

Public Document Pack



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tuesday, 11 July 2023

Tel: 01285 623181/623208
e-mail - democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held at Council Chamber - Trinity Road on **Wednesday, 19 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

(Councillors Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Roly Hughes, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Clare Muir, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Chris Twells, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins)

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.

Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1PX
Tel: 01285 623000 www.cotswold.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members and Officers, relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3. **Minutes (Pages 7 - 32)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 15 March 2023 and Annual Council on 24 May 2023.

4. **Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive (if any)**

5. **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 one minute each and relate to issues under the Council's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

The Chair will ask whether any members of the public present at the meeting wish to ask a question and will decide on the order of questioners.

The response may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

6. **Member Questions**

A Member of the Council may ask the Chair, the Leader, a Cabinet Member or the Chair of any Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Cotswold District. A maximum period of fifteen minutes shall be allowed at any such meeting for Member questions.

A Member may only ask a question if:

- a) the question has been delivered in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than 5.00 p.m. on the working day before the day of the meeting; or
- b) the question relates to an urgent matter, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by 9.30 a.m. on the day of the meeting.

An answer may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Council has received the following the questions printed on the agenda. The responses have been submitted in advance of the meeting which can be found at Annex A.

Question 1 from Councillor Nikki Ind to Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability

Could I please ask for an update on the current timetable for provision of electric car charging points in Tetbury. I understand that Tetbury is in the 2nd phase of delivery, however as the 2nd largest settlement in the District, we still have no public charging points in Council car parks.

In addition, can you please confirm that the District Council still intends to consult with Tetbury Town Council when it comes to the positioning of these chargers.
Many thanks.

Question 2 from Councillor Nikki Ind to Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

When I receive a request to fell a tree, without a Tree Protection Order, but within a Conservation Area, I always make a comment to the Officer regarding requesting the applicant replant a suitable tree as a replacement. I understand the Officer comments that this cannot be enforced, however, given the Climate and Ecological Emergencies declared by this Council, could we not agree to include this in all responses to requests for the felling of trees in the District?

Many thanks.

Question 3 from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability

CDC's Rissington Road Car Park was refurbished by this Council and reopened just before Easter this year at a cost of £374,000. The plans showed some 8 recharging points for electric vehicles.

At present there seems to be some wire poking out of the ground but no recharging points.

When can we expect these charging points to be operational?

Question 4 from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

On 15th July 2020, a group of Bourton residents attended a meeting of Full Council, with one of them asking the Council to address the issue of paying management fees to upkeep open public spaces. Co-incidentally at the same meeting a motion was put to the Council which called for fairer management of public open space and waste collection on new developments.

The motion called for the Council to carry out an evidence based review on the sums being paid for public open space by residents and the levels of service provided. A report was to be produced to Cabinet for April 2021 to allow the Council to ensure that new public open spaces are managed effectively and in a high quality, fair way to all residents. The motion was passed unanimously. Subsequent to this, no further work seems to have been carried out and no report was presented to cabinet.

Please could you confirm why this work did not proceed any further?

Question 5 from Councillor Patrick Coleman to Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

Could the Cabinet Member please update the Council on the latest performance information about the determination of planning applications?

Question 6 from Councillor Gary Selwyn to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation

Could the Cabinet Member please update the Council on the take up of season ticket parking permits at the Whiteway Car Park in Cirencester?

Question 7 from Councillor Daryl Corps to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation

Since 2022 it has been possible to pay for parking in Cotswold District Council car parks by the paybyphoneapp, website and credit and debit card. This is great for those who are willing or able to do so.

There are many people who do not have a smartphone or are unsure of how to pay on a website or are frankly scared of using their debit or credit card on a machine in public, or simply don't use credit cards. This is particularly true of the elderly and vulnerable.

Can I ask Cllr Dale if he would explore the possibility of cash payment for these more vulnerable members of the Cotswolds to be reinstated. Surely we have a duty about care for all residents and visitors to the Cotswolds, not just the tech savvy few.

Question 8 from Councillor Tony Slater to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation

I originally asked a question about the financial viability of the Rugby Club car park as a member of the public last year. Since then a report has been completed in January of this year outlining a strategy for the rugby Club Car park. I would like to know if the recommended changes to the season ticket prices for the Rugby Club car park had generated any additional customers and if so how many to date? Secondly has the additional income covered the costs of the ongoing maintenance of the carpark and/or contributed to the ordinal build costs?

Question 9 from Councillor Andrew Maclean to Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability

Please can you give us an update on whether you will be recruiting a replacement Sustainable Transport Lead following the departure of Hannah Fountain and, if so, what progress has been made?

7. Updated Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (Pages 33 - 56)

Purpose

To present an updated draft Procurement and Contract Management Strategy for comment and consideration by Council.

Recommendations

Subject to the resolutions of Cabinet on 17 July 2023, Council is recommended to resolve to:

- 1) Approve the updated Procurement and Contract Management Strategy.

8. Outside Bodies Appointments Update

Purpose

To appoint members and substitute members to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, following the decision of Annual Council to defer the appointment of members to non-executive bodies.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

- 1) Appoint Councillor Dilys Neill to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with Councillor Nigel Robbins as substitute;
- 2) Appoint Councillor Angus Jenkinson to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, with Councillor Patrick Coleman as substitute.

9. Notice of Motions

No motions have been submitted for this meeting.

10. Next meeting

Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 6pm.

11. Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Installations on Council Assets (Pages 57 - 74)

Purpose

To seek agreement to invest in the installation of solar PV on the roofs of buildings owned and in some cases leased by the Council based on the business cases set out within this report. To seek agreement to enter into a contract with the preferred contractor for the installation of the solar PV.

Recommendations

Subject to the resolutions of Cabinet on 17 July 2023, Council is recommended to resolve to:

- 1) Agree to proceed with investment in roof mounted solar PV based on the business cases in this report;
- 2) Agree to set aside funding for contingency costs of £27,000 from the Council

Priorities Fund with delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to allocate subject to the business case still being viable or expenditure being unavoidable due to structural condition of the building.

12. **Matters exempt from publication**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Council may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

13. **Exempt Minutes of Full Council on 15th March 2023 (Pages 75 - 76)**

14. **Exempt Annexes for Agenda Item 9 (Pages 77 - 86)**

(END)

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Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 15 March 2023.

Councillors present:

Dilys Neill - Chair
Stephen Andrews
Tony Berry
Gina Blomefield
Claire Bloomer
Ray Brassington
Patrick Coleman
Rachel Coxcoon
David Cunningham
Tony Dale

Nikki Ind – Vice-Chair
Andrew Doherty
Mike Evemy
Jenny Forde
Joe Harris
Mark Harris
Stephen Hirst
Robin Hughes
Roly Hughes
Sue Jepson

Julia Judd
Juliet Layton
Andrew Maclean
Richard Norris
Nigel Robbins
Gary Selwyn
Lisa Spivey
Tom Stowe
Steve Trotter

Officers present:

Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer
Rachel Biles, Strategic Projects Lead
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
Scott Williams, Contracts Business Manager

12 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Nick Maunder, Richard Keeling, Clive Webster, and Richard Morgan.

Council noted the sad passing of Cllr Ray Theodoulou, and offered condolences to his family and friends who were in attendance on behalf of all the Members and Officers.

The Leader of the Council offered his condolences on behalf of the administration and the Liberal Democrat Group to Ray Theodoulou's family and friends. It was highlighted how Cllr Theodoulou was a very knowledgeable and diligent councillor.

The Leader of the Conservative Group noted Ray Theodoulou's long service since 2003 and his service with Gloucestershire County Council. It was also highlighted how Cllr Theodoulou had brought his experience from working in financial services to his role as a Councillor. A communication received from Tim Guest as Chair of Southrop Parish Council was also read out by Cllr Berry.

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The Chief Executive provided his condolences on behalf of the officers to the family, friends and colleagues of Ray Theodoulou.

A number of Members spoke and provided tributes to Cllr Theodoulou and his work during his time as a Councillor at Cotswold District Council.

The Chair then invited everyone in the room to stand for a 1 minute silence in remembrance of Cllr Ray Theodoulou.

13 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Berry stated a non-pecuniary interest that he was a member of Friends of the Corinium Museum.

14 **Minutes**

Council noted the correction to be made on Page 12 section 2 of the minutes to change the word 'her' to 'his' in relation to the delegation of the Deputy Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed to the minutes of the meeting on 15th February 2023 subject to any corrections being made.

Voting Record - For 24, 4 abstentions, 0 against, 4 absent

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty		Gina Blomefield	Clive Webster
Andrew Maclean		Juliet Layton	Nick Maunder
Claire Bloomer		Robin Hughes	Richard Keeling
David Cunningham		Tony Berry	Richard Morgan
Gary Selwyn			
Jenny Forde			
Joe Harris			
Julia Judd			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evely			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Rachel Coxcoon			
Ray Brassington			
Richard Norris			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Andrews			
Stephen Hirst			
Steve Trotter			
Sue Jepson			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			

15 Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive

The Chair informed Members that, with the agreement of Council, the Motion by Cllr Judd on the agenda would be taken before the Award of the Leisure and Culture Contracts.

The Leader of the Council noted that Councillors Clive Webster, Nick Maunder, Rachel Coxcoon, Jenny Forde and Andrew Doherty were not standing at the next election and thanked them for their hard work for their residents.

The Leader of the Conservative Group was invited to speak regarding any tributes he wished to make on Members standing down on his side. Cllr Berry paid a general tribute to all of the Members who were standing down from all groups and the work that had been done.

The Chief Executive as part of his announcements wished to thank all departing Members on behalf of the officers of the Council. He also wished all Members standing the very best of luck for the election.

