

Public Document Pack



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Monday, 20 November 2023

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at Council Chamber - Trinity Road on **Tuesday, 28 November 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**
To receive any apologies for absence. The quorum for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is 3 Members.
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 confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 October 2023.
5. **Chair's Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
6. **Public Questions**
To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than two minutes each and relate issues under the Committee's remit.
7. **Member Questions**
To deal with written questions by Members, relating to issues under the Committee's remit, with the maximum length of oral supplementary questions at Committee being no longer than one minute. Responses to any supplementary questions will be dealt with in writing if they cannot be dealt with at the meeting.
8. **Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy (Pages 13 - 92) 30 minutes**
Purpose
To seek approval to consult with partners and the public on a new five year Cotswold Housing Strategy. The strategy directly responds to the Council's Corporate Plan that seeks to address housing affordability and increase the supply of affordable housing.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the draft Cotswold Housing Strategy for public consultation as presented at Annex A and B; and
2. Delegate authority to the Forward Planning Manager, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree a questionnaire for the public consultation exercise and to make minor modifications to improve clarity.

Invited

Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council
James Brain, Forward Planning Manager

9. **Proactive Delivery of Affordable Housing – Report to follow 30 minutes**

Purpose

This report seeks to outline the council's aspiration for a more proactive approach to increase the supply of affordable housing within the district, outline of how this can be achieved, and the resources required.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Note the strategic opportunities being explored to influence the delivery of more affordable homes, including the creation of a new shared Strategic Housing Enabling Manager post.

Invited

Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainability

10. **Q2 Performance Report (Pages 93 - 170) 20 minutes**

Purpose

To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2023-24 Q2.

Invited

Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

11. **Q2 Financial Performance Report – Report to follow 20 minutes**

Purpose

This report sets of the latest budget monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year.

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Review and note the financial position set out in this report
2. Endorse the recommendation that the Cabinet Transformation Working Group continue to review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast financial position.
3. Approve the provisional transfer of £0.150m to the Treasury Management Reserve

Invited

Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive

12. **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees** *10 minutes*

Purpose

For the appointed representatives to update the Committee on the work of:

- Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny (HOSC) – Cllr Dilys Neill
- Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC) – Cllr Angus Jenkinson

13. **Update on the Public Conveniences Review Group** *10 minutes*

Purpose

For the Chair of the Public Conveniences Review Group to provide a verbal update on the work of the Review Group.

14. **Work Plan (Pages 171 - 186)** *10 minutes*

Purpose

To review the work plan and Executive Forward Plan and agree agenda items for future meetings.

(END)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
31/October2023



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 31 October 2023

Councillors present:

Gina Blomefield – Chair
David Cunningham
Patrick Coleman
Angus Jenkinson

Gary Selwyn
Ian Watson
Michael Vann
Tony Slater

Clare Turner - Vice-Chair
(acting)
Jon Wareing

Officers present:

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and
Chief Finance Officer
Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer
Andy Barge, Group Manager - Strategic
Support

Susan Hughes, Business Manager for Support
and Advice
Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property
and Regeneration
Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager
Jacqueline Wright, Community Wellbeing
Manager

Cabinet Members present;

Councillors

Tony Dale- Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation
Paul Hodgkinson- Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture
Lisa Spivey- Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety (substituting for Deputy
Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance)

OS.287 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Dilys Neill and Roly Hughes.

OS.288 Substitute Members

Councillor Patrick Coleman substituted for Councillor Roly Hughes, and Councillor Ian Watson substituted for Councillor Dilys Neill.

OS.289 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

OS.290 Minutes

The information on the training, under the Chair's announcements was amended to "had attended the recent LGA two day training session for Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny with sixteen O&S Chairs from across the country – mainly from County Councils."

'vision information' was addressed as an error.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023.

OS.291 Chair's Announcements

The Chair stated that the spotlight meeting with Great Western Railway (GWR) was still going ahead despite the reversal of plans to close rail ticket offices.. Members would be invited to pre-submit questions to facilitate the meeting.

The Chair also highlighted that the Budget and MTFS papers had been excluded from the printed pack, which was not acceptable.

The Committee then introduced themselves.

OS.292 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

OS.293 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

OS.294 Community Safety Partnership

The purpose of the item was to exercise the function of the Crime & Disorder Committee through review of Cotswold Community Safety Partnership strategy and delivery. The Chair introduced the item, and stated that, as Cotswold District Council did not have a separate Crime and Disorder Committee responsibility for receiving the annual Community Safety Partnership update falls under the Overview & Scrutiny Committee remit.

The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety to address the Committee. The Cabinet Member thanked Officers for their work enabling the partnership. The Cabinet Member stated that the recent focus of the group was to ensure that all action points had identified owners to ensure partnership working and delivery of the actions.

Members discussed the report, including the following points;

- What was the Community Safety Partnership doing to address anti-social behaviour? The Committee requested further detail on the multi-agency community response being undertaken. The Cabinet Member stated they would ask ERS Service Lead to provide more information on this to members.
- Members discussed that, due to the various agencies and pathways involved with crime prevention, it seemed more work was needed to publicise the ways for residents needing help to get in touch. The Cabinet Member stated that an information sheet had been produced, and would be shared with the Committee and that the work on the action plan would also address this.

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- Neighbourhood watch initiatives were discussed, of which the District had one of the highest numbers in the country. It was stated by the Cabinet Member that WhatsApp groups also served this function.
- Another element of the work which was discussed was work around young male carers. The Business Manager for Communities and Wellbeing stated that the focus of the work was to reach creatively those who need help e.g. through mobile provision of services.
- Due to the importance of the work, Members asked that an update be brought to the Committee in six months.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Jenkinson and Seconded by Councillor Cunningham.

RESOLVED: To note the update and receive a further update in six months.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

OS.295 **2024/25 Budget Strategy and MTFs Update Report**

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety introduced the item, alongside the Deputy Chief Executive.

The purpose of the report was to set out the Budget Strategy to support the preparation of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and presents an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecast.

Budgetary pressures were noted, with reserves being utilised. The budget setting process was also made uncertain by the fact that the final local government settlement had yet to be received; the Local Government Association was actively lobbying for this

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that a risk adverse approach had been taken to the budget setting, with reserves being built up wherever possible. However, due to the budget gap, it was noted that tough decisions would have to be made. The Cabinet Transformation Working Group had been looking at ways to make savings.

Members discussed the report and raised the following points;

- Member discussed whether colour printing was needed for committee report packs, although the Cabinet Member pointed out that all members could opt out of printed copies, and encouraged them to use digital papers as much as possible.
- The savings and income generation proposals included £1.5m from proposals such as Sunday charging in car parks, cost recovery of garden waste collection services, and changes to the waste and recycling collection services to achieve increased efficiency. The UBICO savings were discussed, with the Deputy Chief Executive stating that the savings were made through rezoning and re-evaluation to clear nearby residual waste. It was also stated that Garden Waste collection was a discretionary service.
- The Cabinet Transform working group was discussed. The Director of Governance and Development stated that the minutes of these were not publically available due to the confidential nature of the group, but that proposals would be presented to Council through the budget process.
- An asset management strategy was being developed.

- Concerns were raised around the ambitions of the capital programme given current market volatility.
- Members discussed the proposals to take the provision of services back in house and the costs that would be associated with this. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the review and transition plans would need to be within the MTFs. The Deputy Chief Executive also warned members to exercise caution over discussing the proposals, as officers employed by Publica were in the room.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

OS.296 **Playing Pitch Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture introduced the item.

The purpose of the report was for Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations proposed by consultants commissioned to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy for the District and to approve the Strategy.

The Cabinet Member explained that the strategy focused on sports which were played on sports pitches. The strategy set out how many playing pitches existed, and what the need was, including if improvements were needed. The Strategy would form an evidence base for the local plan, and included natural grass and artificial (3G) pitches for Football, Hockey, Polo and Rugby. The Cabinet Member thanked Officers for their work on the report.

Members discussed the report, raising the following points:

- The emergence of new trends in sports e.g. women's football and Cricket demand was mentioned, and whether this was incorporated into the strategy. The Assistant Director for Communities stated that the strategy had been developed with the best available information, which predated the increase in demand, but that if the demand was greater than provision, the Council could work with Town and Parishes and educational establishments to look at increasing provision.
- Cllr Ian Watson stated that he had been working with Sir William Romney's School and the Football Foundation, and that they had received a £1m grant for 3G pitches. A conversation about including this within the strategy would be had with the Assistant Director and Cabinet Member.
- Members discussed 3G synthetic pitches, in light of recent European Union ban on 'intentionally added microplastics' onto the European market, which included rubber infill for 3G pitches. The Cabinet Member and Assistant Director highlighted that there was a ban on rubber infill but not a ban on 3G pitches. They stated that the Council was following Sports England guidelines, and that 3G pitches had benefits such as being able to be constantly utilised (unlike natural grass).
- The Committee discussed whether consideration was given to bowling greens, as these weren't in the strategy. The Cabinet Member stated that they would look into this.
- Members discussed ways of ensuring developer contributions, including CIL and that the new playing pitches at the Steadings are included within the strategy.
- The Committee were keen for the Council to encourage more volunteers to offer their help to local sports clubs for both training and administration.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1) The provision of 3G pitches is reviewed to ensure that the provision is suitable and safe, in view of safety concerns about certain materials used in 3G pitches.
- 2) Consideration is given to whether it would be appropriate to include the provision of bowling greens within the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3) The new pitches planned at the Steadings development are factored into the Playing Pitch Strategy, if this has not already been done.
- 4) Consideration is given to whether the use of Community Infrastructure Levy to fund sports facilities can be formalised in the Local Plan.
- 5) The Council encourages more volunteers to support local sports clubs.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Wareing and seconded by Councillor Watson

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

OS.297 **Car Parking Strategy**

There was a comfort break at 7:09pm, and the meeting resumed at 7:18pm.

Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation introduced the item. The purpose of the report was to outline the approach to reviewing and updating the parking strategy to ensure best use of Council assets.

Members discussed the report, and raised the following points;

- Ensuring that bicycle transport is included within the strategy. The Cabinet Member agreed that the reliance on cars needed to be reduced, and that would look to include bicycle parking within the strategy.
- Some of the Public Toilets owned by the Council were located within car parks, it was noted that it was important to ensure joint up working within these two areas.
- Car parking provision should include suitable provision of disabled bays and bays that are sufficiently wide.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Cabinet that:

- Consideration is given to whether more can be done on the widening of car parking bays within the Car Parking Strategy
- Consideration is given to the level of need for, and provision of, more disabled parking spaces.
- The provision of secure bicycle parking (for pedal and electric bicycles) is included within the strategy.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

OS.298 **Public Conveniences Review Group terms of reference**

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Councillor Tony Slater, as the Chair of the Public Conveniences Review Group, introduced the item. Councillor Slater outlined progress that had been made on work. The Terms of reference had been agreed at the first meeting of the review group. The next steps for the group, having reviewed the toilets within the district were to proceed with a business case.

The Chair of the Committee stated that the group would need to report back in January, but seemed to be progressing well. The Chair also thanked the Review Group for their work.

Members discussed cashless payment in public toilets. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that this £50,000 had been set aside for this.

OS.299 **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Councillor Neill sent her apologies for the meeting, and therefore the Chair read out their report. The report highlighted that the focus of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was Flu, COVID and integrated care. The main concerns were mental health and waiting times.

Councillor Jenkinson, as the representative on the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, had provided a written report which would be distributed with the minutes of the meeting. Cllr Jenkinson summarised the report.

The Moreton – Burton on the Water – Cheltenham bus service was mentioned, with members asking how frequent this was. Cllr Jenkinson stated that he would distribute this information after the meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the update

OS.300 **Forward Plan and Work Plan**

The Chair stated that the next meeting of the Committee would focus on the Local Plan, including the Housing Strategy.

Recommendations from the Public Conveniences Review Group would be added to the agenda for January's meeting.

Members referred to the Publica Review, which had been scheduled for November's Cabinet but was not on the agenda for pre-decision scrutiny at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Executive stated that there was no constitutional requirement for pre-decision scrutiny and that an all Member's briefing would take place, which should answer questions Members had. The Committee felt however, that there was value in the Overview and Scrutiny looking at the proposal in addition to the all member briefing, and proposed that a provisional meeting was scheduled after the briefing on 15 November 2023.

The resolution was proposed by Councillor David Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Slater.

RESOLVED: To accept the work plan, as amended, including a provisional special meeting to look at the Publica Review.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

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The Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 8.05 pm

Chair

(END)

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Agenda Item 8



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 7 December 2023
Subject	Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy 2024-2029
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: Joe.Harris@Cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director of Planning & Sustainability Email: charlie.jackson@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	James Brain, Forward Planning Manager Email: james.brain@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to consult with partners and the public on a new five year Cotswold Housing Strategy. The strategy directly responds to the Council's Corporate Plan that seeks to address housing affordability and increase the supply of affordable housing.
Annexes	Annex A – Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 – technical consultation document Annex B – Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 – non-technical summary consultation document
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the draft Cotswold Housing Strategy for public consultation as presented at Annex A and B; and 2. Delegate authority to the Forward Planning Manager, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree a questionnaire for the public consultation exercise and to make minor modifications to improve clarity.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	Interim Strategic Housing Manager, Housing Team, Climate Action Manager, Development Management and Heritage and Design Manager



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Cotswold District Council recognises the national housing affordability crisis and the impact it has on local residents and communities. A key corporate priority for the Administration is to explore all options to increase the number of affordable homes; especially those within the social rented category, which are one of the few forms of truly affordable housing in the District.
- 1.2** This report seeks approval to consult (with partners and the public) on a draft Housing Strategy Update 2024 -2029 that sets out how the Council will explore options to address this issue, and where possible mitigate the effects of the national housing affordability crisis.
- 1.3** The Council last updated its Housing Strategy in 2016. The draft Housing Strategy Update 2024 -2029 does not include a Homelessness Strategy as this will be the subject of a separate review carried out by the Housing Team and will be presented to Cabinet in 2024.
- 1.4** The draft Housing Strategy Update 2024 -2029 identifies four broad housing priorities:
 - Planning for everyone's housing needs
 - Providing more affordable homes
 - Delivering sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes
 - Thriving communities and neighbourhoods
- 1.5** Each priority contains a series of objectives and actions that will be delivered over the next five years. An action plan will be prepared upon adoption of the Housing Strategy.
- 1.6** A non-technical summary is provided at Annex B.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Social rented housing stock has been in steady decline across the county for the past few decades, with former stock being sold through schemes such as Right to Buy and not replaced. Shelter report there are 1.4 million fewer households in social housing than in 1980, and 1 million households are currently waiting for a social rented home. Spiralling house prices (sales and rentals) and household bills, both of which make housing less affordable, have led to an increased demand in the private rental sector, where the supply of housing has been slow to keep up. The result is above inflationary increases in rents, especially in the south of England and urban areas.
- 2.2** In Cotswold District, local earnings have not kept pace with house prices and the average house in the District is now around 14 times higher than the average local salary. This is a large contributor to the number of households on the Council's housing register. As of 31 October 2023 there were 1,453 households across the District in need of affordable rented housing.



3. The draft Cotswold Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029

- 3.1** Tackling the issues raised by the national housing affordability crisis is impossible to do in isolation. The draft Housing Strategy therefore sits alongside other local and national strategies, plans and work programmes.
- 3.2** The draft Housing Strategy has been shaped by national policy and local context and is informed by data and information about the District's housing market. It also provides a foundation on which to base Local Plan policy updates and their supporting justification.
- 3.3** The purpose of the draft Housing Strategy is to:
- inform our partners and residents about the housing challenges and priorities in the area;
 - be a catalyst for delivering further affordable housing and, in particular, social rented housing;
 - focus resources and effort on agreed priorities;
 - highlight the importance of reducing inequalities;
 - maintain a strategic overview of housing development and support a revised Local Plan; and
 - drive our statutory duties.
- 3.4** The draft Housing Strategy will shape and focus the Council's work with partner organisations and registered housing providers, as well as landowners, developers and community-led organisations. It will also support funding bids.
- 3.5** The draft Housing Strategy includes a long-term vision to 2050 that sees a world where everyone in Cotswold District will live in a healthy, affordable, low carbon home that meets their needs within a safe, sustainable and thriving community, which is accessible to all.
- 3.6** The draft Strategy contains a multitude of short-term objectives and actions that begin the journey of delivering this long-term aspiration. Actions and objectives are organised into four broad housing priorities.
- 3.7** Priority 1: Planning for everyone's housing needs: Everyone in Cotswold deserves to live in a suitable home. This requires having the right properties to meet individual needs in the right locations, with great infrastructure, services and support. Cotswold District has not only an ageing population, but an average house price on the open market is 14 times the average wage.
- 3.8** Priority 2: Delivering more affordable housing: There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market requires people to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. This is being compounded by the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.



- 3.9** Priority 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes: Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the District's total greenhouse gas emissions, so it has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 3.10** Priority 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods: Everyday needs should be easily accessible within a short distance from home. This includes safe and equitable access to fresh groceries, nature, healthcare, jobs or workspaces and other essential services, facilities and infrastructure. It also means listening and working together with communities on things that matter to them and ensuring new development fits well and enhances existing communities and neighbourhoods.
- 3.11** The draft Housing Strategy will be reviewed regularly during the five year period to ensure it continues to respond to the housing needs across Cotswold, and to reflect changes in local context, national policy, legislation and strategy. An action plan will be prepared upon adoption of the Housing Strategy.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1** Unlike the Homelessness Strategy, a Housing Strategy is not a statutory requirement so an alternative option would be to not update the Housing Strategy. Taking such option would not aid a focussed and co-ordinated approach to increasing the supply of affordable housing in the District. It would also make it more difficult to update the Council's Local Plan.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** The national housing affordability crisis and need for affordable housing continues to grow. Whilst the Council has been successful with delivering affordable housing through traditional methods, there are alternative options that can be explored to take an even more proactive approach, which meets the needs of the District in a more targeted way, and delivers more truly affordable housing for our communities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no immediate implications of approving the draft Housing Strategy for public consultation. However, the adoption of the Housing Strategy will place a commitment on various services, notably the Strategic Housing, Forward Planning and Development Management teams. For example, Strategic Housing may have more development proposals to negotiate; Forward Planning may have an increased requirement to plan and monitor affordable housing developments; and Development Management may need to provide more pre-application advice and may experience an increase in planning applications.



7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No additional legal implications.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 No significant risks identified.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 The Housing Strategy, once adopted, is likely to have a positive impact on equality by increasing the supply of affordable housing.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The draft Housing Strategy Update, together with other strategies and plans (i.e. the Council's updated Local Plan and the Design Code), contains various actions that will positively address climate change and aid nature recovery.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

(END)



COTSWOLD HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Action Plan [separate document] and to be prepared following the public consultation and adoption of the Housing Strategy



Foreword

We are at the centre of an affordability crisis in our district and we set out in our Corporate Plan¹ our intentions to tackle the issues surrounding this.

The housing challenges facing our district are constantly evolving, with the effects of the pandemic and pressures on services continuing to be felt, combined with the increased financial pressures on our residents from the Cost of Living crisis. Our commitment to provide good quality homes for all alongside our commitments to end rough sleeping, prevent homelessness and offer a safe place to live for people fleeing war zones add to the challenge.

More decent, affordable housing is needed but land is scarce and there is a shortage of good quality, genuinely affordable housing to rent.

The Council is determined to rise to these challenges and make a real difference and this strategy will set out our plans on how we intend on tackling these.

There is no escaping the size of the challenge. We need to deliver genuinely affordable homes in a district that is extremely constrained by the high quality built, historic and natural environment. There are very few 'easy' sites to develop. That's why we have to make the most of every available opportunity to provide new affordable housing. We also need to ensure that we are addressing the issue of poor quality housing across our district whilst ensuring that we meet our commitments to respond to the climate crisis.

There is no single silver bullet to solve the issue. There are, however, various things we can do to make improvements. Some of them can make a big difference, whereas others will make small marginal gains which, when brought forward together, can also deliver a significant increase. We look forward to working with partners and communities to deliver on our commitments and to making sure Cotswold is a place where people can prosper.



Councillor Joe Harris
Leader of Cotswold District Council

¹ [Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Update Spring 2022](#)



Introduction

The impacts of not having access to good quality affordable homes have devastating effects on people, health and our economy. Our aim is to help everyone in Cotswold to access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. It will be supported by a rolling one year Action Plan. Since the implementation of our Housing Plan in 2016, and our Homelessness Strategy in 2018, there have been many successes along the way. We have increased the supply of affordable housing, invested in partnerships to deliver affordable, carbon neutral homes, as well as providing assistance to those facing homelessness. However, there is still much work to be done in addressing the current housing crisis and the evolving cost of living crisis and there are many challenges to overcome:

- The cost of living crisis and financial pressure on residents is likely to lead to increased numbers in households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- The challenges of adapting to post pandemic levels of demand continue to affect both businesses, employment and local services;
- Public services are under significant financial pressure and we will need to make tough decisions in the coming years. Our ability to generate income has been severely affected over the past two years during the pandemic and into the cost of living crisis;
- High inflation impacts on the viability of delivering affordable housing, including land, build, materials and labour costs;
- The high costs of borrowing will be passed from landlord to tenant, further increasing the affordability gap between real rents and the Local Housing Allowance rates;
- We are working with partners to deliver affordable homes in the coming years, however this needs to go further. Innovation will be key in finding the less 'obvious' schemes to bring forward to make a real difference in the supply of affordable housing;
- Innovation in the way we deliver our Prevention from Homelessness services will need to continue to evolve to respond to financial pressures and demands on the service. Due to the complex nature of Homelessness, a standalone strategy was created in 2018, and is due for review in 2023;
- Climate change and the impact of this has led us to declare a climate emergency. There is an urgent need to deliver zero carbon homes that are accessible to local services and facilities through active travel; and
- Local residents have opened their homes to a high number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. We will continue to work with both the hosts and the families fleeing conflict to find long term, sustainable housing solutions.

These are not small challenges, therefore the aims and priorities set out in this strategy need to be ambitious, innovative and embrace the unique nature of our district.

Our Council Priorities

Our [Corporate Strategy](#) sets out the overall vision for the Council:

To recreate a council that's proactive and responsive to the needs of our residents and businesses in a fast-changing environment, and to build for the future while respecting our heritage.

We will achieve this by focussing on:

1. Delivering our services to the highest standards;
2. Responding to the challenges presented by the climate crisis;
3. Providing good quality social rented homes;
4. Presenting a local plan that's green to the core;
5. Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing; and
6. Supporting businesses to grow in a green, sustainable manner, and to provide high value jobs.

Tackling the issues raised by the housing crisis is impossible to do in isolation, therefore this Housing Strategy sits alongside existing and emerging strategies, plans and work programmes. It has been shaped by national policy and local context and is informed by data and information about our local housing market. We have set out our ambition for housing in Cotswold District and will use it to improve the delivery of high quality, sustainable housing that local people can afford. This Housing Strategy is not the same as the Local Plan, which contains the policies used to determine planning applications and sets out locations for future development. However, it provides an important foundation within which to shape Local Plan policies and supporting evidence.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

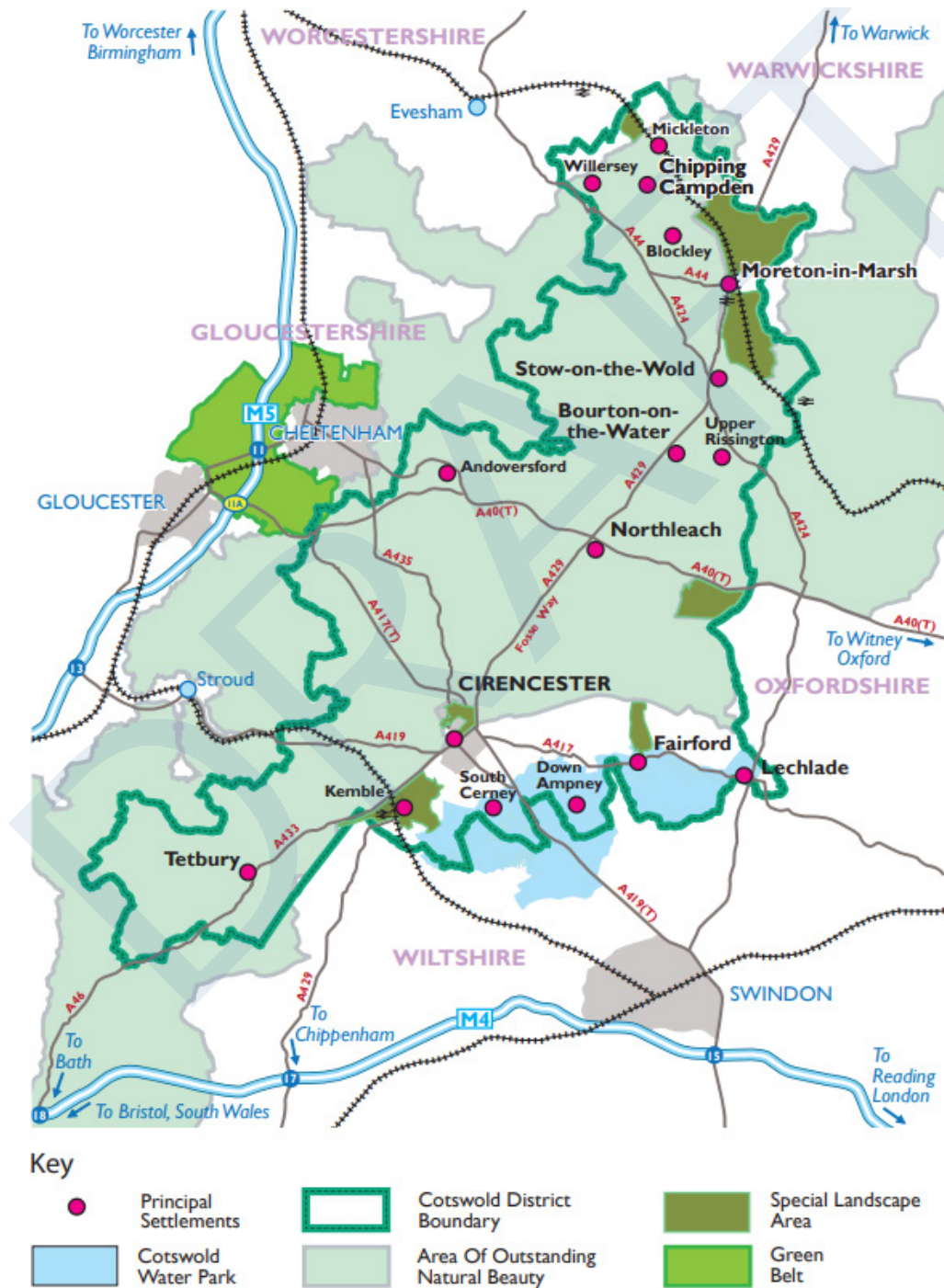
- inform our partners and residents about the affordability challenges and priorities in the area;
- be a catalyst for delivering further affordable housing and in particular social rented housing;
- focus resources and effort on agreed priorities;
- highlight the importance of reducing inequalities;
- maintain a strategic overview of housing development and support the update of the Council's Local Plan; and
- give strategic context for some of our housing related statutory duties.

The strategy will shape and focus our work with partner organisations and Registered Providers, as well as landowners, developers and community-led organisations. It will also support bids for additional funding. The strategy will be reviewed during the five year period to make sure it continues to respond to the housing needs across Cotswold, and to reflect changes in national policy, legislation and strategy.

Where we are now

Cotswold District is a large rural area situated in the east of the county of Gloucestershire, covering almost a half of the entire county. The district is not to be confused with the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which stretches from Warwickshire in the north east to Somerset in the south west.

