

Public Document Pack

Council
20/March2024



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024

Members present:

Nikki Ind - Chair
Gina Blomefield
Ray Brassington
Patrick Coleman
Daryl Corps
David Cunningham
Tony Dale
Mike Evemy
David Fowles
Joe Harris

Mark Harris – Vice Chair
Paul Hodgkinson
Angus Jenkinson
Juliet Layton
Andrew Maclean
Helene Mansilla
Mike McKeown
Dilys Neill
Gary Selwyn
Tony Slater

Lisa Spivey
Tom Stowe
Jeremy Theyer
Clare Turner
Chris Twells
Michael Vann
Jon Wareing
Ian Watson
Len Wilkins

Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)
Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic Services Support Assistant
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

27 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Claire Bloomer, Tristan Wilkinson, Julia Judd, Roly Hughes

The Chair noted that Councillor Mike Evemy had indicated that he was running late.

28 Declarations of Interest

None from the Members.

The Chair notified that there were a number of officers present employed by the Publica Group who would have a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 and would leave the room.

The minutes of the Full Council meeting on 21 February 2024 were considered as part of the pack.

- The Chair raised one amendment on Page 10 of the document pack, that the voting record should be 25 For, 6 Abstentions, 3 Absent.
- Councillor Stowe raised on Page 17; the first bullet point should read pay instead of salary as this was more accurate of what Councillor Stowe said in his summing up of the amendment raised at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That subject to the changes being made, Full Council AGREED the minutes presented of 21 February 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Voting Record

26 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions, 6 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean		Gina Blomefield	Angus Jenkinson
Chris Twells		Tony Slater	Claire Bloomer
Clare Turner			Julia Judd
Daryl Corps			Mike Evey
David Cunningham			Roly Hughes
David Fowles			Tristan Wilkinson
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			

30 Presentation of Awards for Cotswold Photo Competition

The Chair then moved to this item first ahead of the announcements from the Chair, Leader and/or Chief Executive.

The Chair noted the delight of having the photos on the wall which showcased many aspects of life in the Cotswolds. It was noted that the list of runners up and the winner along with the photos would be made available on the Council's online social media pages.

The Chair then presented the awards to the runners up:

- Jimmy Dickinson – Photo: Enjoying summer at Cotswold Water Park (Lake 86)
- Rob Mashford – Photo: Sunset over Lechlade music festival and the Thames
- Nicky Legg – Photo: The Parish Church, Cirencester, as seen from Tar Barrow

The Chair alongside the Leader of the Council then presented the winner of the photo competition Jill Bewley (Photo: Cotswold Ladies) with her prize.

31 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive

The Chair of the Council then provided the following announcements:

- The Chair had attended a number of events within the District which included the unveiling of the replica mosaic at Brewery Court in Cirencester, the Cotswolds Homes Interiors Business Festival and the 1st year celebration of the Cirencester Pantry, and the Moreton-in-Marsh Local Plan event.
- The Chair thanked officers for the organisation of the Cotswold Homes Interiors Business Festival and the Local Plan events happening within the District. The Chair also wished to congratulate Mary Cobbett for her work at the Cirencester Pantry for making it a success.
- The Local Plan consultation event was running until 7 April and the public were encouraged to participate.
- The Chair also encouraged Members to review the Corporate Parenting and Supporting Care Leavers Member Briefing recording and slides to see the important work and lived experiences by Gloucestershire County Council Care Leaver Ambassadors.

The Leader then gave his announcements:

- The Leader also noted the atmosphere and the Cotswold Home Interior Festival.
- The Leader wished to congratulate the winner and runners up of the Cotswold Photo Competition.
- The Leader then gave an announcement on the Local Plan Update currently taking place and made the following points:
 - The Council was required to produce a Local Plan for its area and make provision for local housing in the area.
 - The Government's targets for housing required that the District provide 3,300 new homes which was recognised as controversial in any location.
 - The current system of infrastructure was based on new development coming forward and new sites being brought forward.
 - There were genuine concerns in Moreton-in-Marsh regarding development but that there had been some speculation as to the number of houses.
 - Council Officers and Members were doing their best to provide the best to live, work and visit.

- The Council should work together to make infrastructure the best it can be.

The Leader finally noted that Councillor Jan Gronow from Cirencester Town Council had sadly passed away and paid tribute to their work within the community.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

32 Public Questions

Mr Boulter asked a question in relation to the new Council Tax Bills that had been issued for 2024/25 to residents and the yearly change elements for the different preceptors and how the increases matched up in terms of the overall increase. Mr Boulter noted that he had contacted the Deputy Leader as Cabinet Member for Finance and the Revenues Team about the presentation of the bill but had not received a satisfactory response.

Councillor Harris responded on behalf of Councillor Evemy and apologised for the unsatisfactory answer received. It was confirmed that the Deputy Chief Executive would investigate and respond directly on the issue raised by email.

33 Member Questions

The Member Questions and responses can be found at the attached Annex A.

34 Publica Review- Local Partnerships Transition Plan

The Chair invited those Publica colleagues who felt that they should leave the room to do so. It was noted that an officer from the ICT team would remain in the room to support the technology, as ICT was not part of the proposed transition.