It was noted for the record that Cllr David Cunningham thanked Cllr Andrew Doherty for his work during the floods that had taken place in the north of the district.

At the discretion of the Chair, Councillor Robin Hughes addressed Council regarding sewage in rivers and representations to the water companies.

16 Public Questions

The Chief Executive made an announcement regarding responses to public questions after the meeting. It was highlighted that responses would be provided where possible within 5 working days, and if not, a holding response would be sent. These responses would also be captured in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr Fowles addressed Council and on behalf of the Cotswold Conservative Association wished to thank Council for their condolences on the death of Ray Theodoulou.

Answers to the questions can be found at Annex A.

17 Member Questions

Annex C Supplementary Responses and Written Responses

Cllr Brassington commented following the reply to the supplementary question to Cllr Joe Harris from Cllr Tom Stowe that he found the tone of Cllr Stowe's remarks offensive. It was noted that the Code of Conduct for Councillors says that Councillors should treat other Councillors with respect. This was noted that 'respect means politeness in behaviour and speech'.

The Chair highlighted that the Monitoring Officer would take the matter away outside of the meeting.

18 Gloucestershire-Wide Code of Conduct for Elected Members

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The Leader of the Council introduced the item as an item from the Constitution Working Group and the Audit Committee.

It was noted that a unified code would help to share resources between the different local authority tiers, and that Members of multiple local authority tiers would be clear on the standards that applied to their conduct in their roles on different councils.

The Leader of the Conservative Group seconded the item and felt that this was a much clearer code of conduct for all Members and that it was hoped that Town and Parish Councils would also adopt this.

Council noted that the code of conduct was based on the Local Government Association's recommendations and put more responsibility on the Councillor to abide by the Code of Conduct.

It was noted that any member of the public who chaired a sub-group operated by a town or parish council would need to be aware of their responsibilities under the code of conduct. This was noted by the Director of Governance.

Council commented that the Code of Conduct should be adopted by town and parish councils in the district and that chairs of parish councils should be informed of its adoption by the Cotswold District Council. The Director of Governance commented that this was a good proposal and would take this away. It was also noted that the GATPC had been involved with this and considerations around making this training mandatory. It would also be added to the next Audit Committee agenda.

Council noted that this Code of Conduct would be part of members' training following the election on 4 May 2023.

There was a query to the Monitoring Officer about requests to make the training mandatory and how this might be possible to enforce. It was noted that the Audit Committee had responsibility for standards and this would be discussed at the next Audit Committee meeting on 27 April 2023.

RESOLVED: The Council **AGREED** to:

ADOPT the Gloucestershire-wide Code of Conduct with effect from 9 May 2023

NOTE that the Monitoring Officer will carry out training prior to it coming into effect.

Voting Record – For 29 , Against 0 , Abstention 0 , Absent 4

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty			Clive Webster
Andrew Maclean			Nick Maunder
Claire Bloomer			Richard Keeling
David Cunningham			Richard Morgan
Dilys Neill			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Jenny Forde			
Joe Harris			
Julia Judd			

Juliet Layton			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evely			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Rachel Coxcoon			
Ray Brassington			
Richard Norris			
Robin Hughes			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Andrews			
Stephen Hirst			
Steve Trotter			
Sue Jepson			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Berry			
Tony Dale			

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

The purpose of this report was to consider proposals from the Constitution Working Group for amendments to the Constitution to:

commence the recruitment process and agree remuneration for up to two independent members on the Audit Committee, and associated amendments to the Constitution;
implement a Monitoring Officer Protocol
change the meeting duration for Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committees to a maximum duration of three hours.

The Leader of the Council introduced the item and outlined the context for these proposals. The Seconder of the item Councillor Nikki Ind added that as a member of the Constitution Working Group she was satisfied with the proposals going to Council.

Council noted the minor spelling corrections within the report to the recommendations where there were two letter d's that would be made to the final documents. It was also noted on Page 57 that there was a reference to a 'borough' where this should read 'district'.

Council noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee would need officer support to ensure Members were briefed to complete business within the proposed timings.

Council also noted that some of the meetings may clash with town and parish council meetings which were recognised as being very important for hearing the view of residents. However, it was recognised that the vote that Council was being asked to approve the time limits and that the meeting start times had already been agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: That Council **AGREED** to

a) **APPROVE** the recruitment of up to two Independent Members of Audit Committee on the basis of the recruitment pack at annex A;

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- b) DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer, and Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of Audit Committee, to agree three members of Audit Committee to be on the interview panel;
- c) APPROVE an annual payment of £1,000.00 to be paid to independent members of Audit Committee;
- d) AUTHORISE the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to update Part C3: Committee Functions to make the consequential amendments to the Audit Committee's membership.
- e) APPROVE the Monitoring Officer Protocol for inclusion in the Constitution.
- f) update Procedure Rule 9 in Part D of the Constitution to read as follows:

“The maximum duration of one sitting of a meeting (excluding any comfort breaks) will be as shown below. When the time limit is reached the current agenda item will be completed in the normal way. Any subsequent business will fall or may be reschedule to a later meeting or the meeting may be adjourned (to conclude on a different date).

Council – four hours*

Cabinet – four hours*

Audit Committee – three hours

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – three hours

Planning and Licensing Committee – no maximum duration

*For Council and Cabinet, at the conclusion of an item of business, after three hours have elapsed, a vote will be taken by a simple majority to continue for the final hour”.

Voting Record For 29, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 4 absent

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty			Clive Webster
Andrew Maclean			Nick Maunder
Claire Bloomer			Richard Keeling
David Cunningham			Richard Morgan
Dilys Neill			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Jenny Forde			
Joe Harris			
Julia Judd			
Juliet Layton			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Rachel Coxcoon			
Ray Brassington			
Richard Norris			
Robin Hughes			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Andrews			

Stephen Hirst			
Steve Trotter			
Sue Jepson			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Berry			
Tony Dale			

20 Notice of Motions

Cllr Judd proposed the motion which requested that the Council actively encourage the use of ethical bricks for current and future developments within the district.

Council noted the appalling working conditions for brickmaking and the suffering caused from the unethical conditions.

Council noted the proposals that bricks used in the Cotswolds for developments should be ethical bricks.

There were comments made by Councillors on cost and how any mandatory requirements for bricks could add costs to developments.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning noted that many policies within the planning system were set at a national level. However, there were requirements around sustainable sourcing and building policies within current planning policies.

Council noted that motions can help to start the practical implementation of policies and this motion would help to encourage locally sourced materials.

It was noted that the Council had a net-zero carbon toolkit being used for developments that would also take into account ethical concerns.

Cllr Judd, in summing up the debate on the motion thanked the Senior Democratic Services Officer for assisting in ensuring that the wording of the motion was acceptable for inclusion on the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Council **AGREE** the request to actively encourage the use of ethical bricks for current and future developments within the district.

Voting Record – 27 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstention, 4 absent

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty		Claire Bloomer	Clive Webster
Andrew Maclean		Robin Hughes	Nick Maunder
David Cunningham			Richard Keeling
Dilys Neill			Richard Morgan
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Jenny Forde			
Joe Harris			
Julia Judd			
Juliet Layton			

Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Rachel Coxcoon			
Ray Brassington			
Richard Norris			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Andrews			
Stephen Hirst			
Steve Trotter			
Sue Jepson			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Berry			
Tony Dale			

21 Next meeting

The Chair of Council reminded the public that the next meeting of Council was on 24th May 2023.

22 Approval of contract awards for Leisure and Culture

The purpose of the report was to seek authority to award a contract for the management of the Council's leisure facilities and the management of the Council's culture facilities as set out in the report and the annexes.

The officers responsible for the procurement process introduced themselves as Rachel Biles - Strategic Projects Lead, and Scott Williams - Business Manager - Contracts, Environmental Services. They were supported by Scott Dorling, Partner from Trowers & Hamllins LLP.

It was noted that Leisure and Cultural Centres had been facing difficult circumstances following the coronavirus pandemic.

It was noted that this procurement strictly covered the leisure centres in Cirencester, Bourton-on-the-Water and Chipping Campden.

A minor addition to Recommendation 4 to include the Leader of the Council in the consultation was put to Council as the Cabinet positions may change after the election on 4 May 2023.

Council noted the work with Members as part of the Leisure and Culture Working Group to examine the assessment criteria.

Council noted the hard work of officers to complete the process in a very short timeframe and thanked officers for their work.

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There were comments made by Members regarding the leisure facilities within Chipping Campden and the lack of consultation that had been had with the school through this procurement process. The Business Manager for Contracts stated that the specifications of the contract required the preferred bidder to have a good partnership with the schools to deliver services. It was also noted that meetings would be set up with the schools running leisure centres in the district to discuss this.

Council noted that whilst there were rights to terminate the contract such as poor performance, there was also a voluntary right to terminate the contract in the event that this was deemed as necessary. However this would have financial implications for the Council which was highlighted by the officers present.

Council noted the reporting requirements and performance standards to ensure the contract requirements were met by the preferred bidder.

Council noted the work in partnership with Max Associates who had experience in leisure management contract procurement and had assisted the Council in determining the specifications of the contracts.

23 Matters exempt from publication

Following the questions that Members had asked in public session, the Chair then opened the vote to move into private session for the remainder of this item.

