performance, investigations were made into the automation capability. On speaking with other councils, who were able to achieve 70% of processing automation as opposed to the 40-45% that the service was achieving, it became apparent that the same capability was possible but processes had to change in order to maximise on the capabilities of the system.

This way of working will continue to be tested and monitored but week-by-week, the processing stats are reducing. By being up-to-date, the service will be able to stay on top of the processing stats and keep reducing them.

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events remains well within the target of 5 days. Although there has been a small increase from this time last year, the change is only marginal (0.29)

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	➡	⬇	⬇
Against last Year	⬆	⬇	⬇

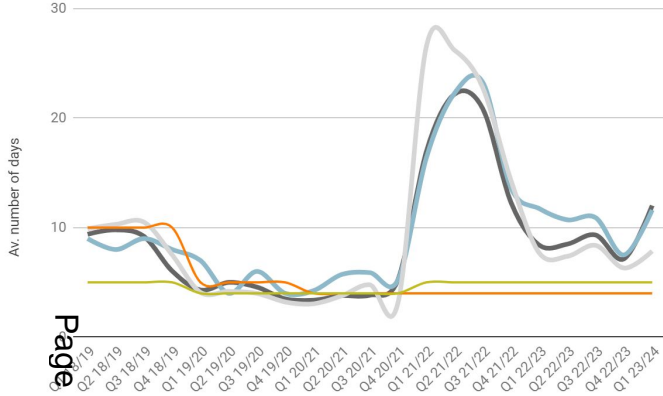
Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	5	5	5

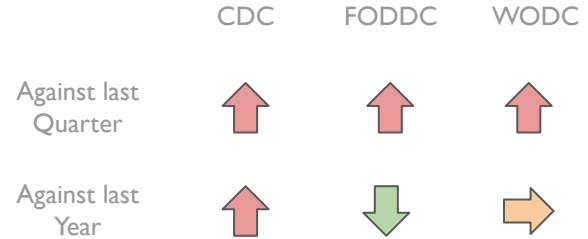
Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events remains well within the target of 5 days. Although there has been a small increase from this time last year, the change is only marginal (0.29)

How do we compare?
Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1



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How do we compare?

SPARSE provide benchmarking data on the speed of processing for HB CoCs. The latest data set is from Q3 2022-23

Q3 2022-23 Benchmark	Days	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	11.00	157/179	4/5	62/72	Bottom
Forest	11.00	159/179	5/5	63/72	Bottom
West	11.00	162/179	4/4	64/72	Bottom

Please see [Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims.](#)

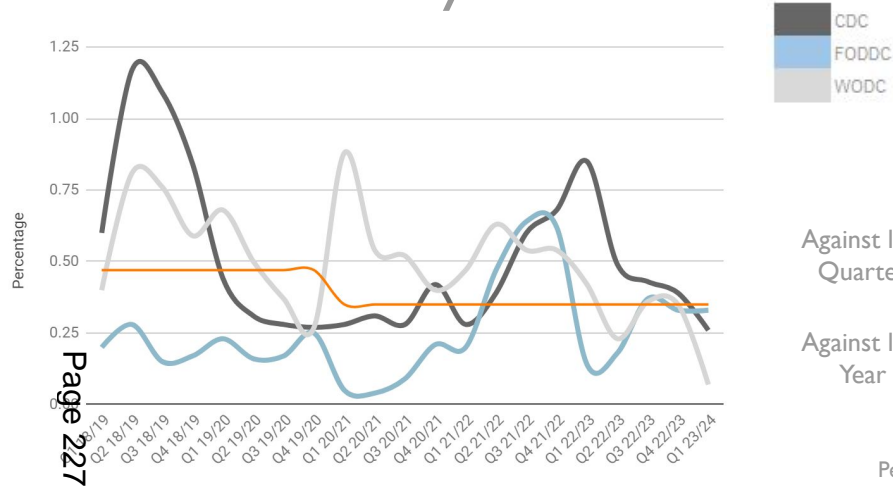
The observation for HB CoCs should be read in conjunction with the observation for HB CTS new claims and changes indicators as the work is performed by the same team.

Q1 commenced with a backlog of work for changes in circumstances. It should be noted that the number of expected changes that would affect Housing Benefit are reducing significantly as can be seen by the number of HB changes assessed compared to the number of CTS changes assessed.

HB Changes - 946
CTS Changes - 4305

Managed migration of Housing Benefit to Universal Credit is being rolled out from April 2024 across the country. As a result, any delay in assessing a HB change can significantly affect the average processing days so we may potentially see an increase in future quarters before reducing again in Q4 when we receive a significant amount of changes that affect Housing Benefit

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	→	↓
Against last Year	↓	↑	↓

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	0.35	0.35	0.35

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment error is 0.26% for Q1, well within the target. Measures are in place to ensure that HB overpayments due to local authority error are reduced as far as possible. Around 20% of the HB caseload is checked by Quality Assurance officers who target areas which have high error rates such as calculation of earnings. In addition to this work, the service is signed up to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) initiative to tackle fraud and error.

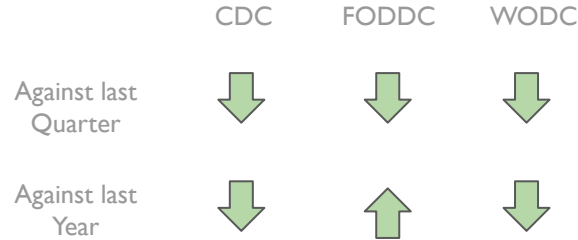
Note: the national target is 0.47%. In 2020-21, the service set a more stringent target of 0.35%

Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



percentage
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Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

90 %

Target for 2023/24

90 %

How do we compare?

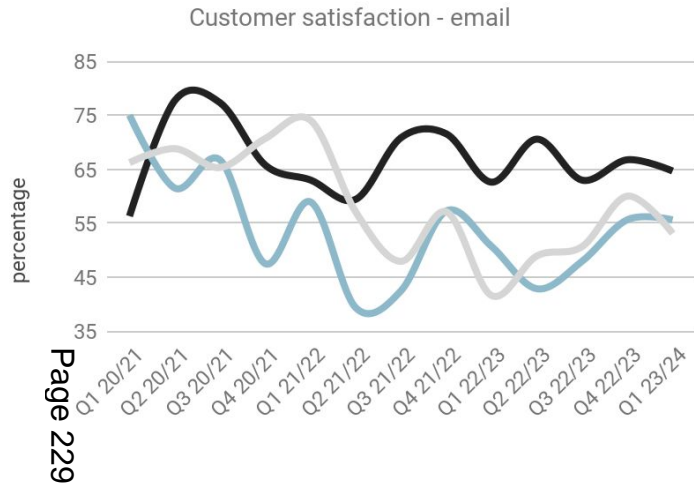
The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included i.e. May and June for Forest in the below table. This is a national comparator

	Apr Rank	Apr Net Sat.	May Rank	May Net Sat.	Jun Rank	Jun Net Sat.
Cotswold	3	97%	3	98%	1	97%
Forest	2	98%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West	4	97%	1	100%	3	96%

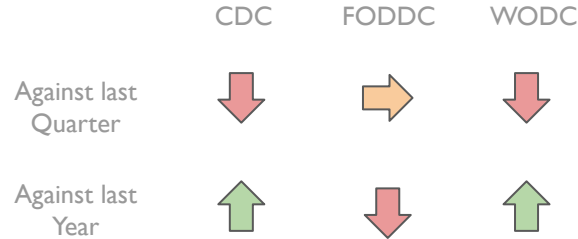
Table topping levels of performance on Gov Metric for customer satisfaction!

Although this is a very small proportion of our calls, numbers are comparable to other District Councils, hence the 'league tables' being a useful comparator.

Customer Satisfaction - Email



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

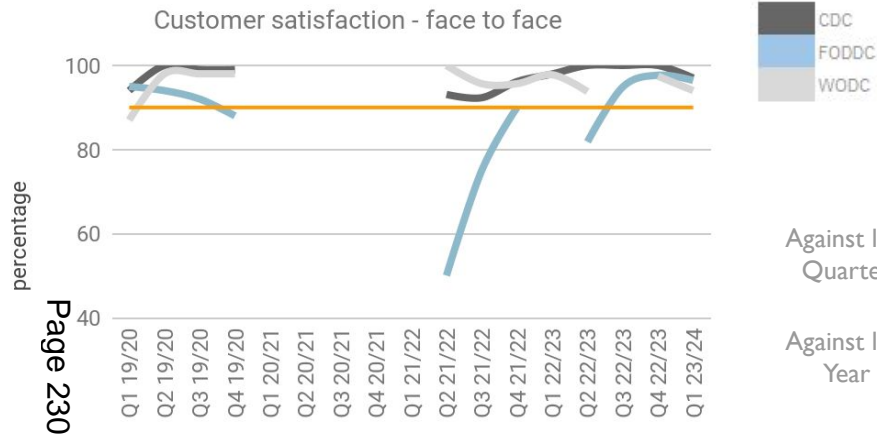
No Target

447 residents responded to the survey of which 289 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 64.65% satisfaction for the quarter. All outbound emails sent by customer services from Salesforce contain a link to the survey. A piece of work was undertaken to review the responses from the email surveys due to the more negative responses. Upon review it appears to be dissatisfaction surrounding service failure; missed bins, container deliveries, responses from Planning or Housing etc. System and process improvements by the individual services are being implemented which may affect these figures in the future.

How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↓
Against last Year	↓	N/A	↑

Target for Q1

90 %

Target for 2023/24

90 %

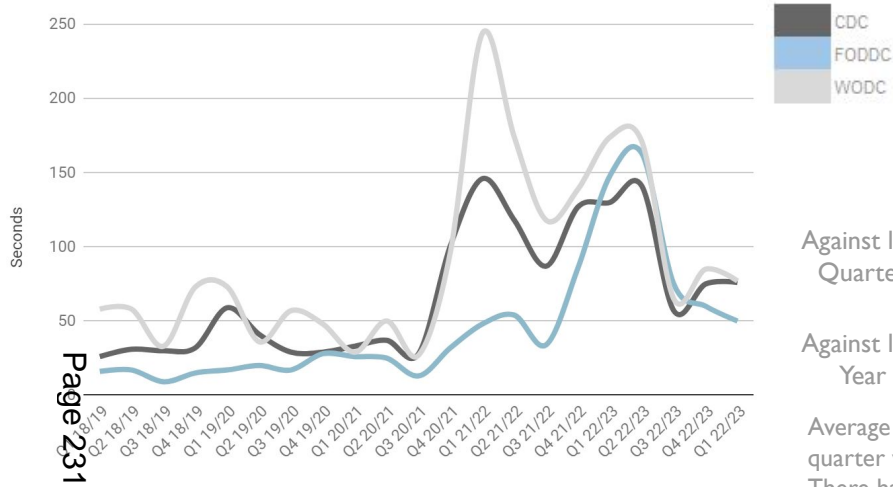
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high with a 97% satisfaction rate for the quarter. 31 out of 32 surveyed were satisfied with the service.