The Chair invited the Leader of Council to introduce the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Harris, made the following report:

- In highlighting the background, an options appraisal was undertaken to examine the future of some Council services remaining within Publica following a Local Government Association Peer Review towards the end of 2022.
- Full Council at its meeting on 22 November 2023 considered and approved the Publica Review report recommendations from Human Engine. The options appraisal from Human Engine recommended that the Council return a majority of the services from Publica to the partner councils.
- Publica would continue to deliver a number of support and customer service functions for the councils.
- The work had begun on the transition through the appointment of Andrew Pollard as the Interim Programme Director and the recruitment of Local Partnerships consultancy through the Local Government's Associations Transformation Fund to provide a bridging report to the final transition plan later in 2024.
- The use of Local Partnerships was to help set out some of the key considerations as part of the transition plan to navigate the complex requirements in transferring employees back to council employment such as governance and service design.

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- The Local Partnerships team engaged with Council staff and Publica staff and management during this process to understand the current position.
- The timescales and services set out were indicative which would feed into the transition plan based on their previous experience.

Councillor Tony Dale as seconder then reserved his right to speak.

Council noted the resource required and the complexities of the work in insourcing services back to the Council.

Council noted the uncertainties regarding the financial costs for insourcing services from Publica and the need for more financial information as part of the transition plan.

Council noted the need for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be involved in examining the transition plan.

Council asked about the need for the Council to be more fleet of foot in delivering services and cost savings as this was not mentioned in the report. There were also questions around customer services and procurement not being brought back in-house under the proposals and how these would be managed as key parts of the Council.

Councillor Harris noted that procurement and customer services were heavily integrated within Publica, and that this arrangement was working well. Furthermore, this current process was identifying services in the short to medium term that could be brought back to the Councils. However, the points raised around the key considerations of cost savings and service delivery would be taken onboard.

Councillor Mike Evemy joined the meeting during the debate.

Council noted the work done by customer services staff in difficult circumstances.

Council raised a number of questions during the debate, including on:

- The size of the team required to work on the transition project.
- Whether there would be a risk register for the programme?
- The role of the Interim Programme Director and the future of shared services with West Oxfordshire District Council.
- The administration of complaints addressed to the Council.
- How would climate change and environmental sustainability be considered in the absence of an officer.
- How the various roles would be set out to Members during the transition.
- The timescales of implementing phase I by October 2024.
- How staff had responded to the changes.
- The Local Government Pension Scheme.
- The confirmation of the final services to remain within Publica.

Councillor Dale as seconder then summed up and responded to the questions and points raised:

- Officers and members were keen to do the transition at pace and provide stability and security to those involved.

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- The Local Partnerships report was to provide a starting point for Members on the future services.
- There was a need for clear communication on staff impacted.
- The project was complicated by its own nature and that there were opportunities to simplify the process and maximise service delivery.
- Flexibility was noted as a key consideration, but this was alluded to in the report and was part of the process.
- Customer services was noted as one of the most transformed services within Publica and breaking this model was not seen as appropriate.
- The proposals set out for sovereign or shared services within Local Partnerships was just an indicative model and further work would be required to finalise this.
- There would be finance, human resources and legal support for the programme office with the appropriate resources such as risk registers being undertaken.
- The Chief Executives of the partner councils were responsible for the transition, but the Interim Program Director worked across all three councils to support the project.
- The work on managing complaints was being done well by customer services with the support of back-office staff.
- The issue of climate change work within the councils would be something that should be embedded in all of the Council's priorities.

Councillor Harris in summing up then made the following points:

- The councils were moving at different paces, but this difference was not a cause for concern.
- There were also conversations around working with West Oxfordshire District Council due to the historic ties between the two Councils.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Dale.

RESOLVED: That Full Council

1. **APPROVED** the recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report
2. **AGREED** to instruct the Interim Programme Director to prepare a detailed transition plan, building on the recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report, for subsequent agreement by Cabinet and Council.

Voting Record

21 For, 0 Against, 9 Abstentions, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean		Chris Twells	Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson		Daryl Corps	Julia Judd
Clare Turner		David Cunningham	Roly Hughes
Dilys Neil		David Fowles	Tristan Wilkinson
Gary Selwyn		Gina Blomefield	
Helene Mansilla		Jeremy Theyer	
Ian Watson		Len Wilkins	
Joe Harris		Tom Stowe	

Jon Wareing		Tony Slater	
Juliet Layton			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tony Dale			

35 Amendments to the Constitution - Report of the Constitution Working Group

The Chair then invited those Publica staff who had left the room for the previous item back into the meeting.

The Chair invited the Leader, Councillor Joe Harris, to introduce the item. In doing so, the following points were made:

- The Employee Code of Conduct was an important document that set out the principles which Council employees would act under.
- The last update to the Employee Code of Conduct had taken place in 2007 and therefore it was important that a review of the document be undertaken.
- A review of the Business Conduct Policy which Publica operates had taken place in 2023 and the document before Council was noted as aligning closely to this.
- This policy would be kept under review as services return to the Council.

Councillor Mike Evey in seconding the recommendations made the following points:

- The recognised Trade Unions which staff were represented by had endorsed the new Code of Conduct.
- There had been HR Policy updates recently with Member oversight from the HR Policies Task and Finish group led by Councillor Cunningham as part of the HR Policies Updates and this work built on that.