RESOLVED: That Council exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Voting Record - For 29, 0 against, 0 abstention, 4 absent

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty			Clive Webster
Andrew Maclean			Nick Maunder
Claire Bloomer			Richard Keeling
David Cunningham			Richard Morgan
Dilys Neill			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefield			
Jenny Forde			
Joe Harris			
Julia Judd			
Juliet Layton			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Mike Every			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Rachel Coxcoon			

Ray Brassington			
Richard Norris			
Robin Hughes			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Andrews			
Stephen Hirst			
Steve Trotter			
Sue Jepson			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Berry			
Tony Dale			

24 Exempt annexes of for the award of contracts for the management of the Council's leisure and culture facilities

There was discussion regarding a number of points within the exempt annexes of Agenda Item 9.

Following requests from a number of Members, a recorded vote on the recommendations was then taken.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. AGREED to award the Leisure Management Contract to the preferred bidder set out in EXEMPT Annex C (i).
2. AGREED to award the Culture Management Contract to the preferred bidder set out in EXEMPT Annex C (ii).
3. DELEGATED AUTHORITY to the interim Head of Legal Services for Contract finalisation.
4. DELEGATED AUTHORITY to Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Leadership and Management Team (Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Governance and Development), to accept capital investment proposals set out in preferred bidder's Leisure tender submission.
5. NOTED the position set out in paragraph 5.6 for the mobilisation period and in the early process of embedding the new contracts.

Voting Record – 17 for, 2 against, 7 abstention, 7 absent

For	Against	Abstention	Absent
Andrew Doherty	Sue Jepson	Andrew Maclean	Clive Webster
Claire Bloomer	Tom Stowe	David Cunningham	Nick Maunder
Dilys Neill		Gina Blomefield	Richard Keeling
Gary Selwyn		Julia Judd	Richard Morgan
Jenny Forde		Stephen Andrews	Patrick Coleman
Joe Harris		Steve Trotter	Richard Norris
Juliet Layton		Tony Berry	Lisa Spivey
Mark Harris			
Mike Evey			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Rachel Coxcoon			
Ray Brassington			

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Robin Hughes			
Roly Hughes			
Stephen Hirst			
Tony Dale			

The Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 5.35 pm

Chair

(END)

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Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 24 May 2023.

Councillors present:

Dilys Neill	Nikki Ind	
Gina Blomefield	Paul Hodgkinson	Tony Slater
Claire Bloomer	Roly Hughes	Lisa Spivey
Ray Brassington	Angus Jenkinson	Tom Stowe
Patrick Coleman	Julia Judd	Jeremy Theyer
Daryl Corps	Juliet Layton	Clare Turner
David Cunningham	Andrew Maclean	Michael Vann
Tony Dale	Helene Mansilla	Jon Wareing
Mike Evey	Mike McKeown	Ian Watson
David Fowles	Clare Muir	Len Wilkins
Joe Harris	Nigel Robbins	
Mark Harris	Gary Selwyn	

Officers present:

Jan Britton, Managing Director - Publica	Ana Prelici, Democratic Services
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer	

25 Election of a Chair

The Chair of Council opened the meeting and addressed the meeting for the final time in her position.

The Chair welcomed new Members to the Council and thanked current and former Members for their support during her tenure as Chair of Council.

There were also thanks given to officers in the management team and also Democratic Services for the work in providing for the smooth running of Council and Committee meetings.

It was also noted by the Chair how it had been an honour to represent the Council at a number of civic events, including the Proclamation of the new King.

The Leader of the Council was then invited to submit a proposal for Chair of Council, and it was proposed that Councillor Nikki Ind take the Chair of Council for the Civic Year.

The Leader paid tribute to Councillor Neill for her leadership during some challenging Council meetings.

The Leader in proposing Councillor Nikki Ind commented on the hard work that she undertakes in her Tetbury Ward, and her generosity towards others.

This proposal was then seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton who addressed Council, and described the breadth of experience even before Councillor Ind's first election in 2019.

Councillor Layton also spoke about how Councillor Ind would be a strong Chair of Council at a time of great uncertainty in the District and the country.

There were no further proposals made for Chair of Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Nikki Ind be elected as Chair of Council until the end of the Civic Year at the Annual Meeting in 2024.

Voting Record For 33, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 1 Did not vote/absent

For	Against	Abstention	Did not vote/absent
Andrew Maclean			Chris Twells
Angus Jenkinson			
Claire Bloomer			
Clare Muir			
Clare Turner			
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neill			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefied			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			
Jeremy Theyer			
Joe Harris			
Jon Wareing			
Julia Judd			
Juliet Layton			
Len Wilkins			
Lisa Spivey			
Mark Harris			
Michael Vann			
Mike Evey			
Mike McKeown			
Nigel Robbins			
Nikki Ind			
Patrick Coleman			
Paul Hodgkinson			
Ray Brassington			

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Roly Hughes			
Tom Stowe			
Tony Dale			
Tony Slater			

26 Appointment of a Vice-Chair

After signing the declaration of acceptance of office, Councillor Nikki Ind took the Chair of Council.

The Chair of Council then opened the appointment of a Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year ending at the Annual Meeting in 2024.

Councillor Claire Bloomer proposed the appointment of Councillor Mark Harris to be Vice-Chair.

Councillor Bloomer spoke of his dedication and care for the community as a former Mayor of Cirencester, and that she was honoured to propose Councillor Mark Harris as Vice-Chair.

Councillor Fowles raised an issue with the agenda, which said 'Appointment' rather than 'Election'. The Business Manager for Democratic Services clarified that the Local Government Act 1972 specified these terms. However it was noted that the website would be checked.

Councillor Jenkinson seconded the appointment of Councillor Mark Harris as Vice-Chair.

Councillor Jenkinson spoke of Councillor Mark Harris' calm and sensible approach as a councillor, and was pleased to be the seconder of this appointment.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mark Harris be appointed as Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year ending at the Annual Meeting in May 2024.

Voting Record

33 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 1 Did not vote/absent

For	Against	Abstention	Did not vote/absent
Andrew Maclean			Chris Twells
Angus Jenkinson			
Claire Bloomer			
Clare Muir			
Clare Turner			
Daryl Corps			
David Cunningham			
David Fowles			
Dilys Neill			
Gary Selwyn			
Gina Blomefied			
Helene Mansilla			
Ian Watson			

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

27 Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive (if any)

The Chair of Council welcomed newly elected Councillors and thanked those Councillors who did not get re-elected. Thanks were extended to the previous Chair Councillor Dilys Neill for the hard work that was done whilst in that role.

The Chair also welcomed the new Leader of the Conservative Group Councillor Tom Stowe and the newly elected Leader of the Green Group, Councillor Andrew Maclean.

The Chair also wished to reaffirm the 'Debate not Hate' initiative that Council endorsed in the previous Civic Year and how Members should treat each other with respect during debate in the new Council session.

It was also noted by the Chair that the Council's motto is 'United We Serve' and this should be what all Councillors seek to keep in mind.

The Leader paid tribute to all of the Councillors who stood and were elected and those Councillors who were not elected.

The Leader also wished to offer condolences on the passing of John Lafford as a notable business figure in Cirencester.

The Chief Executive addressed Council and offered his congratulations to the newly elected Chair and Vice-Chair. There were also congratulations offered to those Councillors elected and thanks for those who were no longer elected for their work.

There were also tributes paid by the Chair, Leader and Chief Executive to the Elections and Democratic Services teams for their work in organising and carrying out the recent local elections.

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There were also tributes paid to Jim Grant who was the principal of Cirencester College who sadly passed away. This included the work on the digital hub which was notable in the community.

Councillor Robins as former principal at the college who worked with Jim Grant, also addressed Council to offer tributes.

28 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris Twells.

29 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers on any of the items.

The Chair noted that there was a general dispensation for Members regarding the Independent Remuneration Panel report to allow discussion of Member Allowances.

30 Formation of Political Groups

The Chief Executive introduced the report and noted that Council was asked to note this report

The following groups were noted

Liberal Democrat – 21

Conservative – 9

Green – 2

Non-Grouped Independents - 2

Councillor Stowe noted that Councillor Twells who was not in attendance, was not part of the Liberal Democrat group and the Leader of the Council should explain the circumstances regarding this change following the election.

The Leader of the Council commented that it was up to Councillor Twells to address that question and that there had been a statement given by Councillor Twells to the media.

31 Election of Leader of the Council

Councillor Evemy proposed that Councillor Joe Harris be the Leader of the Council for the next 4 years.

It was noted that Councillor Harris was elected 12 years ago, at the age of 18, as the youngest member of the Council, and had the longest continuous record of service in the Council alongside Councillor Coleman and Councillor Layton.

It was commented that the Council had seen a number of positive changes since his first term as Leader of the Council in 2019.

Cllr Spivey seconded the proposal that Councillor Joe Harris be elected as Leader of the Council.

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It was commented that Councillor Harris had represented the Council on a number of platforms and was passionate about all of the residents of the District, including those in his hometown of Cirencester.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Joe Harris be elected as Leader of the Council for a term of office ending at the Annual Meeting in May 2027.

Voting Record

31 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention, 1 Did not vote/absent

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

Councillor Joe Harris addressed Council and thanked residents in the Cotswolds for their support at the previous election.

Councillor Joe Harris commented that it was a life honour to lead the Council.

The Leader also paid tribute to former Cllr Tony Berry as Conservative Leader for his service to the Council despite the disagreements between them.

32 **Announcement of the Leader on Cabinet appointments**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and confirmed there were no changes to the overall number of Cabinet Members.

There were changes to the portfolio areas which were outlined by the Leader to Council such as climate change which was also outlined as a priority for the new administration.

The Leader also welcomed Councillor Bloomer, Councillor Hodgkinson and Councillor McKeown as the new Members of the Cabinet.

The Leader paid tribute to previous Cabinet Members who did not stand at the last election for their work in serving the Council.