Figure 1: Map showing the main settlements in the district, Cotswolds AONB, Special Landscape Areas, Cotswold Water Park and the Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2015

Evolution of the housing affordability crisis

The 3rd FASTEST HOUSE PRICE GROWTH in SOUTH WEST

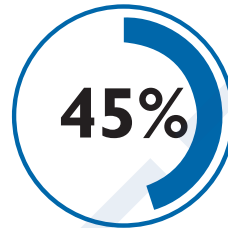
Owning with a mortgage is the most common tenure in the South West.



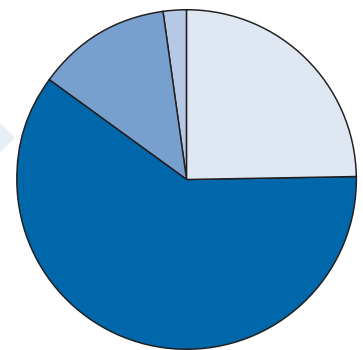
Between 2011-2021 house prices increased by

61%

Cotswold is the 2nd most expensive place to buy a house in the South West.



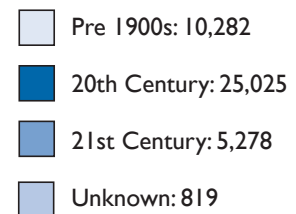
of households are owner occupiers.



Cotswold has an ageing stock of housing.

AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES IN THE COTSWOLDS ARE ALMOST **x14** LOCAL SALARIES

Local earnings have not kept pace with house price rises.



WORSENING LIVING CONDITIONS...

and increased demand for council services.

With people continuing to work from home, the popular rural areas, such as the Cotswolds will likely continue.

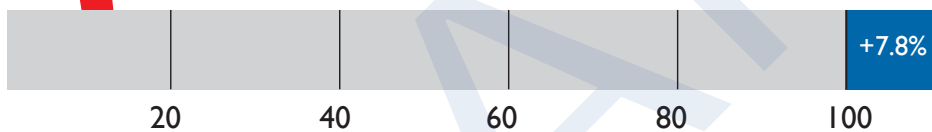
A GROWING PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR...

with increasingly high rents and competition.

In South West
between
2019-2023



Rightmoves's Rental Price Tracker shows that rents in the South West have increased by **7.8%** in the last year alone.



The average new build market housing in the district is not affordable to a resident with **AVERAGE EARNINGS** of

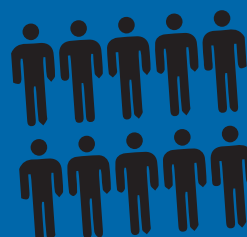
£34,825
PER YEAR

+1,500
more people now live in privately rented accommodation than in 2011.

This is being caused by a shortfall of supply and a surging demand.

There are now **10 tenants** for every **1 available property** nationally.

X 10 TENANTS



X 1 AVAILABLE PROPERTY

A CONTINUING NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Approx, **2,500 households** are unable to afford market rented housing in Cotswold District and 4,800 households aspire to home ownership.



1,460 PEOPLE ARE ON COTSWOLD'S HOUSING WAITING LIST



There is a need for approximately **6,900 adapted homes** in Cotswold District between 2021 to 2041.



500 properties are overcrowded in the District

The average South West resident was paying an estimated

33%

of their basic pay on rent in 2022.



How we have responded so far?

A STRONG DELIVERY TRACK RECORD so far

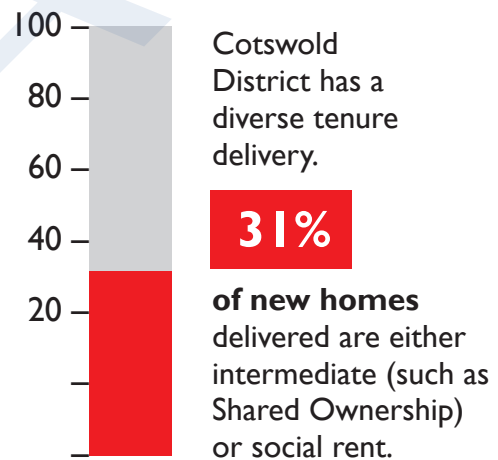
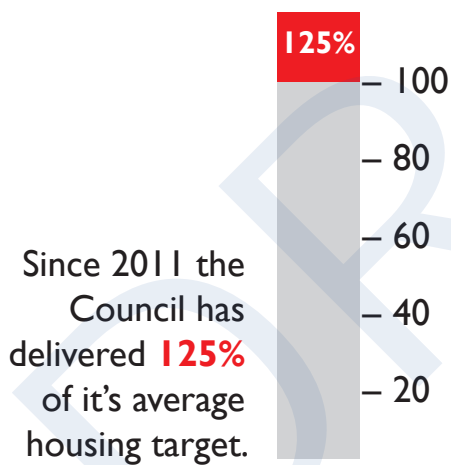
 **6,277**

new homes in the district over the last ten years.

WHICH HAS UNLOCKED THOUSANDS of NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES...

1,972 AFFORDABLE HOMES have been built since 2022.

This has secured homes for people on the waiting list.



The changing delivery context...

A CHALLENGING DELIVERY CONTEXT

FUEL PRICES

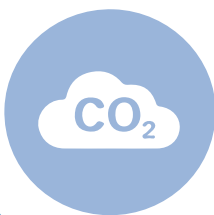
BUILD COSTS

FUEL POVERTY


**HOUSE PRICES
UNCERTAIN**

The vast majority of affordable homes have been delivered through Section 106 agreements with developers or by Registered Providers (such as Housing Associations)

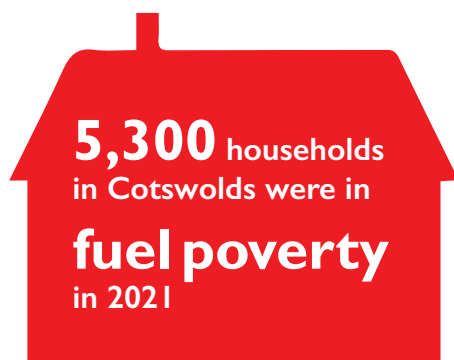
The cost of tackling the climate emergency



17%
of Cotswolds' CO₂
emissions are from
domestic use



17.5%
A Cotswold resident has
a larger carbon footprint
than the average UK resident



5,300 households
in Cotswolds were in
fuel poverty
in 2021

Govt. research puts the **average cost to upgrade** each tenure type to an EPC band rating at

£7,600 Private Rented;

£6,000 Social Rented; and

£8,600 for owner-occupiers



Analysis shows estimated costs
to upgrade all housing in the
UK to EPC band C

= £156 billion

Our Housing Vision and Priorities

Priorities for 2024-2029

By 2050 everyone in Cotswold District will live in a healthy, affordable, low carbon home that meets their needs within a safe, sustainable and thriving community, which is accessible to all.

Priority 1: Planning for everyone's housing needs

Why? Everyone in Cotswold deserves to live in a suitable home. This requires having the right properties to meet individual needs in the right locations, with great infrastructure, services and support. Cotswold District has not only an ageing population, but an average house price on the open market of 16 times the average wage.

Priority 2: Delivering more affordable housing

Why? There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market means that people need to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. This is being compounded by the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.

The starkest issue affecting housing in our district is its deteriorating affordability. What this means in practice is that many people, particularly younger people and first time buyers, are unable to afford a home close to where they work, grew up or have a close connection to. This has an impact on the local economy and the viability of some services. Furthermore, it can lead to an increase in commuting from areas where housing is less expensive, which runs counter to our ambition – and indeed our national requirement – to tackle climate change and improve health and wellbeing.

Annex B further explores the causes of deteriorating housing affordability and affordable housing delivery in Cotswold District.

Priority 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

Why? Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the district's total greenhouse gas emissions², so it has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Priority 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Why? Everyday needs should be easily accessible within a short distance from home. This includes safe and equitable access to fresh groceries, nature, healthcare, jobs or workspaces and other essential services, facilities and infrastructure. It also means listening and working together with communities on things that matter to them and ensuring new development fits well and enhances existing communities and neighbourhoods.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>



Good Housing Can



REDUCE INEQUALITIES



IMPROVE HEALTH & WELLBEING



HELP TO PREVENT CLIMATE CHANGE



BE AFFORDABLE



MEET THE HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS



BE SAFE



BE ACCESSIBLE, OR CAN BE MADE ACCESSIBLE



BE PART OF A THRIVING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



HELP IMPROVE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT



GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE



ENABLE PEOPLE TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



A Summary of our Housing Objectives

Each priority is supported by a series of objectives and each objective contains specific actions that we will carry out over the life of this plan to 2029.

PRIORITY 1: Planning for everyone's housing needs

- 1.1 Better understand and meet local housing need
- 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs
- 1.3 Support people to continue to live safely and independently
- 1.4 Support young people to get their first home

PRIORITY 2: Delivering more affordable housing

- 2.1 Update the Cotswold District Local Plan
- 2.2 Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans
- 2.3 Deliver more affordable housing through the planning application process
- 2.4 Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas
- 2.5 Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

PRIORITY 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

- 3.1 Deliver low and zero carbon homes
- 3.2 Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency
- 3.3 Respond to the increasing cost of living
- 3.4 Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

PRIORITY 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

- 4.1 Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives
- 4.2 Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to amenities
- 4.3 Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets
- 4.4 Improve private rented accommodation
- 4.5 Bring long-term empty homes back into use

Priority I: Planning for everyone's housing needs

Objectives

- 1.1 Better understand and meet local housing need
- 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs
- 1.3 Support people to live safely and independently
- 1.4 Support young people to get their first home

Everyone in Cotswold deserves to live in a suitable home. This requires having the right properties, locations, infrastructure, services and support. Whilst the affordability and accessibility of suitable local housing has declined over the past decades, for the majority of households, it is within their own means to choose where to purchase or rent their home, albeit to varying degrees.

The task for us is to make sure that homes are delivered, adapted and improved to ensure market supply that addresses all needs. There is a proportion of households who either do not have sufficient income or have a level of need, or both, and who are unable to make their own arrangements. This includes those who live in unsatisfactory housing conditions, have disabilities, insecure tenure, medical or welfare needs. We must ensure the provision of suitable housing for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Better understand and meet local housing need

What we will do:

- A. Undertake regular local housing needs assessments to inform our understanding of what is needed in the district, including the needs of specific groups, to inform policy and delivery.
- B. Support a programme of Parish Housing Needs Surveys in rural areas to inform proposals for parishes based on the identified local needs.
- C. Utilise our own internal data and intelligence and that of our partners to build on and improve our understanding of specific and localised housing needs.
- D. Actively allocate housing sites in the Council's updated Local Plan to meet identified needs.
- E. Ensure we provide a variety of house types and sizes to suit a range of households and income levels, particularly affordable housing.
- F. Support the delivery of different types of affordable housing, such as self & custom build and community-led housing schemes, to offer maximum choice for local people to meet their housing needs.
- G. Maintain the self-build register and work to develop a pipeline of plots for self-build and custom housebuilding, seeking a proportion from residential developments.

Why is this important?

Understanding housing needs is an essential part of planning for future housing requirements. The Council commissions various pieces of research to look at the housing need across the district, usually in partnership as housing markets tend to span more than one local authority area.

The research helps us understand the need and demand for different forms of housing including the need for affordable housing, giving us insights into the long term requirements for a whole range of households across all sectors. We also use our housing register Homeseeker Plus³ to give us additional information on local rented needs.

A list of data sources that have helped inform this strategy and provide information regarding housing needs can be found in Annex C. These needs are then translated into the Local Plan, which either specifically allocates sites for development or sets criteria in policies to support the planning application process.

Local Housing Needs Assessment

The six Gloucestershire district and borough councils published a jointly commissioned [Local Housing Needs Assessment \(LHNA\)](#)⁴ in 2020. The survey data gives a picture of the current and future need for different types, tenures and sizes of affordable homes in the district, including households aspiring to affordable home ownership. The LHNA also assesses the needs of different groups, such as older and younger people, people with disabilities as well as a range of other groups that may need specific types of accommodation. This survey ensures we have a good understanding of what might be required in future and can shape policies and delivery to meet this need. The current LNHA is due for renewal in 2024.

Parish Housing Needs Surveys

Different measures of assessing local housing needs can provide different perspectives on the extent and nature of housing requirements in an area. Affordable rural housing should be tailored to its community and environment.

Local evidence, including Parish Housing Needs Surveys and information from the Council's housing register, will indicate the number and type of affordable homes that are required in a parish. Parish Housing Needs Surveys consider all types of housing, from rent to self-build, both affordable and market.

A Parish Housing Needs Survey is also an opportunity to consult with the local community and may help in land coming forward. Proposals can then be drawn up individually for each parish based on the identified local needs. In some circumstances local market housing can also be provided.

³ <https://www.homeseekerplus.co.uk/choice>

⁴ [Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment \(ORS, September 2020\)](#)

Community-led housing schemes

Community-led housing schemes deliver new homes that will be owned or managed by the community. Developments can be for the benefit of the local community, a specific group of people, or both. It can be a new build or refurbishment, in a rural area or a town. This is considered an alternative to developer-led housing through empowering community groups to meet their own housing needs

There are many different types and organisations involved in community-led housing including Community Land Trusts, Co-housing and housing co-operatives. This can be in partnership with a Housing Association, private land owner, a parish council or a developer.

The Council is supportive of the Community-led Housing approach and will continue to work with local groups and the Rural Housing Enabler through the work of the Housing Strategy team.

The Community Led Homes website⁵ has a comprehensive list of funding sources for Community-led housing. The Council also has a small amount of funding to support groups in the Cotswolds with their Community-led housing projects. There are two grants available; the start-up grant of up to £1,000, for groups to become established in their community and incorporate into a formal organisation and a pre-development grant (up to £10,000) for established groups who are progressing their housing project to planning application stage. Please email the Housing Strategy team on housing.strategy@cotswold.gov.uk

Self build register

The Council has a duty to deliver self and custom build plots through the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016). Self-build and custom-built homes could be a route for some to get onto the property ladder and for others to build their ideal home.

The Council maintains a self build register....(reference CDC Self build paper here)

The Council's Local Plan requires proposals of more than 20 dwellings to provide 5% of dwelling plots for sale as serviced self or custom build plots unless it can be demonstrated that there is a higher or lower demand for plots.⁶

⁵ <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>

⁶ Cotswold District Local Plan - policy H1: Housing mix and tenure to meet local needs <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/k2kjqv3b/cotswold-district-local-plan-2011-2031-adopted-3-august-2018-web-version.pdf>

Objective 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs

What we will do

- A. Continue to work in partnership with Registered Providers, local landowners and private developers and public sector organisations to enable the delivery of specific housing needs and maximise affordable housing.
- B. Work with our affordable housing delivery partners on the regeneration of sub-standard affordable housing stock. Through this process, we will seek to deliver more social rented homes and increase the number of affordable homes on the renewal sites where this is feasible.
- C. Consider working with local community-led housing organisations and partner organisations to bring forward community led housing and rural housing schemes to give choice and empowerment at a local level.

Using Council Assets and Investments

- D. Consider using assets to support delivery of social rented, carbon zero priorities where a solid business case exists and need can be established, rather than subsidy through private housing.
- E. Identify a pipeline of sites to be delivered through the collaboration agreement with Bromford Housing Group.
- F. Review and prioritise Council owned sites to enable further reports to be brought forward for decision on:
 - i. Council owned sites suitable for development in line with the Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy; and
 - ii. Council owned sites suitable for disposal as open market sites/ plots or self build plots (as appropriate), with capital receipts earmarked for re-investment in affordable housing delivery.
- G. Acquire / develop accommodation where:
 - i. The development will be financially sustainable not relying solely on subsidy from s106 funding / contributions or any Council annual subsidy.
 - ii. It is understood that cross subsidy in the form of private housing for sale or rent may be necessary and acceptable to ensure financial viability of the development as a whole.
 - iii. The level of cross subsidy required from either private housing or Affordable Home Ownership tenure types will be considered on a case by case basis due to variations in costs etc due to site constraints and risks.
- H. Progress planning applications for the development of Council-owned sites that are allocated in the Local Plan.
- I. Consider the use of grant funding to deliver additional social rented homes and affordable homes, above the planning policy threshold, on new development sites.

Why is this important?

Partnership working has been a major success in boosting the supply of affordable housing in the district.

The Council is developing options to ensure the Council's ambitions to provide good quality, well designed, net carbon zero homes are delivered through partnership collaboration agreements, initially with Bromford Housing Association. This partnership will support shared learning in the delivery of innovative housing development, seeking to demonstrate to developers that net carbon zero affordable homes can be financially viable. The first scheme being delivered through this collaboration agreement is at Broadleaze, Down Ampney, where early engagement and thorough consultation with local people has been key to the development of proposals.

In recent years, we have developed excellent partnership arrangements with several housing associations, including Bromford, Cirencester Housing and Cottsway. This has helped deliver 100% affordable housing developments and renewal schemes across the district with more on the way.

The Council's Climate Emergency⁷ declaration and our Corporate Plan aim to deliver more affordable housing, reduce household bills and improve peoples' health and wellbeing. This ambition aligns with that of our partner housing associations, who want to have healthy and happy customers by providing them with high quality accommodation that is efficient to run.

The Council's corporate strategy to deliver more affordable homes has helped to boost delivery and will continue to do so. 100% affordable and renewal schemes that have been, or are set to be delivered are outlined in Annex D.

Using grant funds to deliver more affordable housing

The Council has often supported housing associations to use grant funding, typically from Homes England or from affordable housing commuted sums held by Cotswold District Council. This includes buying market homes from developers for affordable housing and grant funding additional affordable homes, above the planning policy threshold on new development sites.

Commuted Sums are 'off-site' financial contributions in lieu of affordable housing, provided by developers in exceptional circumstances where affordable housing is not provided on site. In these circumstances developers are required to pay a commuted sum to the Council which is then used to fund affordable housing delivery elsewhere in the district.

In August 2022, the Council sold The Cotswold Club in Cirencester to invest in more net zero affordable housing⁸. This is a further commitment from the Council to boost the delivery of affordable housing through the realisation of its assets.

⁷ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

⁸ <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-sells-the-cotswold-club-to-invest-in-more-net-zero-affordable-housing>

The basis of our partnership working arrangements

We will continue to increase the provision of social and affordable housing by developing schemes that have a solid business case and that meet the needs of local people. We will seek to deliver provision of:

- Good quality housing for rent.
- Housing that is affordable over its whole life cost, both rent and running costs.
- Build housing that is net zero carbon over its lifetime.
- Affordable housing that is available in perpetuity, where possible, supporting the well-being of the residents and the local communities.
- Housing stock needs to be more accessible and adaptable⁹ to allow people to stay in their homes longer and meet an individual's changing needs over their life.
- Homes that support diverse and inclusive communities and provide housing, where there are specific needs for: Older people; Young people; Military veterans; and Families.
- Encourage innovative carbon zero or low carbon affordable housing which utilises local trades and therefore supports the local economy.

⁹ Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

Objective 1.3: Support people to live safely and independently

What we will do

- A. Ensure new homes are adaptable for a variety of potential users using “inclusive design principles” and minimum space standards.
- B. As part of the Local Plan update consider opportunities to:
 - i. prevent smaller properties being demolished and recognise the importance that smaller properties, including bungalows, can play in providing opportunities to first time buyers and renters and downsize.
 - ii. require the delivery of accessible and smaller sized house types, which are typically cheaper to run to accommodate our ageing population and increase the availability of family sized homes.
- C. Provide innovative solutions with our partners to support people in our community to remain living independently for as long as possible.
- D. Work with housing providers, Gloucestershire County Council and public health organisations to reduce the number of instances of adaptations being removed and sent to landfill.
- E. Explore opportunities for intergenerational housing schemes or other new models which combine care and support within the setting.
- F. Work to fulfil our duties outlined in the [Disabled Facilities Grant Policy](#).

Why is this important?

A suitable home can help disabled people of all ages to build and sustain their independence and maintain connections in their community. Many older and disabled people live in homes that are poorly designed for older age or changes in care needs. This makes it difficult for them to do everyday tasks or get out and about easily. Home adaptations give people the choice to continue living independently and safely in their own homes for longer, reducing delays in hospital discharge and preventing premature moves to residential care.

The provision of dedicated older person housing will form an important part of the overall housing mix. The identified need for additional three and four-bedroom homes could be reduced if more of the existing stock could be released by providing suitable housing in the community which older people find desirable and suitable to live in as they age.

Improvements need to be made both in terms of data collection but also the sharing of information between housing associations, local authorities and health organisations, specifically in relation to homes with existing adaptations. Existing policies can lead to unintended consequences such as existing adaptations having to be removed and thrown away once the current user no longer requires them. This creates an unnecessary financial and environmental burden. Improved intelligence and data sharing will help to ensure housing stock is being used efficiently and reduce instances of adaptation being removed. Where adaptations have to be removed opportunities should be explored to improve the reuse and recycling of adaptations.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are capital grants funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) programme to support local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person-centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers.

DFGs are available to people of all ages and in all housing tenures (i.e. whether renting privately, from a social landlord or council, or owner-occupiers) to contribute to the cost of adaptations. They are administered by local housing authorities in England and enable eligible disabled people to continue living safely and independently at home. This includes autistic people, those with a mental health condition, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments such as dementia, and progressive conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease. It includes those suffering from age-related disabilities and can also include those with terminal illness. DFGs are a support measure that a local authority can use to help enable people to live independently and safely at home and in their communities.

Cotswold District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, is under a statutory duty by virtue of the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to provide DFGs for private sector and housing association residential adaptations where the appropriate legislative conditions are met.

Objective 1.4: Support young people to access housing

What we will do

- A. Investigate a First Homes policy, with greater discounts to address the local gap in affordable homeownership prices and lower wages
- B. Continue to support the use of a range of affordable home ownership products, such as Help to Buy, shared ownership and shared equity, to assist local people into home ownership.

Why is this important?

Many of the actions within this strategy will go a long way to benefit young people. This part of the Strategy considers further actions that we can do specifically to support young people to afford a home in our district.

First Homes

Specific actions that can support young people to afford a home in our district could include the recently introduced First Homes¹⁰, which aims to help first time buyers onto the housing ladder by offering discounts of 30% and up to 50%, on new build properties. This discount is retained in perpetuity for future buyers of the property.

National policy now enables us to include a policy in our Local Plan, which will help to deliver entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers or those looking to rent their first home. National policy has strict criteria that entry level exception sites must accord with.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Priority 2: Increase the supply of affordable housing

Objectives

- 2.1 Update the Cotswold District Local Plan
- 2.2 Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans
- 2.3 Deliver more affordable housing through the Planning Application process
- 2.4 Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas
- 2.5 Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market means that people need to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. With the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, this is becoming increasingly difficult, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.

Objective 2.1: Update the Cotswold District Local Plan

What we will do

- A. Examine the housing requirement (the overall housing target) within the adopted Local Plan.
- B. Update Local Plan policies, with the specific aim of delivering more affordable, in particular social rented, homes. For example:
 - i. allocate further sites in the Local Plan and give greater preference in the site selection process to sites that commit to delivering higher levels of affordable housing or higher levels of social rented housing;
 - ii. test the viability of returning to a historic policy that delivered 50% affordable on sites or a greater focus on the delivery of more social rented homes.
- C. Continue to investigate innovative ways of delivering additional affordable housing.

Why is this important?

The Local Plan is one of the most powerful tools at the Council's disposal, which can be used to boost the delivery of affordable housing. We are currently undertaking a partial update of our adopted Local Plan. One of the principal objectives is to boost the delivery of genuinely affordable housing, particularly social rented housing.

The adopted Local Plan has a requirement for a minimum of 8,400 homes over the period 2011 to 2031 (an average of 420 homes a year). It allocates sites across the district to deliver the housing requirement and has an affordable housing strategy, part of which requires the delivery of 30% affordable housing on qualifying brownfield sites and 40% affordable housing on qualifying greenfield sites. To date, this has been effective in delivering a large number of affordable homes across the district.

Evidence of local housing needs

Since the adoption of the Local Plan, the government has introduced a new ‘standard method’ for calculating housing needs¹¹. As of August 2022, the government calculates the district’s housing need to be 533 homes a year. In response, the Council has reviewed the Local Plan. This is summarised in the table below:

	Annual figure (dwellings)	10-year figure (dwellings)
Average annual household growth rate (2022-2032)	307.3	3,073
Additional homes to take account of median workplace-based housing affordability ratio adjustment factor	225.7	2,257
Total housing need	533	5,330

The housing need includes an uplift of 225.7 homes a year to address housing affordability in the district, which is a 73% uplift on the household growth rate.

Whilst an increased housing need would undoubtedly deliver more housing, we do not agree that flooding the district with open market housing developments is the answer to tackling the housing affordability issue. The right types, tenures and sizes of homes are needed in the right locations. Furthermore, housing affordability needs to be considered comprehensively alongside the various other issues considered in this strategy.

Translating the housing need into a housing requirement

The Council will need to assess various matters that contribute towards determining whether the Local Plan housing requirement should be higher, lower or the same as the district’s housing need. For example, the Local Plan housing requirement may be increased above the housing need in order to deliver more affordable housing. The availability of suitable land and the protection and enhancement of the district’s high quality built and natural environments will also be key considerations.

A balance has to be struck between delivering more housing, whilst at the same time protecting the things that make Cotswold District so special. We have to be smart by maximising affordable housing delivery where we can whilst also delivering sustainable development.

Allocating additional land for development

Once the housing requirement is determined, we will need to allocate sites accordingly. We will have a range of criteria to help us choose the sites to allocate in the Local Plan and as part of this process we can give more preference to sites that are able to deliver more affordable housing. Additionally, we can give preference to sites with the best accessibility to services, facilities and employment.

¹¹ [Housing and economic needs assessment \(DLUHC and MHCLG, December 2020\)](#)

Updated national policy

Since the Local Plan was adopted, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance has been updated. New policies have been introduced and some existing policies have been altered, which now enable the Council to update the Local Plan policies to deliver more affordable homes. For example, lower site size thresholds can be set for requiring affordable housing. There are also some subtle changes that can be made to policies that will deliver more affordable homes, such as calculating the affordable housing requirement based on the gross rather than net number of homes being developed.

Vacant Building Credit

To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, national policy allows any affordable housing contributions due to be reduced by a proportionate amount. This should be equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings and does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

National policy is not clear on what defines 'vacant'. Furthermore, unlike some local authorities, the Council does not have a Vacant Building Credit policy that would otherwise provide this clarity. Consequently, a lot of affordable homes that could potentially be required are being lost.

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Objective 2.2: Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans

What we will do

- A. Support the adoption of Neighbourhood Development Plans in our district and local aspirations to address issues including an increase in the supply of affordable housing for existing and future generations.
- B. Support Town and Parish Councils to deliver affordable housing through their share of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- C. Consider focusing the spend of commuted sums to deliver affordable housing projects in Neighbourhood Planning Areas that wish to deliver affordable homes.

Why is this important?

Neighbourhood Plans are a well-established part of the plan making process in England. Cotswold District has seven made plans¹² and 12 plans in various stages of preparation¹³. They are mostly prepared by town and parish councils and generally align with the plan period set out in the Local Plan i.e. to 2031. We know that some of our town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups have identified the need for affordable housing in their neighbourhood areas. However, land availability and site constraints make it difficult to do so. In early 2023, two Neighbourhood Plan areas are actively identifying additional land for new homes – Fairford and Stow-on-the-Wold - detailed in Annex E.

This objective should also be seen within the context of objective 1.1 which seeks to offer more support to those Town and Parish Councils wishing to deliver additional affordable housing through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

¹² Made plans as listed on the [Cotswold District website](#) at time of publication.

¹³ Emerging plans as listed on the [Cotswold District website](#) at time of publication.