Council welcomed the contents of the report and specifically the inclusion of the Nolan Principles as part of the Employee Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED: That Full Council

1. AGREED to authorise the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to update Part E2, the Employee Code of Conduct in the Constitution.

Voting Record

30 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean			Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson			Julia Judd
Chris Twells			Roly Hughes
Clare Turner			Tristan Wilkinson
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evely			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

36 Report on Urgent Decision

The purpose of the report was to report to Cabinet and Council on a decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer under urgency powers.

The Leader, Councillor Joe Harris, introduced this item and made the following points:

- The report was to note the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive.
- Cabinet was not able to consider the version of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028 report at its meeting. As part of the Policy and Budgetary Framework, Cabinet would need to agree to recommend the Corporate Plan to Council.
- In the absence of this decision, the Chief Executive took an urgent decision to recommend to Full Council in January in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Councillor Evely seconded the recommendation to note:

- Cabinet in hindsight would have perhaps provided a delegation to the Chief Executive to avoid the use of the powers but it was important that the urgency powers were used.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that whilst the use of the powers was accepted, an error like this should not occur again in future.

A Member suggested that opposition group leaders should be consulted on urgent decisions . The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Urgency Powers would involve consultation with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee who was required under the Constitution to be an opposition Member. The Leader accepted the point made and stated that this point would be taken up by the Constitution Working Group.

RESOLVED: That Full Council NOTED the decision taken by the Chief Executive under urgency powers.

37 Council Tax Second Home Premiums

The purpose of the report was to consider the proposals to introduce a Council Tax Premium on second homes and apply a premium to long term empty properties after one year.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Evemy, introduced the recommendations and made the following points:

- The legislation to give councils the necessary powers had been anticipated for some time alongside the guidance for these measures.
- However, the timescale for implementation of 12 months was required to provide the formal notification for the second homes premiums. This required a Council decision before 1 April 2024 so that it could come into effect on 1 April 2025.
- The new premium for empty properties would increase the premium from 50% to 100%.
- The need for affordable housing was important and the new premiums would support this.
- Homes being maintained as second homes within the District would have a new premium of 100% Council Tax from April 2025.
- It was noted at paragraph 4.7 of the report that the purpose of the recommendations was to discourage residential properties being taken out of use. The Council would not seek to apply the levy to permanent holiday accommodation. This was noted as accounting for 20% of the homes outlined in the report.

There were two questions raised in respect of paragraph 4.5 of the report if the period by which a home remained empty 'reset' with transfer of ownership and how the provisions on couples living separately would be applied. The Chair on the advice of the Deputy Leader then invited the Business Manager for Environmental, Revenues and Welfare to answer the questions. It was noted in response that a property with a premium having already been applied, would continue on the same timeframe as under the previous owner. It was noted in consideration for officers to clamp down on avoidance of Council Tax premiums and there were checks that could be used to enforce the policy.

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There was a question about the financial implications as part of the report and the £3.3 million of extra revenue of which £246,000 would be retained by the Council. It was noted that the purpose of the empty homes premiums was to disincentivise the retention of empty homes and it was asked if the income generated from this premium was therefore likely to be lower. The Deputy Leader noted that the figures in paragraph 5.3 would be on the second homes premium and the estimate was not on the empty homes due to the point raised. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the projections were based on the second homes premium only. On the empty homes premium, it was noted by the Deputy Chief Executive that the change in the legislation was to reduce the timeline for charges on empty homes from 2-5 years to 1-5 years and the existing policy of 2-5 years was the basis for the Council Tax estimates set out in the Budget passed at February Council. The collection fund position at the end of 2024 would provide an update on the specific amounts.

There was a question by Council regarding holiday home lets and how they could be charged for waste collection to support local services.

Council noted the concerns of many residents around the number of empty properties and the development of new retirement properties within the District. There was also a question around the exception for active marketing of properties and how this would work.

There was a question around when Council has lost touch with property owners and how they would be traced. The Business Manager for Environmental, Revenues and Welfare answered by saying that there were tools to trace them but those who moved abroad could be difficult to find. It was highlighted that officers could use charging orders to recoup money alongside management orders for properties.

There was a question around the share of the income from the new charges. The Chief Executive confirmed that conversations had been taking place with Gloucestershire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner to see how best the money raised within the District could be utilised for projects in the District. The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the Cost of Collection Allowance which the Council as the billing authority could claim for its service in recovering.

Councillor Joe Harris seconded and made the following points:

- This proposal was something that the Council had been waiting for some time for.
- The Leader thanked the Members of the former Second Homes Working Group and the work of officers to deliver this proposal.
- There was an inheritance exemption for up to one year to support families managing the loss of a loved one.
- It was a small lever but one that could be used to benefit the District.
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire County Council would benefit from this levy the most, but that extra money needed to go back into the District.

Council noted some comments that given the scale of the demand within the Cotswolds for affordable housing and queried if there were any alternative uses.

Council asked around the use of active marketing and how that is defined to help stop the avoidance of the premium.

Councillor Every in summing up made the following points:

- In regard to waste collection, it was noted that the Business Rates regime covers the letting of properties and they may claim small business rates relief to reduce this to negligible amounts. Officers are working on a proposal on how to ensure that the waste collection service is only provided to those entitled to use it.
- There were varying demands for retirement properties across the District.
- The UK Government would be producing legislation which would address the concerns raised regarding the exceptions around active marketing.
- In regard to the amount of funding raised, it was noted that the Council has to go as far as possible despite the sum is being small.
- It was hoped that this would help those to reconsider if a second home in a residential area was suitable and would encourage properties to come back on to the market.