The new Cabinet appointments were therefore as follows:

Councillor	Portfolio Area	Areas of Responsibility
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	Improving social mobility and social isolation,

	Public Safety	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

RESOLVED: That Council NOTED the new Cabinet appointments and the changes to the portfolios.

33 Appointment of Committees and Working Groups

The purpose of this report was to set out those matters reserved to Council at its Annual Meeting:

- To establish the allocation of seats to political groups based on political proportionality
- To make appointments to Committees for the Civic Year 2023/24
- To make appointments to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of Committees for the Civic Year 2023/24

The Chair invited the Director of Governance and Development to introduce the report.

The report was outlined as being in two parts: the political balance calculations for each group at Annex A and the committee seat nominees as detailed in Annex B.

There was also a recommendation to Council that the 'Audit Committee' was renamed the 'Audit and Governance Committee' in line with the recommendations of the Peer Review undertaken.

The Leader of the Conservative Group addressed Council and stated that he looked forward to working with all Councillors across the Committees and the Cabinet.

It was also noted by the Leader of the Conservative Group that the renaming of the Audit Committee to the Audit and Governance Committee was welcomed to reflect the vital work that the Committee does.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Joe Harris. This was then seconded by Councillor Evely, who also noted the recommendations regarding substitutions of Members on Committees.

RESOLVED: That Full Council resolves to:

1. DETERMINE that, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act"), the Council shall continue to apply the political balance provisions under the Act to committees as shown in Annex A.
2. APPOINT Councillors to serve on the Council's Committees and working groups as set out in Annex B for a term of office expiring at the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
3. APPOINT Chair and Vice-Chair for the Council's Committees and working groups as shown in Annex B;
4. AGREE that the Audit Committee will now be called the Audit and Governance Committee from this Civic Year forward.

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5. NOTE the arrangements for substitutions set out in part 4 of the report

Voting Record – 33 For, 0 Against, 1 Did not vote/absent

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

34 Appointment to Outside Bodies

The Leader of the Council addressed the Council regarding the appointment of Outside Bodies.

It was noted that two Gloucestershire County Council Committees require appointments and there had been some confusion regarding the power to appoint.

Councillor Blomefield as the newly elected Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, questioned whether the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

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and Gloucestershire Joint Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee were normally appointed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted by Councillor Blomefield that the Constitution was not clear on this point, and this needed to be looked at by the Constitution Working Group.

It was also noted that the Constitution had references to the 'Conservative Party' in regards to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a typographical error, which needed to be removed.

As further discussions needed to take place, the Leader stated that the appointments for the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and Gloucestershire Joint Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee would not be made at this point in time.

Community Safety Partnership – Councillor Lisa Spivey

Cotswold Canal Partnership – Councillor Patrick Coleman

Cotswold Health and Wellbeing Partnership – Councillor Paul Hodgkinson

Cotswold National Landscape Board – Councillor Juliet Layton

GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership – Councillor Tony Dale

Gloucestershire County Council Economy Joint Executive Committee – Councillor Tony Dale

Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning Leaders board – Councillor Tony Dale

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel – Councillor Ray Brassington

Leadership Gloucestershire – Councillor Joe Harris

Publica – Councillor Joe Harris

South West Audit Partnership – Councillor Nigel Robbins

South West Councils – Councillor Joe Harris

Ubico – Councillor Joe Harris (with Councillor Mike Evely as Cabinet Member also attending)

Safer Gloucestershire Board – Councillor Lisa Spivey

Cirencester Civic Society Board – Councillor Gary Selwyn

RESOLVED: That Council NOTED the appointments to outside bodies by the Leader of the Council.

35 Attendance Report

The purpose of the report was to report on Members attendance at Council and Committees for the Civic Year 2022/23.

The Chair opened the item by explaining that the data used had been drawn from the internal systems used by Democratic Services, and therefore the presentation of the report is different from last year.

It was noted that whilst Members attending meetings as observers was not shown in these figures, the full attendance record for all Members is available online on the District Council's website.

There were queries regarding attendance at meetings and whether a Member was a substitute, that this would be captured in the return. The Business Manager for Democratic Services confirmed that Members who substituted for another were captured, but Members who were observers were not captured in this return.

RESOLVED: That Council NOTED the record of attendance for the Civic Year 2022/23.

36 Return of Councillors Elected

The purpose of this report was for Council to note the return of Councillors elected.

The Leader of the Green Group addressed Council and thanked the residents of The Rissingtons and Blockley for their support in both of their Group Member's wards. It was also commented that the Green Group would be supporting initiatives across party lines on tackling climate change, river sewage and supporting biodiversity.

There were comments about the respectful campaigns fought in various wards in the District.

It was noted that the Watermoor ward and the New Mills ward had the lowest turnout percentages in the District, and that it was requested that those polling stations would be looked at. The Leader noted that the review of the polling stations is undertaken periodically and that the Leader and the Chief Executive would take the concerns to a future review.

It was noted that Members from all sides should work together for the benefit of all residents regardless of political affiliation.

RESOLVED: That Council NOTED the return of councillors elected.

37 Report and Recommendations from the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel

Councillor Joe Harris introduced the report as an important report for the agreement of an allowance scheme, and proposed with the report the revised recommendations from the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Director of Governance and Development was then asked to introduce the background of the report.

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It was noted that the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel had given apologies for not being able to present the report.

It was outlined that the last allowance scheme was agreed in 2019 and now needed to be renewed.

It was noted that Members were consulted and analysis from other Councils' schemes in the South West was examined to ensure best practice.

It was highlighted that Councillors currently had an annual increase in line with Staff Pay Awards, but that the current pay award for 2023 had not been agreed.

There was also consideration given in this process to making sure that people from all backgrounds could become Councillors.

It was noted that there were no changes to the multipliers to the basic allowance for those Members who hold a position such as being a Chair. However, this would be reviewed in 2024.

Councillor Every then seconded the report and the revised recommendations.

The expansion of the employee assistance programme to Members was welcomed as a way to support Members' health and wellbeing. The maternity, paternity and adoption changes to the allowance scheme were also agreed.

It was noted by the Deputy Leader that the freezing of the allowances at the Budget in February is something that should be kept, but that the divergence from the staff pay award would have a greater impact on Members.

Therefore it was proposed that the freeze should take place for 2023, but that the increase would then be implemented in 2024 along with any increase in subsequent years.

The Leader of the Conservative Group agreed that the cost of living crisis was still ongoing and therefore that a freeze for 2 years would be preferable in the circumstances.

There were various comments that the allowance for Councillors was often misunderstood and perceived to be higher than the true figure.

RESOLVED: That Council APPROVE the proposed recommendations as amended:

1. Note the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (Annex A), and thank them for their input;
2. ~~Agree to index link members' allowances with the pay settlement agreed by the National Employers for Local Government Services, known as "Green Book".~~ **Leave the members' allowances rates unchanged in 2023/24 and agree to index link members' allowances with the pay settlement agreed by the National Employers for Local Government Services, known as "Green Book" with effect from 1 April 2024, with the increase in 2024/25 reflecting the staff pay settlement increases for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.**

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3. Adopt the Draft Allowances Scheme 2023-27 (Annex B), **as amended by the new recommendation 2.** ~~or an amended version of it.~~
4. Extend the benefits of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to all Members with immediate effect.
5. Implement maternity, paternity and adoption policies for Cabinet Members with immediate effect.
6. Support a mid-term review in 2024.

Voting Record - 23 For, 5 Against, 5 Abstention, 1 Did not vote/absent

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

38 Programme of Meetings Update

The purpose of the report was to consider a change of the next Council meeting date from 5th July 2023 to 19th July 2023.

Cllr Joe Harris proposed the recommendations, and explained that the Council sends a delegation of Members and Officers to the Local Government Association Conference, and this change would help to avoid a large number of absences from the next meeting of Council.

Councillor Mike Evey seconded the report.

There were various comments about the insight that the Local Government Association's conference can give to new and existing Members and Officers.

RESOLVED: That the date of the next meeting be moved from 5th July 2023 to 19th July 2023.

Voting Record - 28 For, 1 Against, 3 Abstention, 2 Did not vote/absent

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

39 Next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council will be on 19th July 2023 at 6pm.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.45 pm

Chair

(END)

Agenda Item 7



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Council – 19 July 2023
Subject	UPDATED PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Evey Deputy Leader – Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evey@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	David Stanley Deputy Chief Executive/S151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Ciaran O’Kane Senior Procurement Business Partner. Email: ciaran.okane@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To present an updated draft Procurement and Contract Management Strategy for comment and consideration by Council
Annexes	Annex A – DRAFT PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY.
Recommendation(s)	<i>Subject to the resolutions of Cabinet on 17 July 2023, Council is recommended to resolve to:</i> <i>1) Approve the updated Procurement and Contract Management Strategy.</i>
Corporate priorities	Procurement supports all key Council 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	Cotswold District Council – Audit Committee Leadership Management Team. Publica Commissioning and Procurement Board.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The current version of the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy has been in place since 2015. Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, Central Government advised that an overhaul of the 2015 Public Procurement Regulations would take place. The new Procurement Bill has encountered a number of delays and has yet to be laid before Parliament.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The revision of the current Procurement and Contract Management Strategy was partly in response to the Internal Audit recommendation as well as the Team recognising the importance of the Council having a Strategy that incorporated the latest available guidance from Government including Social Value and climate change.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The Government introduce updates to current legislation through the publication of Procurement Policy Notes (PPN's). The draft Procurement and Contract Management strategy includes all relevant updates
- 3.2 An update from Central Government in Spring 2023 confirmed that the review of the Procurement would not be published until 2024, at the earliest, which the Team felt was too long to wait for. Therefore, the proposed Procurement and Contract Management Strategy now incorporates current relevant best practice as well as the latest information from Government. Depending on what comes out of the final guidance, further revisions to the Strategy may be required
- 3.3 The revised Strategy has been developed by a multi- disciplinary group which included the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Group Managers.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Not Applicable.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The updated Procurement and Contract Management Strategy will ensure that Social Value and the climate change agenda are embedded in both the commissioning and procurement process.
- 5.2 The revised Strategy also reinforces the Council's principle – 'Providing value for money for our residents and businesses by using our resources wisely and investing in the district's



fabric and future' through effective commissioning and the procurement of goods, services and works.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications from this report. However, compliance with the Councils Contract Rules will support the best use of taxpayers' money.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications from this report or the Strategy, however the Council continues to have a legal duty to comply with the Publica Procurement Regulations.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 There is a potential risk that the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy may need to be further update when the Procurement Bill is laid in Parliament. The Procurement team will advise accordingly if significant updates are required.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1 The are no specific equalities implications from this report however the Council continues to have a legal duty to comply with Modern Slavery legislation.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Strategy has been revised to recognise the importance of climate change and the Council's key priority to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- 10.2 The Strategy recognises that supply chains are the biggest contributor to the overall carbon output of local councils and advocates engaging with suppliers at the earliest opportunity to make climate intentions and ambitions clear at the pre-procurement stages is key to reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable.