Objective 2.3: Deliver more affordable housing through the Planning Application process

What we will do

- A. Provide a high level assessment of potential affordable housing development sites in our Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.
- B. Actively challenge those avoiding their obligation to contribute towards the supply of affordable housing.
- C. Consider prioritising planning applications that seek to deliver social rented housing.
- D. Deliver affordable housing through planning obligations to the following standards:
 - i. Nationally Described Space Standards;
 - ii. M4(2) (accessible housing);
 - iii. Secured by Design (Silver); and
 - iv. a proportion of the affordable housing will be built to M4(3) standard (wheelchair adaptable housing).

Why is this important?

We understand that bringing forward an affordable housing development can entail some uncertainty in terms of whether a site is suitable for development and what is needed to obtain planning permission. We're keen to remove as much of this uncertainty as possible and make it easy, convenient and quick for anyone wishing to bring forward an affordable housing development to do so.

Objective 2.4: Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas

What we will do

- A. Continue to support Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership and the Rural Housing Enabler.
- B. Consider applying to the Secretary of State to designate the part of the district that is not within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and not within the development boundaries of Cirencester, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh and South Cerney as a rural area.
- C. As part of the Local Plan update, propose to reduce the site size threshold where affordable housing would be required in designated areas from 6 to 10 dwellings to 3 to 9 dwellings.

Why is this important?

Affordable housing can make a huge contribution to a rural parish as it not only meets the housing needs of local people but can help maintain local services and amenities such as a local school, village shop or post office. It may also help maintain the social balance and social networks within the parish.

About 40% of the district's population lives in rural locations. Whilst the adopted Local Plan concentrates on directing development towards the 17 most sustainable settlements, this does not mean that rural housing needs beyond those towns and villages will not be met. In addition to small-scale housing development allowed in rural settlements under Policy DS3, Rural Exception Schemes will be encouraged under Policy H3 where there is a proven unmet need for affordable housing.

To help community resilience and sustainability, and increase the affordable rural housing stock, Policy H3 also promotes a 'self-help' scheme where qualifying people can find and build their own affordable home on single plot exception sites.

To support delivery of rural housing in the district, we work with the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership (GRHP). Members are local authorities and housing associations as well as host Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). Cotswold District Council alongside the partners of the GRHP provides funding for Gloucestershire's Rural Housing Enabler. Working in local communities, GRHP helps to identify unmet housing needs in rural areas and promote opportunities for rural housing development.

Rural Exception Sites

Most affordable housing developed in rural parishes is located on Rural Exception Sites. These are sites within or adjacent to a rural settlement where market housing would not normally be acceptable. Housing development is permitted on these sites as an exception to planning policy though all the other usual planning criteria must be met.

The housing must be affordable housing for local people and remain so in perpetuity. Annex D highlights some of the rural schemes that have been developed as a result of our work with the Gloucestershire Housing Partnership and the Rural Housing Enabler.

Designated Rural Areas

National policy draws a distinction between affordable housing requirements inside and outside designated rural areas. Local plans can include a lower affordable housing requirement inside designated rural areas.

In Cotswold District, 80% of the district is located inside the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) and is therefore already designated as a rural area.

The Local Plan requires affordable housing contributions on developments of:

- 6 to 10 dwellings (net) in designated rural areas; and
- 11 or more new dwellings (net) in all other parts of the district.

The ongoing partial update of the Local Plan proposes to lower the site size where affordable housing is required in designated rural areas from 6 to 10 dwellings down to 3 to 9 dwellings. The Council can also apply to the Secretary of State for other parts of the district to be designated as a rural area. This can be done independently and ahead of the ongoing partial update to the Local Plan. We have assessed the 20% of the district that is not within the AONB and have found that the entire area is suitable to become a designated rural area, with the exception of the area inside the development boundaries of Cirencester, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh and South Cerney.

Designating additional land as a rural area would mean that development sites of 6 to 10 dwellings in that area would need to contribute financially towards affordable housing. This could help to deliver more affordable homes as a result. Furthermore, if the proposal to reduce the affordable housing requirement in designated rural areas to 3 to 9 dwellings is adopted, it would help to deliver even more affordable homes in those areas.

Objective 2.5: Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

What we will do

- A) Identify opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cirencester town centre.

Why is this important?

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan and Cirencester Town Centre Master Plan

We are working with Cirencester Town Council and its emerging Neighbourhood Plan to prepare a plan for Cirencester Town Centre and the wider Town. This is an ambitious undertaking but it has been a fantastic example of community-led town planning. The Town Council is leading the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan¹⁴ and we are leading on the Town Centre Master Plan but in truth we are supporting one another to deliver a coordinated and seamless plan for Cirencester.

The Town Centre Master Plan is intended to serve as an urban design framework for the town centre. It is a visionary document that will fulfil a number of functions, including those described in summary below. It will:

- describe and illustrate how planning and design policies and principles should be implemented across Cirencester town centre;
- include a vision and development objectives for the town centre as a whole, establishing a context for proposed and potential interventions, including the delivery of new housing.
- take opportunities to progress our priority to respond to the challenge posed by climate change, ensuring all development proposals and principles in Cirencester work towards the target of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions across all sectors by 2045;
- identify potential areas of change within the town centre, including the delivery of new housing.
- Coordinate the phased delivery of more detailed development briefs for specific sites within the town centre, as and when the need for them arises.

The following image shows the opportunity areas for regeneration within the Town Centre.

¹⁴ <https://cirencesternp.org/>

Opportunity sites



PRIORITY 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

Objectives

- 3.1 Deliver low and zero carbon homes
- 3.2 Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency
- 3.3 Respond to the increasing cost of living
- 3.4 Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the district's total greenhouse gas emissions¹⁵, so has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. More than 80% of the UK housing stock projected for 2045 already exists, which is why we have made improving (retrofitting) existing housing stock a priority.

Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Objective 3.1: Deliver low and zero carbon homes

What we will do

- A. Update the Local Plan and Cotswold Design Code to require improved construction, energy and thermal standards of new homes and consider embedding the Town and Country Planning Association's Healthy Homes Act Campaign¹⁶.
- B. Deliver built examples of the application of the Council's Net Carbon Zero Toolkit, such as the Broadleaze development at Down Ampney, to showcase to developers.
- C. Work with private landlords to incentivise them to provide better insulation and energy efficiency measures in their properties and make it as easy as possible for them to do so.
- D. Adopt a comprehensive sustainability checklist in order that the Council's development planning officers can support developers to achieve the highest practicable sustainability.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

¹⁶ <https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-healthy-homes-act/>

Why is this important?

Good, well-designed and constructed housing is critical in mitigating the risks that climate change poses in the UK. Studies have shown that in the UK we tend to spend about 90% - 95% of our time indoors, and that about 66% of that indoor time is at home. UK climate change could amplify existing health risks related to building overheating, indoor air pollution, flood damage and biological contamination. New buildings should therefore be designed to address these potential health effects, but also to minimise the use of fossil fuels, which contribute to both climate change and poor air quality. New buildings should also make more use of low carbon energy sources and can incorporate technologies that help reduce energy use, and therefore the impact of the built environment on our climate.

Whilst low or net carbon zero housing was once experimental and challenging, there are now many examples of developments of every scale where the net carbon zero design and build process has been mainstreamed, with very beneficial results to owners or tenants. The delivery of net carbon zero or low carbon housing would not only contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets but would also reduce the running costs of the home, which will benefit occupants and contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty. This is particularly important in the context of the cost of living crisis.

The design and provision of zero carbon housing is something that needs to be developed further. Whilst local Housing Associations wish to embrace this provision, it is new for them and comes with risk.

To fully embed zero carbon delivery of social rented and affordable properties, all projects need to be considered from the outset to ensure carbon reduction is maximised at the pre-planning stage so that factors such as orientation can be designed in. Specialist designers/ advisers will need to be engaged on all projects to provide this support and ensure opportunities to utilise new and innovative technologies are maximised.

The Council's Climate Change Emergency declaration and our Corporate Plan¹⁷ aim to deliver more genuinely affordable housing, reduce household bills and improve peoples' health and wellbeing. This ambition aligns with that of our partner housing associations, who want to have healthy and happy customers by providing them with high quality accommodation that is efficient to run.

The Council will work with registered providers to seek exemplar small schemes, which can be used to trial zero carbon and alternative methods of constructions. In considering refurbishment of existing properties carbon emissions will be reduced as far possible taking into consideration constraints, options and costs.

Down Ampney

In Down Ampney, we have entered into a partnership with Bromford Housing Association to provide residents with local affordable homes¹⁸. The development will look to use new technology to reduce the carbon footprint of the homes and their electricity needs, making them more affordable for tenants. Residents will be given the opportunity to input into the design of the homes.

We aim to make these homes truly affordable to buy, cheaper to run and cause much less damage to the environment - tackling two of the key issues for the Cotswolds - the lack of affordable homes and responding to the climate emergency. We will be using land owned by the Council to build these homes and set a much higher standard than what we see from many housing developers. We hope this example will drive higher standards across the Cotswolds by showing what is possible.

¹⁷ [Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) – see pages 9-10

¹⁸ <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-and-bromford-form-a-ground-breaking-partnership-to-deliver-more-affordable-low-carbon-homes-for-cotswold-people>

Objective 3.2: Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency

What we will do

- A) Work with registered provider partners to upgrade poorly performing properties.
- B) Lobby government at a local and regional level to influence future policy, strategy and funding.
- C) Seek funding where possible to enable more retrofit in the district, including boosting resilience to direct climate impacts such as overheating.
- D) Update the Climate Emergency Action Plan and work with partners in the county and the region to take forward and develop innovations to support domestic retrofit.
- E) Consider working in partnership with a Social Enterprise Lender to provide loans to enable people to improve insulation and upgrade heating systems including renewable technology.
- F) Signpost homeowners to sources of advice in the pre-application (and early stages) of the planning application process e.g. further promote the Council's Net Carbon Zero Toolkit to enable homeowners to best retrofit their homes.
- G) Work with expert external partners to improve the quality of retrofit advice to occupants of older and solid stone walled properties typical of the Cotswolds.

Why is this important?

Retrofitting existing housing stock to bring it up to a near-net zero carbon standard is a key requirement for the district.

Emissions from buildings (that is, principally, heating) has barely dropped in 30 years - energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock is generally poor, and improving household energy efficiency (whilst being vital, and bringing dramatically lower energy bills to householders) will be expensive and disruptive, requiring, e.g., the replacement of gas boilers by high efficiency electric heating, and increasing insulation.

Impacts from hot weather are already being felt in the UK - the ONS estimates excess mortality of around 2,800 from the summer 2022 high heat periods¹⁹. Government climate advisers warn that, without adaptation, increasingly hot summers could triple existing health, wellbeing and productivity impacts²⁰. However, many effective strategies exist to limit these impacts, relating both to new build and retrofitting.

19 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessmortalityduringheatperiods/englandandwales|juneto3|august2022>

20 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Risks-to-health-wellbeing-and-productivity-from-overheating-in-buildings.pdf>

Direct climate impacts in the form of pluvial (run-off) flooding from intense rainfall events are increasing, and can directly affect existing homes. The Environment Agency estimated in 2018 that three million properties in England are susceptible, greater in number than those at risk of fluvial (river level) and coastal flooding²¹ but that number will increase as the climate continues to destabilise. Pluvial flood resistance and resilience measures can be retrofitted where buildings are at risk, principally in urban areas.

The Council may be able to support homeowners to access government support for energy retrofit actions by quality assuring and signposting homeowners to sources of advice.

Further commentary on retrofitting can be found in the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 to 2030, specifically section 13.4.2²². Also the Council's Issues and Options local plan consultation (2022)²³ provides further commentary on retrofitting buildings within the context of the Local Plan.

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21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surface-water-the-biggest-flood-risk-of-all>

22 https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/8d8eab9716634de/cdc-climate-emergency-strategy-adopted-2020_09_23.pdf

23 <https://issuesandoptions.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/aaresponding-to-the-climate-crisis/step1>



Objective 3.3: Respond to the increasing cost of living

What we will do

- A) Reducing household bills by:
 - i) requiring new homes to be highly energy efficient so they are cool in summer and warm in winter;
 - ii) supporting existing homeowners and landlords to retrofit homes with insulation and other energy saving measures; and
 - iii) ensuring new homes include rainwater attenuation systems, such as ponds, tanks and water butts, so that occupants can make use of free rainwater and 'grey water' for toilets, gardens and other similar uses.
- B) Reducing food costs by creating spaces for people to grow their own food.
- C) Target and support/enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector.
- D) Tackle fuel poverty through our Warm and Well Scheme delivered in partnership with the Gloucestershire Authorities through energy advice and support, insulation and heating grants and loans.
- E) Work with partners to obtain more detailed information on the cost of living crisis and its impact on those living in social housing.

Why is this important?

In July 2022, Cotswold District Council declared a cost of living emergency, as we are extremely concerned how surging energy and food prices are already exacerbating poverty in the area and the impact further price rises will have on already struggling families. According to the latest figures, one in five children in the Cotswold is in poverty.

Reducing the requirement for heating homes in winter, cooling homes in the summer and reducing the consumption of mains water makes financial and environmental sense. Reducing the cost of household bills will also make a positive contribution to people's health and wellbeing and their ability to actively participate in local activities. This is essential to enable people to remain fit and able to work, which links back to people being able to afford a home.

The Council will encourage new developments to provide spaces for more allotments, community grow spaces and require gardens within new developments to have features that enable people to grow their own food and sufficient storage to accommodate necessary tools and equipment.

There are various grants available to those in need, including:

- the Gloucestershire Welfare Support Scheme²⁴;
- Household Support Fund²⁵; and
- Council led grants such as the warm and well grant, relocation grants, disabled facilities grants²⁶.

²⁴ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/>

²⁵ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/household-support-fund-find-out-more-and-apply/>

²⁶ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/housing-grants/>

Objective 3.4: Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

What we will do

- A. Lobby suppliers and government at a local and regional level to influence future policy, strategy, and funding streams to enable the development of Modern Methods of Construction products that comply with our policies
- B. Encourage the use of appropriate Modern Methods of Construction products on developments where it can actively accelerate the delivery of housing and diversify the market without affecting the delivery of the other objectives of this strategy.

Why is this important?

Modern methods of construction - also known as MMC or 'smart construction' is a fast way of delivering new buildings, by maximising the efficiency of material and human resources. RICS²⁷ recognises that the UK construction sector is struggling to meet growing demand, with issues such as supply and demand imbalances contributing to unaffordability and in extremes, homelessness.

MMC is capable of delivering more consistent low-carbon, low-energy performance in finished buildings since most of the construction phase takes place off-site in factory conditions, enabling better quality control over energy-critical aspects such as air tightness and insulation.

MMC is seriously being considered by the government in helping to rapidly increase the supply of housing and address skill shortages and import costs. RICS explains there is an identified skills crisis in mainstream construction, which will likely result in a decrease of 20-25% in the workforce over the next decade. The workforce is ageing, and the rate of new entrants is lagging behind those leaving. They explain that this is likely to be exacerbated by Brexit as one in eight UK construction workers are foreign. In addition, the weakening pound has increased the cost of imported materials, with some 20% of bricks and brickmaking components imported, mostly from the EU. Rapidly rising energy costs coupled with the high levels of energy consumed in making bricks amplify the need to consider MMC.

²⁷ Modern Methods of Construction A forward-thinking solution to the housing crisis? <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/news/news--opinion/modern-methods-of-construction-paper-rics.pdf>

PRIORITY 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Objectives

- 4.1 Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives
- 4.2 Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to everyday amenities
- 4.3 Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets
- 4.4 Improve private rented accommodation
- 4.5 Bring long-term empty homes back into use

This priority is about focussing on the wider context ensuring everyday needs are accessible within a short distance from home and focussing on specific matters to support, grow and create new thriving communities and neighbourhoods.

Objective 4.1: Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives

What we will do

- A. Ensure partnership working delivers the vision, aim and objectives of the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is integrated within the updated Local Plan.
- B. Consider encouraging developers to follow and adopt the Building for Life standard for well designed homes.
- C. Provide a variety of house types and sizes to suit all households and income levels.
- D. New developments to deliver principles and objectives of the Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy and support wider nature recovery.
- E. Improving the ability of local communities to have a say in the Local Plan making process.
- F. Consider the needs of children in the plan making process.
- G. Work with partners, including The Steadings Community Management Trust, to create a thriving new community at The Steadings, Cirencester.

Why is this important?

We aim to promote an inclusive and integrated society, where development enhances people and nature to thrive.

It is important that our housing strategy aligns with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy²⁸, which aims to improve the lives of people in Gloucestershire. Their vision is that Gloucestershire is a place where everyone can live well, be healthy and thrive - housing is a core component of their vision.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises the importance of accessing Green Infrastructure and work undertaken by Wildlife Trusts have shown the significant nature-based interventions to treat diagnosed illnesses in the UK²⁹. The Council has committed to updating its Green Infrastructure Strategy and this will influence the design of future developments in the district. It will help to guide new developments to actively contribute to nature's protection, and help improve connectivity to drive a healthier and more biodiversity rich towns, villages and countryside. The Town and Country Planning Association have provided a useful summary of what Green Infrastructure is on its website.³⁰

The largest and most significant new community that will be created during the 2020s will be The Steadings, Cirencester. This will be a new community on the edge of Cirencester consisting of 2,350 new homes as well as land for employment, retail and community infrastructure. The Council is working with The Steadings Community Management Trust and other partners to deliver on the goal to build a strong, healthy and cohesive community, encouraging a green lifestyle that will support a healthier future.³¹

We will examine opportunities to update the Local plan to reflect findings of the RTPI's Children and Town Planning Practice advice note³² and Make Space for Girls³³. When children and young people grow up in a quality built and natural environment it can have a positive impact on their health, well-being and future life chances.

To do this effectively local communities, including children, should have a say in what these places look like. At the beginning of 2022 the Council invested in a new digital engagement system, Commonplace, having been awarded £65,000 from the government to improve digital engagement within Planning. The CIRP awarded the Council a silver award in October 2022 for its innovative approach to engagement and professionalism to use social media tools to drive engagement in the Local Plan issues and options consultation. The Council continues to work with the government and in November 2022 we secured an additional £240,000 to further enhance our ability to engage with our local communities.

28 <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/our-focus/#:~:text=The%20Gloucestershire%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing,well%2C%20be%20healthy%20and%20thrive>

29 https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/r1_literature_review_wellbeing_benefits_of_wild_places_lres.pdf

30 <https://tcpa.org.uk/what-is-green-infrastructure/>

31 <http://steadingscmt.org.uk/>

32 <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8848/children-and-town-planning-july-2021.pdf>

33 <https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/case-studies/>

Objective 4.2: Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to everyday amenities

What we will do

- A. Examine the possibility of enshrining the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods, or equivalent, in the updated Local Plan.
- B. Maximising developer contributions.
- C. Ensure the timely provision of essential infrastructure and digital connectivity.
- D. Encourage infrastructure providers and organisations to access a proportion of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver identified strategic infrastructure.

Why is this important?

Part of our ambition to support thriving communities and neighbourhoods, and indeed our response to climate change, is to try to reduce the need for car journeys and focus on other forms of sustainable and more active forms of transport. The ambition is to create neighbourhoods where everyday requirements are within a 20-minute walk (around 1 mile) or cycle (around 3 miles) in the larger towns. This will include improving access to employment opportunities, transport, and local amenities.

Sustainable Transport Strategy

In March 2021, the Council appointed its first Sustainable Transport Strategy Lead officer, 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. A key consideration will be making it easier for people of all ages and abilities to safely access their local centres or high streets by public transport and active travel (e.g. walking, mobility scooters, pushchairs and bikes, cargo bikes) and increasing options to reduce the reliance on cars.

Developer Contributions

Through the Local Plan updating process the Council will examine opportunities to improve the securing of developer contributions towards education, affordable housing, community facilities, transport, open space amenities, walking and cycling, transport links, etc. We will also seek to ensure development is designed and contributions are made to provide opportunities for physical activity for all, including play equipment, formal and informal sport, allotments, and open spaces with good access so everyone can benefit from amenities.

When legally securing these provisions the Council will also be mindful to ensure infrastructure is delivered in a sensible and timely manner and making sure new development mitigates the impact on existing local communities.

The Council will be inviting bids to access money secured by the Community Infrastructure Levy for the first time in 2023, details, including how to bid for levy, are available on the Council's website.

Objective 4.3: Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets

What we will do

- A. Assess whether a new Local Plan policy can be introduced to restrict second homes, Airbnb style holiday rentals and holiday home renting in new properties.
- B. Continue to actively investigate breaches of planning conditions and thoroughly investigate any complaints where holiday homes or Airbnb style holiday rentals are operating without the correct permission and/or are breaching environmental regulations.
- C. Enable the provision of short-term holiday let accommodation in suitable locations to redirect the demand for this accommodation away from unsuitable locations and /or stressed locations.
- D. Continue to lobby the government on the second home, holiday home and Airbnb style holiday rental issues, especially in official consultations, so this issue remains on their agenda.
- E. If the legislation is introduced that allows us to do so, we will impose higher rates of council tax on empty and second homes.
- F. Support the proposal for a tourist accommodation registration scheme.
- G. Consider extending additional tourism charges on key car parks and other council assets across the district to mitigate the impact of tourism on local communities. Additional money will be focussed on new / updated infrastructure and new affordable homes.

Why is this important?

We are aware of the impact the second homes, holiday homes and Airbnbs are having on communities within the district. We undertook a consultation between February and March 2022 on our ongoing partial update to the Local Plan. This issue was raised on numerous occasions in responses to the consultation and in the conversations with residents at our drop in events with many saying it is negatively affecting communities and housing affordability.

The majority of people supported the idea of the Local Plan restricting second home / holiday ownership in new developments and less than one-fifth were against the idea. Two thirds of respondents thought restricting second home ownership in new developments would make the overall housing stock more affordable with 5% thinking it would become less affordable.

We also asked, 'should the restriction apply to all new housing that is built or a proportion of new housing?' A considerable majority of respondents (71%) thought that second home restrictions should apply within all new housing developments.

Of course, planning restrictions can only apply to new developments. The majority of second homes, holiday homes and AirBnBs are already in existence and the Council has limited powers to intervene. However, we have been lobbying the government to do so, for example, in our consultation response to the Planning White Paper.

The government has listened to our and other authorities in a similar situation and in January 2022 the [government introduced legislation](#) that will prevent owners of second homes from abusing a tax loophole by claiming their often-empty properties are holiday lets, thereby avoiding paying normal tax rates.

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill also intends to introduce further restrictions:

- Councils will also be granted powers to impose higher rates of council tax on empty and second homes (double the standard council tax rate on any home left empty for longer than a year, rather than two years as is currently the case).
- The government also committed in June 2021 to look into the possibility of a “tourist accommodation registration scheme” in England, through the [Tourism Recovery Plan](#).

The government also recently announced that second-home owners may face an Airbnb ban, which would aim to protect tenants living in tourist hotspots.

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Objective 4.4: Improve private rented accommodation

What we will do

- A. The Council will investigate undertaking a Stock Conditions Survey to identify priority areas for improvement.
- B. The Council will appeal to private landlords to insulate their properties, install double glazing and other energy features, to support their residents and reduce their maintenance costs. We will also provide guidance on the best means to do this through our support to the Warm and Well programme.
- C. The Council will target landlords whose properties do not meet the legal Minimum Energy Efficiency standards, to ensure their compliance.
- D. The Council will continue to undertake mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) to drive up the quality and safety of shared housing.
- E. The Council will drive up the quality and safety of shared housing and identify and take enforcement action against unlicensed HMO's.
- F. The Council will work with private landlords and take enforcement action where necessary to tackle hazards and improve the quality of rented accommodation where many of our most vulnerable residents live.

Why is this important?

With many people unable to afford to buy a home, the private rented sector in the district is also seeing a surge in demand. As with the cost of owning a home in the district, which has substantially increased, rental prices have also increased. We need to support people so they can afford to rent a home which is safe to live in.

This report already includes a section on how we can reduce household bills but private landlords have extra responsibilities in this regard to make sure their properties have the necessary insulation, double glazing and other energy and water saving features so that the utility bills of their tenants can be reduced. A well maintained property will keep energy and other costs down and landlords have legal responsibilities to ensure the condition of the property meets health and safety standards for occupation.

It is in the interest of landlords to have well-insulated housing which is in good condition as tenants are healthier and happier and likely to extend their contracts.

Objective 4.5: Bring empty homes back into use

What we will do

- A. Continue to work through towards achieving the key Priorities detailed in the strategy:
 - i. To maintain accurate information about the number of long term empty properties;
 - ii. Provide advice and information to help raise awareness and address issues around empty properties; and
 - iii. Bring empty properties back into use to increase the supply of quality, affordable homes for residents in housing need.
- B. Continue to apply Council Tax Premiums (Levies).
- C. Continue to appeal to the owners of long term empty properties to make their properties available for sale or to rent.
- D. Consider undertaking work to understand the causes and barriers preventing properties being brought back into use

Why is this important?

In common with many other districts, Cotswold District Council faces an increasing shortage of affordable homes for its residents. This gives rise to increased homelessness and difficulty accessing affordable accommodation for many people. Empty properties seriously affect the lives of people in the vicinity and can be a magnet for anti-social behaviour and an unnecessary drain on public services. Tackling empty homes will not only help provide additional much-needed homes within the district, but will contribute to the improvement of the local environment and benefit communities.

Empty homes can cost their owners thousands of pounds a year in council tax, insurance, mortgage and repairs. The district suffers from a lack of housing and we have hundreds of households who have registered for affordable rented homes via that council's Choice Based Lettings system, HomeseekerPlus and many are in housing need.

We are committed to reducing the number of long term empty homes in the district. For more information read our [Long Term Empty Homes Strategy](#).

ANNEX A: KEY LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

A useful library of housing related Acts - <https://thebla.co.uk/housing-acts/>

Housing Act 1985 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/contents>

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>

Housing Act 2004 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/106>

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

Localism Act 2011 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/contents/enacted/data.htm>

Housing and Planning Act 2016 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/contents/enacted>

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018/guide-for-landlords-homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-closes-tax-loophole-on-second-homes>

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

NPPG: Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

Tourism Recovery Plan (policy paper) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-recovery-plan>

First Homes scheme: discounts for first-time buyers <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Building Regulations 2010. Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M, 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

Cotswold Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031 <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/k2kjqv3b/cotswold-district-local-plan-2011-2031-adopted-3-august-2018-web-version.pdf>

Town and Country Planning Association: Healthy Homes Act Campaign <https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-healthy-homes-act/>

ANNEX B:

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF DETERIORATING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY?

Many of the causes of housing unaffordability in Cotswold District are beyond the control of the District Council. For example:

- Wages have not kept pace with house price rises.
- Developers can 'drip-feed' new homes into the market to ensure house prices remain high to maximise profits (or put another
- Land banking (i.e. land being used as a financial asset to increase share prices rather than to deliver housing).
- Right to Buy has left a shortage of social-rented housing nationally.
- Both low interest rates and the increased ability of people being able to get a mortgage have fuelled an increase in house prices.
- Stamp Duty holidays have fuelled increased demand for housing. With more money to spend on buying a home, house prices have risen.
- Second homes, holiday homes and buy to let have removed housing from the market that could otherwise be made available to those who want to own a single home, and the resulting increased demand within a reduced pool of housing stock inflates house prices and worsens affordability.
- The Covid Pandemic resulted in an initial 'dash to the countryside' where there is more space than city living. However, a longer term effect has been the wider societal acceptance of remote and home working with workplaces becoming commutable on the basis of a longer journey that is required less frequently. This has made Cotswold District a more desirable location to live, especially for those working in the West Midlands, South East and the Avon area.
- Not enough new social-rented housing has been built across the country. Subsidies for building social housing have been cut and, more recently, funds have had to be diverted towards resolving fire safety concerns and cladding issues. Subsidies will also be needed to retrofit homes with insulation.
- We also recognise that simply building more and more open market housing is not the right approach. We need a strategy at both a local level and a national level to help deal with the housing (affordability) crisis.