RESOLVED: That Full Council

1. **AGREED** from 01 April 2024, to levy the maximum level of premium for Empty Homes as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

a) Premium of 100% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) after 1 year up to 5 years of becoming empty;

b) Premium of 200% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) between 5 years and 10 years;

c) Premium of 300% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) for 10 years or more.

2. **AGREED** in principle from 01 April 2025 to the implementation of a premium (Second Homes Premium) of 100% for dwellings that are no one's sole or main residence and which are substantially furnished as set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

3. **AGREED** to issue the mandatory notice of 12 months to all owners of second homes that a premium will commence from 1 April 2025; and,

4. **NOTED** that where premiums are to be applied, the Council is mindful of the current consultation by government which recommends exceptions in certain circumstances outlined within this report.

Subject to the outcome of that consultation, a further report may be presented to Cabinet and Council prior to the implementation of the Council's policy on premiums taking into account statute, the Council's requirements and any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

Voting Record

30 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean			Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson			Julia Judd

Chris Twells			Roly Hughes
Clare Turner			Tristan Wilkinson
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

38 Council Tax Reduction for Care Leavers

The purpose of the report was to consider proposals to extend the age that Care Leavers could receive a reduction in Council Tax from 21 years to 25 years.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Evey, introduced and made the following points:

- There had been a Corporate Parenting and Care leavers Briefing setting out councillors' the responsibilities as corporate parents.
- The Council had a duty of care for those in care and those who have left care within the District.
- There were 864 young people in care in Gloucestershire and 29 were in the Cotswold District.
- Care leavers within the new policy were those aged between 18-25. There were 560 such people across Gloucestershire and 13 within the District.
- The difficult circumstances of care leavers were important to recognise.
- The policy would provide support for those leaving care with their Council Tax within the District along with identical motions across Gloucestershire.

Councillor Stowe seconded and made the following points:

- The wellbeing of residents should be at the centre of the Council's decisions in order to support their life development.
- The impact on the Council's finances was relatively small compared to the positive impact on the lives of care leavers.

Council noted the excellent Corporate Parenting briefing provided to Members.

It was noted that there should be support for transition to paying for Council Tax and helping to support care leavers to manage their money.

The Deputy Leader summed up and made the following points:

- Councillor Every had spoken with officers on the point of care leavers at the end of their Council Tax exemption and processes would be in place to help give the right direct support.
- It was noted that from the briefing that there were 15 ambassadors on Gloucestershire County Council's Corporate Parenting Panel which raised the issue of access to leisure and housing. It was noted that the Deputy Leader would see how the Council could support access to housing and leisure facilities.

RESOLVED That the Full Council:

1. APPROVED to extend the age that a care leaver can receive a reduction in their council tax from 21 years to 25 years;
2. APPROVED to include those care leavers from outside of Gloucestershire County within the offer;
3. APPROVED the amended Eligibility Criteria as set out in Annex A

Voting Record

30 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean			Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson			Julia Judd
Chris Twells			Roly Hughes
Clare Turner			Tristan Wilkinson
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			

Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

39 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

The purpose of this item was to consider the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Mike Evey, introduced and made the following points:

- This annual statement was previously part of the appendices to the Budget papers but it was important for officers and for Members to review the paper on its own.
- The salaries of the statutory officers had to be published in the public domain.
- The policy statement included the Council's approach to areas such as severance and pay protection.
- On Page 121 of the pack, the role of the Performance and Appointments Committee was outlined in regard to the statutory officers' the terms and conditions, retirement and grievances.
- The report noted the median pay at section 10.2.

Councillor Joe Harris formally seconded the report.

Councillor Jenkinson wished to record the value of officers within the Council and their work.

RESOLVED: That Full Council

1. APPROVED the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.
2. AGREED that the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 will be updated and republished to reflect any changes to the senior management structure at that point.

Voting Record

30 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean			Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson			Julia Judd
Chris Twells			Roly Hughes
Clare Turner			Tristan Wilkinson
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evely			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

40 Notice of Motions

Councillor Mark Harris as Vice Chair of Council then took the Chair as Councillor Ind was the seconder of the motion.

Councillor Lisa Spivey introduced the motion on behalf of Councillor Bloomer who had given apologies for absence. The following points were made:

- The officers were thanked for all the work that had gone into it.
- The motion was necessary for the wellbeing and vitality of communities.
- It was imperative to recognise the selfless dedication of volunteers in the communities inspired by example of King Charles III.
- The cost-of-living crisis had meant that volunteers were relied upon more to deliver services to residents.
- The work of volunteers benefited their personal and professional development and strengthened the bonds within communities.

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- The motion would establish a process for the public to nominate unsung heroes, of which four would be chosen to be recognised at a Full Council meeting. They would receive a letter of thanks and a pin badge.
- In addition, a biannual coffee morning would be established for all volunteers to promote their work and thank them for their service.