How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Note that any gaps in the data indicate no surveys were returned. This is especially apparent when the offices were closed during the pandemic.

Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



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How do we compare?

SPARSE are investigating pulling together Customer Services benchmarking data and if there is sufficient demand and suitably similar metrics to provide comparison across similarly rural local authorities we will work with them to assess any crossover in metrics and potential presentation.

Direction of Travel

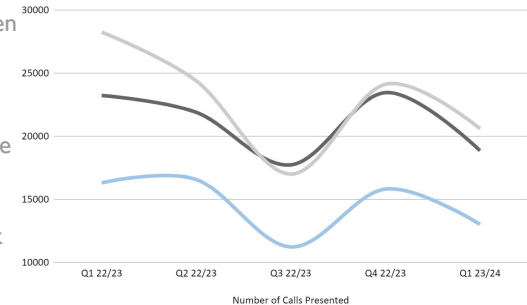
	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	➔	⬇	⬇
Against last Year	⬇	⬇	⬇

Target for Q1

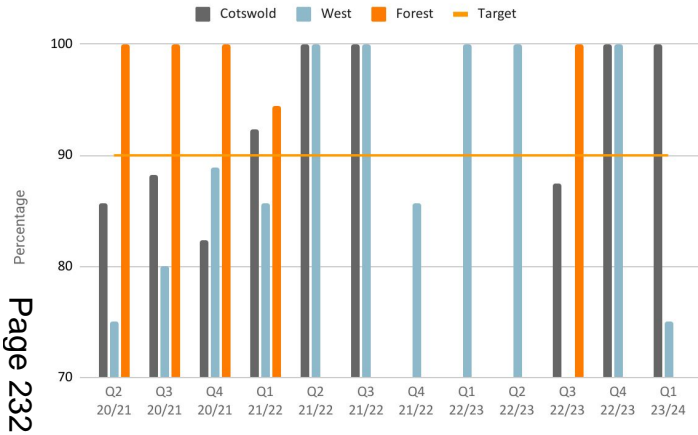
	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	NO TARGET		

Average call waiting time for the Council remained largely unchanged in comparison to last quarter with a small increase from 75 to 76 seconds. There has been a marked improvement from Q1 2022-23 with reductions in average from just under a minute.

Call numbers are going down as can be seen from the chart to the right. This trend is expected to continue with further work surrounding Channel Choice encouraging customers to self-serve where possible. The service are proactively working with other services to reduce processing times and repeat contact by using direct links to back office systems resulting in improved customer experience



Building Control Satisfaction

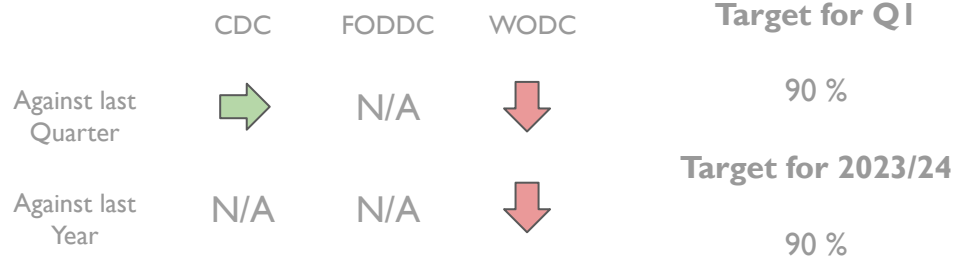


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How do we compare?
Percentage of share in the market

	April	May	June	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	45%	63%	52%	121
Forest	63%	50%	69%	93
West	65%	70%	81%	145

Direction of Travel

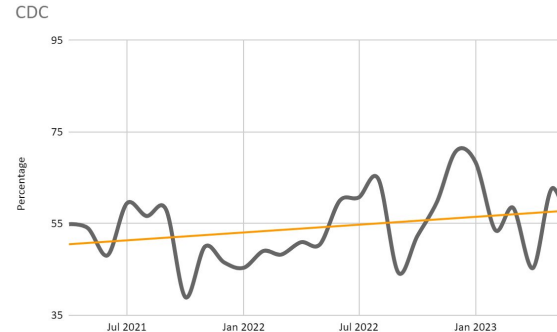


Each month, the service conducts telephone interviews with customers who have received a completion certificate during the month. The customer rates the service on helpfulness of staff, quality of technical advice and other information, responsiveness, value for money, and overall satisfaction.

The data still suffers from low numbers of satisfaction survey returns but 11 surveys were completed in Q1, all of which were satisfied.

The service is in discussions with Customer Services to see if advisors have availability to conduct surveys on their behalf.

Building Control had 121 applications in Q1 and retains a strong hold in the share of the market. The below chart show market share over time

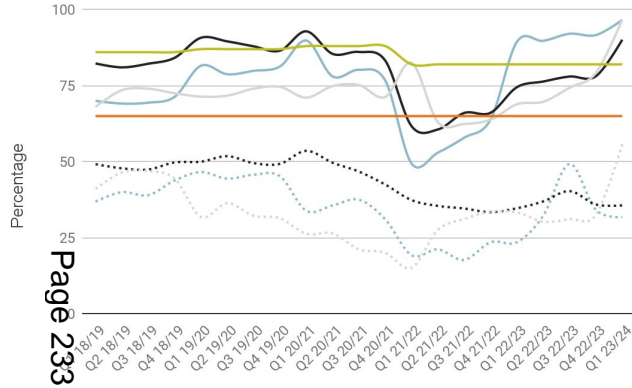


Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)

■ Target
 ■ Cotswold
 ■ Forest of Dean
 ■ West Oxfordshire
 ■ Shire Districts' Median

Applications completed within 8 weeks

- - - - Cotswold
 — Forest of Dean
 — West Oxfordshire



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How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time

PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

2022 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	76.18	131/181	5/6	52/72	Third
Forest	89.32 %	53/181	1/6	19/72	Second
West	74.43 %	143/181	4/5	59/72	Bottom

Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC	Target		
	CDC	FODDC	WODC	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↑	65	65	65
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑			

The service has performed very well processing Minor applications within times. 101 minor applications were determined in Q1, compared to 88 applications in the same period of the previous year.

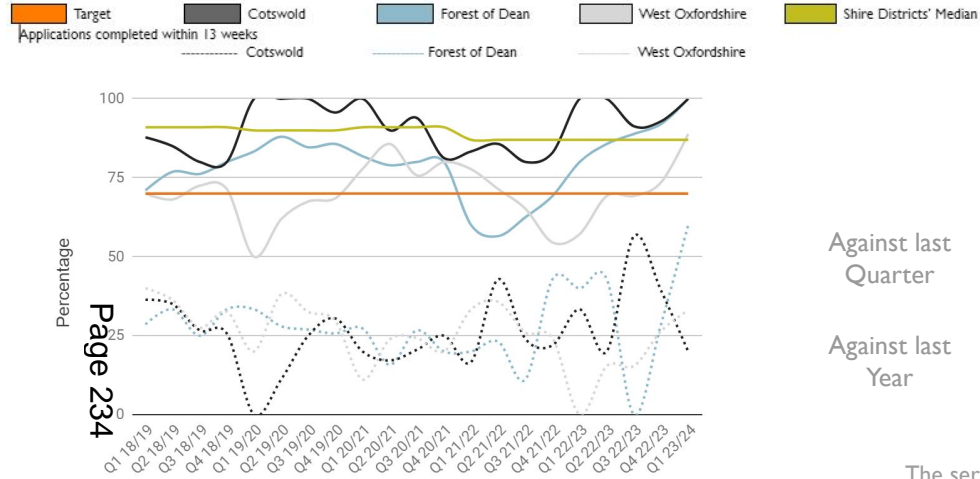
Performance for Development Management continues to improve across the application types.

The key findings not requiring Member authorisation from the PAS report that went to each cabinet this quarter have been implemented which has seen an upturn in performance across the partnership.

If applications are not acceptable they are being refused early on in the process and if more than “simple tweaks” are required for an application, the Pre-App service is used.

Charges for the Pre-App service were launched in April which has resulted in more revenue and less enquiries. This has had an impact on the turnaround times for applications. Officers consider that if performance continues at this level then risk of special measures is mitigated

Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



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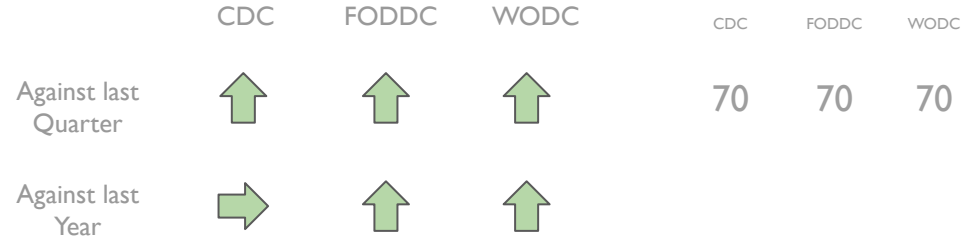
How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time

PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

2022 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	87.18	96/181	4/6	42/72	Third
Forest	92.00	63/181	2/6	24/72	Second
West	76.55	164/181	4/5	64/72	Bottom

Direction of Travel

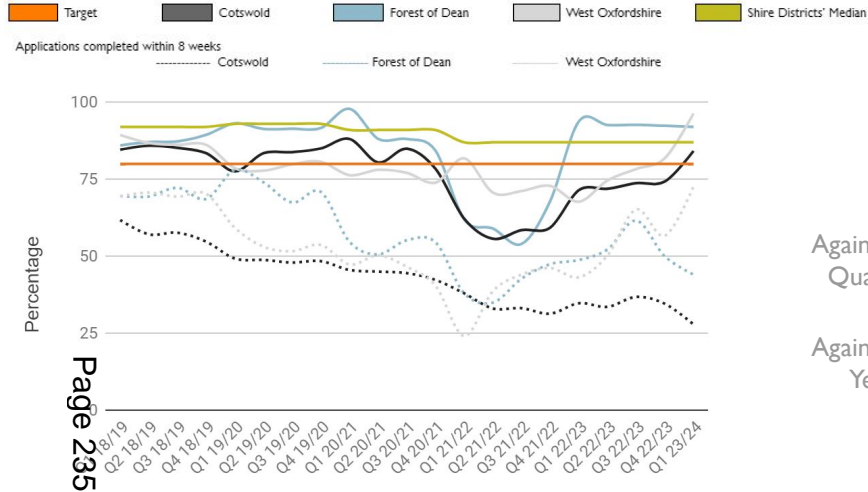


The service has also performed very well processing Major applications within times, improving from last year to 100.00% for the quarter.

Five major applications were determined during Q1.