(END)

Procurement and Contract Management Strategy

Approved 2023

By



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Background

Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, the Government announced its intention for a radical overhaul of public procurement law and a green paper was published on this topic in January 2021. The Government has stated its aim is to provide the UK with a modern, fit for purpose set of rules, to minimise the bureaucratic burden for contracting authorities and businesses, and to facilitate innovation and the participation of SMEs.

However, any change to procurement law is not expected until "at least 2023" but it is important that in the meantime, our procurement activities are undertaken consistently to a high standard and in line with best practice to achieve economic and social benefits for all of our communities.

This Strategy will be further updated as and when new legislation becomes available.

I. Introduction

Publica provides Procurement Services to its Partner Councils, Ubico and Cheltenham Borough Homes. The Services include

- Supporting and guiding officers in line with best practices and Procurement principles;
- Commissioning – considering **all** options before a decision has been made to provide a service;
- Assisting with Procurement of the appropriate goods, services or works in line with internal and external policies;
- Effective supplier and contract management;
- Disposal of assets (if necessary).

Demand for local public services is rising, and cost pressures are increasing, yet government funding to councils has reduced markedly and looking forwards there is great uncertainty surrounding the future of local government funding. It is therefore important that Procurement deliver better results for public services by

- Maximising the value – including the 'social value' achieved from every £1 spent;
- Generating income ('commercialisation') – where possible;
- Being Innovative and working with Innovative supplier.

In addition, Local Authorities and their communities are faced with many Economic, Social and Environmental challenges.

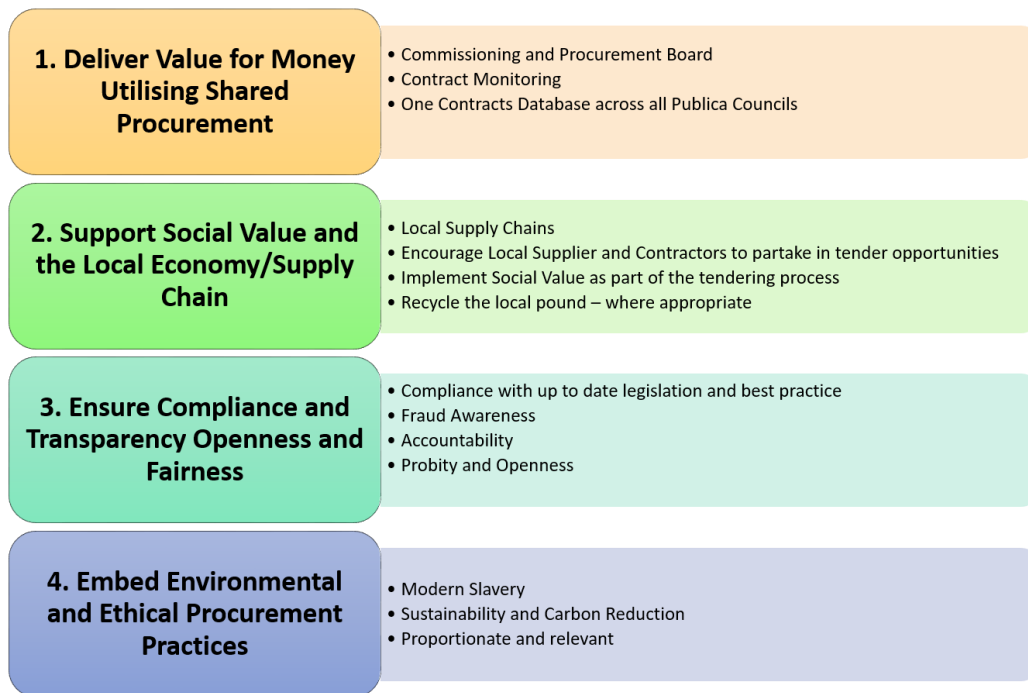
Publica procurement will provide leadership and make best use of resources through partnership, being effective commissioners and working with budget holders, suppliers and other stakeholders. We will aim to develop a common approach to procurement across all partners ensuring the processes and documentation are standardised and establishing a joint contracts database which will lead to effective commissioning, improved practises and financial savings.

This document sets out Publica's strategic approach to procurement and contract management. It is not intended to be a procurement or contract management manual; however, the principles contained within the strategy should be applied to all procurement activity. Consideration of this strategy is not optional and it should be read in conjunction with the Contract Procedure Rules, Commissioning and Procurement User Guide and other relevant organisational policies.

2. Our Vision

Our vision for Procurement and Contract Management over the term of this strategy is to demonstrate value for money through the effective Commissioning and Procurement of goods, services and works on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits to the community and Councils, whilst minimising the impacts to the environment.

Meeting this vision and ensuring success of this strategy will depend on the implementation and effectiveness of all of the following key principles.



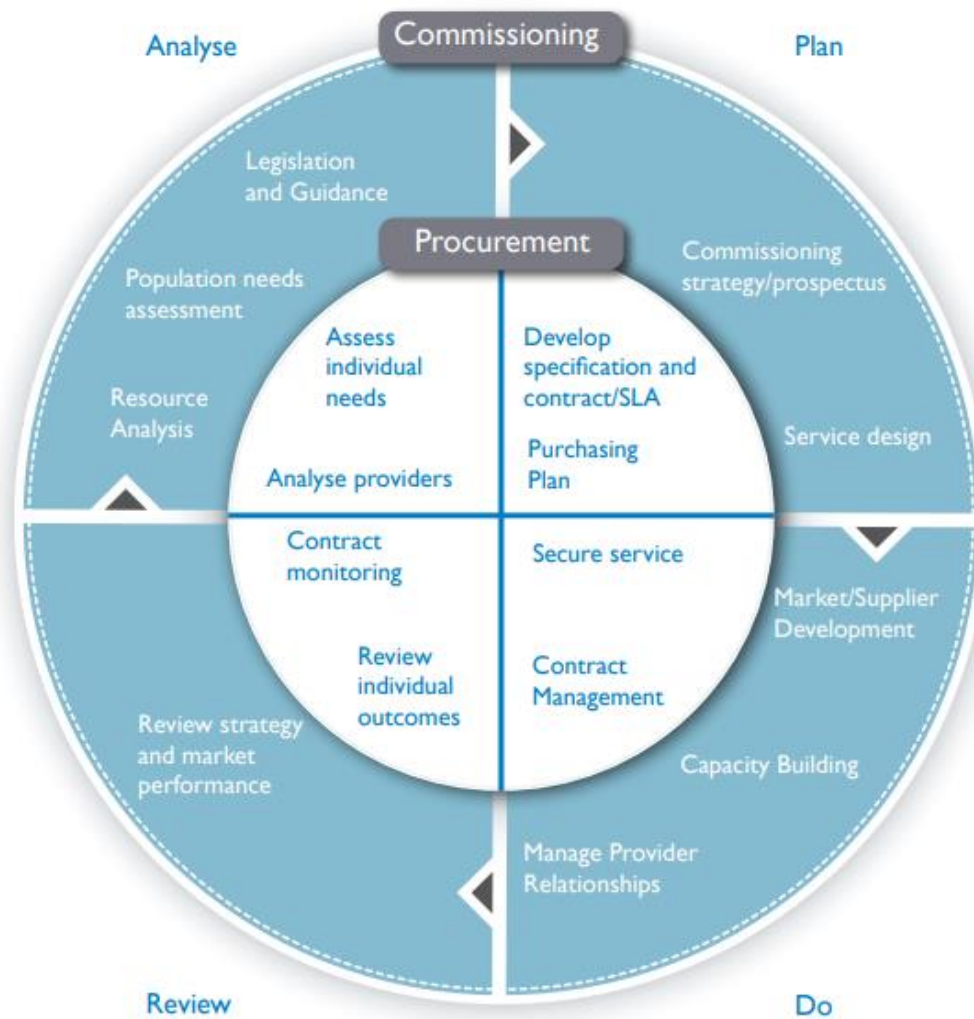
3. Effective Commissioning and Procurement

A key Publica Business Priority is to get Commissioning right. [The Publica Commissioning and Procurement User guide](#) sets out the importance and principles of effective Commissioning and Procurement. In addition, Procurement by its very nature is well placed to support delivery of all of the Business Priorities.

Publica is mindful that the impact of procurement is far greater than processes, objectives, principles, and that effective Commissioning and Procurement can incorporate a wide-ranging socio – economic agenda.