To summarise the context in which this Strategy operates, housing affordability is a multi-faceted national housing issue and the Council's efforts to provide an effective response will always only be part of the solution. Be that as it may, delivering affordable housing helps local people to afford a home.

Delivering housing in a constrained district

We also have to bear in mind that we operate in an incredibly constrained district. For example, 80% of the district is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB). National policy requires that this nationally protected landscape, which has the highest status of protection, must be conserved and enhanced. The scale and extent of development within AONBs must be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the AONB³⁴.

The current Local Plan seeks to focus the majority of housing growth in 17 Principal Settlements³⁵, which are the most sustainable locations with the best access to services, facilities and employment. However, eight of the district's Principal Settlements are completely within the AONB³⁶. A further five Principal Settlements are bound by the AONB on one or more sides and form part of the setting of the AONB³⁷.

A further 6% of the district is designated as a Special Landscape Area, much of which provides an important setting and an effective buffer for the AONB. A further 6% of the district is located within Cotswold Water Park, a large proportion of which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest³⁸, which also has the highest status of protection.

The district also has:

- 33 registered historic parks and gardens
- 144 Conservation Areas (more than any other district in England)
- 5,004 entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest (second after City of Westminster)
- 238 Scheduled ancient monuments
- Various habitats sites, including:
 - » 2 internationally designated [Special Areas of Conservation](#)
 - » 37 other nationally designated [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) and 1 [National Nature Reserve](#)
 - » Various other locally designated sites, such as Local Sites, [Key Wildlife Sites](#) and [Local Nature Reserves](#)
 - » Various areas of Priority Habitat³⁹

The current affordable housing strategy

The Local Plan contains an affordable housing strategy, which seeks to deliver around 64% of the district's affordable housing need (approximately 100 affordable homes a year of an identified need of 157 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2031⁴⁰). The Inspector of the examination of the Local Plan concluded that the affordable housing need could not be met in full. A balance had to be struck in order to achieve sustainable development with regard to delivering affordable housing and the need to protect the high quality built and natural environment and the need to avoid long distance commuting. The Inspector concluded that the Local Plan affordable housing policies were sound⁴¹.

³⁴ NPPF paragraph 176

³⁵ The Principal Settlements are identified by Policy DSI of the adopted Local Plan

³⁶ Andoversford, Blockley, Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Northleach, Stow-on-the-Wold, Tetbury and Upper Rissington

³⁷ Cirencester, Kemble, Mickleton, Moreton-in-Marsh and Willersey

³⁸ [Cotswold Water Park confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest](#)

³⁹ These are wildlife habitats that are listed at section 41 of the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) as being [habitats of principal importance for biodiversity](#).

⁴⁰ [Cotswold District Council SHMA, Further Update, Affordable Housing \(HDH Planning, 2016\)](#) and the accompanying [Errata Note \(May 2017\)](#)

⁴¹ See paragraphs 55, 56 and 209 of the Report on the Examination of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (PINS, 5 June 2018, PINS Ref: PINS/F1610/429/2)

The bulk of affordable housing delivery comes from Local Plan Policy H2, which requires up to 30% affordable housing on qualifying brownfield sites and up to 40% affordable housing on qualifying greenfield sites. There are several additional policies that add to the affordable housing supply⁴². Local Plan Policy H1 also requires a suitable mix of house types and sizes, which deliver the smaller house types and sizes that are typically more affordable.

Since the Local Plan was adopted, several additional years of monitoring data have become available, which provide some useful data:

- Between 2015 and 2022, the district delivered 1,244 affordable homes (an average of 178 affordable homes a year). This included 111 social rented homes (an average of 16 per year).
- Between 2022 and 2031, developments with planning permission and remaining Local Plan site allocations are expected to deliver 836 additional affordable homes (net) (an average of 93 per year). Based on historic delivery and future trends, it is conservatively estimated that around 215 further affordable homes will be delivered as windfalls between 2022 and 2031 (an average of 24 per year)⁴³. Based on the current housing land supply, total affordable housing delivery between 2022 and 2031 is therefore expected to be 1,051 affordable homes (an average of 117 per year).
- Total affordable housing delivery between 2015 and 2031 is expected to around 2,295 homes (net) (130 affordable homes per year on average).

The average annual delivery rate of 178 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2022 and the estimated total affordable housing delivery rate of 130 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2031 far exceed the 100 affordable homes year figure which the Local Plan Inspector considered to be a reasonable number of affordable homes over the plan period.

The estimated number of affordable homes that would be delivered across the plan period was also a conservative figure, as it is better to underestimate than overestimate for the purpose of a Local Plan examination. However, housing delivery has been strong in the district and the Local Plan housing requirement has not been used as a maximum. This in itself has yielded a higher return of affordable homes; nearly 10,000 dwellings (all tenures) being estimated to be delivered over the plan period, which is 117% of the 8,400 dwelling Local Plan housing requirement.

⁴² Local Plan Policies H3 and H4

⁴³ NPPF (2021) Annex 2 defines windfall sites as “Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.” An explanation of how the estimate of future windfall delivery in Cotswold District is calculated and the justification for using a windfall allowance in the housing trajectory is provided at pages 7 to 18 of the [Housing Land Supply Report](#) (CDC, July 2022). In addition to the guidelines provided in that report for assessing windfall delivery, the following additional guidelines have been used for determining whether affordable housing developments count as windfalls:

Any additional affordable housing delivered on 100% affordable housing sites are counted as windfall affordable housing (the number of windfalls excludes the 30% or 40% requirement that would already have been delivered on those sites if the site is within or adjacent to the development boundaries of one of the 17 Principal Settlements identified in the Local Plan).

Market homes bought with grant funding and have been converted into affordable housing are counted as windfall affordable homes.

Affordable housing delivered to date

Between 2011 and 2022, a total of 5,927 new homes have been built within the district. This is a significant over-delivery (28% higher) than the 4,620 homes that were required for that period⁴⁴.

Of the 5,927 homes that were built, 1,880 (32%) were affordable homes. This includes 401 social rented homes, which contribute 8% of the total number of homes delivered and 21% of the number of affordable homes delivered.

Affordable housing delivery in Cotswold District between 2011 and 2022 (gross)

Year	Affordable Rent	Social Rent	Shared Ownership	Equity Model	Key Worker	Total
2011/12	18	140	64	0	0	222
2012/13	9	92	81	0	0	182
2013/14	32	37	27	4	0	100
2014/15	64	21	36	11	0	132
2015/16	55	0	12	25	0	92
2016/17	160	6	62	34	0	262
2017/18	139	3	74	29	0	245
2018/19	176	22	85	8	0	291
2019/20	57	20	54	10	0	141
2020/21	49	17	33	2	13	114
2021/22	12	43	36	8	0	99
Total	771	401	564	131	13	1,880

⁴⁴ The housing requirement of Cotswold District is a minimum of 8,400 dwellings (420 a year) for the period 2011 to 2031, which is set out in Policy DSI of the [Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031](#).

ANNEX C: DATA SOURCES AND RESOURCES

Children and Town Planning. RTPI 2021 <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8848/children-and-town-planning-july-2021.pdf>

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan
<https://cirencesternp.org/>

Community Led Housing
<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>

Cotswold Climate and Ecological Emergencies
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

Cotswold District Council and Bromford form a ground-breaking partnership to deliver more affordable, low-carbon homes for Cotswold people
<https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-and-bromford-form-a-ground-breaking-partnership-to-deliver-more-affordable-low-carbon-homes-for-cotswold-people>

Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Update Spring 2022
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/kbqdj5lw/cdc-corporate-strategy-2022.pdf>

Cotswold District Local Plan 2012 to 2031
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2011-to-2031/>

Cotswold District Local Plan evidence - housing to meet local needs
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

Cotswold Housing Grants
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/housing-grants/>

English Housing Survey data on owner occupiers, recent first time buyers and second homes
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/owner-occupiers-recent-first-time-buyers-and-second-homes#full-publication-update-history>

English indices of deprivation 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Excess mortality during heat-periods: 1 June to 31 August 2022. ONS
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessmortalityduringheatperiods/englandandwales1juneto31august2022>

First Homes scheme: discounts for first-time buyers
<https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2020
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/b43lc0lk/3110-gloucestershire-local-housing-needs-assessment-sept-2020.pdf>

Gloucestershire Welfare Support Scheme
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/>

Homeseeker Plus
<https://www.homeseekerplus.co.uk/choice/>

House Price Statistics. Land Registry 2022
<https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/browse?from=2021-09-01&location=http%3A%2F%2Flandregistry.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fregion%2Fcotswold&to=2022-09-01&lang=en>

House price to workplace-based earnings ratio. ONS, 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

Long Term Empty Homes Strategy 2019 to 2024

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/sjsf1whf/long-term-empty-homes-strategy-2019-2024-cdc.pdf>

Make Space for Girls

<https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/case-studies/>

Modern Methods of Construction A forward-thinking solution to the housing crisis?

<https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/news/news--opinion/modern-methods-of-construction-paper-rics.pdf>

NOMIS official census and labour market statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157373/report.aspx?town=cotswold>

Population projections for local authorities

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from overheating in buildings. Climate Change Committee, July 2022

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Risks-to-health-wellbeing-and-productivity-from-overheating-in-buildings.pdf>

Surface Water: The biggest flood risk of all. GOV.UK, 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surface-water-the-biggest-flood-risk-of-all>

The Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/our-focus/#:~:text=The%20Gloucestershire%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing,well%2C%20be%20healthy%20and%20thrive>

The Steading Community Management Trust

<http://steadingscmt.org.uk/>

UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

Wellbeing benefits from natural Environments rich in wildlife

https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/r1_literature_review_wellbeing_benefits_of_wild_places_lres.pdf

What is Green Infrastructure?

<https://tcpa.org.uk/what-is-green-infrastructure/>

ANNEX D: SCHEMES DELIVERED OR IN THE PIPELINE

Here is a list of [rural] schemes that have been, or are to be, delivered across the district as a result of our work with our Registered Provider partners, the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership (GRHP) and the Rural Housing Enabler.

Land adjacent to Broadleaze, Down Ampney (a social rented housing development - Bromford).

Cotswold District Council own land adjacent to Broadleaze in Down Ampney, which is allocated in the Local Plan for housing development. The Council is currently working with Bromford Housing, assembling two plots of land, to bring forward an exemplar scheme for carbon zero social rented, energy efficient homes.

Patterson Road, Cirencester (36 social rented homes - Bromford)

In 2020, 36 new, energy efficient homes were completed to update and replace existing affordable housing that was no longer fit for purpose. These provide a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership homes, built to modern energy efficiency standards, for local residents.

Churnbridge Row, North Cerney (12 affordable homes - Cirencester Housing)

In 2020, 12 new affordable homes were completed in North Cerney. The Council granted funding for the completion of the development, which played a big part in ensuring that these will always be affordable homes for local people. The scheme comprises 10 houses and flats for affordable rent and two houses for shared ownership.

Wickhams Field, Tetbury (30 social rented homes - Bromford)

In April 2022, a 30-dwelling affordable housing development was completed at Wickhams Field, Tetbury. The site is now fully occupied with most residents having a connection to the town. The 30 homes are a mixture of two and three-bedroom houses and one-bedroom flats, all of which are for social rent.

Chesterton Halt, Cirencester (24 affordable homes - Bromford)

Bromford acquired the Chesterton Halt site in Cirencester for a 100% affordable housing development of 24 no. 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. The scheme was completed in 2019.

Akeman Court, Cirencester

In 2015, Bromford completed the delivery of six houses and seven apartments at Akeman Court in Cirencester on land that had stood empty for some time.

Fortey Road, Northleach

Bromford demolished an abandoned affordable housing block at Fortey Road, Northleach, which had stood empty for many years. In its place, 22 new affordable rent and affordable home ownership homes were completed in 2016.

Chamberlayne Close, Stow-on-the-Wold (18 social rented homes - Bromford)

In July 2022, 18 energy efficient homes for social rent were completed in Stow-on-the-Wold. The previous homes were identified under the Sheltered Housing Review as being no longer fit for purpose for elderly customers and they had a poor energy efficiency rating.

Stockwells, Moreton-in-Marsh (28 social rented homes - Bromford)

Stockwells cul-de-sac in Moreton is being redeveloped to provide 28 new net zero carbon social rented homes. The development will be the first affordable modular build of its kind in the Cotswolds.

The existing homes at Stockwells were built in the 1950s and were not energy efficient. The scheme involves demolishing the 24 existing homes and replacing them with 28 modern, energy-efficient homes which are affordable for tenants to run. The new homes will be completely gas-free and all homes will be fitted with air source heating and solar panels to align with the Council's drive for all affordable housing to be green to the core.

Leaholme Court, Cirencester (44 apartments - Bromford)

44 new apartments for social rent were completed at Leaholme Court in summer 2022, replacing 46 flats built in the early 1960's that were no longer fit for purpose.

Cross Tree Crescent and Oakley Flats, Kempsford (27 1-3 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows - Bromford)

A scheme is underway to demolish 14 sub-standard existing houses and 12 flats and to rebuild 27 new affordable 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows. Oakley Flats are currently under construction and due for completion spring 2023. Cross Tree Crescent is to follow thereafter. These will be modern, energy efficient homes, which are affordable for people to live in and run.

The Sunground, Avening (14 new social rented and shared ownership homes - Bromford)

Work has commenced on the development of three 2-bedroom and six 1-bedroom social rented homes and four 2-bedroom and one 3-bedroom shared ownership homes. These will include various features that will make the homes more carbon efficient and cheaper to operate, such as the homes having an air source heat pump for heating and hot water; electric vehicle charging points; solar panel; provision of water butts; secure cycle storage; and provision of broadband.

Land at Davies Road, Moreton-in-Marsh (15 social rented homes - Cottsway)

This development, located at Davies Road in Moreton-in-Marsh, will provide 15 low-carbon homes for social rent, including a mix of one, two and three-bed properties. The scheme is due to be completed in 2024 and will include sustainable features such as air-source heat pumps and enhanced levels of insulation.

Berrington Road Garages, Chipping Campden (4 1-bed bungalows for social rented - Bromford)

Bromford acquired a site in 2019 at Berrington Road in Chipping Campden in 2019 and completed a development of four no. 1-bedroom affordable bungalows in 2021.

ANNEX E: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS



Stow on the Wold and The Swells Neighbourhood Plan

The supply of affordable housing in Stow on the Wold has been historically low compared to other settlements across the district, even when land is available other more lucrative development has occurred often at ours and the Town Council's objection. The hill top town is completely surrounded by long views across the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural beauty which makes it incredibly sensitive to new housing developments on the edge of the town.

Stow on the Wold Town Council and Swells Parish Council have jointly embarked on preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. It has set a vision which seeks to ensure by 2031 the whole community will have benefitted from new genuinely affordable, energy efficient homes with robust connectivity, and other carbon-neutral developments providing educational and leisure provision, new employment space and greatly improved parking provision. It will thus sustain an energetic and productive community of all ages.

The Town Council finds the attractiveness of the Stow area has brought housing pressures leading to high property values that are unaffordable for those on the average (median) income in Cotswold District. The Town Council believes a lack of an appropriate mix of housing, particularly affordable housing, has led to more economically-active people, particularly the young, being forced to look elsewhere for somewhere to live. Local businesses link difficulties in recruiting staff on high house prices, lack of public transport, high commuting costs and lack of parking to support existing services and facilities.

We agree with the Town Council that improving the availability of affordable housing would enable local young people and others to take up local employment opportunities and help provide sufficient accommodation for an economically active population. The challenge will be to do so in a way that protects and enhances the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a national landscape designation.



Fairford Neighbourhood Plan

Similar to Stow on the Wold and The Swells Neighbourhood Plan, Fairford has also embarked on a Neighbourhood Plan for its area. Their plan is far more advanced and a final draft plan is due to be consulted on in 2023. It contains policies to help preserve the historic character of Fairford, protect green spaces, ensure necessary infrastructure is provided on a timely basis, and ensure that development does not create or increase flood risk.

Their plan directs new housing development to an area, close to the schools, between Leafield Road and the northern extension of Hatherop Road. This will deliver additional affordable housing in the Town over the next decade.

ANNEX F: DELIVERY AND MONITORING

We will need to work in partnership with government agencies, public organisations, the voluntary sectors and private sector providers to deliver the strategy. We will also work with our neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary housing issues and priorities.

We will monitor and assess our progress towards achieving the objectives in this strategy through an action plan. To help us respond to a continually changing environment, we will review our actions annually to make sure they remain effective.

A Housing Strategy Action Plan 2024-25 will be prepared following adoption of the Housing Strategy and will set out what we plan to achieve in year one.

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COTSWOLD
HOUSING STRATEGY

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COTSWOLD
HOUSING STRATEGY
2024-2029

Executive Summary

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COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNITED WE SERVE

Introduction

There is a housing affordability crisis in the Cotswolds.

Our aim is to help everyone across the district to access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

We have seen many successes since the implementation of our Housing Plan in 2016 and our Homelessness Strategy in 2018.

We have increased the supply of affordable housing, invested in partnerships to deliver affordable housing, invested in carbon neutral homes, as well as providing assistance to those facing homelessness. However, there is still much work to be done in addressing the current housing crisis and the evolving cost of living crisis.

The housing strategy includes a wealth of detail that explains the context of issues, their impacts and the specific nature of our response. It is appreciated that not everyone will relish the thought of reading a largely technical document so we have prepared this summary document. It gives a snapshot of the main issues, priorities and actions.

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The Housing Strategy

Tackling the issues raised by the housing crisis is impossible to do in isolation, therefore our Housing Strategy sits alongside existing and emerging strategies, plans and work programmes.

It has been shaped by national policy and local context and is informed by data and information about our local housing market. It also provides an important foundation within which to shape Local Plan policies and supporting evidence.

The purpose of our strategy is to:

- inform our partners and residents about the housing challenges and priorities in the area;
- be a catalyst for delivering further affordable housing and in particular social rented housing;
- focus resources and effort on agreed priorities;
- highlight the importance of reducing inequalities;
- maintain a strategic overview of housing development and support a revised Local Plan; and
- drive our statutory duties.

The strategy will shape and focus our work with partner organisations and registered housing providers, as well as landowners, developers and community-led organisations. It will also support bids for additional funding.

The strategy will be reviewed during the five year period to make sure it continues to respond to the housing needs across Cotswold, and to reflect changes in local context, national policy, legislation and strategy.









Where we are now

Cotswold District is a large rural area situated in the east of the county of Gloucestershire, covering almost a half of the entire county. The district is not to be confused with the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which stretches from Warwickshire in the north east to Somerset in the south west.

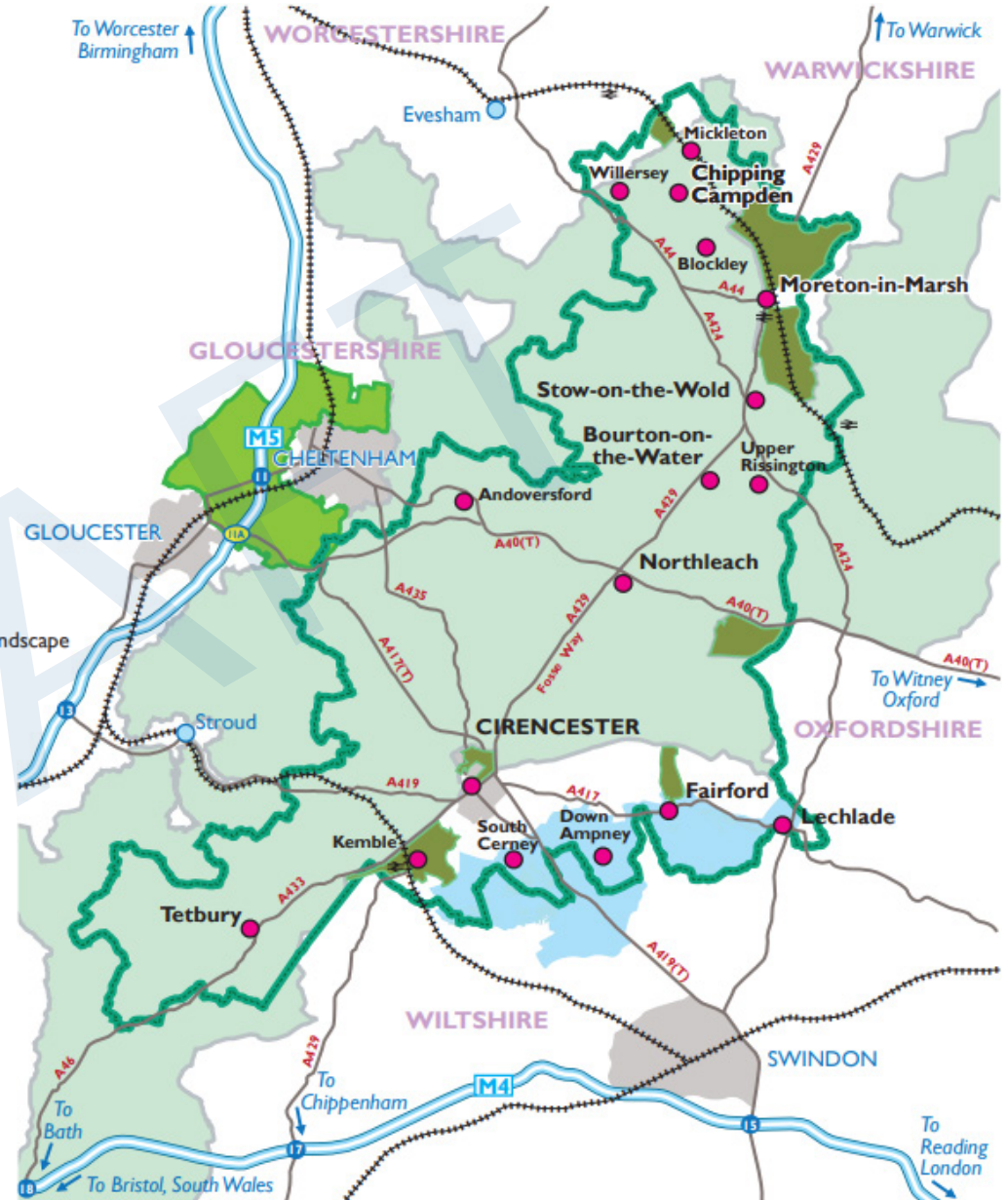
Figure 1: Map showing the main settlements in the district, Cotswolds AONB, Special Landscape Areas, Cotswold Water Park and the Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt.

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Key

	Principal Settlements		Cotswold District Boundary		Special Landscape Area
	Cotswold Water Park		Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty		Green Belt

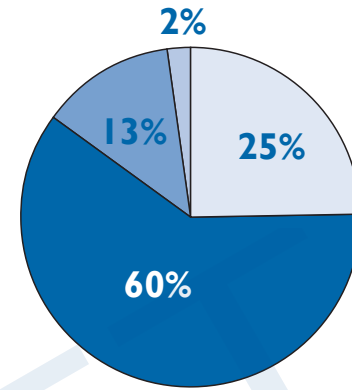
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2015



Evolution of the housing affordability crisis

The 3rd FASTEST HOUSE PRICE GROWTH in SOUTH WEST

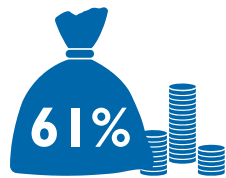
Owning with a mortgage is the most common tenure in the South West.



Cotswold has an ageing stock of housing.

- Pre 1900s: 10,282 houses
- 20th Century: 25,025 houses
- 21st Century: 5,278 houses
- Unknown: 819 houses

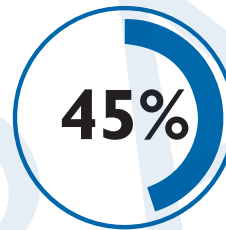
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Between 2011-2021 house prices increased by



Cotswold is the 2nd most expensive place to buy a house in the South West.



of households are owner occupiers.

AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES IN THE COTSWOLDS ARE ALMOST



LOCAL SALARIES

Local earnings have not kept pace with house price rises.



WORSENING LIVING CONDITIONS..

and increased demand for council services.

A GROWING PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR...

with increasingly high rents and competition.

In South West between 2019-2023

PRIVATE RENT INCREASED BY

12%
IN 4 YEARS

TO LET

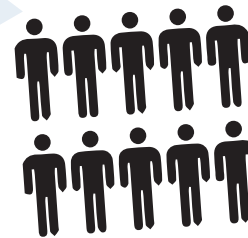
Rightmoves's Rental Price Tracker shows that rents in the South West have increased by 7.8% in the last year alone.



+1,500

more people now live in privately rented accommodation than in 2011.

X 10 TENANTS



X 1 AVAILABLE PROPERTY

This is being caused by a shortfall of affordable supply and a surging demand.

There are now 10 tenants for every 1 available property nationally.

The average new build market housing in the district is not affordable to a resident with **AVERAGE EARNINGS** of

£34,825

PER YEAR

A CONTINUING NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES



Approx, **2,500 households** are unable to afford market rented housing in Cotswold District and 4,800 households aspire to home ownership.

1,460 PEOPLE ARE ON COTSWOLD'S HOUSING WAITING LIST



The average South West resident was paying an estimated

33%

of their basic pay on rent in 2022.



There is a need for approximately **6,900 adapted homes** in Cotswold District between 2021 to 2041.

500 properties are overcrowded in the District.



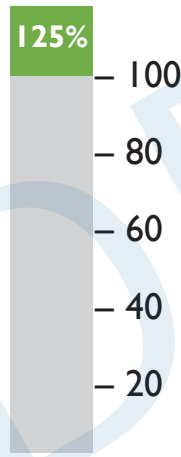
How have we responded so far?

A STRONG DELIVERY TRACK RECORD so far

6,277

new homes in the district over the last ten years.

Since 2011 the Council has delivered **125%** of its average housing target.



1,972 AFFORDABLE HOMES have been built since 2022.

WHICH HAS UNLOCKED THOUSANDS of NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES...

Cotswold District has a diverse tenure delivery.

31%

of new homes delivered are either intermediate (such as Shared Ownership) or social rent.

This has secured homes for people on the waiting list.

The changing delivery context...

A CHALLENGING DELIVERY CONTEXT

FUEL PRICES

BUILD COSTS

FUEL POVERTY


HOUSE PRICES UNCERTAIN

The vast majority of affordable homes have been delivered through Section 106 agreements with developers or by Registered Providers (such as Housing Associations)

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The cost of tackling the climate emergency

17% 
of Cotswolds' CO₂ emissions are from domestic use

17.5%
A Cotswold resident has a larger carbon footprint than the average UK resident

Analysis shows estimated costs to upgrade all housing in the UK to EPC band C
= £156 billion

5,300 households in Cotswolds were in **fuel poverty** in 2021

Government research puts the **average cost to upgrade** each tenure type to an EPC band rating C at
£7,600 Private Rented;
£6,000 Social Rented; and
£8,600 for owner-occupiers

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Our Vision

By 2050 everyone in Cotswold District will live in a healthy, affordable, low carbon home that meets their needs within a safe, sustainable and thriving community, which is accessible to all. We firmly believe housing should:



REDUCE INEQUALITIES



IMPROVE HEALTH & WELLBEING



HELP TO PREVENT CLIMATE CHANGE



BE AFFORDABLE



MEET THE HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS



BE SAFE



BE ACCESSIBLE, OR CAN BE MADE ACCESSIBLE



BE PART OF A THRIVING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



HELP IMPROVE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT



GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE



ENABLE PEOPLE TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



Our Priorities

Planning for everyone's housing needs

Everyone deserves to live in a suitable home that meets their needs. This requires having the right properties, locations, infrastructure, services and support. Whilst the affordability and accessibility of suitable local housing has declined over the past decades, for the majority of households, it is within their own means to choose where to purchase or rent their home, albeit to varying degrees.