[See slide for Minor Developments for further narrative](#)

Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



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How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time

PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

2022 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	70.89	172/181	6/6	69/72	Bottom
Forest	91.30	69/181	1/6	26/72	Second
West	75.52	152/181	5/5	61/72	Bottom

Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC	Target		
	CDC	FODDC	WODC	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↑	65	65	65
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑			

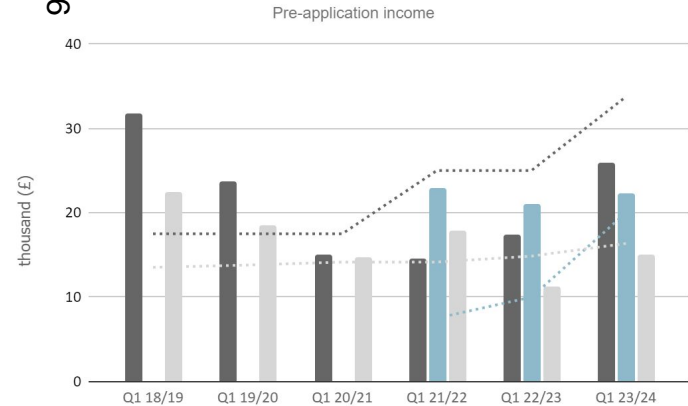
Determination times for Other applications have also improved reaching a rate of 84.21% for the quarter.

This is the first time the target has been exceeded since Q3 2020-21.

247 Other applications were determined in Q1.

[See slide for Minor Developments for additional narrative](#)

Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
<i>Total Income</i>			
Against last Qtr	↑	↓	↓
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑
<i>Pre App Income</i>			
Against last Qtr	↑	↑	↑
Against last Year	↓	↑	↑

Targets Q1

Total Planning Income	155928
Pre App Income	33750

At the end of Q1, total planning income for the Council exceeded the target. In comparison to Q1 2022-23, there has been an increase for total planning income and pre-app income, although the target for Q1 pre-app income was not met.

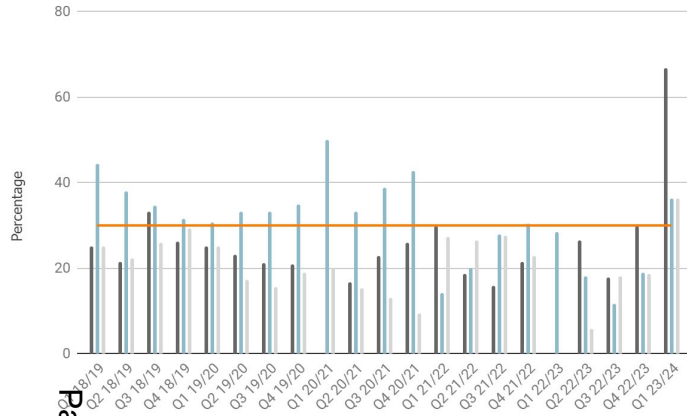
Due to the cost of living crisis and the slow down in the economy, we may be seeing a slow down in larger developments in particular which could have an impact on income.

It is likely that we will continue to see fewer larger developments due to loss of confidence in the housing market coupled with the fact that the Council has a 5 year land supply so gets fewer speculative applications which tend to attract large fees.

How do we compare?

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) planned to benchmark back in [2021](#). No data is available in the public domain, but the data team has been in contact with PAS to find further information and are awaiting an update.

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



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Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC	Target		
	CDC	FODDC	WODC	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↑	30	30	30
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑			

This indicator seeks to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed (low is good).

Between 1 April 2023 and 30 June 2023, three appeals were decided; of which one decision was supported.

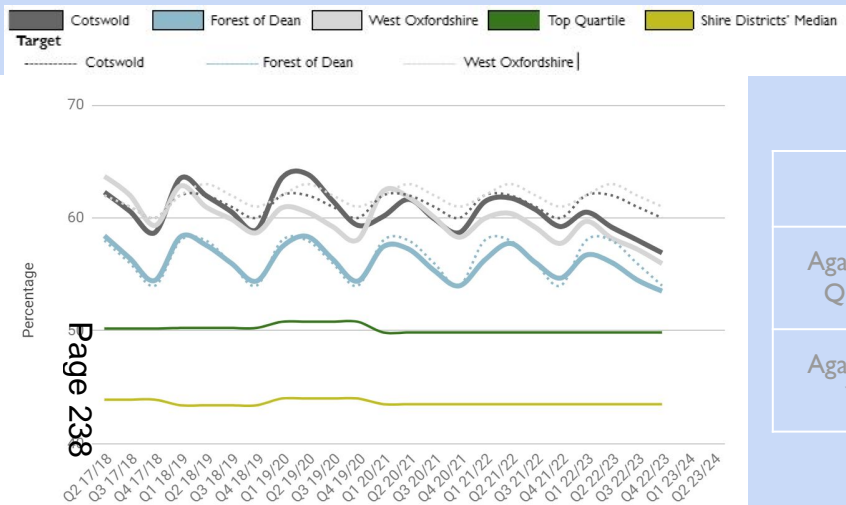
This equates to a percentage of 66.67% which is well above the target. As this metric is cumulative, it may well reduce throughout the year depending on how many appeals are received. As the base number of appeals is so low, which is good, when one or two are lost there is a disproportionate impact on the percentage outcome, which doesn't look favourable. This will need to be tracked over the year.

The service reports there has been a substantial reduction in enforcement cases.

How do we compare?

The Data and Performance Team have been in touch with the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a full data set.

Percentage of household waste recycled



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter			
Against last Year			

Target for Q1

CDC	FODDC	WODC
62	58	62

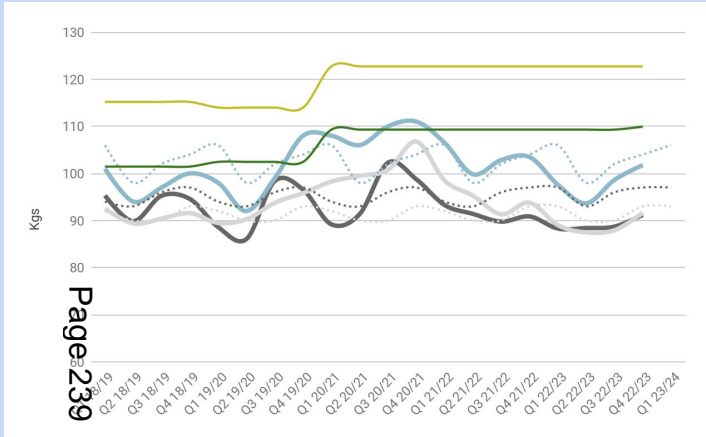
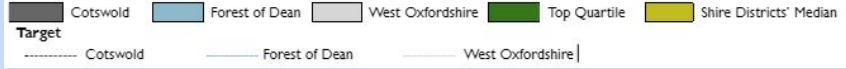
The service is awaiting the data regarding recycling rates for Q1 and this will be updated as soon as they are in

How do we compare?

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting

2021-22 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Mainly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	59.20 %	9/174	1/6	2/37	Top
Forest	54.30 %	25/175	3/6	8/37	Top
West	57.70 %	15/175	3/5	4/37	Top

Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



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Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter			
Against last Year			

Target for Q1

CDC	FODDC	WODC
97	106	93

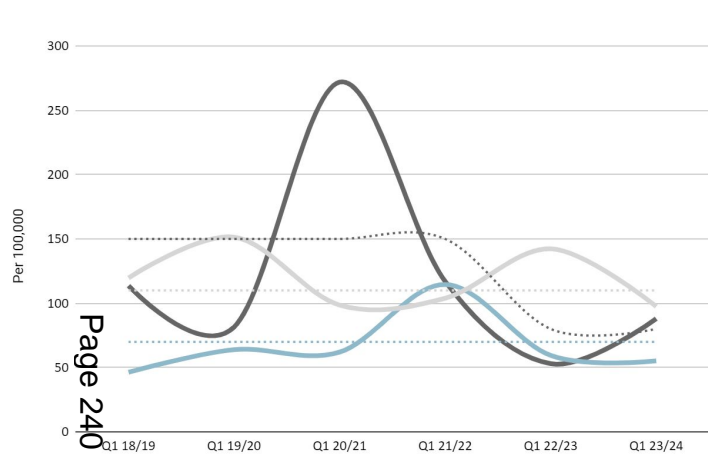
The service is awaiting the data regarding tonnage for Q1 and this will be updated as soon as they are in

How do we compare?

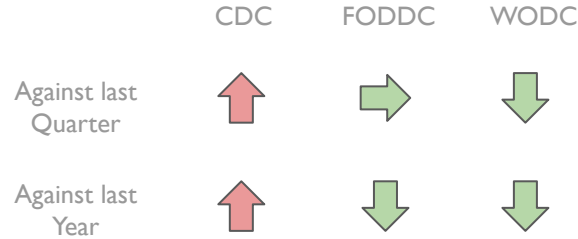
Residual household waste per household (kg/household)

2021-22 Benchmark	Tonnage	District Rank	County Rank	Mainly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	364.70	16/174	2/6	4/37	Top
Forest	412.10	38/174	4/6	12/37	Top
West	377.90	23/174	4/5	10/37	Top

Missed bins per 100,000



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	80	70	110

The number of missed bins per 100,000 increased in Q1 .

The number of missed bins for Q1 are above target and higher than both last quarter and this time last year. This has been attributed to issues with one particular round which has now been rectified. There has been a lack of supervisors at Ubico which could also have had an impact on this figure. Further training will mitigate this.

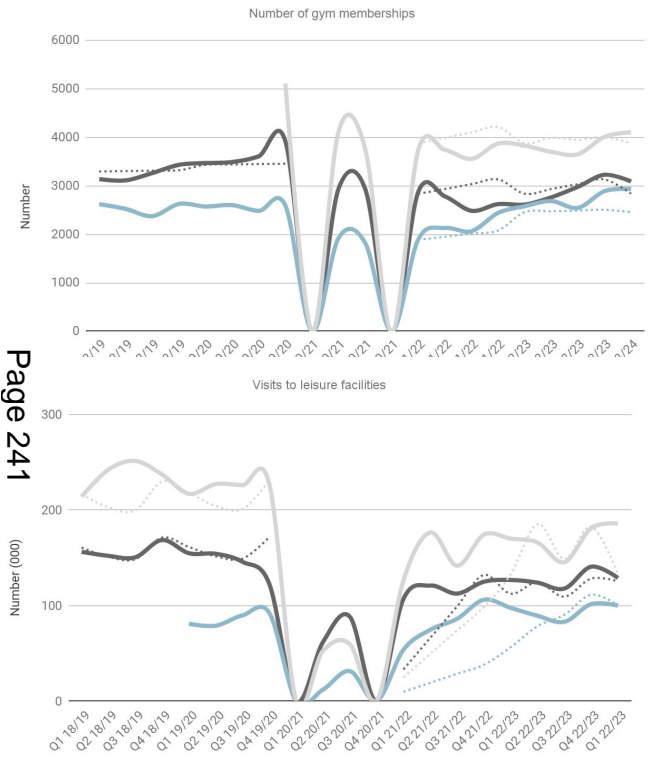
Note: since the implementation of In-Cab technology, the data source for missed collections is Alloy, In-Cab's back office system. This data source is more accurate than the previous data source.