To ensure Publica carry out effective Commissioning and Procurement the team will maintain a forward plan with details of upcoming relevant procurements. The forward plan will be a discussion point at Commissioning and Procurement Board who meet on a monthly basis. The Board includes Senior Managers all relevant stakeholders.

3.1 Commissioning Cycle



4. Procurement and the Climate Emergency

There is now a renewed focus on environmental issues, due to the Climate Emergency, statutory obligations and local authority targets as well as clear links from climate change to economic recovery, jobs, skills, protecting the vulnerable and healthy communities.

Public partner councils have all declared climate emergencies and each are faced with local targets to achieve 'Net Zero' or be 'Carbon Neutral' by 2030. A vital mechanism to respond and contribute to these challenges is **Effective Commissioning, Procuring and Contract Management**.

Supply chains are the biggest contributor to the overall carbon output of local councils and often it is an accumulation of small factors that add up to make a difference. An example of this might be the carbon emissions due to transport of products by suppliers. This often is not something that the councils can control, but it certainly influences the levels of emissions the council contributes to as a whole. One way in which procurement will make a significant change is through influencing the supply chain, and encouraging climate action by suppliers.

Engaging with suppliers at the earliest opportunity to make climate intentions and ambitions clear at the pre-procurement stages is key to reducing the Councils carbon footprint.

The consideration of environmental issues will be embedded in all the Council's procurement of goods, services and works, reducing the impact of activity and enhancing and protecting our environment.

Key Actions

- adopt the principles of resource and waste minimisation for materials, energy, water, air and land in support of carbon reduction and climate change, reusing and recycling wherever possible;
- consider the costs and benefits of environmentally-friendly goods, services and works;
- Challenging at the pre-tender stage the product, material, design and works selected to ensure environmental considerations are part of procurement decision making;
- wherever possible and practicable, specify a requirement in line with nationally or locally agreed specifications; where such exact specification is not possible, enable suppliers to submit offers for environmentally-friendly alternatives;
- work in partnership with other public bodies to maximise sustainable procurement gains through collaboration and information sharing;
- Ensure that all organisations have equal access to procurement opportunities, from larger organisations to SME's and the voluntary sector, in order to ensure fair and equitable opportunities for all.

Delivery

- Utilise the Councils Impact Assessment Tool (IAT) which will consider a wide range of impacts that a procurement or the project it delivers will have on the environment and social factors. Enabling works, materials or services to be reconsidered before procurement commences to limit negative impacts and maximise benefits. Before starting a tender process the IAT will help to identify key environmental opportunities in higher value contracts.
- Mandate that any environmental requirements identified as part of the toolkit process must be included in any tender specification;

- Ensure that all procurements require suppliers to submit information on their environmental policies and practices and for larger contracts, on their key performance indicators;
- Using open tenders to encourage local suppliers, unless there is a specific need or benefit offered by securing contracts via Procurement Frameworks;
- Making ethical considerations using Blueprint for Better Business principles
- Promoting purpose driven and responsible local supply chains;
- Encouraging innovation related to more sustainable goods, works and services, through effective market research and use of outcome specifications.

These actions will be delivered by the qualitative scoring of tenders based on:

- The environmental and sustainability policies that suppliers are demonstrating they are putting into practice. Considering matters like reduced packaging in the supply chain, sustainable travel and locally sourced products;
- Where feasible evaluating whole life costs when sourcing goods and services.

Contract performance

- Make sure that the relevant climate and sustainability requirements and performance are embedded into the contract and contract monitoring;
- Move towards measuring the carbon emissions and savings that result from the council's contracts.

Championing sustainability in the first instance will allow councils to set expectations and give suppliers the chance to adapt or discuss how they might make improvements. It equally gives suppliers the opportunity to share their climate innovations and insights, and for councils to learn from them.

5. Modern Slavery

Procurement Regulations make certain modern slavery offences grounds for mandatory exclusion of bidders from public procurement. (This forms part of the tender evaluation exercise). Standard procurement documentation requires bidders to self-certify their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

We are committed to ensuring the suppliers with whom we do business understand the risks of modern slavery in supply chains, and take appropriate action to identify and address those risks, with particular focus on supporting victims of modern slavery.

Modern slavery risks will be addressed during the procurement process: -

- When identifying the need, approach to be taken and the market - **pre-procurement**
- When deciding the requirement - **specification stage**
- When selecting suppliers to invite to tender - **selection stage.**

- When awarding the contract - **award stage**.
- In the performance of the contract - **contract conditions and contract management**.

6. Social Value

Publica will take a holistic approach when considering its activities and take into account the wider economic, social and environmental effects of their actions.

In essence, Social Value serves as an umbrella term for these broader effects, and organisations, which make a conscious effort to ensure that these effects are positive, can be seen as adding social value by contributing to the long-term wellbeing and resilience of individuals, communities and society in general.

Publica and its partner councils should consider social value through their policy and spending decisions to maximise the benefit for their communities. In addition, Publica and its partner councils encourage their supply chains to pay their staff and sub-contractors a Living Wage.

See Appendix I for Publica Social Value statement

7. Contract Management

Contract Management is concerned with the continuous review and management of the contractual terms and/or service level agreement secured through the procurement process to ensure suppliers and partners deliver the outcomes agreed. Managing the contracts and relationships with our delivery partners, is imperative to ensure that:

- the strategic priorities agreed at the outset are delivered in a cost effective and timely manner;
- non-compliance or variation is identified early for escalation and resolution
- risks and costs are managed;
- Contract reviews are undertaken and lessons learnt inform the commissioning and procurement process to ensure continuous improvement.

Officers responsible for managing and monitoring contracts must ensure:

- A copy of the original contracts is accessible to them and reviewed regularly, to ensure they are aware of the contracted terms.

- That contractors' business continuity plans are in place and are reasonable. Periodic reviews of these plans should be undertaken.

7.1 Contract Management Principles

The following principles will underpin Publica's approach to contract management

- **Ensure that contracts are known and understood by all those who will be involved in their management** – Make sure that adequate resource are identified and appointed well before award of contracts and that there is an effective handover or transition from sourcing to contract management.
- **Be clear about accountability, roles and responsibilities** - Ensure contract ownership, management processes and governance mechanisms are clear with defined roles and responsibilities at appropriate levels of seniority. Make sure contracts have a documented Contract Management Plan.
- **Establish and use strong governance arrangements to manage risk and enable strategic oversight** – ensure that governance structures are proportionate to size and risk of contracts, are suitably empowered and support the business outcomes and objectives.
- **Adopt a differentiated approach based on risk** – distinguish between tactical and strategic contracts and direct the strongest resource to contracts where the risks and rewards are highest. Consider a self-managing approach for lower risk contracts.
- **Manage contracts for business/public service outcomes** – the owners of the required outcomes should be accountable for successful contract performance and should work closely with procurement to manage contracts.
- **Accept that change will happen and plan for it** – develop flexible approaches to change through joint working with suppliers; accept that change will affect both parties during the contract life, but control costs with robust change control mechanisms. Ensure that controls are in place to prevent changes from altering the strategic intent of the contract.
- **Measure and report on performance and use KPI's and data efficiently to incentivise good performance** – administer contracts proactively and efficiently, making maximum use of benchmarking and performance measurement data. Ensure KPIs and incentives are appropriate and proportionate to the contract.
- **Drive continuous improvement, value for money and capture innovation** - actively use contract tools and provisions to leverage the relationship, continually drive value for money and seek out and implement innovative ideas for improvement.
- **Accept that successful delivery of major projects is best achieved through a single fully integrated team** – where the supplier and client work as a single team with one focus, delivery of the successful outcomes.

8. Fraud

The Publica partners are committed to countering fraud and corruption and officers who procure goods, services and works must be fully aware of the rules and procedures that support this aim.

Successful counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements should be the consequence of effective business systems, governance practices and controls, specifically the:

- Contract Procedure Rules
- Financial Rules
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Employee's Code of Conduct or Business Conduct Policy, and
- Counter Fraud and Anti- Corruption Policy and Fraud Response Plan

Please see Appendix 2

9. Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) may affect suppliers and contractors to the Council. Procurement related information is likely to be the subject of a number of requests under the FOI Act.

That information must be provided unless it is covered by one of the Act's exemptions.

Requests for information are retrospective which means that any information an external party has provided in the past or may provide in the future will be subject to FOI e.g. contracts, tender documents, development proposals. Personal data is exempt under FOI, because it is already within the terms of the Data Protection Legislation.

10. Data Protection

The Data Protection Legislation consist of the UK- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018(DPA 2018) (and regulations made thereunder) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426).

Article 28 of the Data Protection Legislation adds a requirement upon controllers (the organisation who determines the purposes and manner in which personal data is processed) to ensure that certain provisions are included in contracts where there is personal data being passed from one party as the controller to another acting as a processor of that personal data.

The aim of the Article is to ensure that a controller of data who passes personal data to the processor controls how that processor can use that data. In order to achieve this, the Article stipulates that any processing of personal data by a processor shall be governed by a contract containing certain Information.