The task for us is to make sure that homes are delivered, adapted and improved to ensure market supply that addresses all needs. There is a proportion of households who either do not have sufficient income or have a level of need, or both, and who are unable to make their own arrangements. This includes those who live in unsatisfactory housing conditions, have disabilities, insecure tenure, medical or welfare needs. We must ensure the provision of suitable housing for everyone.

Our top actions

1. Ensure that we have good, reliable and up-to-date information on specific and localised housing needs so that it can inform council and partner projects and new developments.
2. Supporting people to live safely and independently by ensuring new homes are adaptable for a variety of potential users and explore opportunities for intergenerational housing schemes or other new models which combine care and support within the setting.
3. Support young people to access housing by investigating the introduction of a First Homes policy that offers greater discounts for younger people to access housing.



Providing more, affordable homes

There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market means that people need to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. With the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, this is becoming increasingly difficult, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.

Our top actions

1. Working with like minded partners

Long gone are the days that the Council owned, built and maintained council housing; this housing stock was transferred to registered housing providers many years ago. While we still have some in-house expertise we no longer have the capacity to embark on a new building programme like city and metropolitan authorities. Therefore, we need to cut our cloth accordingly. We will continue to work with like minded registered housing providers, land owners, private developers, community-led housing organisations and charities to deliver new affordable housing.

2. Increase the supply of affordable housing

We will work with our housing association partners to collectively deliver approximately 700 new affordable homes by April 2031, the end of the Local Plan plan period. With a focus on delivering more low cost rental properties.

3. Update our Local Plan

Every few years we update (to varying degrees) our Local Plan. The Local Plan plays a central role in establishing how many new homes are needed in the District and where they should be delivered over the next decade or so. We commit to update the Local Plan so that we can examine ways to further increase the amount of affordable housing achieved from new developments. We have also committed to prepare a masterplan for Cirencester Town Centre, where we will examine opportunities to deliver new affordable housing and student accommodation in the heart of the town.

4. Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas

Apply to the Secretary of State to designate the part of the district that is not within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and not within Cirencester, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh and South Cerney as a rural area. Designating additional land as a rural area would mean that development sites of 6 to 10 dwellings in that area would need to contribute financially towards affordable housing. This could help to deliver more affordable homes.

Delivering sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the district's total greenhouse gas emissions¹, so has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. More than 80% of the UK housing stock projected for 2045 already exists, which is why we have made improving (retrofitting) existing housing stock a priority.

Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Our top actions

1. Deliver zero carbon homes with lower household bills

We will update the Local Plan and Cotswold Design Code to mandate energy and thermal standards that will deliver zero carbon homes. The code will embrace healthy homes principles advocated by the Town and Country Planning Association.

2. Supporting you to retrofit your home

There are a range of activities that we will investigate to help make it easier and cheaper for you to retrofit your home. We will lobby the government to influence national policy, regulations and open up sources of funding. We will investigate ways of supporting owners of historic and listed buildings to sympathetically retrofit their homes through the local planning process. And we will consider working in partnership with a Social Enterprise Lender to provide loans to enable people to improve insulation and upgrade heating systems including renewable technology

3. Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney

We have entered into a partnership with Bromford Housing Association to provide residents with local affordable homes. We aim to make these homes truly affordable to buy, cheaper to run and cause much less damage to the environment - tackling two of the key issues for the Cotswolds - the lack of affordable homes and responding to the climate emergency. These will act as a proof of concept to show new development can deliver zero carbon affordable homes.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Everyday needs should be easily accessible within a short distance from home. This includes safe and equitable access to fresh groceries, nature, healthcare, jobs or workspaces and other essential services, facilities and infrastructure. It also means listening and working together with communities on things that matter to them and ensuring new development fits well and enhances existing communities and neighbourhoods.

Our top actions

1. Working with landlords to improve the quality and safety of private rented accommodation.
2. Continuing to lobby the government to prevent the loss of residential properties to second homes and short-term holiday lets and control the increase of 'party homes'.
3. Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to everyday amenities by maximising developer contributions to pay towards local infrastructure and encourage infrastructure providers and organisations to access our Community Infrastructure Levy.





COTSWOLD

HOUSING STRATEGY

DRAFT



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNITED WE SERVE

Agenda Item 10



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 7 DECEMBER 2023
Subject	COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2023-24 QUARTER TWO
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	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst 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)	That Cabinet resolves to: I. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2023-24 Q2.
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.
- 2.2** Progress on actions in the Corporate Plan for Q2 include:
- "Spotlight on Planning" Town & Parish Council Forum events held during September in Cirencester and Moreton in Marsh.
 - Round 1 of Phase Two of the Water Park Strategy for installing cycle stands is complete, with 19 out of the 46 now in place across Fairford, Lechlade and South Cerney. Positive discussions have been held for the Spine Road Crossing between GCC and Cotswold District Council Officers to agree the next steps forward including options for allocation of funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to support the design and delivery phases of the project.
 - The Planning Enforcement project to develop an ICT enabled proactive approach to the service recommenced in September.
 - The proposal for Solar PV on Trinity Road Council offices went to Cabinet and then on to Full Council in July with a resolution of approval of the funding.
 - The Collaboration Agreement entered into by the Council and Bromford Housing to deliver the Down Ampney housing development had been delayed due to drainage concerns, but progress is now underway with drawings approved by members and a Planning Application due to be submitted in November.
 - Housing Requirement paper approved by Council, concluding there has not been a significant change in housing needs since the Local Plan (LP) was adopted in 2018 and therefore the LP housing requirement remains up-to-date and does not need updating.



- The sixth edition of Crowdfund Cotswold concluded in September with four projects actively seeking community contributions, while an additional three are in the verification process. These projects offer a diverse thematic and geographical range, addressing issues from climate change to children's play provision in both the North and South of the district.
- The Cotswold Community Network (CCN), aimed at networking and sharing information about what is happening in communities throughout the district, has grown in members with successful presentations by Guest Speakers through Q2 including Fraud Awareness, Community Connexions Transport and Mental Health resources.
- The Community Safety Partnership has reviewed and drafted and update for its Action Plan for 2024/25 with the report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October.
- Majority of shortlisted areas have been visited for the Safer Streets Cotswolds proposals. Once the visits have been completed, alongside more local engagement, the decision will be taken on which areas will receive the improvements to make them safer.
- Additional events and classes under the Active Cotswold Action Plan have been positively received, including a successful live event featuring Mr. Motivator.
- The Holiday Activity Food programme continues to be a success with the number of attendants doubling in comparison to last year.
- The Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP) held a workshop with service providers from both statutory and voluntary sectors to explore how partners can work together to provide better support to young people and families and in areas of high need.
- The Changing Places Toilet Facilities are complete at Cotswold Farm Park and Abbey Grounds, Cirencester with Birdland due to start in the coming month. Cotswold Country Park and Beach is in the planning and procurement stages and will be delivered early in 2024.
- Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) have successfully recruited a Rural Domestic Abuse Champions Network Co-Ordinator with training workshops to be organised for professionals and community leaders.
- The County Council Digital Household Grant scheme is now live, and Officers continue to liaise with Fastershire and the main infrastructure companies like Openreach and Gigaclear to bring forward improvements in the district.

2.3 Off target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at Q2 include:

- **Develop and implement an Asset Management Strategy.**

Update: Costs are currently being finalised with a consultant to prepare the Asset Management Strategy. A broad strategy is expected to be completed by December, followed by a property-specific strategy in the New Year.

- **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 the decision to set up district wide owner occupier rooftop PV scheme. The ‘Make My House Green’ scheme has since launched.

- **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. Phase one has been completed with installations at Rissington Road Bourton on the Water and at Trinity Road Cirencester. Phase 2 is due for completion during Q3 2023-2024.

- **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: The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) mitigation strategies are complete for Cotswolds Beechwoods and North Meadow so planning applications can be determined. A briefing note for HRA issues has been circulated to management. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project is progressing, and interim guidance for developers has been completed.

- **Deliver a sustainable transport strategy.**

Update: The Sustainable Transport Decarbonisation Strategy is due to be completed by the end of October and a member briefing will be organised in the run up to Christmas. The strategy identifies a series of carbon reduction interventions in Cirencester and the wider district. During the summer months the Council commissioned Systra to prepare an access and movement study to examine parking needs and opportunities to improve active travel. The council has completed a public transport study that examined the links between Kemble to Cirencester and an assessment of sites to locate a new public transport hub in Cirencester Town Centre.



- **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 with the strategy presented and approved at Cabinet on 2 November.

- **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. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding includes provision in Year 3 (2024/25) to support those furthest from the labour market and for green skills. Officers are liaising with key contacts in the County Council about this.

- **Develop and implement an action plan to improve digital inclusion.**

Update: Work is progressing through partnership activity with a headline report outlining produced 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.

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 (60.12% against a target of 53%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected (67.85% against a target of 57%)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.72 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.33% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (97% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (88.6% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (95% against a target of 70%)



- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (85.31% against a target of 80%)
- Number of visits to the three leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (3090 memberships against a target of 2936 memberships and 128512 visits against a target of 120000)
- Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (93.31% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 90%)

3.2 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (23.98 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (9.83 days against a target of 4 days)

Q2's standalone figures show that Council Tax New Claims are being processed in 16.76 days, against the target of 20 days and Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance are being processed in 6.83 days against a target of 4 days, however, as the targets are cumulative the rolling statistics are above target for average processing days.

(Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events however remains well within the target of 5 days.)

The Resolution: Following procedural changes to manage the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers, we are now achieving a level of 60-70% of automation for the DWP work up from 40-45% in Q1 allowing for more focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is currently investigating improvements to the data that is sent through to local authorities via a Working Group. Once the improvements have been made there is the potential, in conjunction with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The outstanding workload is reducing week by week and management of the resource to support the reduction is underway. The improvements to the automation system have freed up officer capacity to help reduce the backlog of claims. It is anticipated that the trial for reduced phone line opening hours at Cotswold will further free up capacity for officers to process claims.

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 remains unchanged at 88 from Q1 to Q2. This is above target and higher than this time last year. This has been attributed to a stand-in driver navigating unfamiliar routes due to sickness and a vehicle being off the roads. Both have 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.

Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (30 against a target of 50)

Nineteen properties including 8 for affordable rent and 11 for shared ownership have been delivered in Cotswold at Evenlode and Siddington during Q2 with eleven delivered during Q1.

The Resolution: Delays were encountered at one housing development site due to the insolvency of the main contractor, leading to the site remaining inaccessible for several months before a replacement contractor could be legally engaged. The legal issues have since been resolved, a new contractor has been engaged, and construction has recommenced. It is anticipated that the 28 affordable units on the site will be delivered within the next quarter.

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 performance report is attached at Annex C.

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 28 November 2023; and any comments from the Committee will be recorded and shared with relevant Cabinet Members.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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 Q2 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 Q2
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 / Simon Anthony	Joe Harris	On Target	Review of Grounds Maintenance Service scheduled to start in November
SS2		Improve road sweeping regimes	November 2020	April 2024	Bill Oddy/ Simon Anthony	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	Costs prepared and provided to CFO in July for replacement in Stow. Awaiting budget agreement as costs exceed budget
SS4		Keep areas of open space tidy	April 2021	April 2024	Andy Barge/Simon Anthony	Joe Harris	On Target	Review of Street Cleansing review and Grounds Maintenance Service scheduled to start in November
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	Latest edition distributed September 2023.
SS6		Deliver programme of engagement for town and parish councils	October 2021	April 2024	Angela Claridge	Joe Harris	On Target	"Spotlight on Planning" Town & Parish Council Forum events held in September in Cirencester and Moreton in Marsh.
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 strategy for the Cotswold Water Park	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		Deliver on funded projects	November 2021	March 2023	Andy Barge/Philippa Lowe	Juliet Layton	On Target	19 of the 46 new cycle stands have now been installed as part of round 1 of provision. Locations are at the Memorial Hall in Lechlade; Hilary Cottage Surgery & the Football Club in Fairford; the One Stop Shop, Village Hall and Upper Up Playing Field in South Cerney. Delivery of a further 8 stands is part of phase 2 and discussions continue on a further group of sites for the final stands. A number of meetings have been held with GCC managers and officers to discuss options for progressing to the feasibility to the next design stage. An updated proposition is awaited from GCC but discussions were positive and GCC have confirmed their support. There is still an on-going issue regarding the detailing of the finish of the new cycle way access point to the car park at Neigh Bridge which again has been raised with GCC for resolution.

SS15		Adopt and implement a clear financial strategy that reflects the changing economy and our identified needs	September 2020	Refreshed annually	David Stanley	Mike Evely	On Target	
SS16	Establish financial resilience to enable investment in our priorities	Adopt and implement recovery investment strategy	September 2020	Refreshed annually	David Stanley	Mike Evely/Tony Dale	Cancelled	
SS17		Develop and implement an asset management strategy	March 2021	December 2022	David Stanley/Claire Locke	Mike Evely	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Cost being finalised with consultant. Broad strategy due to be complete by December then property specific strategy in New Year.
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	The FRM team inputted into the Water Summit day held at CDC on the 13th October. The team is continually mitigating against the risk of flooding from new developments by commenting on between 20-30 new applications for minor development per month. The team is overseeing the work of UBICO who maintain the CDC owned watercourses and trash screens. The team also respond to reports of flooding which has so far included only 1 report of internal flooding to a residential property this quarter.
SS19		Roll out the Cotswold Flood Warden Programme	November 2021	November 2022 for the initial pilot year.	Robert Weaver	Lisa Spivey	On Target	The new officer started at GRCC in late July, and over the months since then, has met with officers at the Council and with current flood wardens, undertaking a number of site visits to consolidate relationships with current wardens, and spend some time developing links with other strategic partners at the LRF, Environment Agency and Thames Water. At quarter end, there are 24 wardens recruited, from 13 settlements around the district.
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	Enforcement project re commenced in September
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 Evely	Complete	
SS28		Explore opportunities for 'comfort partnerships'	April 2021	September 2022	Jon Dearing/Mandy Fathers	Mike Evely	Complete	
SS29		Develop a strategy for the provision of public toilets	April 2022	September 2022	David Stanley/Jon Dearing/Susan Hughes	Mike Evely	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	
CCI	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 approved and Make My House Green scheme launched
CC2		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	

CC3	Develop, facilitate and deliver an exemplar public engagement programme in relation to carbon reduction and climate change	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		
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 Charlie Jackson	Mike McKeown	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Phase 1 complete, phase 2 due for completion Q3 2023/24	
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 /Chris Crookall-Fallon	Mike Evemy/Mike McKeown	Off Target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation	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 Evemy/Mike McKeown	On Target	The project team are currently preparing a financial appraisal report for the CFO to review and approve.
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 Evemy/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 Evemy/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	HRA mitigation strategies in place for Cotswolds Beeches and North Meadow, however further work is required to deliver these and to update them. Briefing note on HRA issues across Publica circulated to management. Work on BNG continues, with interim guidance for developers finalised (currently being made accessible for the web) - partnership project with other LPAs in Gloucestershire.	

CC20	recovery in the Cotswolds	Create a community and wildlife sanctuary at Chesterton Cemetery	December 2021	March 2023	Claire Locke/Andrew Turner	Mike Evely	On Target	Work has commenced and is projected to take a number of months due to the planting cycles.
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 2024	Simon Anthony	Mike Evely	On Target	Ongoing
CC22		Consider changes to the waste and recycling service	April 2022	March 2024	Simon Anthony	Mike Evely	On Target	Options presented to the Cabinet Transformation Working Group in September and further modelling working being undertaken.

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	Drawings approved by members with the Planning application due to be submitted by November.
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	
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	Complete	
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	Work with housing providers to improve the affordability and sustainability of developments across the district	Examine our existing assets and identify opportunities for housing delivery	September 2020	Achieved	Rob Weaver Claire Locke	Joe Harris	Complete	
SH9		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		Identify and allocate land for future housing and businesses.			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	Housing Requirement paper approved by Council, it concludes there has not been a significant change in housing needs since the Local Plan was adopted in 2018 and therefore the LP housing requirement remains up-to-date and does not need updating. The Local Plan continues to identify a sufficient supply of sites to meet total plan needs (by 2031) and shorter term requirements (5YHLS and Housing Delivery Test). The regulation 18 consultation programmed for Jan 2024 will show any additional housing sites.

LP2	Develop an updated local plan that delivers our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure	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.	July 2020	Submit in 2023; Examination 23/24; and adoption 23/24	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	Draft policies will feature in the regulation 18 consultation document programmed for January 2024.
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	Sewage workshop scheduled for 13 October 2023, which will explore natural interventions. Water Cycle Study due to be completed by the end of the year.
LP4		Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds	March 2022		March 2023	Charlie Jackson/James Brain Jon Dearing/Phil Shaw	Juliet Layton	On Target
LP5	Develop a coordinated strategy for Cirencester town centre that responds positively to the changing nature of the high street	Deliver Cirencester town centre masterplan	2020/21	Framework masterplan has been commissioned and is due to be delivered during 2022; this will include community and stakeholder engagement	Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	During the summer months the council has commissioned various feasibility studies to aid the preparation of the masterplan e.g. it appointed Systra to assessment parking demand within the town centre and measures to meet needs in the future. A consultation on an emerging draft is scheduled to run alongside the Cirencester NDP
LP6		Work with Cirencester Town Council to deliver Cirencester neighbourhood development plan			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	Cirencester NDP (Reg14) is programmed to be consulted upon in January 2024
LP7		Enable appropriate changes of use			Charlie Jackson/James Brain	Juliet Layton	On Target	Policy SI (cirencester) is being update and will form part of the partial update.
LP8		Identify sustainable transport options			Charlie Jackson/Hannah Fountain	Juliet Layton	On Target	The Sustainable Transport Decarbonisation Strategy is due to be completed by the end of October and a member briefing will be organised in the run up to Christmas. The strategy identifies a series of carbon reduction interventions in Cirencester and the wider district. During the summer months the Council commissioned Systra to prepare an access and movement study to examine parking needs and opportunities to improve active travel. The council has completed a public transport study that examined the links between Kemble to Cirencester and an assessment of sites to locate a new public transport hub in Cirencester Town Centre. The decision to pause recruitment to the Sustainable Transport post remains.
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
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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	The sixth round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 13th September. At the point of writing, four projects are actively campaigning for community contributions, and a further three are undergoing verification. These projects promise a good thematic and geographical spread, covering North and South Cotswolds and interventions from climate change to children's play provision. A number of projects supported in earlier rounds are completing works, with the launch of Bledington Play area on 1 October.
HW3	Coordinate an asset based community development approach	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey	On Target	Following on from the successful CHEQ's (Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop, Eastleach, Quenington and Southrop) community event, the Community Builder's (CB's) held another very well attended 'Meet & Greet' at Upper Rissington as part of an Autumn/Winter plan to engage with more villages, find out what residents would like to see happen in their communities, reduce isolation, support people to take action and signpost to relevant groups/organisations in the district. We are supporting Digital Inclusion groups in Bourton and Tetbury to help older residents, both of these are well attended and have given excellent feedback. Both CB's have linked in and attended a number of planned events such as HAF, Foodbank and Fun Days to speak with as many residents as possible.
HW4	Host regular community forums with community groups and community leaders	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Lisa Spivey/Claire Bloomer	On Target	The Cotswold Community Network is going strong with 115 members from 65 different organisations. We have had Guest Speakers present on subjects such as Fraud Awareness, Community Connexions Transport, Adult Education, Healthy Lifestyles, Mental Health resources and more. Many links and collaborative working continues to stem from the network.
HW5	Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing goals						<p>Safer Streets Funding: Majority of shortlisted areas have been visited.</p> <p>Crime Perception Survey: The CSP held a Crime Perception Survey in March using the same engagement platform under the Safer Streets Cotswold branding. The three funded engagement events that took place this summer were used to ask people to complete the short survey. The survey received 115 responses. The main findings can be viewed on request. The data shows, that there is an overall feeling of safety. However, crime as well as ASB is perceived to have increased over the last 3 years. The majority of people seem to be confident in knowing how to report crime. However, too many residents are not confident, and some are not sure. This is an area that the CSP needs to look into. The contributions were generally rather positive and the majority of residents that have completed the survey are feeling safe in their local areas with low levels of perceived crime and ASB.</p> <p>Engagement events: Cotswold CSP has applied for and received £6.8k from the OPCC for community engagement activities. In 2023 the CSP has organised 3 engagement events: Cirencester 31st March, Upper Rissington 29th August and Tetbury 30th August. These events were family events with free activities for children and young people. CSP members like Trading Standards, GDASS, Fire service, Neighbourhood Policing Team, Bromford Housing, Cotswold Friends, The Churn project and others attended and supported the event with valuable information for residents. All events were successful and very well attended and valuable conversations with residents about community safety perceptions were held.</p> <p>CSP Action Plan: The CSP has reviewed its Action Plan and drafted an updated plan for 2024/25. A report will be presented at the October O&S committee to update on the CSP's achievements as well as to present the new Action Plan. Reporting times for the plan will change to align with the financial year, hence the new plan will go live in April 2024.</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 / Jackie Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	Captured in Active Cotswold 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	Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages	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	Jackie Wright/Rachel Biles	Paul Hodgkinson	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Report for adoption going to Cabinet in November 2023.
HW11		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	Updates are captured as well in Active Cotswold Action Plan. Joined the Ramblers Wellbeing Walk scheme in partnership with West Ox with the first Walk Leader Training undertaken in September. Officers attended various groups to talk about 'Live Longer Better' and to demonstrate resistance band workouts. Further FIT KITS have been donated to South Cerney, Bourton, Morton in Marsh making a total of 6 distributed. Successful Active Cotswold Live Event with Mr Motivator on Sunday 1st October at Bingham hall in Cirencester with great participation in all activities and very positive feedback. Motivation Club has been set up in September. Meeting held with Freedom Leisure about joint working on Active Cotswold program. Agreed in principle to deliver all community based activities under the Active Cotswold branding and to work together on this as one team.
HW12	Improve equal access to quality services across the district	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	Have run another successful HAF programme this summer with the number of attendants doubling in comparison to last year. Bloodhound continue to be our Community Connectors, providing excellent support to families with both digital support in making bookings, and providing transport to allow children to attend provision across the district. Cotswold Food Network Cotswold Food Network has launched with a steering group having been brought together consisting of CDC officers from economic development, benefits/welfare, community wellbeing and climate action as well as feeding Gloucestershire aiming to improve food equity holistically A workshop is planned in November to discuss community growing.
HW13		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	The ILP held a workshop with service providers from both statutory and voluntary sector, with two more to follow in October. The workshops are exploring how partners can work together to provide better support to young people and families and in areas of high need. Chipping Campden Working with our community in Chipping Campden to discuss the challenges of delivering services in our rural towns and villages. Discussions highlighted two main areas of concern; accessing mental health support when it's needed and support for young people with diminished youth services, initially regarding drug and alcohol issues. CGL and Gloucestershire Police have plans to work together in the area, to raise awareness of drug and alcohol in the town. We're also exploring several funding options to provide counselling for young people on long waiting lists.

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	no update	
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	The youth network has identified a gap in provision for Cirencester in particular due to the increasing issue of ASB, concerns from schools and street gangs. The town would benefit from targeted youth support which is being considered by the ILP (row 112) as well as a funding application that is being put in to the Big Lottery by the Youth Network. Other needs include: mobile youth provision to reach isolated areas, where youth clubs are not viable due to small numbers, youth provision in Chipping Campden. Both themes are also being looked at by the ILP as well as being included in the funding application.	
HW16		Work with partners to implement four Changing Places Toilet facilities	September 2021	April 2023	Paul James	Claire Bloomer	On Target	Abbey Grounds, Cirencester now complete. Birdland due to start this month and Cotswold Country Park and Beach should also be onsite soon.	
HW17	Promote both mental and physical health equally, to increase awareness of mental health issues and improve the community response to people in crisis	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	No Change	
HW18		Provide targeted mental health campaigns and support	September 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Jacqui Wright	Paul Hodgkinson	On Target		
HW19		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		The Rural Domestic Abuse Champions network Coordinator has been recruited successfully by GDASS. Once the postholder has settled, work across all the rural districts will commence and will include setting up training workshops for professionals as well as community leaders, opportunities to network, as well as targeting specific groups like farmers and the beauty industry. As part of our work trying to increasingly look at preventing DA in the first place, we are currently researching how much knowledge on healthy relationships, Domestic Abuse etc. is being shared at Secondary Schools in the district.
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	Ensure our housing and built environments enable residents to live healthy lives	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		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	
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	
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. Monthly monitoring meetings are held with the Growth Hub.
VE9		Build a reputation as a business-friendly council	July 2020	April 2024	Andy Barge/Paul James	Tony Dale	On Target	
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. Work on this was due to start in October. Proposals for a Centre for Sustainable Aviation at Cotswold Airport appear to be gathering momentum. The Rural England Prosperity Fund has now opened for applications 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 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	Help our town centres recover from COVID-19 and in the face of changing shopping habits	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 Grant scheme is now live. Officers continue to liaise with Fastershire and the main infrastructure companies like Openreach and Gigaclear to bring forward improvements in the district.
VE16		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	No Change
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. UKSPF funding includes provision in Year 3 (2024/25) to support those furthest from the labour market and for green skills. Officers are liaising with key contacts in the County Council about this.
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. A new Business Navigator is now in post to help provide this service. 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
July 2023 - September 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.
- Crowdfund Cotswold continues to attract wide interest from across the District with four projects actively seeking community contributions, while an additional three are in the verification process. These projects offer a diverse thematic and geographical range, addressing issues from climate change to children's play provision in both the North and South of the district.
- The Holiday Activity Food programme continues to be a success with the number of attendants doubling in comparison to last year.
- The Changing Places Toilet Facilities are complete at Cotswold Farm Park and Abbey Grounds, Cirencester with Birdland due to start in November. Cotswold Country Park and Beach is 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, progress is now underway with drawings approved by members and a Planning Application due to be submitted by November.
- 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 presented to the most recent meeting of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group in September.
- "Spotlight on Planning" Town & Parish Council Forum events held during September in Cirencester and Moreton in Marsh.
- Round I of Phase Two of the Water Park Strategy for installing cycle stands is complete, with 19 out of the 46 now in place across Fairford, Lechlade and South Cerney.
- Cotswold Home Solar was launched at the start of September with four residents so far having placed deposits for installations through the scheme partner, MakeMyHouseGreen.

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

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 at Neigh Bridge that is largely complete with outstanding issues still being pursued with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in liaison with the Cotswold Lakes Trust. Work is on-going to deliver 52 new cycle stands, with 19 already installed in locations in Lechlade, Fairford and South Cerney. Plans are in place for additional stands in those locations and more are being investigated.

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. During Q2, a productive discussion took place between GCC and Cotswold District Council Officers to agree the next steps forward including options for allocation of funding both from Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to support both the design and delivery phases of the project.

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 a 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 and the Government has confirmed that it no longer is minded to consider designating the Council for poor performance. 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 underway and 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 have been 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 and the work associated with the impending requirements to deliver BNG will be improving the IT platform.



The Context

In national policy terms, Q2 2023/24 was notable for the government's announcement on relaxing decarbonisation targets (PM's announcement on 20 September). The deadline for ending the sale of new fossil fuelled cars was set back from 2030 to 2035, and the date for ending the installation of gas fired boilers in new homes buildings was set back from 2025 to 2035. Some commentators have observed that these changes may not greatly change the actions of housebuilders or car manufacturers, which are largely committed to these changes anyway, whilst others have expressed concern that these changes will materially damage both the UK's timely achievement of its net zero goals, and its international standing as a climate leader.