Councillor Ind seconded and made the following points:

- Councillor Ind was delighted with the idea brought by Councillor Bloomer.
- The example of volunteers was important in communities and particularly in Tetbury with the friendship café and community fridge which provided vital support for residents.
- Volunteers' work often goes under the radar, and this would help the Council recognise those within the District doing that work.
- The work was also noted as an extension of former Councillor Julian Beales work with Community Champions.

Council noted the previous work of Councillor Julian Beale and how volunteers were previously recognised. It was noted that this motion would be on an ongoing basis rather than just a one-off event.

Council commented that there should be a coffee meeting in the north and one in the south of the District.

Council noted that it would be appropriate to also recognise teams rather than just individuals.

Council asked which team was picking this up and it was confirmed that this would be the Communities Team. It was also noted that a nominations email address would be created for this.

Council noted the importance of involving town and parish councils in identifying individuals.

RESOLVED: That Full Council **AGREED** to pass the following motion:

Recognising the invaluable contributions of unsung heroes within our communities, Council is inspired by the ethos of community service set by King Charles at the beginning of his reign.

Council should seek to encourage others to engage in volunteer work and acknowledge the essential role volunteers play in sustaining vital community services.

As more pressures are placed on our communities, it is so important to recognise those unsung heroes. Volunteering allows community members to be actively engaged and help address needs and issues they care about. This builds stronger bonds within a community.

Volunteering provides opportunities for people to gain work experience, build skills, and make professional connections. This can benefit volunteers individually as well as strengthen the overall workforce.

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Volunteering often connects people from different backgrounds and builds understanding between diverse groups within a community.

Volunteering is associated with benefits like better health, lower stress, and a longer lifespan for those who volunteer. When people volunteer it not only helps the community but can also enhance the lives of the volunteers.

Acknowledging the cost-effective nature of this approach in the current economic climate and the rising cost of living, underscores the critical reliance on volunteers for community well-being.

Recognising the pivotal role volunteers play in sustaining essential services such as Citizens Advice, Cotswold Friends, food banks, Churn Project and many others, this Council resolves:

1. To implement a process enabling members of the public to contact their respective ward councillors, with nominations of 'unsung hero' volunteers. At each Full Council, up to four unsung heroes will be announced by the chair/leader. These unsung heroes will be chosen following a review of all nominations at a meeting of the Chair, Vice Chair and portfolio holder for Cost of Living. The chosen nominees would then be invited to attend the council meeting. If they are able to attend, they would then be presented with a letter of thanks, signed by the leader and chair of the council and the Ward Member, alongside this, they would be also presented with an unsung hero pin badge.
2. To resource and host a biannual coffee morning to promote volunteering opportunities and express gratitude to those who selflessly serve. This would be open to all volunteers, regardless of winning.
3. To note that the programme shall stand as a testament to our deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the public in supporting and enriching our community.

Voting Record

30 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 4 Absent/Did not vote

For	Against	Abstention	Absent/Did not vote
Andrew Maclean			Claire Bloomer
Angus Jenkinson			Julia Judd
Chris Twells			Roly Hughes
Clare Turner			Tristan Wilkinson
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neil			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			

Council
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Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Michael Vann			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

41 Next meeting

The next meeting was noted as the Annual Council on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.26 pm

Chair

(END)

Member Questions for Council – 20 March 2024

Question	Response
<p>Question 1 from Councillor Nikki Ind to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation</p> <p>Following the recent Local Government Association survey, which found that most councils are aware of the agreement between mobile operators and the Government to switch off 2G and 3G mobile networks by 2033, can you please confirm to what extent is Cotswold District Council reliant on these networks, as opposed to the faster 4G and 5G technologies, and if we are currently reliant, what is the plan for upgrading systems to avoid loss of service? Clearly, any upgrades will have a financial impact on our already stretched budget, and I would like to be assured that provision has been made for this work.</p> <p>I am thinking primarily about parking meters, public toilets and alarm systems, but also waste in-cab technologies and telecare devices which may be being used by our residents.</p>	<p>4G has now been around for over a decade and systems using this type of technology are usually replaced at least every 7 years as the embedded software will no longer be supported and therefore are at risk of Cyber Attack.</p> <p>I can confirm that all the systems listed won't be affected by the switch off of 2G and 3G mobile networks as they use the 4G network.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Nikki Ind to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for</p>	

<p>Economy and Council Transformation</p> <p>Councillor Ind thanked Councillor Dale for his response and did not ask a supplementary question.</p>	
<p>Question 2 from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Mike Evely, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance:</p> <p>The Leader appointed seven Cabinet Members following last year's local elections. Will the Deputy Leader tell us on how many days each Cabinet Member spent time on site here at Trinity Road since their appointment? I understand this data will be stored by the council via our security passes.</p>	<p>We do not collect attendance data and the security data we record cannot be used reliably for accurate attendance purposes.</p> <p>For example, the Council Chamber and other areas of Trinity Road can be accessed without using a security pass. Members who forget their card pass are often issued with temporary passes. Another example would be where a single Member or Officer accesses a door and multiple people enter at the same time.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Mike Evely, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Councillor Twells asked a question to Councillor Harris as Councillor Evely was not present at this point in the meeting. It was affirmed that effective scrutiny within a Cabinet system was important. It was noted that the door passes along with Outlook calendar invites could be used to provide accurate data and if the Leader and Deputy Leader would help to provide this information to him?</p>	<p>Councillor Harris indicated that Councillor Twells could discuss with the Deputy Leader offline as to how this information could be provided. It was noted that the information being sought about attendance was not accurately recorded and that therefore it should not be put into the public domain. It was noted that the use of temporary passes was an example of why the information may not be accurate.</p>