Procurement will therefore ensure that Data Protection Legislation is addressed where required at each stage of a regulated procurement and recorded appropriately on the Contract register by:

- ascertaining what type of personal data will be held as part of the contract and where that data will reside
- identify how the data will be obtained, how it will be stored and who it will be shared with
- identify which suppliers are affected by Data Protection Legislation and record accordingly on the Contract register

11. What is next?

Over the past number of years, the Procurement team have made a lot of service improvements to the Procurement service, however there is still a lot to do. Strategic actions over the coming years include but are not limited to the following;

Task	Details
Category Management	Improve our strategic approach to category management so that we can segment spend into areas which contain similar or related products and services enabling opportunities for consolidation and efficiency.
Regulation	Prepare and adapt to upcoming changes to regulations following publication of the new Procurement Bill.
Spend Analysis	Introduce spend analysis as a process to analyse the historical spend (purchasing) data across Publica to provide answers to questions concerning spend visibility, compliance and control.
Further improve self-serve provision.	Improve self – service provision by establishing in-house frameworks and Dynamic Purchasing Systems for key areas of spend. This will release the procurement

	team to concentrate on strategic areas of procurement.

Appendix I - Social Value Statement



Background

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the Act) provides a legal obligation on public bodies to consider how the services they commission and procure, over the thresholds provided for in the Public Contract Regulations, might improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the local area and how, in conducting procurement it can secure Social Value.

Whilst the obligation only applies to above threshold procurements for services (or mixed contracts where services is a large part of the contract), Officers should consider Social Value in all of the Publica Council's procurement requirements when it is proportionate and relevant to do so.

The aim of the Act is not to alter the commissioning and procurement processes, but to ensure that, as part of these processes, the Publica Council's consider the wider impact of the services delivered. This also includes encouraging Officers to talk to stakeholders, including the local community, to design better services, and explore finding new and innovative solutions.

The Publica Councils have a combined annual spend of £26m on a range of goods and services. The Act provides a significant opportunity to think creatively about how we can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits from this spend.

In addition, the Publica Councils want this statement to be the start of a conversation about how we use our wider processes, resources and influence to support value in our local areas.

1. What is Social Value?

The Social Value Act does not define what 'Social Value' means. Therefore, the Publica Councils has proposed the following definition of Social Value that links back to the Publica Councils vision:

Social Value is the wider social, environmental and economic benefits that we will secure from commissioning and procuring activities.

2. The Social Value Model

The Social Value model sets out the Governments Social Value priorities for Procurement. There are five themes and eight policy outcomes, which flow from these themes. These are

Themes		Policy Outcomes
Theme 1	COVID -19 recovery	Help local communities to manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19
Theme 2	Tackling economic inequality	Create new business, new jobs and new skills
		Increase supply chain resilience and capacity
Theme 3	Fighting climate change	Effective stewardship of the environment
Theme 4	Equal opportunity	Reduce the disability employment gap
		Tackle workforce inequality
Theme 5	Wellbeing	Improve health and wellbeing
		Improve community cohesion

There should be a clear ‘golden thread’ from the government priorities to the development of strategies and business cases for programmes and projects, through to our Procurement specifications.

3. How we will deliver Social Value

The Publica Councils procure a wide range of goods and services, and it is recognised that there can be no ‘one size fits all’ model. This statement should be applied in a proportionate manner and be tailored to reflect the service, goods or works that are being procured. It is the role of commissioners and procurement leads to consider, on a contract-by-contract basis, the potential Social Value outcomes that could be delivered through the procurement exercise and the most appropriate procurement strategy to achieve these.

We will apply Social Value in a way that is fair and transparent to all providers.

In addition, the Publica Councils aspire to ensure that the concept of Social Value is considered in all our organisational change activities including those applying to how we assess services that are delivered directly by the Council.

The Publica Councils contract rules dictate the procurement process to be followed above specific thresholds. Therefore, our approach to Social Value will be as follows:

Informal – all procurement below £25,000

Officers will ensure that the specification/statement of requirement takes in to account our Social Value priorities and that all bidders are given the opportunity to contribute to Social Value regardless of the category of the procurement.

Formal – all Procurements above £25,000

Officers will ensure that the specification/statement of requirement takes in to account our Social Value priorities and include relevant and proportionate Social Value outcomes that the Publica Councils wish to see from the procurement exercise. Officers may wish to include consultation with community groups to ensure that any practical support is not prescribed but co-created with the community.

Officers will also consider making Social Value a contractual obligation within the specification/statement of requirement where it is appropriate to do so. Examples could include

- Reducing carbon footprint
- Recruiting apprentices for a specific project
- Community wellbeing
- Encouraging core contractors and suppliers to pay their own employees a Living Wage and ensuring the principles of the Living Wage filter through the supply chain.

Social Value can be included as evaluation criteria and be assessed in line with Price and Quality.

4. Consultation

It is important that the local communities are engaged in shaping and deciding what is important to them, as well as engaging with the market to understand their ideas for how they can contribute our Social Value policy outcomes. In order to ensure our proposed ideas really do add Social Value we need to engage with communities to understand their existing assets and then use this information to build the Social Value requirements. This will ensure that we are adding and not simply duplicating the value already existing within the community as this could have an adverse impact.

Appendix 2 - Fraud Awareness



Fraud can occur at all stages of the procurement cycle and can be internal, external or both where there is collusion. Officers must be aware of the risks, detailed below, and the fact that they apply not just to large, high value contracts but also to low level spend. Officers engaged in all stages of the process need to be alert to the possibility of abuse when raising or approving requisitions, when writing or evaluating specifications, as well as further on in the process once the contract has been awarded.

Pre-tendering risks:

- **Needs assessment** – Need or timing tailored to benefit a specific supplier
- **Bid tailoring** – Narrow, broad or vague specifications
- **Bid splitting** – To circumvent approval thresholds.
- **Contract waivers** – To circumvent a fair and proper tendering process.
- **Abuse of position/conflict of interest/bribery** – Officers, Members or Suppliers acting inappropriately and for personal gain.

Tendering/bid evaluation risks:

- **Leaking confidential information** – staff providing details to contractors for unfair advantage.
- **Influencing the evaluation** – staff influencing an outcome for a preferred supplier.
- **Fictitious companies bidding** – to mislead and influence the evaluation process.
- **Cartels/collusive bidding/inflated bids** – suppliers colluding to influence the outcome.
- **Cover pricing** – obtaining artificially inflated prices to give a misleading impression of the extent of competition

Post-tendering risks:

- **Poor Contract Management** – allows abuse and possible fraud by the supplier.
- **Claims for fictitious services/goods** – charging for goods not supplied.
- **Charging for different quality goods/product substitution** – inferior goods supplied for inflated prices and altered contract terms.
- **Fictitious companies/staff/contractors** – diverting payments.

Fraud awareness and training for all staff involved in the procurement process is mandatory and includes training on the fraud indicators officers must be alert to.

To manage the risk of bribery and corruption, procedures for declaring gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest are also mandatory and the organisation encourages a culture of transparency that is supportive of whistleblowing.

Segregation of duties, a centralised contract register and proactive contract management further mitigate the risk from fraud.

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Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL 19 July 2023
Subject	COMMERCIAL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS ON COUNCIL ESTATE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance. Email: mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Claire Locke Assistant Director Property and Regeneration Email: claire.locke@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Christopher Crookall-Fallon - Head of Climate Action Email: Christopher.Crookall-Fallon@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek agreement to invest in the installation of solar PV on the roofs of buildings owned and in some cases leased by the Council based on the business cases set out within this report. To seek agreement to enter into a contract with the preferred contractor for the installation of the solar PV.
Annexes	Annex A - EXEMPT Procurement Tender outcome summary Annex B - EXEMPT Business cases Annex C - Climate Impact Assessment Annex D - EXEMPT Lease risk summary
Recommendation(s)	<i>Subject to the resolutions of Cabinet on 17 July 2023, Council is recommended to resolve to:</i> <i>1) Agree to proceed with investment in roof mounted solar PV based on the business cases in this report, and that,</i> <i>2) Agree to allocate funding for contingency costs of £27,000 from the Council Priorities Fund with delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to allocate subject to the business case still</i>



	<i>being viable or expenditure being unavoidable due to structural condition of the building.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the highest standard of service • Respond to the climate crisis
Key Decision	Yes
Exempt	<p>Yes: Exempt annex A containing named bidders - commercially sensitive Exempt annex B containing commercially sensitive information Exempt annex D containing commercially sensitive information</p> <p>No: Annex C</p>
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Finance Officer Procurement team Legal team

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1 This report seeks Council approval to invest in Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV) and battery equipment at the Trinity Road office and one Council-owned tenanted property in Cirencester, using funding provided by members of the public through the 2022 Cotswold Climate Investment.
- I.2 In round numbers the total investment sums will be £210k for the Trinity Road offices and £59k for the tenanted site (£268k total, if both sites proceed).
- I.3 Making an investment in solar PV contributes to reducing the climate impact of electricity consumption within the Council's estate (both Council-occupied and tenanted). Benefits to the Council include a) delivering a part of its commitment to becoming net zero carbon in operation by 2030, b) generating a return on investment (as per the financial model in the business case annex), c) fulfilling one of the stated purposes of the Cotswold Climate Investment, and d) supporting a tenant organisation in their own carbon reduction journey.
- I.4 An open procurement process has been undertaken to establish accurate installation costs, and the winning contractor is an established PV installer. No substantive costs will be incurred and no contract for installation will be entered until full Council decision.
- I.5 A key investment decision factor is the likely future price of power, which affects the value of PV electricity consumed at Trinity Road, and the price of power sold to the tenant in the Cirencester property. Most power sector commentators expect power prices to remain firmly above the levels that were common a few years ago, but professional economic forecasters give a range of expectations. This lack of certainty must be considered when reviewing the financial model in Annex B.
- I.6 The 25 year financial model at Annex B takes account of the cost of power to the Council which is largely known for the next two years, and from then on takes a reasonable central estimate of future power price, provided by a professional consultant. For the tenanted property, the report seeks delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to agree a selling price for power which both provides sufficient return to the Council and is acceptable to the tenant. A firm price proposal will be put to the tenant following Cabinet decision. Solar panels have a realistic expected lifetime of 25 years or more.