Following Professor Piers Forster, Chair of the Climate Change Committee, stated "We remain concerned about the likelihood of achieving the UK's future targets, especially the substantial policy gap to the UK's 2030 goal. Around a fifth of the required emissions reductions to 2030 are covered by plans that we assess as insufficient. Recent policy announcements were not accompanied by estimates of their effect on future emissions, nor evidence to back the Government's assurance that the UK's targets will still be met. We urge the Government to adopt greater transparency in updating its analysis at the time of major announcements."

Page 116 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

The business case and Council investment decision for solar PV and battery storage at the Council's offices at Trinity Road and one other tenanted site was agreed by Cabinet and Council in July. System design discussions are now well underway with the appointed installer, with the expectation of installation before the end of the year. The installation of electric vehicle charge points in the Trinity Road carpark, which will also be accessible to the public, is delayed but due to be installed before the end of Q3.

'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. Whilst the bulk of waste collection vehicle replacements are scheduled for some years hence, attention is turning now to the potential for electrification of part of the waste collection fleet. The new leisure services operator is in place, and a new application for government

funds has been made which, if successful, will enable the installation of further solar PV power on the Cirencester leisure centre, further reducing the cost of electricity for the site.

‘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 appointed to deliver an updated evidence base and policies for renewable energy in the district, and an evidence base and policies for sustainable construction, both key planks of the updated LP. In addition the updated Cotswold Design Code will be procured during Q2, which is likely to contain important components of low carbon building design. Further installations of electric vehicle charge points in Council-owned carparks continue to run behind schedule. It is now expected that the Rissington Road and Trinity Road car park charge points will be installed before the end of Q3, 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

Cotswold Home Solar was launched at the start of September, and had strong initial interest, with four residents so far having placed deposits for installations through the scheme partner, MakeMyHouseGreen. The communications team is working on ways to refresh and sustain a marketing campaign to make sure as many residents as possible can make use of the scheme. 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 increase in Boiler Upgrade Scheme grant to £7.5k announced in September should encourage more households to fit low carbon heat pumps.

‘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.

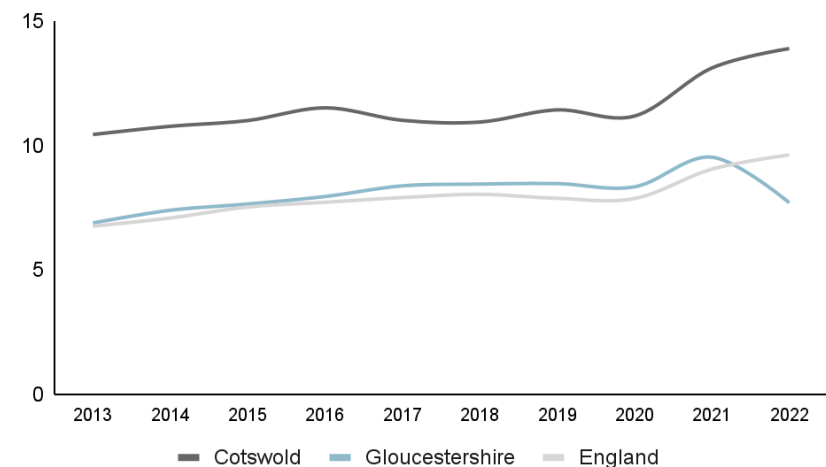
House prices and rents are relatively high. At the end of September 2022, the median property price in Cotswold District was £400,000 compared to £275,000 in England. House prices are falling due to the cost of living crisis, while rents are increasing. There is a shortage of good quality rented accommodation 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, 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.

Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings



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 site drawings have been approved by Members with the Planning Application expected to be submitted in November. A financial appraisal is to be reviewed by Officers 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. Consultants are preparing costs based on the preferred design and these should be received in November. The Council will then need to update the original business case based on capital costs, likely grant funding available and the revenue from leasing the building to New Brewery Arts. 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 was completed in July and will form part of the costed proposals which will come to Cabinet and Council early in the New Year.

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, however, delays have been encountered due to the insolvency of the main contractor, leading to the site remaining inaccessible for several months before a replacement contractor could be legally engaged. The legal issues have since been

resolved, a new contractor has been engaged, and construction has recommenced. It is anticipated that the 28 affordable units on the site will be delivered within the next quarter.

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.
- **Design Code** – a broad document covering all aspects of design within a Cotswold context including architectural, urban, landscape, ecological and sustainable design. Design consultants, LDA, were commissioned in October 2023 with the project due to complete in July 2024.
- **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

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 was completed to determine the most suitable delivery model, contract scope and contract terms for the Council's leisure facilities for when the previous contract expired on 31 July 2023. The procurement process to appoint a new external Leisure and Culture Management Contractor is complete and the new contract with Freedom Leisure commenced 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. Due to delays with Officer and Member holidays the presentation of the PPS for Cabinet have been pushed to November 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. The Changing Places Toilet Facilities are complete at Cotswold Farm Park and Abbey Grounds, Cirencester with Birdland due to start in the coming month. Cotswold Country Park and Beach is in the planning and procurement stages and will be delivered early in 2024.

The sixth round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 13th September. At the point of writing, four projects are actively campaigning for community contributions, and a further three are undergoing verification. These projects promise a good thematic and geographical spread, covering North and South Cotswolds and interventions from climate change to children's play provision. A number of projects supported in earlier rounds are completing works, with the launch of Bledington Play area on 1 October.

The Active Cotswold programme has distributed seven Community Fit Kits to date. The Council has joined 'Ramblers Wellbeing Walk Scheme'

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(<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-wellbeing-walks.aspx>) in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council. Our Community Support Officer Kate has delivered a first training session to 8 volunteer walk leaders in September. The training took place at Sherbourne Estate. More walk leader training sessions are planned in due course. Officers visited 16 groups with barriers to Physical Activity and given demonstrations and talks and there have been 2 successful Chair Exercise class trials. A new outdoor movement class that is free to participants for the first 12 weeks has started in Fairford in September. The session has 12 attendees and will continue indoors in the coming weeks.

The council is working in partnership with 'Mr Motivator' and has hosted an Active Cotswold Live Event at Bingham Hall in Cirencester where he was the main act. Other activities included Zumba, Yoga, Chair Exercise, a Smoothie Bike as well as activities for children. Partner organisations such as Active Gloucestershire, Healthy Lifestyles Service, Freedom Leisure, Slimming World and the Falls prevention team provided information and were available for people to answer any questions. The event attracted over 100 local people and was a big success. A second event is planned for the North of the district in Spring 2024. The Council has launched the 'Mr Motivator Motivation Club'. This club provides free access to all of Mr Motivators online content including classes and nutrition advice. Residents sign up to the club by completing this [Google Form](#) or email Community.support@cotswold.gov.uk.

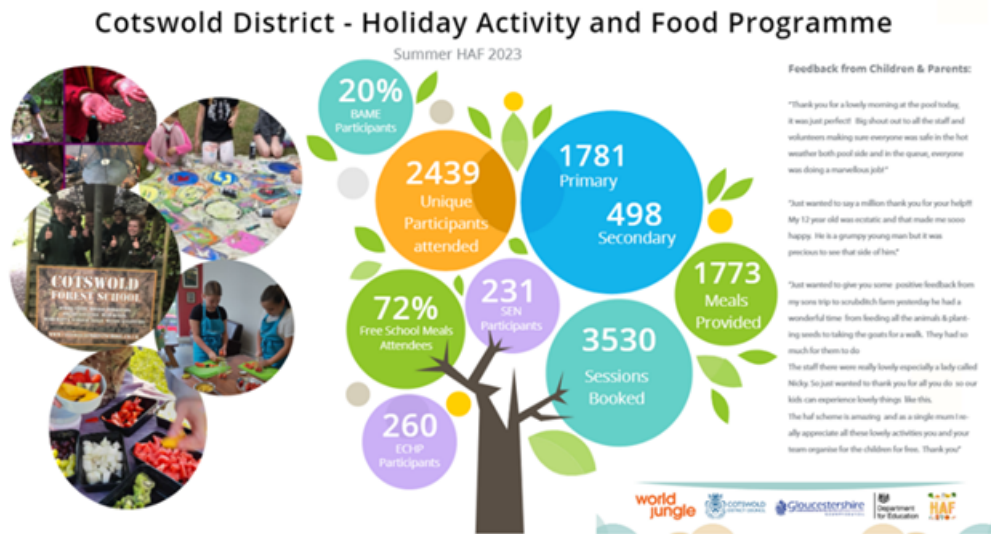
Following on from our successful 'Meet your Community Builder' event in the CHEQ's villages, which as a result has seen the set-up of a new Art Club by residents in Eastleach, which prior to this engagement had no clubs at all. The Community Builders held another very well attended 'Meet & Greet' at Upper Rissington as part of their Autumn/Winter plan to engage with more villages, find out what residents would like to see happen in their communities, reduce isolation, support people to take action and signpost to relevant groups/organisations in the district.

Following the successful Digital Inclusion Group that was set up by a resident in Bourton on the Water with the support of our Community Builder, a new group has started in Tetbury helping residents to get online. Both groups are well attended and receive excellent feedback.

The Council is hosting bi-weekly Cotswold Community Network meetings which are informal virtual meetings for local statutory and voluntary organisations/groups of all sizes. The network has 115 members from 65 different organisations. The last quarter has seen guest speakers presenting on subjects such as Fraud Awareness, Community Connexions Transport, Adult Education, Healthy Lifestyles, Mental Health resources and more. Many links and collaborative working continue to stem from the network.

The council continued to partner with World Jungle to deliver the Government funded Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF). HAF has gone from strength to strength, this summer it more than doubled the number of children on free school meals, who attended the provision, compared to last year. The number of activities on offer also increased and over 200 food hampers were provided to families. 'Bloodhound Education' continue to be the HAF Community Connectors, providing excellent support to families with both digital support in making bookings, and providing transport to allow children to attend provision across the district. This project has increased the Council's engagement with the most vulnerable families as well as building connections with Social Care and key organisations that support families across the district. The Council is now looking at a wider project to continue the good relationships built with families and to maintain the connections with youth provider organisations to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families after HAF funding comes to an end, in early 2025. The infographic below displays the highlights of the Summer HAF programme.

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The community wellbeing team held recent engagement event with Army families, in South Cerney, which has helped to improve relationships and reduce the isolation often experienced due to the transient nature of the camp and their families having limited time to integrate with their community outside of the camp, before they move on. The team plans to provide a Fun Day in August 2024 for the new and existing children looking ahead to a new school term. The team is working with Gloucestershire County Council to find a solution to the lack of safe pavements between the camp and Cirencester town centre. We aim to maintain and increase our engagement into 2024, bringing many of our partner organisations and the support they can offer, with us.

The Council in partnership with Feeding Gloucestershire and with input from various local organisations has developed the 'Cotswold Food Network'. The overarching aim of the Network is to improve food equity across the district and beyond, so that everyone has access to nutritious and delicious food and some to eat it with, no matter of background. The network brings together a wide range of partners to enable a focus on food not just from 'farm to fork, but also through the lenses of climate change, cost of living (financial inclusion/food insecurity) as well as economic development & tourism. The network will enable bottom up activity that is reflecting our communities assets and ideas through engagement and co-production. The first emerging theme is community growing and a workshop to explore this further is planned for November.

The network is also currently planning a 'Cost of Living Round Table' event that will bring together all relevant support agencies to look strategically at how support can be provided more effectively across the district. Also planned are two community events for the North and South of the district, which will provide space to connect and interact, activities as well as information and advice around food, financial inclusion and health and wellbeing.

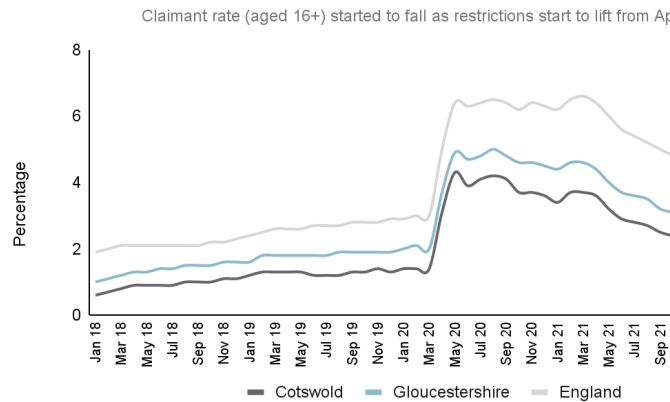


The Context

The District supports an economically active population of around 47,100 and has strengths in finance and business services, ICT including science and technology, retail, and accommodation 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 the national average, and 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 increased during the pandemic. It 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 further uncertainty as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sharply rising prices, particularly for energy and fuel, which is impacting on disposable income and living standards. Although energy and fuel costs have 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)

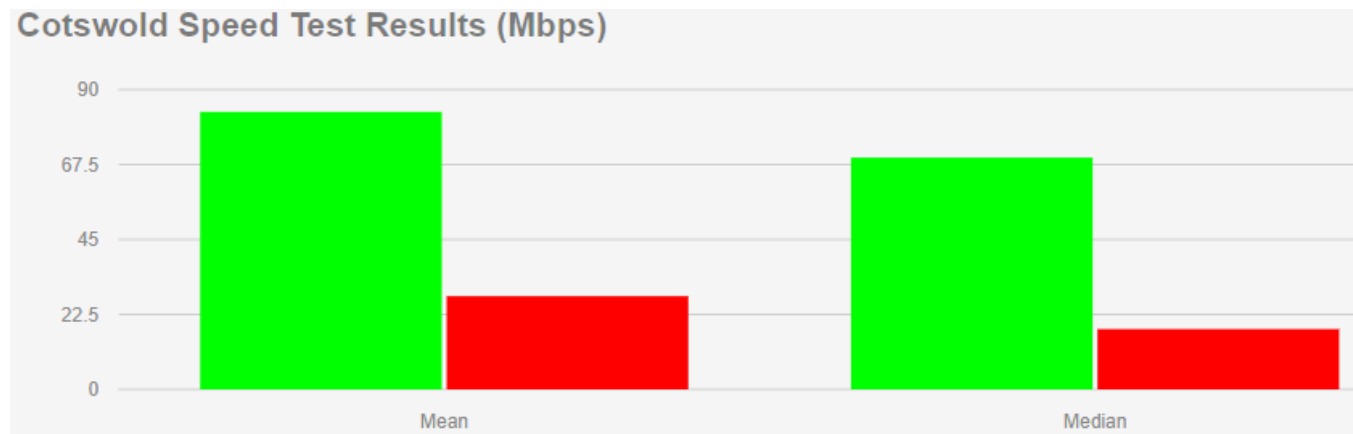
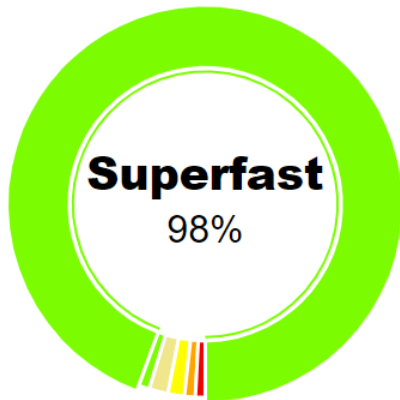
Businesses within the visitor economy, particularly within hospitality, continue to face a particularly challenging scenario: huge increases in wage costs – not only to recruit and retain staff amid continuing labour shortages, but also with the increase in the minimum wage; significant, continuing increases 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.

Overall overseas visitor numbers were still down on pre-pandemic levels (about 10%), however the high-spending US market continued to be buoyant and preliminary figures suggest spending by overseas visitors is up on pre-pandemic figures. The annual economic impact study is due to be released in early November.

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 have been 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 the Chief Executive of the National Star College and from Kier and National Highways on the A417 Missing Link project.

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, new offices at The Growth Hub/Farm491 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. Applications are currently open for 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 2023. 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. The Council has procured a delivery partner for the business grants (ALP Synergy Ltd) and the village hall grants (Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) jointly with the Forest of Dean District Council. The business grant applications are now open and we anticipate the village hall grants will be open soon once GRCC have completed an audit of the buildings.

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. Another count is due in October 2023, although it is encouraging that the longest-standing vacant building, the former House of Fraser on the Market Place, has now been let to the Grace Network. 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.

The current provision for coach parking in Bourton on the Water will cease at the end of December. However a local stakeholder group, including representatives from the Council, Gloucestershire CC Highways, Bourton Parish and Bourton Business Network, have been working to find a suitable alternative site. We are optimistic that a viable solution, involving a drop off point in the centre of the village and coach parking on the industrial estate, can be found.

Bookings for coaches visiting Bourton on the Water are currently handled by the Visitor Information Centre and the Economic Lead has been liaising with the VIC to help them work towards financial sustainability. The expectation is that the VIC will continue to handle coach bookings and that the resultant income will help with their financial sustainability.

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Cotswolds Plus, the newly accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) led by Cotswolds Tourism, is now up and running joining the national portfolio of 22 accredited LVEPs. The Cotswold Plus LVEP partners include Marketing Cheltenham, Visit Gloucester, Visit Gloucestershire, Visit DeanWye and the Cotswold National Landscape. The work of the LVEP is concentrated on co-ordinating regional activity to eradicate duplication and improve collaboration, ensuring a cohesive strategic approach across the visitor economy that aligns local and regional priorities with national strategic goals.

The LVEP has eight agreed workstreams: sustainability (transport and active travel); sustainability (business practices and bio-diversity); accessibility and inclusion; skills and training; research and data; business support; travel trade; and business events. LVEP status affords us greatly enhanced support from the national tourism body, VisitEngland, including amongst other potential benefits additional training, toolkits and advice. One of the toolkits that will be available to Cotswolds Tourism staff covers Grant Funding and Bid Writing.

The tourism team have just gone out with renewals for annual membership of Cotswolds Tourism. Nationally Destination Management Organisations are reporting that the considerable financial challenges facing visitor economy businesses have led to up to a 20% drop off in paid membership. Full figures for Cotswolds Tourism will not be available until the end of October but, while we have seen some businesses unable to renew or downgrading their membership level, preliminary results are encouraging and we anticipate only a small drop off in membership levels and income.

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 council continues to liaise actively with the university on this project.
- 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 the council is 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 has now been completed and 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 presented to the most recent meeting of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group in September. They are committed to using local labour, contractors wherever possible and there is an opportunity for the council to work with local training providers, particularly around training for drystone walling.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
July 2023 - September 2023

Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of Council Tax Collected	Green	6
Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected	Green	7
Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims	Red	8
Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events	Green	9
Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances	Red	10
Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay	Orange	11
Customer Satisfaction - Telephone	Green	12
Customer Satisfaction - Email	Grey	13
Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face	Green	14
Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time	Grey	15
Building Control Satisfaction	No Data	16

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KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)	Green	17
Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)	Green	18
Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)	Green	19
Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice	Green	20
Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed	Orange	21
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Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)	Green	23
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Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships	Green	25
(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	Grey	26

Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days	Green	27
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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	Green	30
Number of affordable homes delivered	Red	31
% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day	Green	32
Complaints	Grey	33
Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days	Grey	35

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.

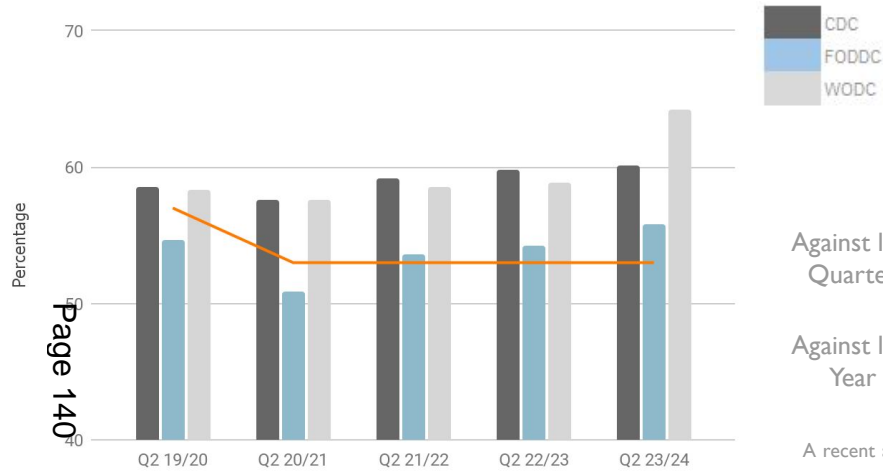
Overall Performance

The Council's performance has been mixed, with commendable progress in Tax Collection Rates and Official Land Charge Search 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 Missed Bins per 100,000 and Number of Affordable Home Delivered.

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



	CDC	FODDC	WODC	Target for Q2
Against last Quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A	53%
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑	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

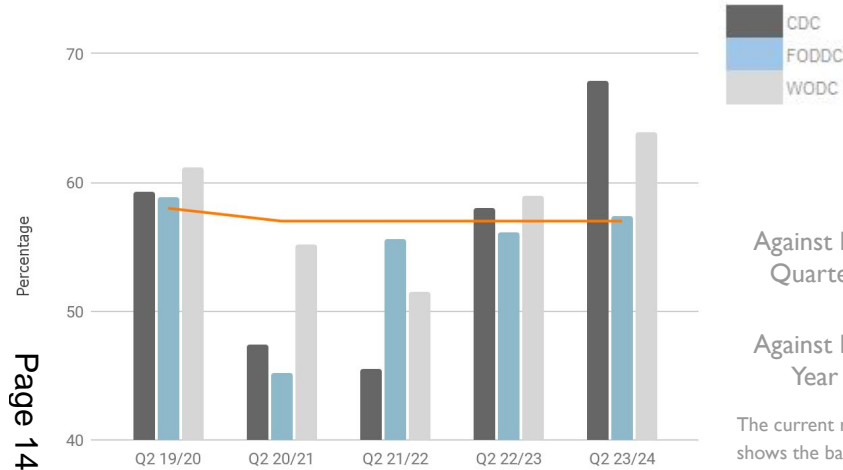
A recent audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. The recovery of these arrears had been suspended to support customers in difficult financial circumstances and to facilitate the adoption 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 balance at the end of the quarter for aged debt and the total outstanding:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£717,592.74	£1,075,749.93	£1,307,883.43	£3,101,226.10

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 rates for Q2 are well above target and are the highest they have been since prior to 2018/19.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



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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

Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q2

57%

Target for 2023/24

99%

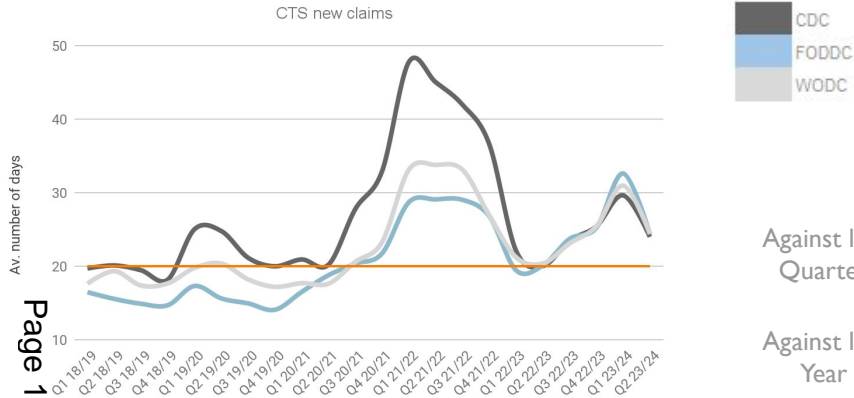
The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the balance at the end of the quarter for aged debt and the total outstanding:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£912,363.51	£1,096,711.92	£1,331,903.79	£3,340,979.22

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. This is emphasized in Cotswolds, where funds collected for previous years arrears are presently credited to the current year pending the processing of additional assessments and changes by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

The collection rate for Cotswold during Q2 is back to pre-pandemic standards and the highest it's been since prior to 2018/19. It should be noted that the amount collected at Cotswolds is c.10% higher than typical levels due to a complex property settling some outstanding arrears which have been credited to the current year's account. The service is currently awaiting the VOA to finalise additional assessments and changes to ensure the correct allocation of funds to the respective years. Once completed it is anticipated the collection rate will align with previous years in the next quarter.

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



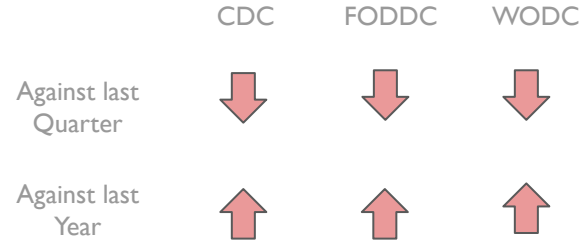
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How do we compare?

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%

Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

20

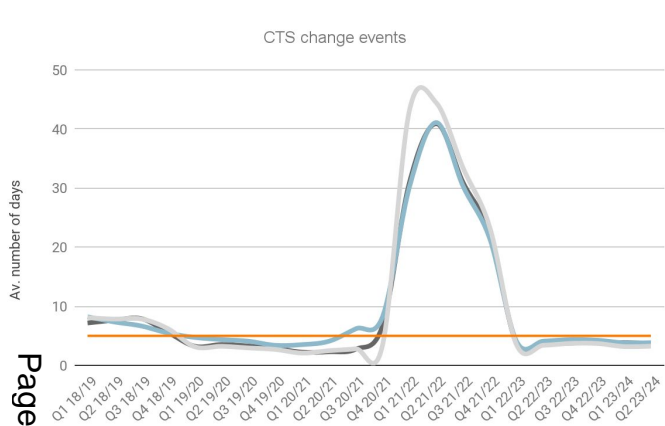
The processing stats for new CTS claims for Q2 are below the target of 20 days with Cotswolds averaging 16.76 days, however, given the target is cumulative, the rolling stats are above target. It should be noted that the cumulative processing time decreased by 5.65 days from last quarter.

Following procedural changes to manage the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers, we are now achieving a level of 60-70% of automation for the DWP work up from 40-45% in Q1 allowing for more focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is currently investigating improvements to the data that is sent through to local authorities via a Working Group. Once the improvements have been made there is the potential, in conjunction with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The outstanding workload is reducing week by week and management of the resource to support the reduction is underway. The improvements to the automation system have freed up officer capacity to help reduce the backlog of claims. It is anticipated that the trial for reduced phone line opening hours at Cotswold will further free up capacity for officers to process claims, however, pressure on the team remains high.

It is worth making clear that, especially for HB COCs, our main sources of HB changes come about after Christmas and in early January when we receive uprating information & rent increases from housing associations. The service indicates that processing days will reduce, but it will not be a rapid process.

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↓	↓

Target for Q2

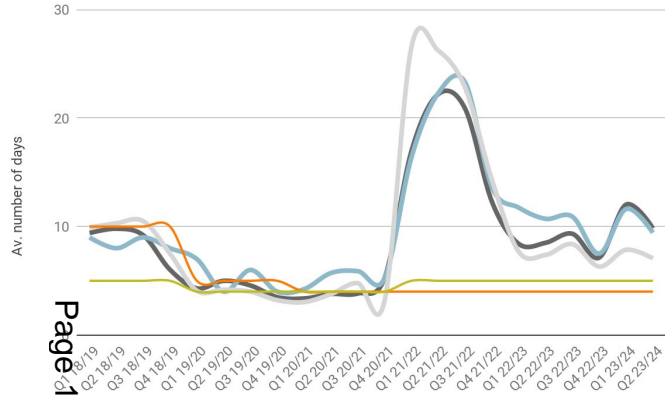
5

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 (0.11).