<p>Question 3 from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Joe Harris Leader of the Council:</p> <p>Many residents have contacted me to express their concern at the lack of progress with the Dolphins Hall project in Tetbury, which lies in my ward. The project was supposed to have been funded mainly via Section 106 contributions. There has been little obvious progress on site and the latest reports from Tetbury Town Council suggests that the project now requires at least another £50,000. In addition, the Town Council has admitted that a number of title deeds and other legal documents relating to the project have gone missing. Many residents share my frustration that TTC has failed to manage this expenditure or provide updates to residents.</p> <p>Given that it was this authority that originally provided the S106 monies to TTC, will either the Leader or the relevant Cabinet Member chair a meeting with Town Councillors to discuss a way forward? It may be that we will have to commission an investigation by an external body.</p>	<p>As the prelude to question sets out, this is a Tetbury Town Council matter.</p> <p>The District Council has previously invited its auditors, South West Audit Partnership, to undertake an investigation and it found that Cotswold District Council has discharged its obligations appropriately.</p> <p>The District Council has no jurisdiction over Tetbury Town Council's handling of the funds and the delivery of the project.</p> <p>Reference is made to several title deeds and other legal documents are missing. Tetbury Town Council has subsequently confirmed that the only missing document is a covenant to the access road between Sherwood Road and the Recreation Road. If you believe other legal documents are missing it is recommended that you bring such matters to Town Council's attention.</p> <p>I note the Project Chair of the Dolphins Hall Redevelopment Project last week offered you a meeting and is keen to engage you as the local ward member as the redevelopment progresses, I suggest this would be a great opportunity to understand more about the redevelopment and raise any concerns you have.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Joe Harris Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Councillor Harris indicated in response that a visit would be organised.</p>

<p>Councillor Twells asked a supplementary question about the project as the District is the local planning authority and that if the project was not delivered as expected then this would have repercussions for the Council if developers wanted to recover costs. Councillor Twells asked if the Leader and/or a suitable Cabinet Member would visit Tetbury with him to examine progress with the project.</p>	
<p>Question 4 from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>Under the revised local plan CDC is working closely with several partners, including the National Trust, to increase access to the countryside. A new policy EN18 is to be provided for the Sherborne Park Estate near Northleach. The policy enables the production of a masterplan for the estate, which encourages more people to experience and enjoy Sherborne. 10.20.4 of the plan states that this will offer a sustainable tourism offer close to Bourton-on-the-Water which could help mitigate its 'honey pot' status.</p> <p>This particular honey pot has a large number of business owners who are worried about the effect of this new policy. Having just recovered from the effects of the Covid pandemic they are now suffering from the loss of the villages coach parking facilities and face have coaches banned from the</p>	<p>The council is consulting on a draft Local Plan policy titled, EN18: Sherborne Park Estate Masterplan. It states that if the National Trust prepare a masterplan for the Sherborne Park Estate, then it would need to be prepared in consultation with local communities, relevant stakeholders and the council. The draft policy does not propose a masterplan.</p> <p>The draft policy sets out 11 criteria that a masterplan would need to adhere to, for example it would need to demonstrate how future development could be achieved without compromising the environment and local communities. The masterplan will act as a framework for determining any relevant planning application(s) that may come forward in the future.</p> <p>The draft policy has very limited status at this stage, and it is the first opportunity to gather members of the public feedback, such as this comment / question. The council will use this feedback to shape the eventual policy or, if deemed necessary, deleted from the pre-submission draft local plan i.e., the plan the council wishes to adopt.</p>

<p>village all together. What support, if any, can these business hope to receive from CDC as the local planning authority to ensure a level playing field and to ensure that any future development at Sherborne Park is supplementary to, rather than detrimental to, the vitally important businesses in Bourton?</p>	<p>The National Trust has prepared concept plan and other supporting information, which is available to view on the council's website (https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/ - within the "Local Plan update and Masterplan consultation" drop down menu).</p> <p>This provides an initial indication of the National Trust "Big Nature, Better Access" project on the Sherborne Park Estate. The policy is very much seeking to ensure a masterplan and future proposals on the estate are complementary in terms of the economy, community and the environment.</p> <p>The council welcomes and invites comments on the policy and useful suggestions to address the points raised.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>Councillor Wilkins asked a supplementary question about whether Bourton-on-the-Water businesses would be kept in mind given the current situation with coach parking within the area in addition to the concerns raised regarding the Sherborne Park Estate?</p>	<p>Councillor Layton agreed that these businesses would be kept in mind, and that officers were in discussion regarding Sherborne Park Estate to minimise any effects to Bourton residents.</p>
<p>Question 5 from Councillor Tom Stowe to Councillor Mike McKeown</p> <p>Please can you confirm the number of households who have signed up to a contract for solar panel installation via "Cotswold Home Solar", the</p>	<p>In July 2023, Cabinet agreed to enter into an arrangement with Switchd Ltd trading as MakeMyHouseGreen, to co-brand and promote a district-wide domestic rooftop solar group purchasing scheme. The aim of this initiative is encouraging the domestic take up of Solar PV. The scheme launched in September and has so far resulted in 6 households having solar panels fitted, 7 more have paid a deposit and 64 customers are in the sales process. A total of 350 people have interacted with platform.</p>