The missed bins target was revised to 80 per 100,000 scheduled collections from 2022-23 Q1 to reflect improvements made over the previous year

How do we compare?

The Data Team are currently working with partners to compile the data return for APSE performance networks which will then provide benchmarking for this metric.

Number of visits to the three leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



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Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Gym Memberships			
Against last Quarter	↓	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑
Leisure Visits			
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Gym Memberships			
Target	2838	2459	3877
Leisure Visits			
Target	125k	100k	180k

How do we compare?

The Data Team are currently working with partners to compile the data return for APSE performance networks which will then provide benchmarking for this metric.

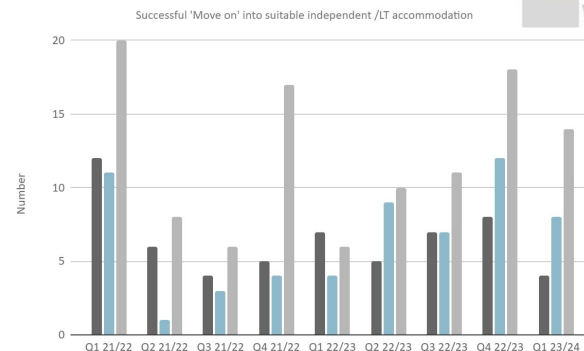
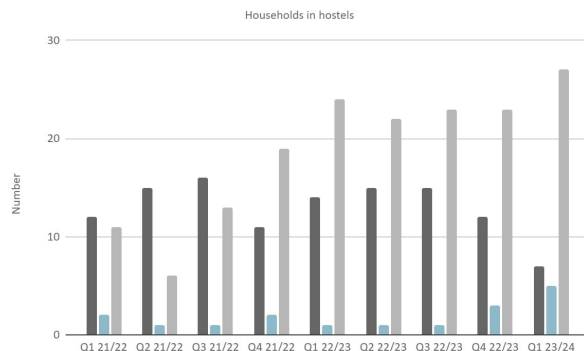
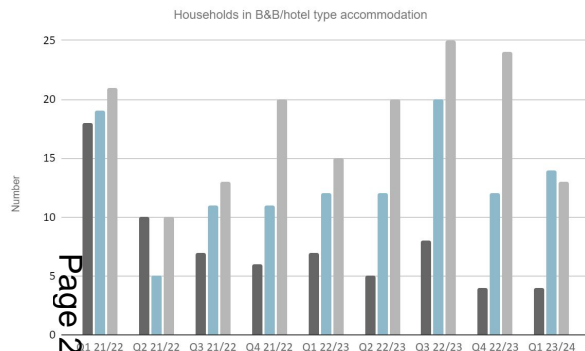
The leisure targets were reviewed at the end of 2021-22 which resulted in increases in the target for visitor numbers.

Visits to leisure facilities at Cotswold decreased from last quarter but are 2k plus over this time last year.

Gym memberships remain steady albeit with a slight dip in numbers. An uplift in memberships compared to quarter four 2022-23 is apparent.

Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels



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Direction of Travel

		CDC	FODDC	WODDC
Against last Quarter	B&B/Hotels	➡	⬆	⬇
Against last Year	B&B/Hotels	⬇	⬆	⬇
Against last Quarter	Hostels	⬇	⬆	⬆
Against last Year	Hostels	⬇	⬆	⬆
Against last Quarter	Move Ons	⬇	⬇	⬇
Against last Year	Move Ons	⬇	⬆	⬆

Although homelessness continues to be an issue, the number of households presenting as homeless is going down at Cotswold, largely due to our strong prevention and early intervention focus. This is having a knock on effect in reducing the numbers of in B&B and hostels, and therefore is also reducing the temporary accommodation and move on.

As there has been a reduction in homelessness at Cotswold, West and Forest households have been able to utilise hostels in the district, therefore they are still running at capacity, with costs being recharged to the relevant authority. There are 3 hostels located in Cotswold district, one of which is exclusively for Cotswold Households.

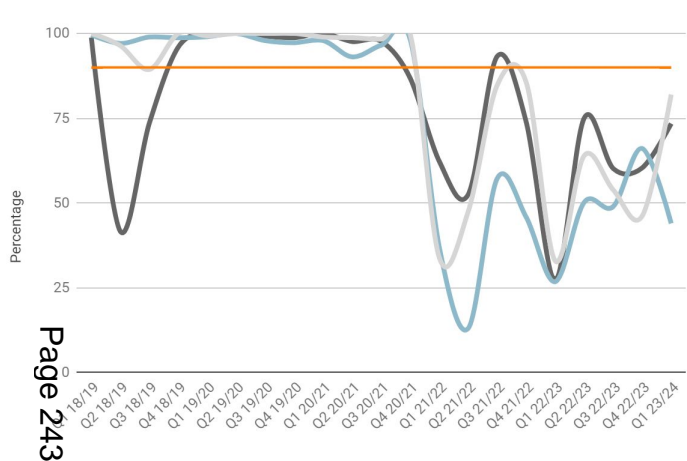
Cotswold DC received a Homelessness Prevention Grant Top aimed at relieving some of the pressures around the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Usage of the grant to provide additional specialist staffing to free up the wider Housing Team has been approved alongside increasing prevention measure.

Further funding to work with Housing Association partners is being explored with the aim of delivering additional affordable properties, further easing pressures on the housing system from the refugee crisis. If deliverable, and developer dependant, these properties may become available in Q3/Q4

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	90	90	90

The Councils performance has improved since last quarter and dramatically since last year. Although it is still below the 90% target, sitting at 73%.

The service has been working with internal consultees to build relationships and following these meetings, the consultees now understand the issues that can arise from slow responses.

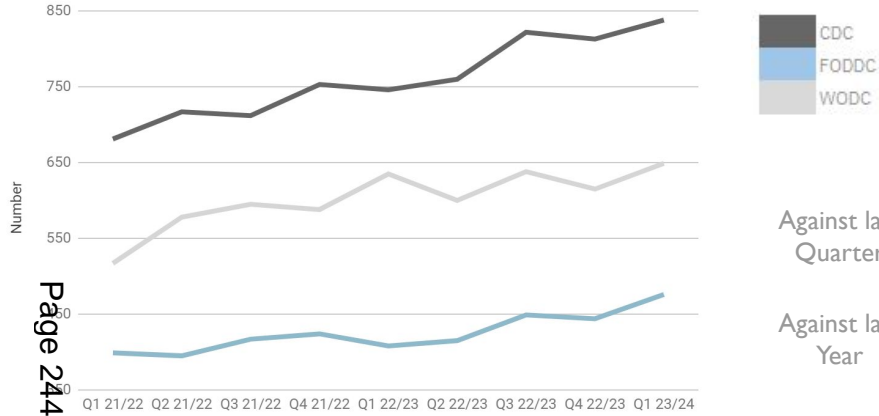
The service is looking to streamline and this will include further training and discussions so that consultees know what is required of them.

The HLMR project will start later in the year.

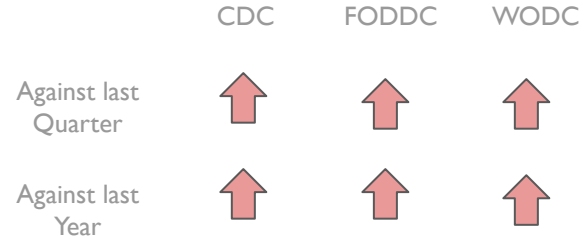
How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1



Properties continue to be added and removed from the list but as the graph indicates there is an upward trend.

Maintaining registers of long-term empty properties, can help monitor the situation, target interventions, and communicate with property owners more effectively. The LTE list is constantly being addressed with all owners being contacted by email, phone or letter in an attempt to bring properties back into use

There have been challenges within the team due to resource issues which has meant the strategy to identify and tackle the issue of long-term empty properties effectively has lost focus. However, the service reports the resource issue is now resolved and work will resume.

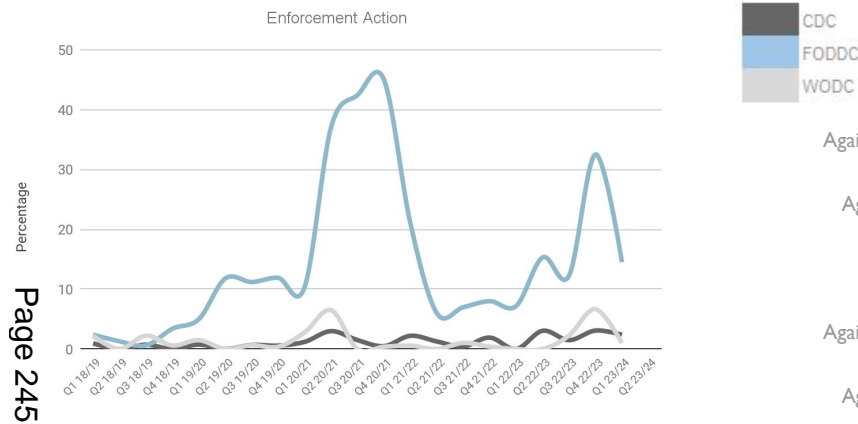
The service reports that properties are staying on the LTE list longer; anecdotal evidence suggests there are difficulties in getting building supplies for refurb work as well as the impact of the cost of living crisis. Most properties are individually owned and have to be followed up individually which is resource intensive, and will not result in the removal of large numbers from the LTE list.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action

(defined as a warning letter; fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)



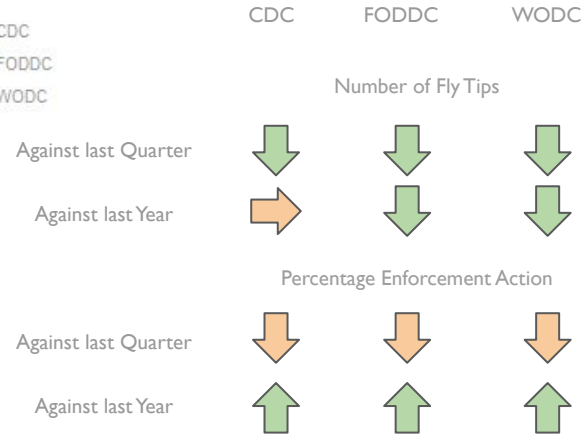
Page 245

How do we compare?

Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England
There are 301 authorities with a total of 995545 Fly Tips reported (Range - 34830)

	No. Fly Tips for 2022-23	% Total Fly Tips	Absolute Value from Highest No. Fly Tips	Absolute Value from Lowest No. Fly Tips
Cotswold	1092	0.11%	33738	1092
Forest	1569	0.16%	33261	1569
West	1150	0.12%	33680	1150

Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

CDC FODDC WODC

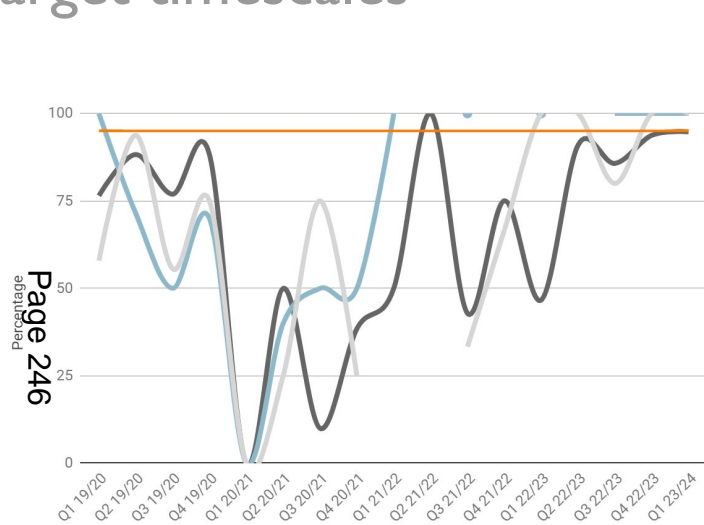
No Target

There was a reduction in fly tipping across the district from last quarter. This has been attributed to the installation of CCTV cameras at fly tipping hot spots. This has also facilitated gathering evidence for enforcement action.

Although the enforcement action percentage has dropped to 2.38%, the Council has one case to be heard in September and 3 cases that are being recommended for prosecution including one for fly tipping at Green Lane. Four warning letters and 6 FPNs were issued in the quarter. The amendment for increased powers for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) has not yet been implemented.

The service are also working with Ubico to tackle side waste being left out by residents.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	→	→
Against last Year	↑	→	→

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	95	95	95

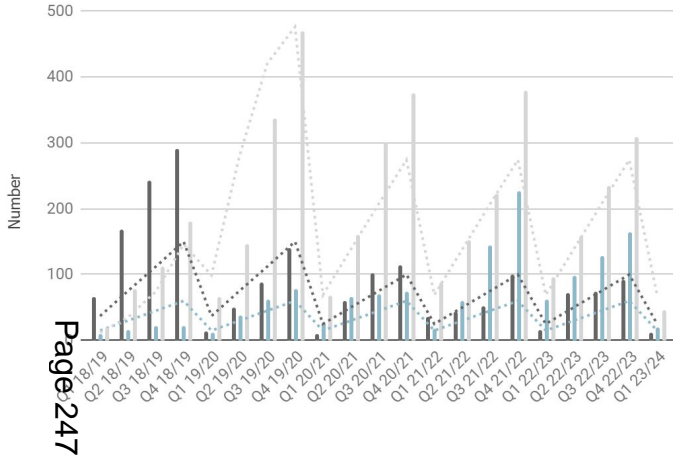
The Council had 19 inspections, one of which was not inspected within the allotted time. The premises that was not inspected in time was a family business that worked irregular hours and the inspector needed to visit when they were in production. There have always been a higher number of required inspections in the district as there are more complex businesses within the district.

High risk work is naturally prioritised which can have an impact on lower risk scheduled inspection rates. The service now has a useful dashboard which is helpful for monitoring team performance and tracking lower risk scheduled inspections within the team.

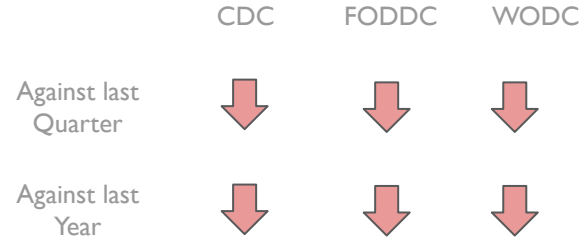
There were two premises that required improvement following scheduled inspections; both of which have all improved to a score of 5.

How do we compare?
APSE performance networks are introducing benchmarking for environmental sectors for 2023-24

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target for Q1	25	15	69

Eleven affordable rent properties have been delivered in Cotswold at Upper Rissington and South Cerney despite the forecast of 68. Following changes within the team, work is underway to contact the Registered Providers (RPs) to assess the situation. Having contacted one of the RPs, the service report that 17 of the forecast properties for Q1, should actually have been forecast for Q1 2024-25.

The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years.

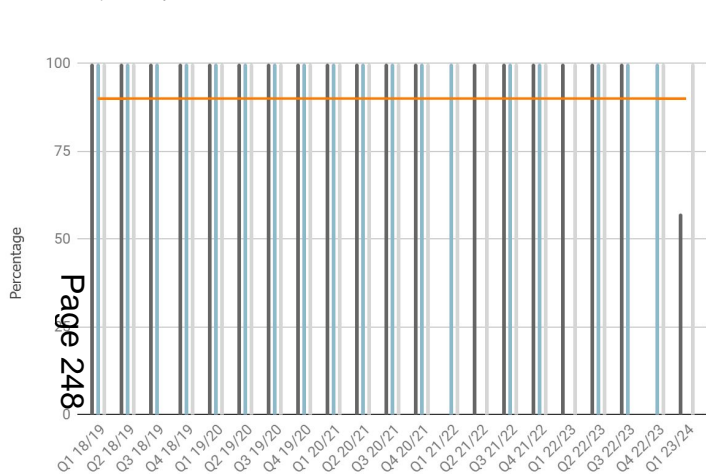
How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Note: this data is collected cumulatively from the beginning of the financial year to account for peaks and troughs

% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day

(including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries)



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	→
Against last Year	↓	↓	→

Target for Q1

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Target	90	90	90

There were seven notifications received in Q1, three of which were not reviewed within one working day.

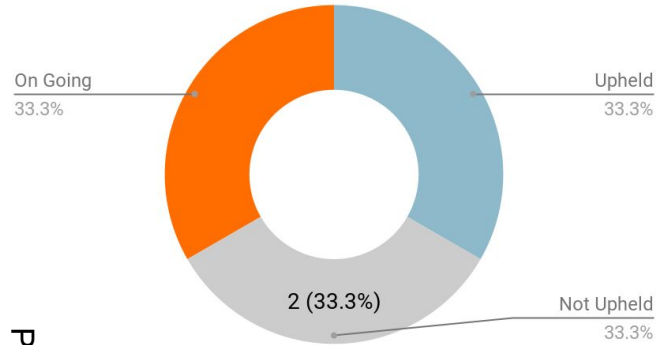
These notifications upon review, did not require a one day urgent response and the services are looking to ensure cases are managed and updated appropriately.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

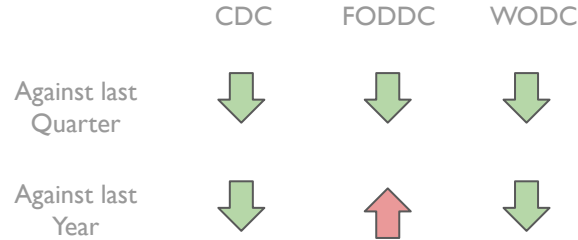
Number of complaints upheld

Complaints by Status



Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1



Target for Q1

No Target

Target for 2023/24

No Target

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How do we compare?

The complaints and enquiries received in the period by the Ombudsman
The provisions made in the period by the Ombudsman
Compliance with recommendations recorded during the period by the Ombudsman

2022-23	Received	Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy
Cotswold	10	1	100%	N/A	0%
Forest	6	1	100%	100%	0%
West	12	2	50%	N/A	100%
Similar Organisation			59%	100%	15%

Overall low numbers of complaints with a balanced picture of upheld/not upheld.

See the table on the following page for a breakdown of those upheld and partially upheld.

A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st October 2021.

The new process has the following stages:

- Stage 1: Relevant service area responds to complaint within 10 working days
- Stage 2: Complaint is reviewed by Corporate Responsibility Team, response is signed off by relevant Business Manager, and sent to complainant within 10 working days
- Stage 3: Complaint is reviewed by relevant Business Manager, signed off by relevant Group Manager, and sent to complainant within 15 working days

Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Council Tax	Ongoing issue with Council Tax dept	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	8
Planning	Complaint via Ombudsman regarding fathers land	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	14

Agenda Item 12



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023
Subject	FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q1 2023/24
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report sets of the latest budget monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year.
Annexes	Annex A – Revenue Budget Summary Annex B – Capital Programme Summary Annex C – Non-Treasury Management Prudential Indicators
Recommendation(s)	<i>That the Committee:</i> <i>1. Reviews and notes the financial position set out in this report</i> <i>2. Endorses the recommendation in paragraph 8.3 that the Cabinet Transformation Working Group review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico and provide Cabinet with an update in November on options to mitigate the forecast financial position.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering our services to the highest standards
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** This report provides members with the first outturn forecast and monitoring position statement for the 2023/24 financial year and should be viewed as an update to the *2023/24 Financial Performance – High-Risk Budgets* report considered by Cabinet in July 2023.
- 1.2** The purpose of this report is to notify members of any significant variations to budgets identified in the initial budget monitor exercise, highlight any key financial issues, and to inform members of options and further action to be taken.
- 1.3** In common with the almost all local authorities, the council faces several external budget pressures that are impacting on its finances over the medium-term. There remains significant uncertainty around inflation and interest rates in the current financial year which exert an influence over the Council's budget both directly and indirectly.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1** This report sets out the outturn forecast for the financial year informed by the Q1 budget monitoring.
- 2.2** Based on the budget monitoring exercise undertaken for Q1 and an assessment of the risks and uncertainties facing the Council, the outturn forecast is and adverse variation of £0.448m



Table ES1 – Revenue Budget Outturn Forecast (Q1)

	2023/24 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Revenue Budget				
Subtotal Services	17,491	5,979	17,894	403
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,636)		(1,636)	0
Revised Subtotal Services	15,856	5,979	16,258	403
Corporate Income & Expenditure	(1,492)	(174)	(1,847)	(355)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	0	400	400
Net Budget Requirement	14,363	5,805	14,812	448
Funded by:				
Council Tax	(6,311)		(6,311)	0
Retained Business Rates	(4,389)		(4,389)	0
Government Funding - Grants	(2,905)		(2,905)	0
Government Funding - NHB	(290)		(290)	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	393		393	0
TOTAL Funding	(13,503)	0	(13,503)	0
Budget shortfall/(surplus)	861		1,309	448

Table ES2 – Revenue Budget – Reconciliation of variations (Q1)

	Positive variation (£'000)	Adverse Variation (£'000)
Variations at a glance		
Fees & Charges - Income Shortfall		270
Overspend - Waste & Recycling containers		50
Commercial Property - Rental income shortfall (risk)		66
Pay Award (risk)		400
Savings Target shortfall (risk)		100
Other service variations		59
Ubico Contract forecast underspend	(42)	
Treasury Management Income	(200)	
Reduced Revenue financing of Capital programme	(100)	
Other Corporate Income and Expenditure	(154)	
Subtotal	(496)	945
Net Outturn Variation		448



The material forecast variations are listed below with a detailed table of all service variations in Annex A. Please note that the actual spend to date shown in Table ESI differs from the detailed position shown in Annex A as this adjusts for the timing difference on Housing Benefit Payments and 2022/23 accruals.