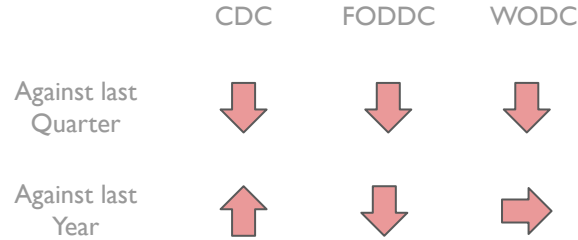
How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

4

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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	5.00	165/179	5/5	67/72	Bottom
Forest	4.00	150/179	3/5	60/72	Bottom
West	4.00	162/179	4/4	66/72	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.

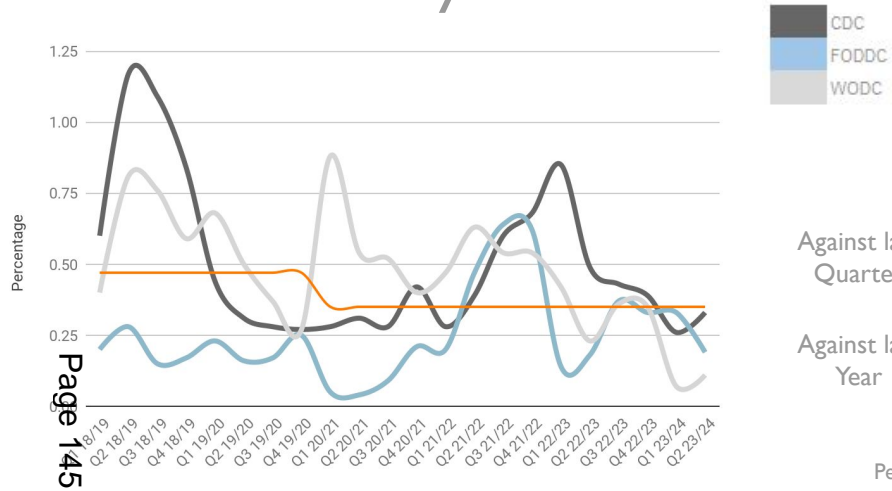
At the end of Q2, the average days to process HB changes decreased to 6.83 days, however, since the target is cumulative, the ongoing statistics show higher figures. Although above target, the reduction in HB Change applications means any delay in assessing an application due to outstanding evidence required has a more visible impact to the average processing days. As a significant amount of changes that affect HB are usually received during Q4 we may potentially see a decrease to the processing times.

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 - 702
CTS Changes - 2644

Managed migration of Housing Benefit to Universal Credit is being rolled out from April 2024 across the country.

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 Q2

0.35%

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment error is 0.33% for Q2.

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.

How do we compare?

TBC

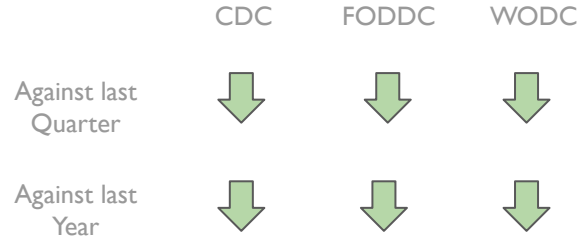
Note: the national target is 0.47%. In 2020-21, the service set a more stringent target of 0.35%

Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



percentage
Page 146

Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

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. September for the partnership in the below table. This is a national comparator

	July Rank	July Net Sat.	Aug Rank	Aug Net Sat.	Sept Rank	Sept Net Sat.
Cotswold	5	96%	3	97%	N/A	N/A
Forest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West	4	96%	1	98%	N/A	N/A

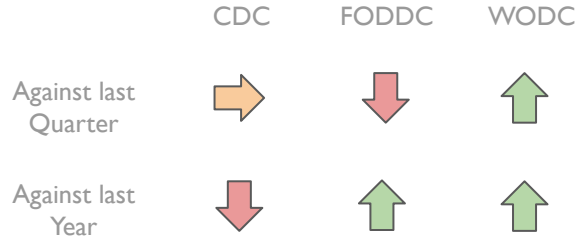
Services provided via the telephone consistently yield high satisfaction, and there has been a notable uptick in survey participation compared to the previous quarter. In Q2, there was a concerted effort to encourage advisors to actively promote the survey among residents.

Cotswold continues to achieve top-tier performance levels, when a sufficient number of surveys are included in the Satisfaction Index. 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 Q2

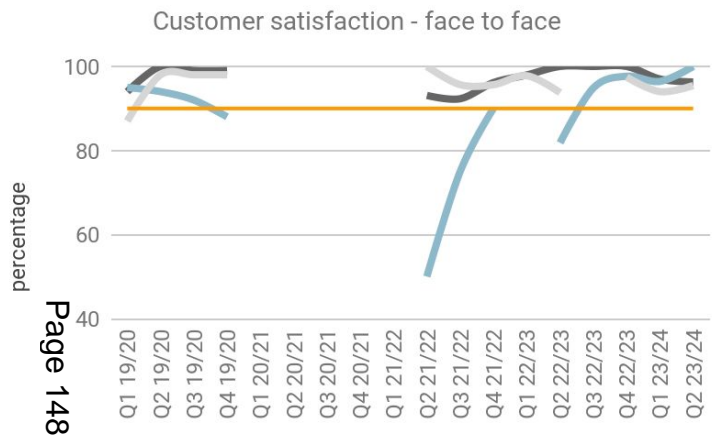
No Target

374 residents responded to the survey of which 241 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 64.44% 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	↓	↑	↑

Target for Q2

90%

Target for 2023/24

90%

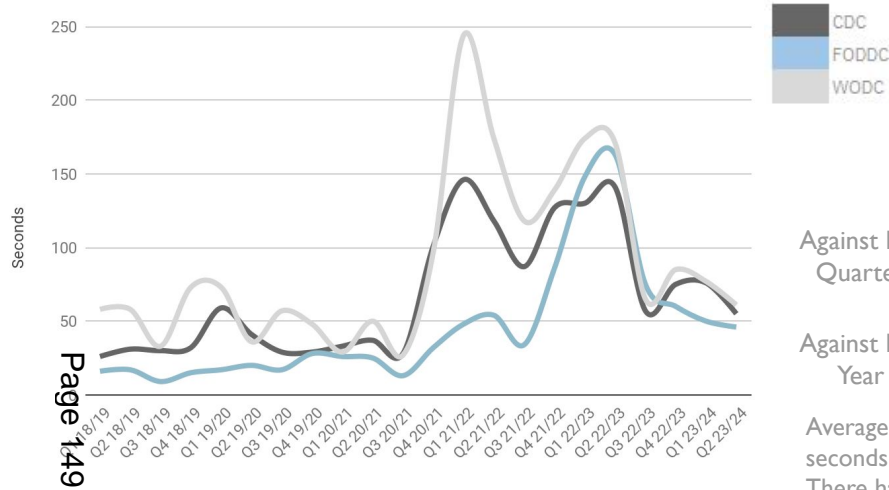
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high with a 96.29% satisfaction rate for the quarter. 26 out of 27 surveyed were satisfied with the service.

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

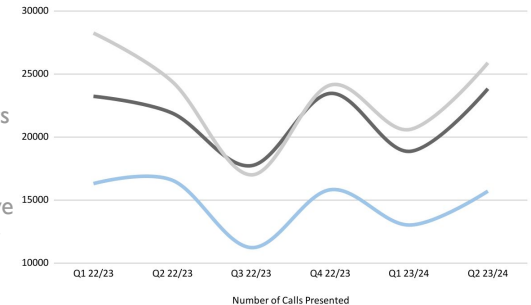
	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↓
Against last Year	↓	↓	↓

Target for Q2

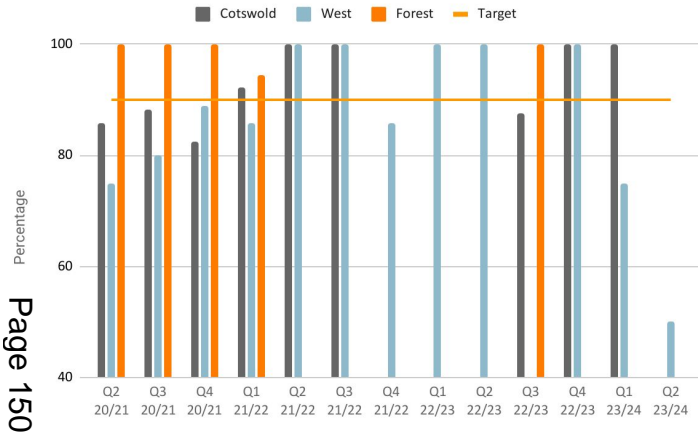
NO TARGET

Average call waiting time for the Council saw reductions in comparison to last quarter by 21 seconds to an average of 55 seconds. There has been a marked improvement from Q2 2022-23 with reductions in average from just under a minute and a half.

Call numbers increased in comparison to last year and last quarter as can be seen from the chart to the right. The data indicates and overall decline in call numbers over time which 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



Direction of Travel

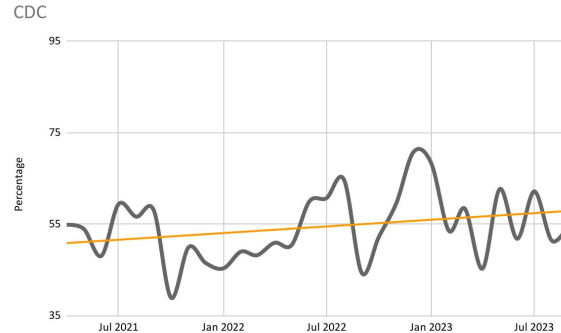
	CDC	FODDC	WODC	Target for Q2
Against last Quarter	N/A	N/A	↓	90%
Against last Year	N/A	N/A	↓	Target for 2023/24 90%

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 within none having been returned during Q2. Discussions are proposed with ICT to investigate an SMS notification service linking customers to an online survey. Building Control had 140 applications in Q2 and retains a strong hold in the share of the market. The below chart show market share over time.

How do we compare?
Percentage of share in the market

	July	August	September	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	62%	52%	55%	140
Forest	84%	61%	55%	112
West	74%	88%	75%	167

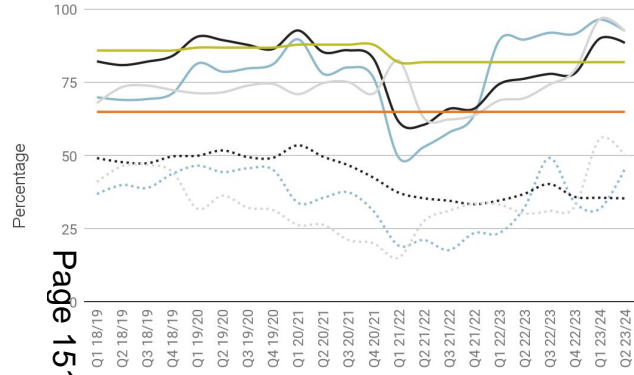


Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)

■ 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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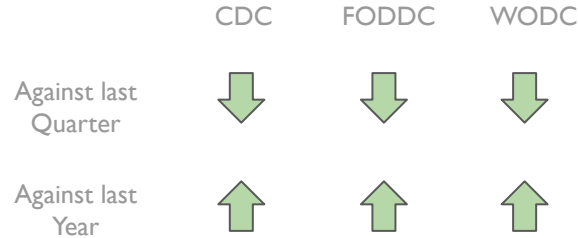
How do we compare?

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

June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	82.21	97/164	4/6	33/59	Third
Forest	93.18	25/164	1/6	6/59	Top
West	85.58	83/164	2/5	27/59	Third

Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

65%

The service has performed very well processing Minor applications within times. 92 minor applications were determined in Q2, compared to 105 applications in the same period of the previous year.

Performance for Development Management continues to improve across the application types.

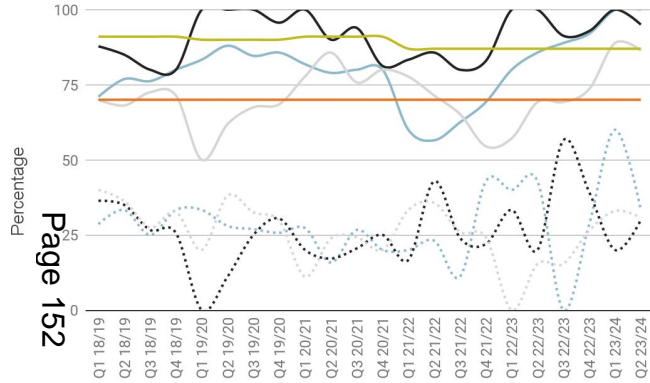
The key findings requiring Member authorisation from the PAS report that went to cabinet this quarter are currently being implemented with the Negotiation Protocol the first to be rolled out.

The Pre-App service continues to generate increased revenue and fewer speculative inquiries. This has led to a reduction in officer time dedicated to such queries which has had a positive impact on the turnaround times for applications.

The service reports that due to impending resourcing challenges within DM, it is anticipated that the number of applications determined within time is likely to decrease over the next quarter.

Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)

■ Target
■ Cotswold
■ Forest of Dean
■ West Oxfordshire
■ Shire Districts' Median
 Applications completed within 13 weeks
 ----- Cotswold
 ----- Forest of Dean
 ----- West Oxfordshire



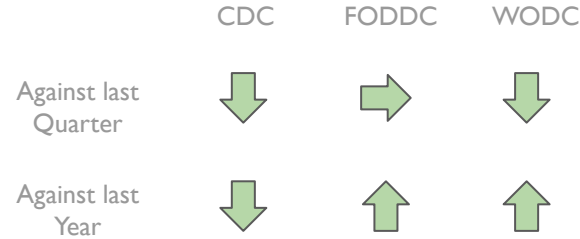
How do we compare?

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

June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	90.00	83/164	3/6	29/59	Second
Forest	96.77	31/164	1/6	9/59	Top
West	83.33	117/164	5/5	43/59	Third

Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

70%

The service has also performed very well processing Major applications within times, slightly dipping in comparison to last year and last quarter from 100% to 95% for Q2.

Fifteen major applications were determined during Q2, compared to seven applications in the same period of the previous year.

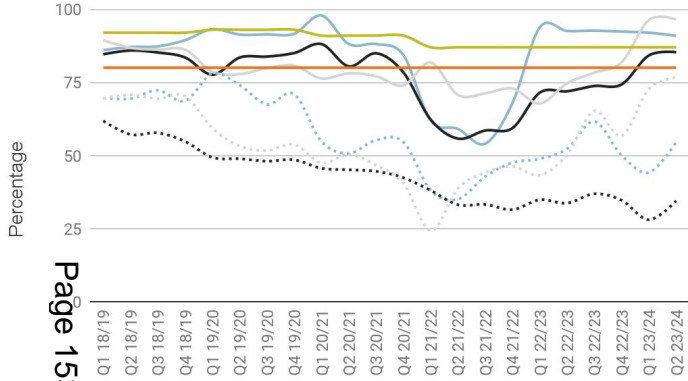
[See slide for Minor Developments for further narrative](#)

Percentage of other 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?

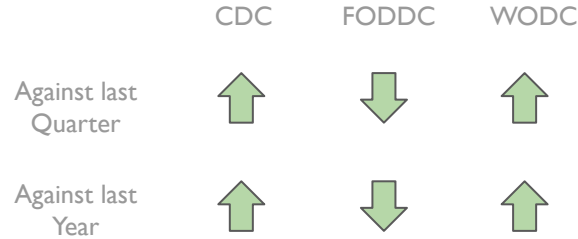
Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time

PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

June 2022 -
June 2023
Benchmark

	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	77.33	154/164	6/6	55/59	Bottom
Forest	91.90	68/164	1/6	21/59	Second
West	89.49	85/164	4/5	30/59	Third

Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

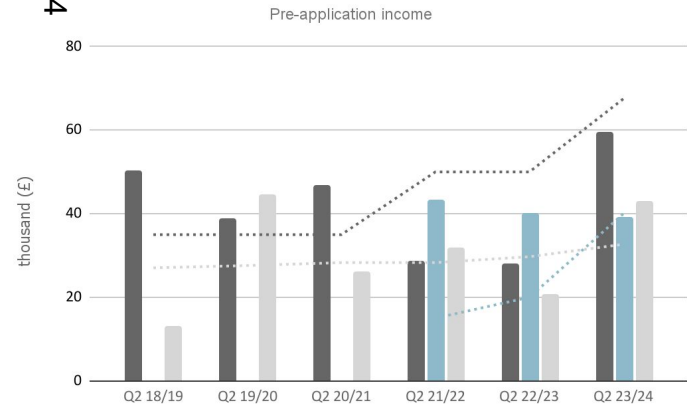
65%

Determination times for Other applications have also improved reaching a rate of 85.31% for the quarter, the highest they have been since Q1 2020-21.

289 Other applications were determined in Q2.

[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 Q2

Total Planning Income

379939

Pre App Income

67500

At the end of Q2, total planning income for the Council exceeded the target. In comparison to Q2 2022-23, pre-app income has more than doubled, along with an increase for total planning income, although the target for Q2 pre-app income was not met.

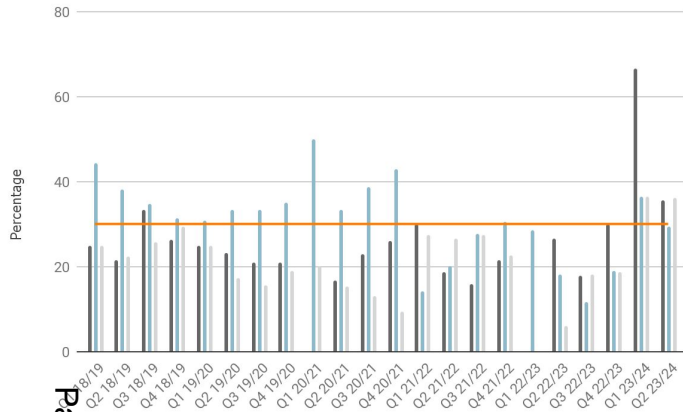
Due to the cost of living crisis and the slow down in the economy, we may be seeing a slow down in larger developments in particular which could have an impact on income.

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
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q2

30%

This indicator seeks to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed (low is good).

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 September 2023, eleven appeals were decided; of which eight decisions were supported.

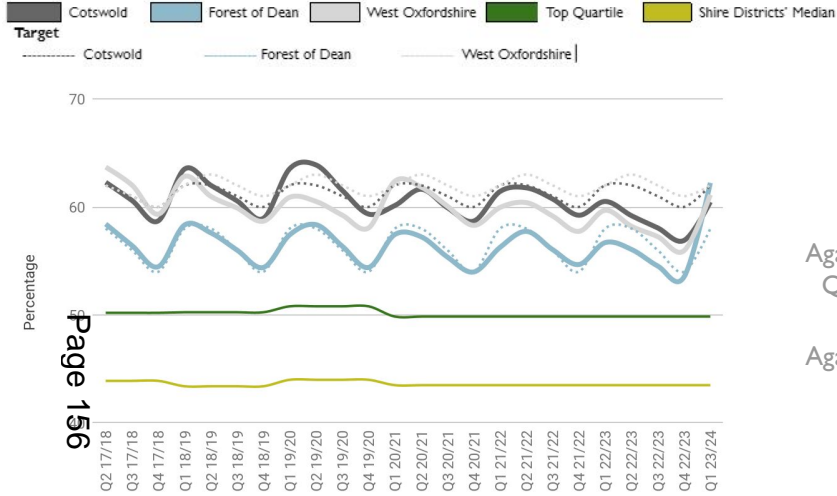
This equates to a percentage of 27.27% for this quarter but a cumulative total of 35.71% for the year which is slightly above the target. As this metric is cumulative, it may well reduce throughout the year depending on how many appeals are received.

The service reports there has been a substantial reduction in enforcement cases.

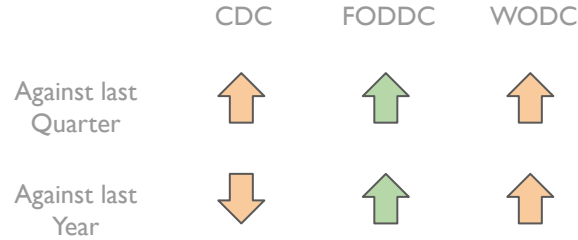
How do we compare?

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



Target for Q1

62%

How do we compare?

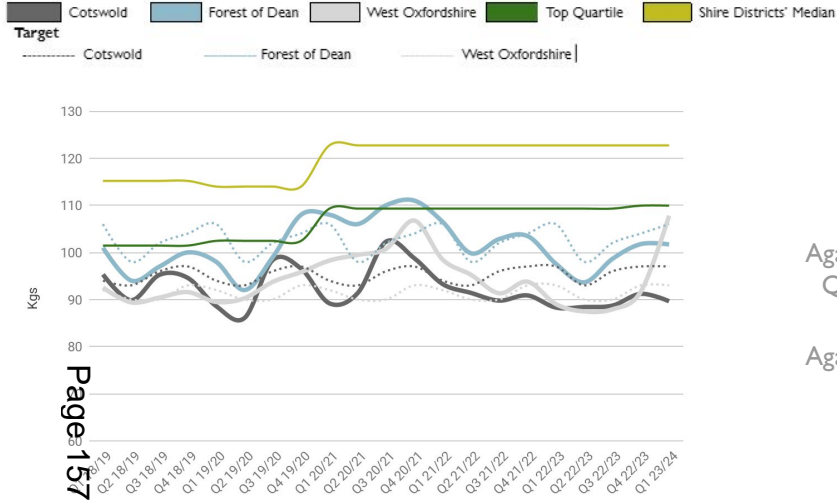
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting

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

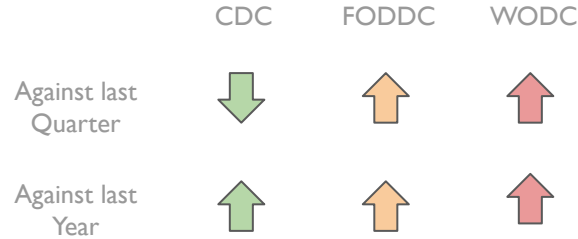
The data regarding recycling rates is received by the data team from Gloucestershire County Council, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q1 2023/2024 (April - June).

During Q1, recycling rates improved in comparison to last quarter by 3.56% to 60.46% but sit slightly below the 62% target. Rates are slightly lower than this period last year by 0.05%.

Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



Direction of Travel



Target for Q1

97

How do we compare?

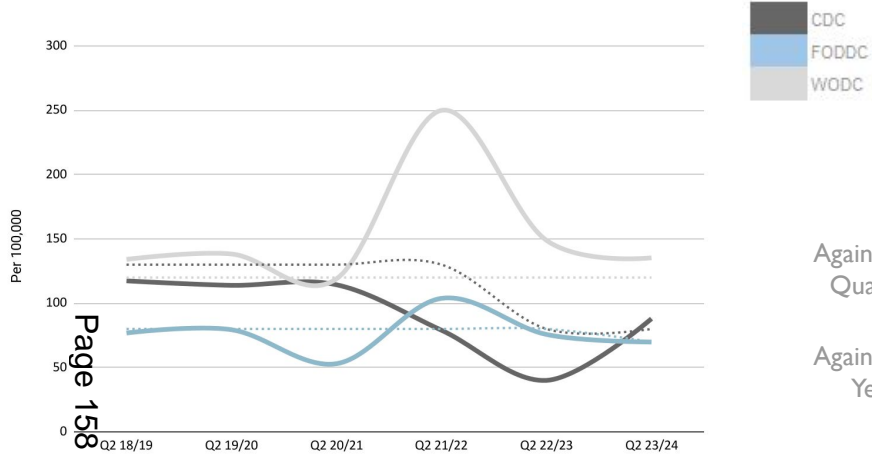
Residual household waste per household (kg/household)

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

The data regarding tonnage is received by the data team from Gloucestershire County Council, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q1 2023/2024 (April - June).

In Q1, Cotswold continues to fall below the target for tonnage of household waste, slightly decreasing since last quarter by 1.58kg to 89.62 kg. In comparison to Q1 2022-2023 the tonnage has increased by 1.34kg.

Missed bins per 100,000



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	→	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↓	↓

Target for Q2

80

The number of missed bins for Q2 are above target and are higher than this time last year but remains unchanged from last quarter. This has been attributed to a stand-in driver navigating unfamiliar routes due to sickness and a vehicle being off the roads, both have since been resolved.

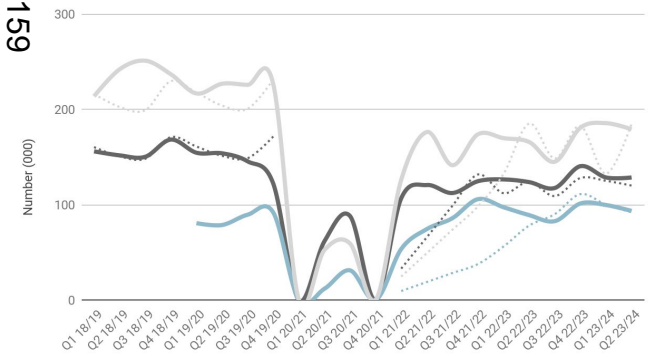
Note: since the implementation of In-Cab technology, the data source for missed collections is Alloy, In-Cab's back office system. This data source is more accurate than the previous data source.

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 leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Gym Memberships			
Against last Quarter	➡	⬆	⬆
Against last Year	⬆	⬆	⬆
Leisure Visits			
Against last Quarter	➡	⬆	⬆
Against last Year	⬆	⬆	⬆

Target for Q2

Gym Memberships
2936
Leisure Visits
120k

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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 remained relatively consistent compared to the previous quarter, showing an increase of over 4k compared to quarter two 2022-23, despite the change in providers.

Gym memberships remain steady in comparison to last quarter with an uplift in memberships compared to quarter two 2022-23.

The Learn to Swim figures experienced a minor dip this quarter; a trend not uncommon in this flexible program. Typically, numbers decline during the summer holidays due to changing routines.

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



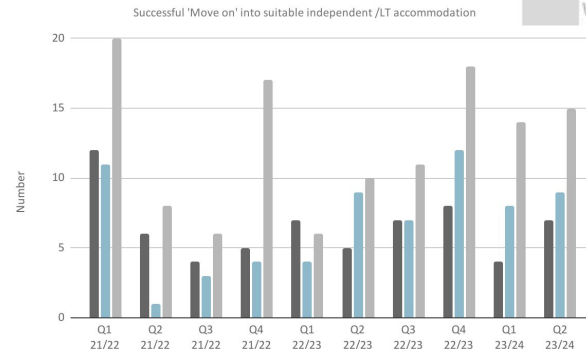
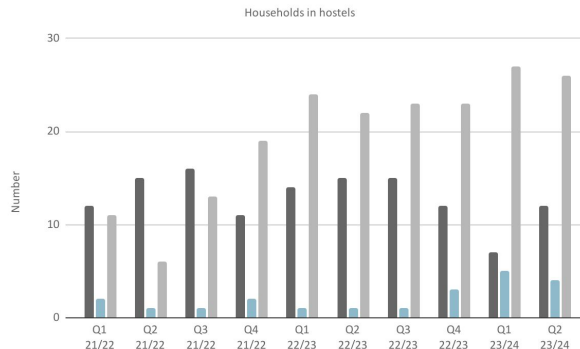
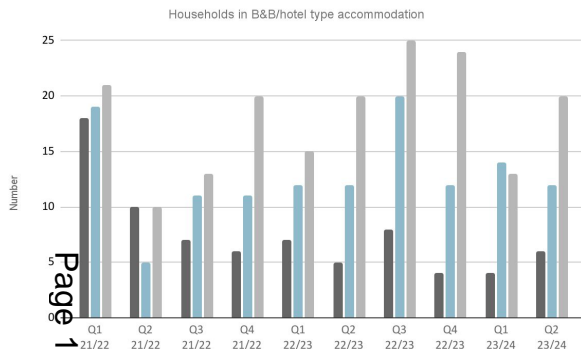
COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CDC

FODDC

WODC

INDEX



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Direction of Travel

		CDC	FODDC	WODC
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	↑	→	↑

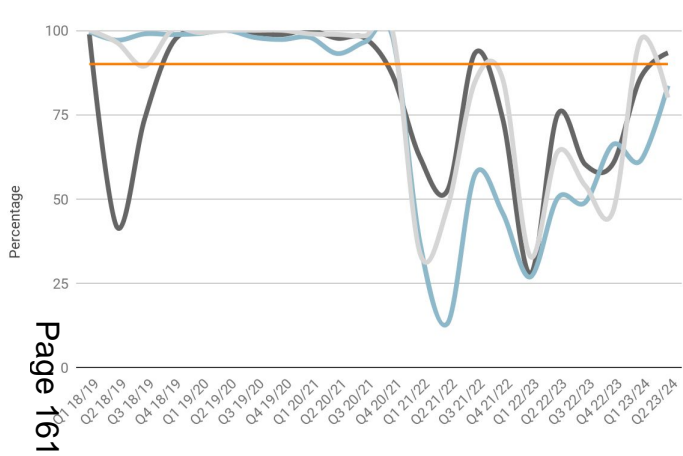
Although homelessness continues to be an issue, the number of households presenting as homeless has stabilised at Cotswold, largely due to our strong prevention and early intervention focus. During Q2 there has been a slight increase in households in temporary accommodation and move ons in comparison to last quarter.