<p>partnership between “Makemyhousegreen.com” and CDC?</p>	<p>MakeMyHouseGreen have recently agreed to fund letters to 4,000 homes, in addition to the existing social media promotion, depending on the results from this they may fund more letters.</p> <p>We are pleased with the progress to date, every home that installs solar reduces their energy bills and typically saves over a tonne of CO2 per year.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Tom Stowe to Councillor Mike McKeown</p> <p>Councillor Stowe referred to a letter received from MakeMyHouseGreen and the discount provided of £250 to any customer but that this was only from one provider. It was noted that there were a number of reputable businesses installing solar PV panels within the District. Councillor Stowe asked if there was oversight to ensure the prices quoted are competitive and what liabilities would the Council be open to if the partner company was to fail?</p>	<p>Councillor McKeown noted that a rigorous selection process had been undertaken with a strict criteria when evaluating each company. It was noted that the criteria used by the Council was to ensure that any partner company would be financially sound, and that the website did provide options that there were other providers within the District.</p>
<p>Question 6 from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>At the Council's meeting on 24th January, changes were agreed to the planning scheme of delegation following recommendations by the Planning Advisory Service. These changes involve introducing a 28-day call in limit and will come into force on 1st April. These changes will involve significant changes to the way members work with, and engage with, Officers and Parish and Town</p>	<p>Officers are in the process of arranging several events. With regards to members, an all-member briefing will be held online on Monday 25 March at 10am. For those unable to make the briefing a recording will be provided. A diary invitation should have made its way member's calendars. With regards to Town and Parish Councils, the council is holding a 'Planning Roadshow' for Town and Parish Councils and the intention is hold the first event in July, but this will be confirmed nearer the time. This will be one of several planning topics at the first event.</p>

<p>Councils. Please can you confirm that an all member briefing by Senior Officers on the new process will be scheduled and confirm what engagement with Town and Parish Councils is planned?</p>	
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>Councillor Wilkins asked a follow-up question about the upcoming training and the proforma promised and when this would be available.</p>	<p>Councillor Layton noted that a proforma would be made available online for Members to use to make the process as efficient as possible.</p>
<p>Question 7 from Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Mike Evemy</p> <p>At the recent budget meeting, the Council approved capital expenditure in excess of £150,000 to make urgent repairs to the Council owned Old Station building which is in a very poor condition and will continue to deteriorate and cost a lot more money if nothing is done to secure its future. Over the years various approaches about the future of this important asset have been made to the Council by local organisations including the now defunct approach from New Brewery Arts. What plans does this administration have to secure the future of this building?</p>	<p>As announced at Full Council on 21st February the Council has issued a ‘Call for Interest’ encouraging local organisations and businesses to come forward with their ideas and funding schemes. The Council is looking for a new partner that can bring forward plans and secure funding to bring the building back into use. The ‘Call for Interest’ was promoted on 4th March, with stories in the local media and on the Councils social media accounts. Direct contact was also made with a number of local stakeholders to make them aware of this opportunity. A number of interested parties have already been in touch.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Mike Evemy</p>	<p>Councillor Harris noted that this was a difficult building given the age and condition of the building. It was highlighted that expressions of interest had been made but a significant capital</p>

<p>Councillor Fowles noted that a number of local stakeholders had been in touch about the marketing of the station. It was noted that the condition of the building was such that a plan was needed to get a new owner in place for the building. Therefore Councillor Fowles asked what the process was beyond expressions of interest.</p>	<p>investment was required to bring it back into use. However it was noted that the Council would do whatever it could to facilitate the process of bringing the Old Station back into use.</p>
<p>Question 8 from Councillor Daryl Corps to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>Regarding the Local Plan update and the recent area ‘open sessions’ for members of the Public. Firstly, I want to thank James Brain and Mathew Britton, two fantastic officers. From 10am until 8am they stood valiantly answering hundreds and hundreds of questions from very concerned Residents of Moreton in Marsh and the surrounding Villages in the Redesdale Hall on Wednesday 6th March.</p> <p>The feedback I have been receiving from Residents is twofold.</p> <p>One, they really want a clear and structured presentation of the proposed changes to the Local Plan, a properly structured meeting, chaired and minuted. They worry that the questions and concerns raised at the open day session were not properly documented. They worry this is not a genuine consultancy with Residents. They also saw the detailed, illustrated, clear and concise</p>	<p>The administration's number one priority us to avoid is the situation that we had in the first half of the last decade whereby developers had ‘free rein’ over the Cotswolds, and to quote Cllr Fowles the local authority ‘lost control of planning’ because of a failure to maintain an up-to-date local plan and 5-year housing land supply.</p> <p>This is one of the reasons why Moreton grew so rapidly without adequate infrastructure to support both existing residents and those who moved to new developments.</p> <p>A new local plan is the opportunity to right some of these wrongs and help fix Moreton; any plan to do this though will be predicated on some new development in the locality. For right or for wrong that is the way the national planning system works</p> <p>We’re committed to meaningful engagement with residents in Moreton and across the Cotswolds as we develop the next local plan. The development of a new local plan is a drawn out and complex process.</p> <p>The Leader and Chief Executive are currently looking at resourcing of the local plan process, which could include an officer, who’s role is to help ensure that communities like Moreton are aware of engagement events, and how they can take part. It’s also important that we help ‘unpack’ a lot of the process and associated planning jargon so residents can comment in a clear and informed way.</p> <p>The drop in events were an opportunity for residents to ask questions about the Local Plan consultation and for planning officers to explain the proposals to residents. There were</p>