- Building Control income is below budget with a lower number of applications in quarter one when compared to the same period in prior year (121 applications compared to 175 in Q1 2022/23) in part due to continuing financial climate and uncertainty, £0.124m income shortfall forecast.
- Public Convenience income shortfall due to reduced footfall. Forecast income shortfall of £0.076m.
- Household waste bins, bags and containers - overspend forecast of £50k, overspend due to increased demand, increased cost of materials and longer lead times.
- Land charge income is performing below budget with income received forecast to be £70k below budget at the end of the financial year in part due to the rise in free unofficial personal searches as well as current economic uncertainty leading to a reduced demand.
- Ubico are currently forecasting a net underspend of £42k as a result of lower than estimated diesel costs, savings from resource changes to garden waste service delivery netted off forecast external support to undertake modelling of options for waste and recycling rounds, higher repairs and vehicle hire costs for garden waste vehicles.

- 2.3** The adverse income variations outlined above are unlikely to recover in the current financial year with an under performance against income budgets in previous financial years. This will need to be addressed for the 2024/25 budget and over the MTFS period.
- 2.4** The Cabinet Transform Working Group (CTWG) will continue to consider the forecast outturn, financial risks and uncertainties set out in this report. The CTWG will specifically be considering proposals from service delivery partners to contribute to the Council's Savings plans and will be closely monitoring the achievement of savings targets.
- 2.5** Without any improvement in the forecast outturn for the year, corrective action or additional savings the outturn variation would have to be met from the Financial Resilience reserve. Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and further management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the current forecast position. Members should note that the budgeted use of the Financial Resilience reserve utilised to set a balanced budget was £0.861m. Without mitigating and corrective action, this would increase to £1.309m and is clearly not an acceptable position.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL



2.6 A summary of the Capital Programme outturn forecast is shown in the table below.

Table ES2 – Capital Programme Outturn Forecast (Q1)

Capital Programme	2023/24 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2022/23 (£'000)	2023/24 LAB (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q3 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Leisure & Communities	1,387	4	1,391	(28)	1,391	0
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	4,001	208	4,209	1,763	3,918	(291)
Environment	1,956	173	2,129	(85)	583	(1,546)
Retained & Corporate	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	350	65	415	0	100	(315)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	191	0	191	0	191	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	28	0	28	0	28	0
Land, Legal and Property	500	370	870	0	870	0
Transformation and Investment	5,486	294	5,780	81	1,216	(4,564)
TOTAL Capital Programme	13,899	1,114	15,013	1,731	8,297	(6,716)

2.7 As set out in the *Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Outturn* report to Cabinet in July 2023, slippage of £1.114m from the 2022/23 capital programme has been included in the revised capital programme set out in Table ES2 above. The initial outturn forecast for the current year is an underspend of £6.716m with slippage likely of £2.027m.

2.8 The forecast assumes that the Strategic Property Acquisition (included in the summary line Transformation and Investment) will not proceed in the current financial year. With interest rates remaining relatively high, any future acquisition decision will need to be supported by a full business case setting out the wider benefits and financial impact over the immediate and longer-term.

2.9 The report outlines a number of risks and uncertainties regarding the outturn forecast, particularly around income performance assumptions given the volatility.

2.10 Financial Sustainability – The 2023/24 revenue budget is held in balance through the use of £0.861m of the Financial Resilience Reserve. It should be noted that without any improvement in the forecast during the year, corrective action or additional savings the outturn variation would have to be funded from the same reserve at year end. Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and further management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the current forecast outturn.



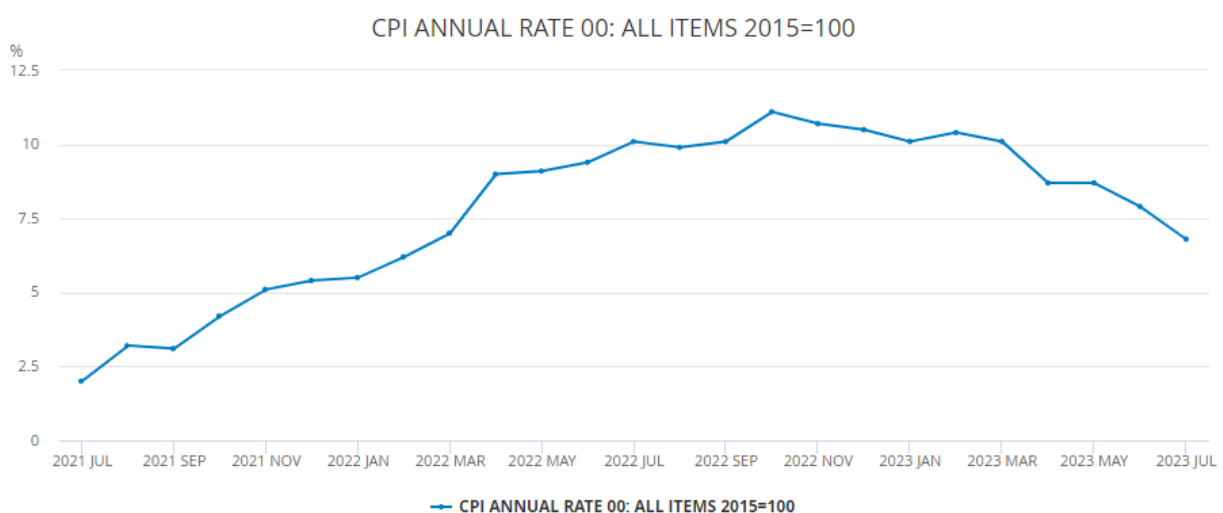
- 2.11 When taken with the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, the Council would be utilising £1.309m of the Financial Resilience reserve to support the budget which is not sustainable over the medium-term.
- 2.12 Financial Performance reports will be presented to members at the December 2023 and March 2024 Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

3. EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 The *2023/24 Financial Performance – High-Risk Budgets* report to Cabinet in July 2023 set out the external economic pressures on the Council.

Inflationary Pressures

- 3.2 The level of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, for July 2023 is 6.8% (7.9% in June 2023). Although it is not the Government's preferred measure of inflation, the Retail Prices Index is 9.0% (10.7% in June 2023). Core inflation (as defined by the Office for National Statistics as the CPI Rate excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco) remained at 6.9% (no change from June 2023). It is this measure that has concerned the Bank of England and led to increases in interest rates.



- 3.3 Although general inflation has reduced since the start of the calendar year, the Council is subject to specific inflationary pressures on its services (e.g. fuel costs on waste and recycling service) which have tended to track higher than CPI and RPI.



- 3.4 The Council will need to take into account the inflationary pressures when monitoring financial performance during the year and in assessing the impact on 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets.

Inflationary Pressures – Pay Award

- 3.5 With inflation remaining relatively high and not reducing as quickly as anticipated, this may lead to higher wage demands for both private and public sector workers.
- 3.6 The assumption made for the 2023/24 budget was for an average Pay Award of 4% across Publica, Ubico and Retained staff. Inflationary provision of £1.2m has been included in the budget for the pay award across Publica and Ubico contracts and for retained staff costs.
- 3.7 Local Government employers made a final offer to the unions in March 2023. With effect from 01 April 2023, the offer made by employers was:
- an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive (equating to an increase of between 3.88% and 9.42% depending on the paygrade)
 - an increase of 3.88% on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer
 - an increase of 3.88% on all allowances
- 3.8 For reference, the financial implications of the employers offer outlined above would have been broadly similar in terms of cost when compared to 2022/23 although the Council has allowed for a higher level of pay inflation in the current year's budget. **The estimated additional financial impact of the employers offer would be around £0.400m.**
- 3.9 The unions have rejected this offer and are seeking a pay increase of RPI Inflation plus 2% at every spinal column point. **The estimated additional financial impact of the union proposal would be around £0.700m.**
- 3.10 At the time of writing this report it is unclear when the pay award will be settled and at what level. Unison undertook a disaggregated ballot of members on strike action but fell short of the 50% legal threshold required to strike in a national ballot (75% of members voted in favour of strike action but on a turnout of 31%). In a response to a joint letter from Local Government unions dated 16 August 2023 seeking an improved pay offer, Local Government employers reaffirmed the position that the *“employers’ offer has been repeatedly and unanimously reaffirmed as full and final since it was made on 23 February.”*



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Energy Costs

- 3.11** The 2023/24 budget and MTFs recognised the significant increase in Energy prices experienced during the previous financial year. Government support for businesses through the energy price cap ended in March 2023.
- 3.12** Retail prices remain well above the pre-2021 average meaning the Council will continue to pay much more for energy than it did prior to 2021/22. At this stage it is too early to assess whether the additional amounts included in the budget are adequate. The Council is investing in measures to provide green energy (Solar PV) and to reduce its energy consumption over the medium-term.

Interest Rates

- 3.13** The Bank of England has increased interest rates 14 times since December 2021 in an effort to mitigate inflationary pressures with the latest increase of 0.25% taking the base rate to 5.25% on 04 August 2023. The council's treasury management advisors have forecast further increases during the year with an expectation that the base rate may peak at 5.50% to 5.75%.
- 3.14** In order to support the Capital Programme, the Council may need to undertake borrowing during the current financial year although this is dependent on a number of factors. Clearly, with PWLB interest rates remaining relatively high compared to the previous 12 years, this will impact the expenditure required to service any borrowing the Council undertakes.
- 3.15** The Council has limited and reducing internal resources to support the capital programme (capital receipts, earmarked reserves). This is not unique to Cotswold District Council with reports in specialist press (e.g. Public Finance) of Councils shelving or scrapping planned capital projects as others costs continue to rise and/or the need to find savings to balance the budget.
- 3.16** With interest rates expected to remain relatively high during the financial year, the Council will need to ensure capital expenditure and capital financing decisions are made 'in the round'. This will ensure that existing and new capital schemes are not considered in isolation and are prioritised against the Council's Corporate Plan and reference to affordability and deliverability.
- 3.17** An updated Asset Management Strategy is being prepared which will review and assess the Council's assets and bring forward recommendations for the retention or disposal of the Council's land and property holdings linked to the Council's Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Asset disposals would generate a capital receipt which could be utilised in place of external borrowing. The Asset Management Strategy will be considered by Cabinet in the autumn.



4. 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET

- 4.1 The Revenue Budget was approved by Council at their meeting on 15 February 2023 with no adjustments made during the financial year to date.

Table 1 – Revenue Budget reconciliation

Budget Item	(£'000)
Original Budget (Council, 15 February 2023)	14,363
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Latest Budget	14,363

- 4.2 At 30 June 2023 the Council's financial system shows unadjusted net expenditure of £5.805m against the profiled budget of £3.132m. Please note that the actual spend to date shown in Table ES1 differs from the detailed position shown in Annex A as this adjusts for the timing difference on Housing Benefit Payments and 2022/23 accruals. The financial position is expected to remain challenging during the financial year with the Council facing significant budget pressures as outlined earlier in the report.
- 4.3 The outturn forecast for 2023/24 of £14.812m results in a forecast variance of £0.448m. Table 2 provides members with an overview of the significant outturn variations that have been forecast across services with Tables 3 and 4 providing detail on the non-service revenue expenditure and income budgets.