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.

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 Q2

90%

The Councils performance has improved since last quarter and has succeeded in getting 93.31% which is above target for the first time since Q3 2020-21.

The monthly performance meetings with the AD responsible for the majority of the answering teams have been successful. Workshops are being arranged to offer additional support and guidance to the teams, emphasizing the importance of timely responses to searches and requests.

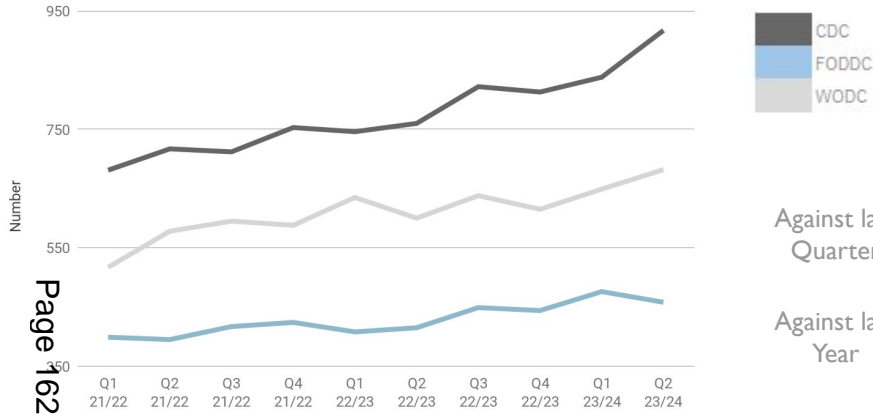
Due to impending resourcing challenges across the partnership within the answering teams, it is anticipated that the number of searches completed within 10 days is likely to decrease over the next quarter.

The HLMR project will start later in the new year.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODDC
Against last Quarter	↑	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Target for Q2

No Target

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.

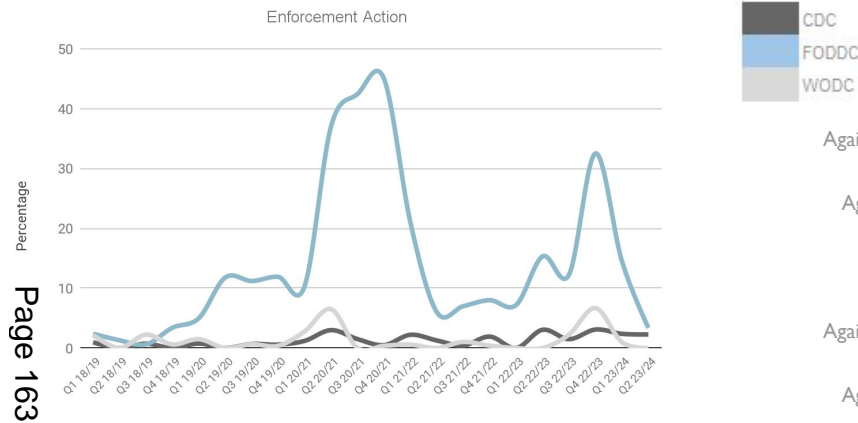
The service reports that the LTE figures continue to be affected by the new Retirement Village in Cirencester as they reach the six months empty point. It's common for properties of this nature to experience a lengthier selling process.

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)



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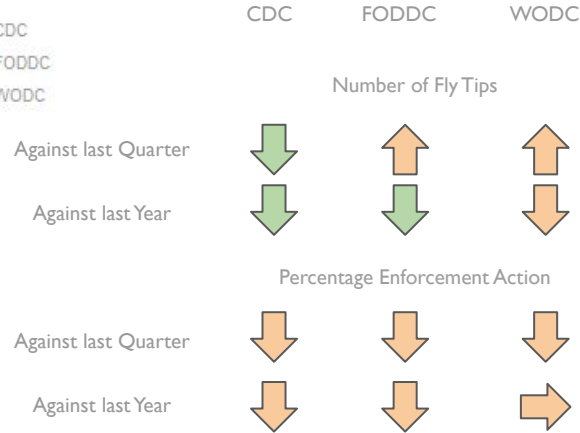
How do we compare?

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



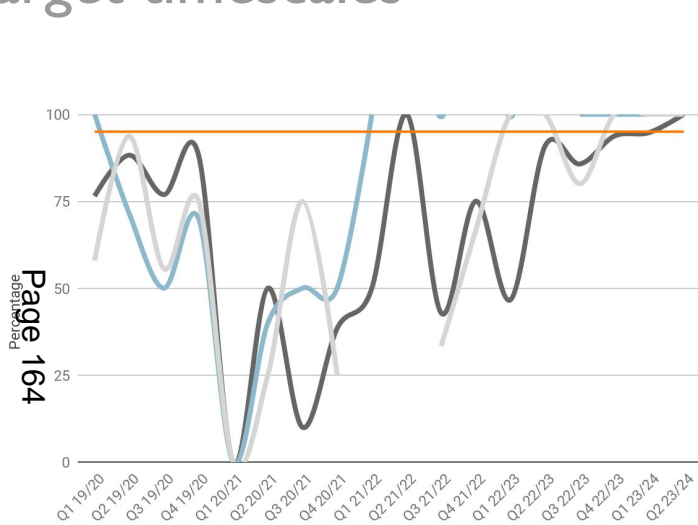
Target for Q2

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.

Q2 saw a slight drop in the enforcement action percentage to 2.28%. However, the Council achieved a successful prosecution in Q2 under section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, resulting in a fine of £1,672. Currently, three cases, including one for fly tipping at Green Lane, are recommended for prosecution. Additionally, five warning letters were issued in the quarter. The amendment for increased powers for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) has not yet been implemented.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	N/A	→
Against last Year	↑	N/A	→

Target for Q2

95%

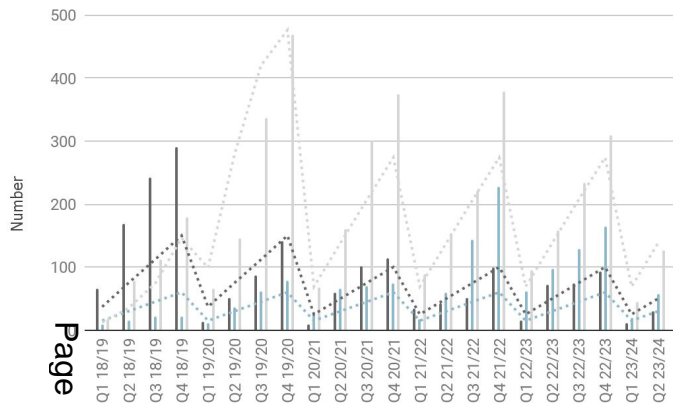
The Council had 11 inspections, all of which were inspected within the timescales. The inspection rates for Q2 are well above target and the highest they have been since Q2 2021-2022.

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.

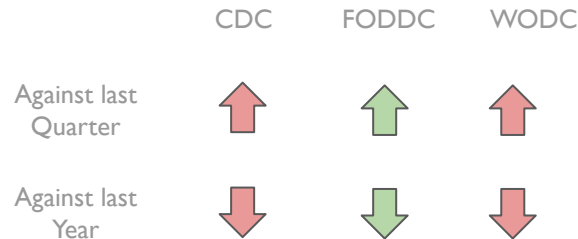
How do we compare?

APSE performance networks are introducing benchmarking for environmental sectors for 2023-24

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

50

Nineteen properties including 8 for affordable rent and 11 for shared ownership have been delivered in Cotswold at Evenlode and Siddington. A total of 30 affordable homes have been delivered during Q1 and Q2 against a target of 50. Although this falls below target, delays were encountered at one housing site due to the insolvency of the main contractor, leading to a temporary halt in construction. The legal issues have since been resolved, a new contractor has been engaged, and construction has recommenced. It is anticipated that the homes will be delivered within the next quarter.

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.

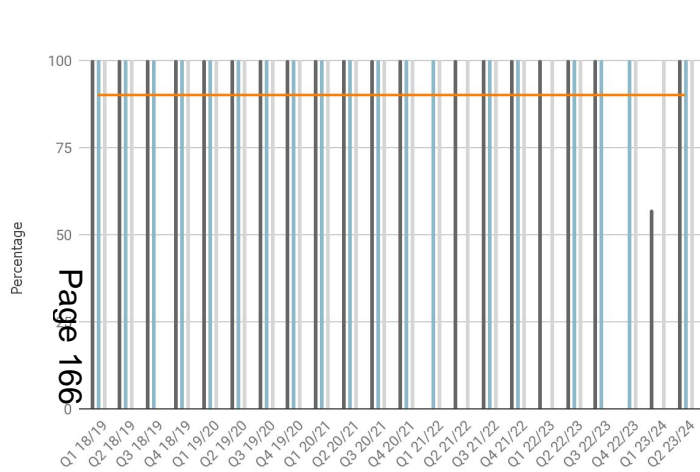
How do we compare?

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 Q2

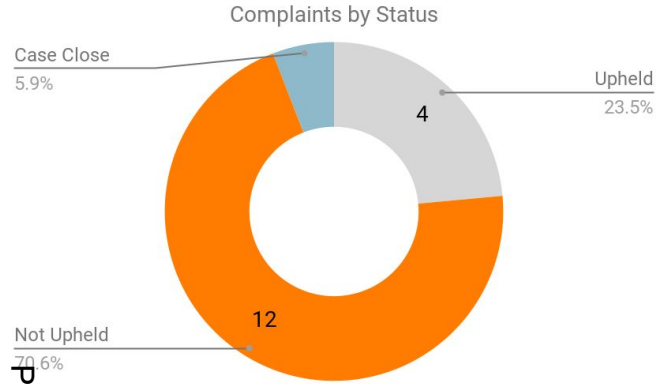
90%

There were two notifications received within Q2 regarding the death of a Premises Licence Holder and a Private Water Supply contamination. Both were assessed within one working day.

How do we compare?

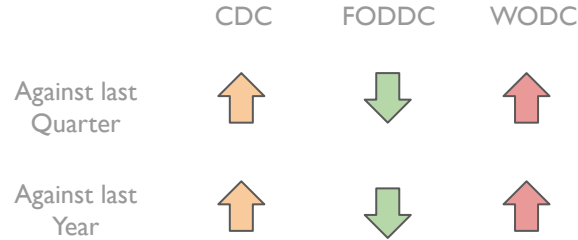
No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Number of complaints upheld



Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1



Target for Q2

No Target

Target for 2023/24

No Target

How do we compare?

The complaints and enquiries received in the period by the Ombudsman
The decisions 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%

During Q2, the Council experienced an increase in complaints received from last quarter. The majority of the cases were 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.

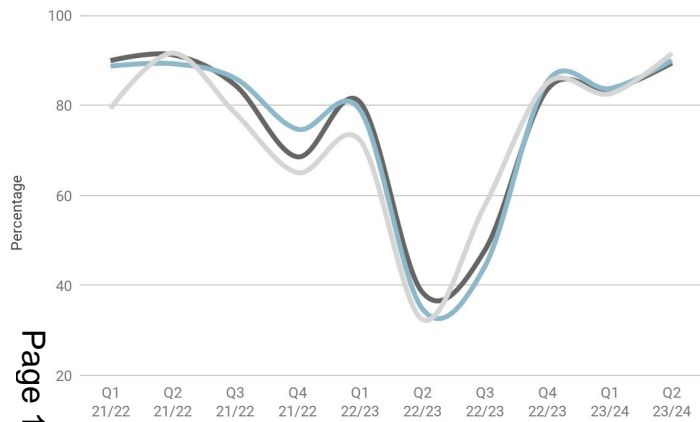
The new process has the following stages:

- 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

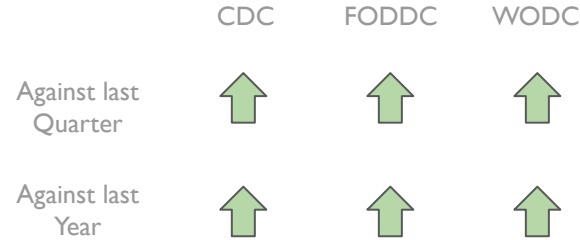
Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Planning	Unhappy with planning delays and lack of response	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	10
Waste and Recycling	Unhappy with delay for refuse collection	Dealt with by Depot/Contact Monitoring Officer	Upheld	4
Legal	Unhappy with the receipt of late notice of intent for Assets of Community Value	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	7
Council Tax	Upset the Council didn't add key information to account resulting in action against them.	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	6

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Direction of Travel



Target for Q2

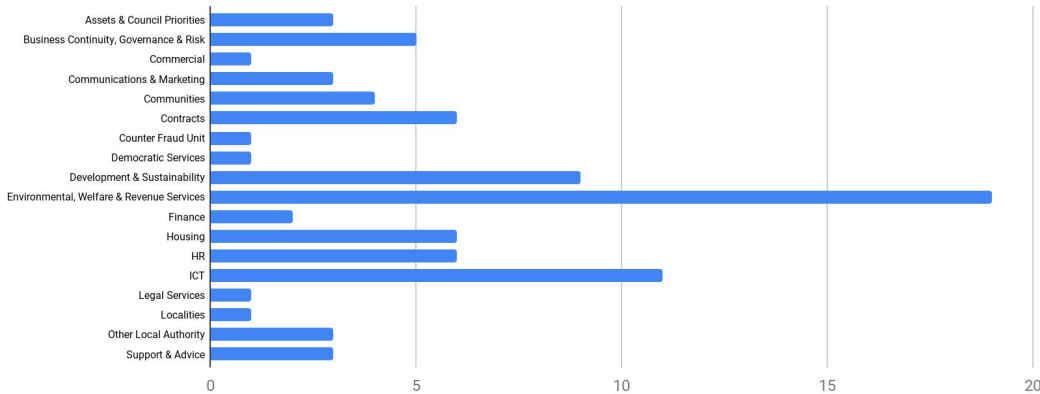
No Target

Target for 2023/24

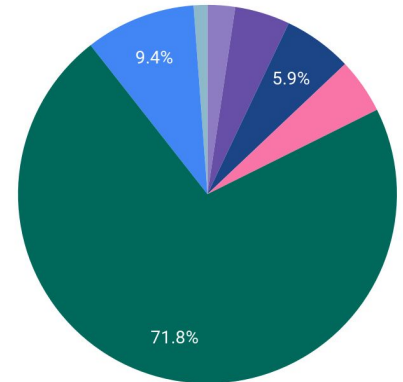
No Target

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Requests by Service Area



Response Type



Note: This is a new metric and the Data Team would welcome comments on the preferred observations

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COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN
1 NOVEMBER 2023 – 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council currently operates the Strong Leader and Cabinet form of governance. The Council has appointed one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which has the power to investigate Cabinet decisions and any other matters relevant to the district and its people, making recommendations to the Council, Cabinet or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council. Scrutiny has an important role in holding the Cabinet to account and in contributing to policy development. The Council has agreed an Executive Scrutiny Protocol to guide how Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will interact with each other.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates a work plan which is agreed annually but provides for flexibility to enable the Committee to respond to emerging issues or priorities. The work plan will include a mix of Cabinet reports that have been selected for pre-decision scrutiny, and reports on other Council services, topics or issues which have been specifically commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In setting and reviewing its work plan, Scrutiny will be mindful of the constraints of the organisation and will take advice from officers on prioritisation, which may be informed by the following considerations (TOPIC criteria):

Timeliness: Is it timely to consider this issue?

Organisational priority: Is it a Council priority?

Public Interest: Is it of significant public interest?

Influence: Can Scrutiny have meaningful influence?

Cost: Does it involve a high level of expenditure, income or savings?

Call in

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any “call-in” of a decision that has been made but not yet implemented. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision made is appropriate given all relevant information (but not because it would have made a different decision). It may recommend that the Cabinet, a Portfolio Holder or the Council should reconsider the decision. (It should be noted that Cabinet does not have to change its decision following the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Spotlight session - 21 November 2023		
<p>Rail Ticket Offices Council on 20 September 2023 passed a Rail Ticket Offices motion and in doing so referred the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Great Western Railway are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing at local stations.</p>	<p>Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris</p>	<p>Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer Ana.Prelici@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Tuesday 28 November 2023		
<p>Proactive Delivery of Affordable Housing</p>	<p>Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris</p>	<p>Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director - Planning and Sustainability charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Q2 Performance Report</p>	<p>Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey</p>	<p>Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Q2 Financial Performance Report</p>	<p>Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey</p>	<p>David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
<p>Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris</p>	<p>James Brain, Forward Planning Manager james.brain@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Monday 8 January 2024		
<p>Corporate Plan 2024-2027</p>	<p>Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris</p>	<p>Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</p>

Cotswold District Local Plan - Partial Update	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	James Brain, Forward Planning Manager james.brain@cotswold.gov.uk
2024/25 Budget Consultation Feedback Report	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Agile working and future tenancies at Trinity Road Council Offices	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property and Regeneration Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk
Tuesday 30 January 2024		
Review of Leisure and Cultural Services provision	Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Scott Williams, Contracts Business Manager Scott.Williams@publicagroup.uk
2024/25 Budget – Fees and Charges Report	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Report	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Recommendations of Public Conveniences Working Group		Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer Ana.Prelici@cotswold.gov.uk
Tuesday 27 February 2024		
Climate and Ecological Emergency	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability - Cllr Mike McKeown	Chris Crookall-Fallon, Head of Climate Action chris.crookall-fallon@cotswold.gov.uk
River Quality/Sewage	Cabinet Member for Communities and	Phil Shaw, Business Manager - Development

	Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Management phil.shaw@publicagroup.uk
Q3 Financial Performance Report 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Q3 Performance Report 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Tuesday 2 April 2024		
Community Safety Partnership	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Jacqueline Wright, Community Wellbeing Manager Jacqueline.Wright@Cotswold.gov.uk
Housing	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Assistant Director - Planning and Sustainability
Publica Business Plan	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Jan Britton, Managing Director - Publica jan.britton@publicagroup.uk
Tuesday 7 May 2024		



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN
INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN
PRIVATE
SESSION AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION**
Forward Plan – November 2023 – May 2024
Published 31 October 2023

The Forward Plan

By virtue of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, local authorities are required to publish a notice setting out the key executive decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before such decisions are to be taken. The Regulations also require notice to be given of any matter where it is proposed that the public will be excluded during consideration of the matter.

This Forward Plan incorporates both of these requirements. In the interests of transparency, it also aims to include details of those items to be debated by the Cabinet that relate to either policy/budget formulation, matters which will be subject to a recommendation to the Council, and other matters due to be considered by the Cabinet. This programme covers a period of four months, and will be updated on a monthly basis. The timings of items may be subject to change.

It should be noted that although a date not less than 28 clear days after the date of the notice is given in each case, it is possible that matters may be rescheduled to a date which is different from that given provided, in the cases of key decisions and matters to be considered in private, that the 28 day notice has been given. In this regard, please note that agendas and reports for Meetings of the Cabinet are made available on the [Council's Web Site](#) – five working days in advance of the Meeting in question. Please also note that the agendas for Meetings of the Cabinet will also incorporate a necessary further notice which is required to be given in relation to matters likely to be considered with the public excluded.

There are circumstances where a key decision can be taken, or a matter may be considered in private, even though the 28 clear days' notice has not been given. If that happens, notice of the matter and the reasons will be published on the Council's Web Site, and available from the Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1PX.

Key Decisions

Key Decisions

The Regulations define a key decision as an executive decision which is likely –

(a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the

relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the authority.

In financial terms, the Council has decided that a key decision is any executive decision which requires a budget expenditure of £150,000 or more, or one which generates savings of £150,000 or more.

A key decision may only be made in accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained within the Council's Constitution.

Matters To Be Considered in Private

The great majority of matters considered by the Council's Cabinet are considered in 'open session' when the public have the right to attend.

However, some matters are considered with the public excluded. The public may only be excluded if a resolution is passed to exclude them. The grounds for exclusion are limited to situations where confidential or exempt information may be disclosed to the public if present and, in most cases involving exempt information, where in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The definitions of these are set out in the Council's Constitution.

Documents and Queries

Formal reports presented relating to any executive decision will be available on the Council's Web Site at least five working days in advance of the Meeting at which the decision is to be made (except insofar as they contain confidential and/or exempt information).

The Decision Notice for each key decision will be published as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been made. We will seek to do this within five working days of the date of the decision. The Decision Notice will be available for public inspection on the Council's Web Site, and at the Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1PX.

If you have any questions about the Forward Plan, or if you wish to make representations about any of the matters contained within it, please contact the Council's Democratic Services Team. The Democratic Services Team can also, on request, provide copies of, or extracts from, documents listed in the Plan and any which subsequently become available (subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure).

Contact Details:

Democratic Services, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1PX

E-mail: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk **Telephone:** 01285 623000 **Website:** www.cotswold.gov.uk

Telephone: 01285 623000

Fax: 01285 623907

The Council's Executive Arrangements

The Council currently operates the Strong Leader and Cabinet form of governance.

By law, the Cabinet can comprise a Leader of the Council, together with up to nine other Members to be appointed by the Leader (one of whom has to be appointed as Deputy Leader). The Leader will be elected by the Council, for a four-year term; and the Deputy Leader appointment is also for a four-year term.

The Cabinet at Cotswold District Council currently comprises a Leader, a Deputy Leader, and six other Cabinet Members. The structure is as set out in the table below.

Executive decisions are taken either collectively by the Cabinet or individually by Cabinet Members.

The Cabinet generally meets monthly; whereas decision-making by individual Cabinet Members occurs on an 'as and when needed' basis.

Decisions of the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members are subject to scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Joe Harris	Leader	Coordination of executive functions, Policy framework including the corporate plan, Publica, Council communications, Democratic services, Housing and homelessness, Clean and green campaign and street cleaning, Town and parish council liaison
Mike Evely (Deputy Leader)	Finance	Financial strategy and management, Property and assets, Waste and recycling, Revenues and benefits, Grants, Public toilets, UBICO
Mike McKeown	Climate Change and Sustainability	Climate and biodiversity emergency response, Community energy, Sustainable transport, Retrofit, Council sustainability
Tony Dale	Economy and Council Transformation	Business transformation, Local Enterprise Partnership and county-wide partnerships, Economic development, Car parking operations and strategy, Tourism and visitor information centres, Chamber of Commerce liaison, Customer experience and channel shift
Juliet Layton	Planning and Regulatory Services	Development management, Forward planning and the local plan, Heritage and design management, Environmental and regulatory services, Cotswold Water Park
Paul Hodgkinson	Health, Leisure and Culture	Public health, Mental health, Leisure centres, Museums, Culture , Young people
Lisa Spivey	Communities and Public Safety	Improving social mobility and social isolation, Flooding and sewage, Safeguarding, Domestic abuse, Police liaison and crime, Refugees, Crowdfund Cotswold, Member Development
Claire Bloomer	Cost of Living and Inclusion	Cost of living support, Liaison with 3 rd sector, Diversity and inclusion, Supporting women and minorities

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
2 November 2023 - Cabinet						
2024/25 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update Report	No	Open	Cabinet	2 Nov 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Playing Pitch Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet	2 Nov 2023	Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Rachel Biles, Strategic Projects Lead rachel.biles@publicagroup.uk
Parking Strategy	No	Open	Cabinet	2 Nov 2023	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Susan Hughes, Business Manager for Support and Advice susan.hughes@publicagroup.uk
Publica Review Report	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	2 Nov 2023 22 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
22 November 2023 - Full Council						
Programme of Meetings 2024/25	No	Open	Council	22 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe	Andrew Brown, Democratic Services

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
					Harris	Business Manager andrew.brown@public agroup.uk, Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer caleb.harris@cotswold. gov.uk
Amendments to the Constitution	Yes	Open	Council	22 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
7 December 2023 - Cabinet						
Cotswold District Local Plan - Partial Update	Yes	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	James Brain, Forward Planning Manager james.brain@cotswold.gov.uk
Q2 Financial Performance Report	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Q2 Performance Report	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst alison.borrett@publica group.uk
2024/25 Budget Consultation Feedback Report	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/2025	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	7 Dec 2023 24 Jan 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Enviromental, Welfare and Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publica. group.uk
Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	James Brain, Forward Planning Manager james.brain@cotswold. gov.uk
Increase in Fixed Penalty Notice fines for fly-tipping, duty of care, littering and graffiti.	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Philip Measures philip.measures@public agroup.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Asset Management Plan	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Proactive Delivery of Affordable Housing	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director - Planning and Sustainability charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk
Agile working and future tenancies at Trinity Road Council Offices	No	Part exempt Annexes will include commercially sensitive information relating to the business model, income and costs for specific tenants	Cabinet	7 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property and Regeneration claire.locke@publicagroup.uk
8 January 2024 - Cabinet						
Corporate Plan 2024-2027	No	Open	Cabinet Council	11 Jan 2024 24 Jan 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Penalty and Prosecution Policy	No	Open	Cabinet	11 Jan 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Emma Cathcart, Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit emma.cathcart@cotswold.gov.uk
The Old Station and Memorial Cottages - Investment Decision	Yes	Part exempt Containing commercially sensitive information	Cabinet Council	11 Jan 2024 24 Jan 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Mark Stedman, Senior Project Manager Mark.Stedman@publicagroup.uk
Review of Parking Charges	Yes	Open	Cabinet	11 Jan 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk
24 January 2024 - Full Council						
5 February 2024 - Cabinet						
2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital	Yes	Open	Cabinet	1 Feb 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Report			Council	21 Feb 2024	for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
2024/25 Budget – Fees and Charges Report	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	1 Feb 2024 21 Feb 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Channel Choice and Telephone Access Update	Yes	Open	Cabinet	1 Feb 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Resident Services jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk
21 February 2024 - Full Council						
4 March 2024 - Cabinet						
Q3 Performance Report 2024	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Mar 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst alison.borrett@publicagroup.uk
Q3 Financial	No	Open	Cabinet	7 Mar 2024	Deputy Leader -	David Stanley, Deputy

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Performance Report 2024					Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
20 March 2024 - Full Council						
8 April 2024 - Cabinet						
13 May 2024 - Cabinet						
15 May 2024 - Full Council						
Key decisions delegated to officers						

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