Masterplan for Cirencester and asked the question, why are we not getting one for Moreton? All they had were vague 'possible' proposals. For many residents the local plan document is confusing, its huge, it's not clear and concise, for many this can create suspicion over what's being hidden from them. A presentation in many resident's minds would at least go some way to giving the clarity that they want. The drop-in session was arranged with the best intentions, but is not enough for Residents, they deserve a proper presentation. Secondly, they are also asking why so many houses without a mention of any infrastructure? No environmental study or assessment on the potential impact on our services - our Doctors Surgery, Hospital, sewage treatment and the effect on our already heavily polluted Evenlode River? Cllr Layton, can the District Council reassure the people of Moreton:-

A –This is not a done deal?

B - They can have what they deserve, a properly chaired local plan update presentation?

C –There will be a concise Town “Masterplan” including all the relevant public Health assessments for Air quality and water?

D –Is this really the only option in CDC’s mind for Moreton as the scale is just staggering. Residents have been very clear with me that this is not NIMBYism, it’s the eye watering scale and numbers of the housing being proposed and without a single

comments forms available on the day for residents to provide feedback. The best way to respond to the consultation, which is still open and closes on 7th April 2024, is to respond via your.cotswold.gov.uk.

A - This is not a done deal. This is the very start of the process of planning for housing, employment and infrastructure needs up to 2041.

The Local Plan consultation includes eight development strategy options – strategic scale growth of a settlement (e.g. in Moreton-in-Marsh) being one of those options, albeit the evidence we have gathered so far points towards this being part of the solution. We want to hear peoples' views though on how and where development needs up to 2041 can be accommodated in Cotswold District.

These will then be properly considered and responded to. Further evidence is also needed before any decision can be made – for example, a feasibility study on the proposed new road and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It may be that points raised in the consultation or further evidence that comes to light means that strategic scale growth in Moreton isn't the best solution.

B - We are holding a second event for residents in Moreton-in-Marsh to find out more from councillors and officers about the Local Plan and development proposals in Moreton-in-Marsh. The event will be in a Q&A format and attendees have been invited to submit questions in advance to local.plan@cotswold.gov.uk no later than midday on Wednesday 20 March.

C - If, having considered all the consultation responses and obtained the necessary further evidence, Moreton-in-Marsh is determined to be a suitable location for strategic scale growth, then this will need to be planned properly in a new masterplan / strategy for the town. However, this would come further down the line.

Plan making is an iterative process whereby evidence gathering accumulates through the process. Early-stage environmental studies have been commissioned and published –

<p>mention of INFRASTRUCTURE or a proper presentation to them?</p>	<p>examples include the Intergrated Impact Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1.</p> <p>As the council begins to alight on a preferred strategy this will act as a catalyst for more in depth studies and assessments. Studies are published on the council's website: https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/</p> <p>D - The Local Plan consultation discusses eight development strategy options, which we are seeking feedback on. The scale of development mentioned in the Local Plan consultation document is around 1,500 additional dwellings for Moreton-in-Marsh up to 2041.</p> <p>This number isn't set in stone though – it's an estimation, based on the evidence we have to date, which could be higher or lower. As mentioned previously, this is the beginning of the process of establishing how we collectively meet the needs of the future, jobs, housing, infrastructure, green spaces, etc.</p> <p>We encourage and invite you and others, through the Local Plan consultation, to share views and to suggest credible alternative suggestions for how development in Cotswold District up to 2041 can be distributed.</p> <p>Infrastructure - Future development will need to be supported by the necessary infrastructure. Any development proposals would be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p> <p>It is also important to bear in mind that the government has set a target to deliver 300,000 additional homes each year. The government mandates how many homes the council needs to plan for. The 3,300 housing need figure that the Local Plan consultation discusses, and the figure of around 1,500 additional homes in Moreton-in-Marsh, both derive from the national housing need figure that is set by the national government and handed to the district council to deliver.</p>
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	<p>Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework operates a “principle in favour of sustainable development” policy, which is designed to ensure the government's targets are met.</p> <p>For example, if the council does not prepare a plan the development industry is incentivised to submit speculative applications, which would likely lead to uncoordinated patterns of development and weaken the council’s ability to negotiate needed infrastructure as we saw in the last decade.</p>
<p>Supplementary from Councillor Daryl Corps to Councillor Juliet Layton</p> <p>Councillor Corps noted that Moreton had grown by 43% since 2010 with no new infrastructure. Councillor Corps asked what infrastructure would be implemented before any new homes were allocated to Moreton.</p>	<p>Councillor Layton noted that in 2010 the Council did not have a Local Plan at that time which meant that there was no control over what developments could take place. It was highlighted that the plan was in the consultation phase and would therefore need to complete this process before any new decisions on infrastructure were made.</p>

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