Table 2 – Revenue Budget Outturn Forecast summary

	2023/24 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Revenue Budget				
Environmental & Regulatory Services	485	136	614	129
Business Sup. Svcs - Finance, HR, Procurement	1,120	445	1,120	0
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,359	565	2,359	0
Assets, Property & Regeneration	718	231	808	90
Publica Executives and Modernisation	131	33	131	0
Revenues & Housing Support	615	1,089	615	0
Environmental Services	4,808	1,061	4,891	83
Leisure & Communities	1,918	(169)	1,953	35
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,947	1,775	1,947	0
Democratic Services	1,114	501	1,114	0
Retained and Corporate	2,277	313	2,343	66
Subtotal Services	17,491	5,979	17,894	403
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,636)		(1,636)	0
Revised Subtotal Services	15,856	5,979	16,258	403
Corporate Income & Expenditure	(1,492)	(174)	(1,847)	(355)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	0	400	400
Net Budget Requirement	14,363	5,805	14,812	448
Funded by:				
Council Tax	(6,311)		(6,311)	0
Retained Business Rates	(4,389)		(4,389)	0
Government Funding - Grants	(2,905)		(2,905)	0
Government Funding - NHB	(290)		(290)	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	393		393	0
TOTAL Funding	(13,503)	0	(13,503)	0
Budget shortfall/(surplus)	861		1,309	448



Table 3 – Corporate Income and Expenditure

	2023/24 Revised Budget to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Corporate Income and Expenditure				
Contingency, other non-service income and expenditure	134	327	0	(134)
Savings & Transformation Items (See Tables 5a and 5b)	(500)		(400)	100
Treasury Management - Interest Payable	99	0	99	0
Treasury Management - Interest Receivable	(817)	(274)	(1,017)	(200)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	17	0	17	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	200	0	100	(100)
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(625)	0	(645)	(20)
	(1,492)	53	(1,847)	(355)

Table 4 – Provisions and Risk

	2023/24 Profiled Budget to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Provisions and Risk				
Ubico Pay Inflation			200	200
Ubico Growth			0	0
Energy Costs			0	0
Publica Pay Inflation			200	200
Forecast Risk			0	0
	0	0	400	400

Key variations

- 4.4** The forecast outturn position is a net overspend/adverse variance of £0.572m. Without any improvement in the forecast during the year, corrective action or additional savings the outturn variation would have to be funded from the Financial Resilience reserve at year end. Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and further management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the current forecast outturn position. Members should note that the budgeted use of reserve utilised to set a balanced budget was £0.861m. Without mitigating and corrective action this would increase to £1.433m and is clearly not an acceptable position.



- 4.5** Annex A provides a detailed analysis and includes commentary against the most significant variances. This report highlights a number of budget variances across a range of service areas; excluding those where the income and expenditure variance are comparable and offset against each other (net nil variance).
- 4.6** The material items which have had an impact on the Council's revenue budget are summarised below with narrative explaining the reasons(s) for the variation in the paragraphs that follow.
- Forecast underachievement of income – Building Control (£0.124m), Land Charges (£0.070m), Public conveniences (£0.076m)
 - Pay Award risk (£0.400m adverse) – see paragraphs 3.5 to 3.10 and 4.26 to 4.27
 - Savings Target Risk (£0.100m adverse) – see Section 5 of the report
 - Treasury Management performance (£0.200m positive variation)
 - Other Corporate Income and Expenditure budgets (£0.254m positive variation)
- 4.7** The building control service operates in a competitive market, although the Council has retained its market share income is below budget with a lower number of applications in quarter one when compared to the same period in prior year (121 applications compared to 175 in Q1 2022/23) in part due to continuing financial climate and uncertainty, £0.124m income shortfall forecast.
- 4.8** Income from land charges is below budget with income received forecast to be £70k below budget at the end of the financial year due in part to the rise in free unofficial Personal Searches (through Personal Search Agents). Current economic uncertainty, the rise in interest rates and inflation along with forecasts of falls in house prices into 2023 and 2024 will inevitably lead to a reduced demand for this service.
- 4.9** Public Convenience income shortfall due to reduced footfall. Forecast net overspend of £0.076m. Cabinet approved increases to the service charges for the Council's Public Conveniences from 01 April 2023. The service requires an ongoing subsidy of £0.194m given the cost of maintaining the 15 sites the Council operates. There has been a reduced level of usage since the Covid pandemic with an income shortfall of £32k in 2021/22 and £26k in 2022/23.
- 4.10** Household waste bins and receptacles – an overspend is forecast of £50k, due to increased demand, increased cost of materials and longer lead times. This will be monitored throughout the year and reviewed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process with consideration of developer contributions.

- 4.11** There is a risk that the Council will not receive the budgeted level of commercial rental income given the challenging economic conditions across retail and office sectors and downward pressure on rents. An income shortfall of £0.066m is currently forecast but will be reviewed for the Q2 report alongside the wider Asset Management Strategy.
- 4.12** Where income shortfalls have been forecast, it is expected that Business Managers and Assistant Directors evaluate options for corrective action. It is unlikely income will recover in the current financial year and may have a detrimental impact on the Council's finances over the medium-term. The evaluation must include an assessment of the service cost and income, market positioning, and unit cost and benchmarking data analysis. Options should outline, if possible, how the service can be delivered in a financially sustainable way.
- 4.13** The Council's Environmental Services (grounds maintenance, street cleaning, domestic waste collection, recycling collections etc.) are provided by Ubico Ltd. The contract with Ubico for 2023/24 of £8.275m is currently estimated to cost £8.232m – a net variation of £0.043m. The net reduction is a result of lower than budgeted diesel costs (fuel rate reduced from £1.45 p/l to £1.25 p/l), reduced staff costs from changes made to garden waste rounds. There are forecast increases in expenditure from higher repair, maintenance and hire costs of the garden waste fleet as a result of ageing vehicles which are due to be replaced imminently.
- 4.14** The tables below provides members with an overview of the financial performance of the Ubico Contract (Table 5a) and non-Ubico expenditure and income from fees and charges (Table 5b)

Table 5a – Ubico Contract Outturn Forecast (Q1)



Waste, Recycling, Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Services	Ubico Contract Costs OB (£'000)	Ubico Contract Costs CS (£'000)	Outturn Forecast (£'000)	Outturn Variance (£'000)
WST004 Bulky Household Waste	0	0	0	0
Car Parks GM [CTW668]	63	63	65	2
CCM001 Cemetery/Churchyards GM [CTW688]	175	175	180	5
RYC002 Garden Waste Collection [CTW634]	1,315	1,316	1,336	20
WST001 Household Waste [CTW611]	1,622	1,623	1,614	(9)
RYC001 Recycling [CTW633]	2,933	2,935	2,897	(38)
RYC003 Refuse/Recycling/Food Waste [CTW635]	685	686	680	(6)
STC001 Street Cleaning [CTW666]	1,465	1,466	1,451	(16)
Trinity Road Offices GM [CTW668]	16	16	16	0
Grand Total	8,275	8,281	8,239	(42)

Table 5b – Ubico, Non-Ubico, Fees & Charges performance (Q1)

	Gross Service Cost LAB (£'000)	Income LAB (£'000)	Net Service Cost (£'000)	Expⁿ Forecast (£'000)	Income Forecast (£'000)	Net Service Forecast (£'000)	Net Service Variation (£'000)
Waste, Recycling, Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Services							
WST004 Bulky Household Waste	57	(79)	(22)	57	(79)	(22)	0
Car Parks GM [CTW668]	63	0	63	65	0	65	2
CCM001 Cemetery/Churchyards GM [CTW688]	175	0	175	180	0	180	5
RYC002 Garden Waste Collection [CTW634]	1,353	(1,301)	52	1,373	(1,301)	72	20
WST001 Household Waste [CTW611]	1,781	(24)	1,757	1,822	(24)	1,798	41
RYC001 Recycling [CTW633]	3,245	(950)	2,295	3,207	(950)	2,257	(38)
RYC003 Refuse/Recycling/Food Waste [CTW635]	686	0	686	680	0	680	(6)
STC001 Street Cleaning [CTW666]	1,504	0	1,504	1,489	0	1,489	(16)
Trinity Road Offices GM [CTW668]	16	0	16	16	0	16	0
Grand Total	8,880	(2,353)	6,527	8,888	(2,353)	6,535	8

4.15 Performance against the Ubico Savings Target is outlined in Section 5 of this report



Treasury Management

- 4.16** Dividends from the Council's longer term investments (Pooled funds and Real Estate Investment Trusts) of £0.138m were received in the first quarter of the financial year achieving a return of over 5.3% (pooled funds) and around 2.8% (REIT). Interest from short term cash deposits with the Debt Management Office (DMO) was £0.1m by the end of the first quarter due to larger surplus balances than estimated being available to invest and interest rates rising at higher rate than budgeted. Investment income is forecast to be £0.200m higher than budgeted at the end of the financial year.
- 4.17** With the expectation of improved investment returns during the financial year, it was agreed at July Cabinet that any additional investment income above the budgeted level is transferred to a new earmarked reserve ("Treasury Management Risk") to manage higher borrowing costs in the short-term and to mitigate potential changes to the accounting treatment of gains and losses on pooled funds from March 2025.
- 4.18** Council approved the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy) at their meeting on 15 February 2023. Audit and Governance Committee have responsibility for reviewing and monitoring treasury management arrangements in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and receiving performance reports. The Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 4.19** The CIPFA Code was updated in 2021 and includes the new requirement, mandatory from 1st April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are expected to be included in the Council's usual revenue and capital monitoring reports.
- 4.20** The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 was approved at a meeting on 15 February 2023. Audit and Governance Committee will consider the Q1 treasury management indicators at their meeting in October 2023.
- 4.21** An overview of the non-treasury management performance is set out in Section 6 of the report (Capital Programme) with Annex C providing further details of the relevant prudential indicators.



Corporate Income and Expenditure, Provisions and Risk

- 4.22** As outlined in Tables 3 and 4 there are a number of significant variations forecast across the Corporate Income and Expenditure budgets. These budgets support the General Fund Revenue budget and are typically the non-service items such as Treasury Management, financing, contingency budget and provisions for risk.
- 4.23** Paragraphs 4.15 and 4.16 highlighted the performance of the Council's Treasury Management Investments, largely due to the higher than anticipated interest rates. The outturn forecast is additional income of £0.200m.
- 4.24** The Council has in prior years financed ICT capital expenditure from the revenue budget – typically around £0.200m per annum. With the outturn forecast on ICT Capital indicating expenditure of £0.100m for the year the forecast for the revenue contribution (RCCO) has been matched leading to an underspend of £0.100m. Members will need to consider how ICT Capital expenditure should be financed in future years given the budget gap forecast in 20204/25 and over the MTF5 period.
- 4.25** The 2023/24 revenue budget includes a net transfer from earmarked reserves of £0.645m to fund specific related expenditure – predominantly around new burdens and homelessness. A further £20k transfer from the Transformation and Investment Programme reserve is proposed to fund external consultancy commissioned by Ubico to support the delivery of future savings and efficiencies.
- 4.26** Paragraphs 3.5 to 3.10 set out the current position regarding the 2023/24 Pay Award which remains uncertain in terms of timing and impact on the Council's finances. The assumption made at the time the budget was set was for the pay award to increase staff costs by 4% and has been included in service budgets and the Ubico contract sum. An additional amount is held as a contingency on the basis of the uncertain inflation environment.
- 4.27** Therefore, a significant element of the financial impact from the pay award (when agreed) is already provided for in the budget. The amount over and above this, (the estimated additional financial impact of the employers offer would be around £0.400m) represents the unfunded risk and is notionally identified as a provision on the revenue budget.



4.28 A contingency budget is held centrally to mitigate any in-year cost pressures from inflation or other unforeseen events. This is reported as uncommitted to in-part offset the pay award risks highlighted in the paragraphs above.

5. SAVINGS AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY

5.1 The 2023/24 Revenue Budget includes savings, cost reduction and additional income of £1.510m to mitigate budget pressures and to enable a balanced budget to be achieved. This included third party contract savings (£0.500m), expenditure savings (£0.456m), additional income from fees and charges (£0.415m), and corporate savings (£0.139m).

5.2 Savings proposals were reviewed to ensure they were robust and could be delivered. There is always a risk with a savings programme – savings may not be delivered in full or on time. Close monitoring of the savings programme through the Cabinet Transform Working Group (CTWG) and through the quarterly financial performance reporting is important to highlight any issues and for action to be taken to bring savings or the budget back in line.

5.3 This section sets out the current forecast position on the delivery of the savings agreed as part of the revenue budget identifying any issues and options available to the Council to address under delivery.

5.4 CTWG's role is primarily to receive regular updates on progress against the Council's Savings and Transformation programme (including Publica and Ubico savings and efficiencies targets) as part of an ongoing strategy to mitigate the budget gap, any further adverse variation that may arise during the year, and to assess proposals for 2024/25 and later financial years.

5.5 Table 6a provides members with a summary of position at the end of Q1.



Table 6a – Savings Update

	2023/24 Budget Removed (£'000)	Tracker	2023/24 Forecast Position (£'000)	2023/24 Variation (£'000)
Savings already adjusted out of Service Budgets				
Corporate Savings				
LGPS - Secondary Rate (PIA) (Budget savings)	(139)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(139)	0
Expenditure Savings				
Remove permanent funding for Crowdfunding platform	(85)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(85)	0
Insurance Premium	(47)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(30)	17
Rationalisation of Postage	(20)	Slippage in Savings Delivery	(11)	9
Rationalisation of MFDs (Multifunction Devices)	(25)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(25)	0
Google / MS 365 Procurement proposal	(10)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(10)	0
Publica Contract - Net change in Establishment	(67)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(67)	0
Visitor information centre funding reduction	(27)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(27)	0
Internal audit days reduction	(20)	Slippage in Savings Delivery	0	20
Planning Appeals Budget	(40)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(40)	0
Recycling Budget Adjustments	(16)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(16)	0
Household Waste Budget adjustments	(9)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(9)	0
Recycling Credits	(90)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(90)	0
Fees and Charges				
Car Parking Fees (Sunday Charging)	0			0
Other Fees and Charges - Cost Recovery	(186)	Slippage in Savings Delivery	(142)	44
Garden Waste - fee increase	(229)	Underway/On-Track/Complete	(229)	0
	(1,010)		(920)	90

5.6 The forecast in Table 6a indicates £0.883m of the £1.010m savings already adjusted out of the revenue budget (around 87.4%) will be achieved. £0.127m (12.3%) is off-target and is largely due to under-performance of fees and charges income (Public Conveniences, Land Charges) as outlined earlier in the report. Expenditure savings arising from lower Insurance Premiums have been achieved, although this is below the anticipated level. A reduction in the level of audit days is not likely to take effect until 2024/25 due to notice periods required to make significant changes to the agreement with South West Audit Partnership (SWAP).

5.7 Table 6b provides members with an update on the performance against the Publica and Ubico savings targets (third party contract savings). A number of savings initiatives were identified as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process and were reviewed at Publica and Ubico shareholder forums. These initiatives required further scoping and planning before they could move into the delivery phase.



Table 6b – Savings Update

	2023/24 Original Net Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Forecast Savings (£'000)	2023/24 Variation (£'000)
Savings & Transformation Items			
Savings held 'below the line'		0	0
Publica Savings	(250)	(250)	0
Ubico/ESIP Savings	(250)	(150)	100
Other Corporate Savings		0	0
Additional in-year savings (as per Tracker)		0	0
Item 1			
Item 2			
	(500)	(400)	100

- 5.8 The forecast on the identification and delivery of savings against targets indicates a potential shortfall of £0.100m against the Ubico target and should be viewed as indicative at this stage of the year with further updates to CTWG and Cabinet on savings and cost reduction proposals.
- 5.9 Publica savings proposals against the £0.250m target are broadly in-line with the operating model set out in the Publica Business Plan 2022-2025 document ([link to Publica Business Plan](#)). Savings and efficiencies continue to be monitored and challenged through CTWG for robustness in terms of deliverability and the wider business case.
- 5.10 Savings proposals reviewed to date have been focussed on efficient service delivery and cost reductions including:
- Workforce Planning – one-off savings arising from vacancy management
 - Agile Working (reduced business travel costs)
- 5.11 Ubico savings proposals require further scoping and due diligence given the impact there may be on service delivery. Cost reductions have already been taken from operating a more efficient Garden Waste collection service (reduction of loaders on a small number of rounds with no impact on service quality).
- 5.12 Members should note the £42k underspend forecast on the Ubico contract sum with a cautious position adopted on savings delivery to avoid risk of double counting.



6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 6.1 Council approved the Capital Programme for 2023/24 at their meeting on 15 February 2023. Cabinet approved the carry forward of unspent Capital budgets of £1.114m in the Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2023. The revised capital programme for 2023/24 is £15.013m. Given the budget profile of some of these schemes there has been a relatively low level of expenditure in the first quarter with a net total spend of £1.731m (£0.140m when the service loan is excluded).

Table 7 – Capital Programme budget reconciliation

Capital Programme Reconciliation	(£'000)
Original Budget (Council, 15 February 2023)	13,899
Slippage from 2022/23 (Cabinet, 17 July 2023)	1,114
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Latest Budget	15,013

Table 8 – Capital Programme Outturn Forecast

	2023/24 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2022/23 (£'000)	2023/24 LAB (£'000)	2023/24 Actuals to Q3 (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Capital Programme						
Leisure & Communities	1,387	4	1,391	(28)	1,391	0
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	4,001	208	4,209	1,763	3,918	(291)
Environment	1,956	173	2,129	(85)	583	(1,546)
Retained & Corporate	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	350	65	415	0	100	(315)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	191	0	191	0	191	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	28	0	28	0	28	0
Land, Legal and Property	500	370	870	0	870	0
Transformation and Investment	5,486	294	5,780	81	1,216	(4,564)
TOTAL Capital Programme	13,899	1,114	15,013	1,731	8,297	(6,716)

- 6.2 As set out in the Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Outturn report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2023, slippage of £1.114m from the 2022/23 capital programme has been included in the revised capital programme set out in the table above. The initial outturn forecast for the current year is an underspend of £6.716m with slippage likely of £2.027m.



- 6.3** A summary of the key activity and variations forecast to date is provided below with Annex B providing a detailed overview of expenditure and explanation for variances against the capital programme.
- 6.4** The forecast assumes that the Strategic Property Acquisition (included in the summary line Transformation and Investment) will not proceed in the current financial year. With interest rates remaining relatively high, any future acquisition decision will need to be supported by a full business case setting out the wider benefits and financial impact over the immediate and longer-term.

Capital Receipts and Disposals

- 6.5** The Council received no capital receipts and did not make any asset disposals during the first quarter of 2023/24.

Table 9 – Capital Financing Statement Forecast

Capital Financing Statement	2023/24 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2022/23 (£'000)	2023/24 LAB (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Capital receipts	8,036	433	8,469	6,627	(1,842)
Capital Grants and Contributions	1,576	331	1,907	1,154	(753)
Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	150	0	150	50	(100)
Community Municipal Investments (CMI)	116	350	466	466	0
Prudential Borrowing	4,021	0	4,021	0	(4,021)
	13,899	1,114	15,013	8,297	(6,716)

- 6.6** The Capital Financing position set out in the table above will be reviewed by the s151 Officer during the year as expenditure forecasts are updated to ensure a balanced use of capital resources and mitigation of current and future interest rates.

Prudential Indicators

- 6.7** The detailed Non-Treasury Management prudential indicators are included in Annex C with the commentary below providing members with a high-level summary.
- 6.8** With the lower level of capital expenditure forecast for the financial year, this will reduce the underlying need to borrow. The mid-year Treasury Management report to Audit and Governance Committee will set out the wider impact on the Capital Financing Requirement and other prudential indicators measuring proportionality of capital financing costs to the Council's net revenue stream.



7. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

7.1 The report outlines a number of risks and uncertainties around the wider economic environment. Some further risks are briefly outlined below.

- Assumptions made in the forecast are based on projections for inflation and interest rates. Uncertainty remains around Government policy, volatility of GBP (£) against other currencies, interaction between increased UK interest rates and the level of inflation.
- This report includes initial forecasts for income from fees and charges and this remains a risk to the Council given the impact of higher prices, energy costs on the cost of living, and the impact of recessionary pressures on the economy. This may lead to reduced demand for council services and hence lower income from fees and charges.
- The Council is dependent on a number of key partners (e.g. Ubico, Publica, Freedom Leisure) for the delivery of core Council services and may be more exposed to fluctuations in income and expenditure. Any additional income or expenditure pressures would increase the financial pressure facing the Council and would need to be funded through reserves or savings found elsewhere.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This monitoring report presents an update on the Council's financial position. As the report sets out, an overspend of £0.448m is forecast for the financial year which. Without mitigating or corrective action this would be financed from the Financial Resilience Reserve at year end which is not considered appropriate given the scale of the financial challenge over the MTF5 period.

8.2 The Cabinet Transform Working Group will continue to consider the impact of the forecast outturn and the impact on earmarked reserves as part of their oversight of the savings and transformation programme.

8.3 It is recommended that CTWG review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico and provide Cabinet with an update in November on options to mitigate the financial position as currently forecast.

9. CABINET

9.1 This report was received by Cabinet at its meeting on the 12th September 2023. Any comments from this Committee will be reported to Cabinet.



10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The financial implications are set out in this report

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Under Part 2 Local Government Act 2003, the Council must, from time to time during the year review the calculations it has used to set its budget. The Council's Chief Financial Officer is required to report to the Council on the robustness of estimates made for the purposes of calculating the annual budget, and on the adequacy of proposed financial reserves. Members must have regard to that report when making decisions about the calculations in connection with which it is made.

12. RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 Section 7 of this report sets out the financial risks and uncertainties.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT

13.1 None.

14. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Considered within this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None

(END)