- 1.7 The business case for installing panels on Trinity Road appears strong, even with inevitable uncertainty over future power price. The business case for the tenanted property is less strong, and depends on the agreement of the tenant to take the power. The two investments in aggregate have a reasonable business case.
- 1.8 This PV installation is viewed as a pilot project that should give the Council confidence and experience in replicating such installations in other Council-owned and tenanted properties, subject to a future business cases.
- 1.9 To ensure that PV assets are maintained and their performance monitored, and that tenants are correctly charged for PV power consumed, additional technical / financial staff resources will be required. This report identifies in outline how such additional resources could service, and be combined with, other related energy needs, and proposes an annual contribution by the Council to part-fund an energy manager post which will both administer the solar PV investment and deliver energy savings across the Council estate.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cotswold District Council's Climate Emergency Strategy identified solar PV on council-owned buildings as a carbon reduction action with a potentially viable return on investment, whether to off-set the cost of purchased electricity in council-occupied properties, or to sell zero carbon electricity to tenants of commercial properties. Solar PV, whilst not a panacea, is an important part of meeting the Council's objective of becoming operationally net zero carbon by 2030.
- 2.2 In anticipation of the investment in Solar PV on council owned properties, the Council issued £0.5m of Cotswold Climate Investment 'bonds' to the public in 2022, earmarked for Solar PV, building energy efficiency improvements, and Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in the Council's Car Parks. The PV investments identified in this report will draw down part of this borrowing, whose relatively low interest rate supports the viability of the schemes.
- 2.3 The Council owns a number of buildings which are let commercially to provide a return on investment which underpins the delivery of core services to the public. A number of these office and warehouse buildings have roofs which could be suitable for the

installation of Solar PV and could generate energy to power the activities within the buildings.

- 2.4 Tenants are responsible for paying their own utility bills, but the Council could sell PV-generated energy to tenants in parallel with their existing supply arrangements, subject to suitable legal agreements being in place.
- 2.5 The capital investment is capable of providing a return on capital sufficient to meet the Council's expectations and reflect future uncertainties, and this commitment to decarbonisation would align well with the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy.
- 2.6 Viability for rooftop PV is site dependent, so the focus of this pilot phase is on larger buildings. Smaller properties could be considered in future phases.
- 2.7 A fully compliant open procurement has been undertaken, including a "meet the buyer" event at pre tender stage in order to attract both local and national PV installers to partake in the procurement exercise. Four bids were received and the summary of those bidders is set out in Annex A. Bidders were assessed on a combination of quality and price. The preferred bidder is Ecovision Ltd which achieved a combined score 74.90%.

3. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The Council procures energy (gas and power) through a broker. Due to extreme market volatility since the invasion of Ukraine, the Council's current cost of both gas and power is relatively high, but should fall over the next two years. Future energy costs are uncertain, but most energy sector commentators warn that prices are unlikely to fall to pre-Ukraine levels for many years.
- 3.2 Energy supply contracts are currently managed from existing resources across Council and Publica teams. Given the complexity of the administrative arrangements associated with Solar PV and EVCPs (e.g. energy generation and general PV performance, sale to the grid and billing to tenants) a dedicated role is needed to support the Council and maximise investment performance and returns.
- 3.4 EVCPs (existing, under construction and planned) have fees set which aim to recover costs (installation, electricity, maintenance and back office services) and generate a small surplus for reinvestment. The business case for EVCP, as agreed by Cabinet in March

2022, set-aside funding of £7,800 for staff resources to support the administration of energy-related maintenance and administration.

- 3.5 Installation of the Solar PV and the associated management of energy costs and subsequent tenant agreement will require further staff resources. It is proposed that partner Councils (Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire) fund a dedicated shared Energy Manager (part-time) from a proportion of the projected income from Solar PV. If this post demonstrates significant savings, a recommendation may be made in the future to increase this resource. Each council is asked to fund one day per week, to provide a shared post of three days (22.5 hours). This post is estimated to have an FTE salary of £42,500/year, this equates to £25,500 pro-rata and totals £33,600 with on-costs. The cost to each council would be £11,200.
- 3.6 Taking account of the staff resources already identified in the EVCP business case, Cotswold District Council is asked to top-up with £3,400 per annum for this post.

4. BUSINESS CASE METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Business cases have been prepared which set out the capital costs and anticipated revenue return (annex B). This is based on the sale of energy to tenants, or the avoidance of purchased electricity, to provide a return on investment. For business cases purposes it has been assumed that capital expenditure is financed from the Cotswold Climate Investment Bond. The principal assets (the solar arrays) have an expected life of at least 25 years.
- 4.2 This report seeks approval for the Section 151 officer, in consultation with others, to agree an appropriate sale price for PV-generated electricity to the Council's tenant. It is proposed that such a sale price would seek a mid-point between:
- firstly, the minimum target return identified by the Section 151 officer that relates both to the Council's project-specific cost of capital and future revenue risk, and
 - secondly, the currently known, and estimated future, cost of grid electricity to the tenant.

Such a price mid-point would seek a balance between the objectives of achieving carbon reductions, supporting the viability of a tenant's business (which in turn reduces risk to the Council as landlord), supporting a tenant's journey towards decarbonisation, and maximising financial return to the Council.



Clearly if no such mid-point is achievable (for example if a tenant has a current or expected future cost of electricity below the Council minimum) then the site investment is very unlikely to proceed.

- 4.3 The cost of electricity for the Trinity Road office is known with fairly high confidence for the first year of operation and thereafter we have assumed that power cost will be in line with the central estimate of market price of power provided by a professional consultant. It is important to recognise that the confidence level on such industry economic forecasts decreases the further in the future the projection is made. It is nonetheless necessary to use such projections in order to derive the IRR, RoI etc on a 20 year business case.
- 4.4 Battery storage has been proposed by the successful tenderer for both CDC sites. The batteries enable excess solar electricity to be stored and used at times when there is little or no solar generation, thereby maximising the amount of solar electricity used on-site.
- 4.5 The supply and installation of Solar PV is a fixed price provided by the installer. Adding a contingency sum to cover any unforeseen costs is therefore likely to unfairly skew the business case. However there is a risk that unforeseen costs do occur principally associated with the building structure itself. For project budgeting purposes a 10% contingency sum of £27,000 will be earmarked from the Council Priorities Fund (CPF). Utilisation of the contingency sum is subject to approval by Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer on the basis that incurring the costs still delivers a positive business case, or ceasing the project at that point is not feasible, or costs are essential due to building defects and would have to be incurred anyway.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report proposes a methodology that will be used for assessing the financial viability for the installation of Solar PV on Council-owned properties. The report recommends that in the first phase of properties to be assessed, Solar PV should be installed on 2 properties - Council Offices at Trinity Road, and a tenanted building in Cirencester.
- 5.2 As discussed in the report, the principal driver for investment in Solar PV is to reduce the climate impact of the Council's energy consumption as part of the commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030. Solar PV installations will provide the Council with an ongoing financial benefit and return on investment, although members should note the

volatility in energy prices over the last 12 months and projections of future prices does impact on the certainty of financial returns.

- 5.3 Initial capital expenditure of £0.268m is required to deliver Solar PV on the 2 properties in the first phase. The financial modelling undertaken by the project team (based on a number of assumptions around energy usage and future energy prices) indicates a central estimate of return on investment of 9.3% with an average payback period of 14 years.
- 5.4 With significant volatility in the energy market over the last 12 months and a degree of uncertainty around when the market will stabilise over the medium-term, it is difficult to provide members with certainty around the financial returns on an annual basis. The financial modelling over a 20-year period shows positive cash flows from the investment taking into account running costs, annual inspections and routine maintenance. Where energy is sold to tenants, future electricity prices have been modelled based on market intelligence and an assessment of the size of each Solar PV installation.
- 5.5 Members should review the risks set out in Section 7 of this report. The financial returns set out in this report and through the financial modelling are not guaranteed and will be subject to fluctuation over the life of each installation. The only certainty at the initial stage of each scheme is the capital outlay on the installation of Solar PV with estimates of future income from the sale of energy to tenant over the remaining asset life period.
- 5.6 The Council approved the Capital Programme and Capital Financing at their meeting in February 2023. Whilst the business case has assumed capital financing costs, the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will consider the capital financing of the investment alongside the capital financing requirements associated with the wider capital programme. This will take into account the level and availability of internal resources (e.g. capital receipts) alongside external resources (e.g. prudential borrowing). Recent increases in the Bank of England base rate and expectations of further interest rate rises has led to increases in the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates. Should the Council need to undertake prudential borrowing to support the capital programme over the immediate short-term, this may put pressure on the revenue budget given the increased cost of capital and may make future capital expenditure and financing decisions more challenging.
- 5.7 As noted in paragraph 2.2 of the report, the Council has financing already in place to support the Solar PV investment through the Cotswold Climate Investment bonds. However, as set out in the paragraph above, there will be other factors over the duration

of the programme that will have an influence on the capital financing position. The financial implications of the capital financing and treasury management decisions will be reported to members through the regular financial performance reports to Cabinet and through the treasury management reporting to Audit and Governance Committee.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The responsibilities of the Council as landlord and its ability to alter buildings whilst tenants are in occupation will vary depending on individual lease agreements. Tenants will have existing energy contracts in place with third party providers. The Council cannot insist that existing tenants switch to the supply that the Council installs and therefore this needs to be mutually agreed, with a contract for the energy purchase put in place. Where PV is installed and a tenant ends their tenancy, the Council will market the property with green energy provision and would require that any incoming tenant purchases energy generated from the solar PV.
- 6.2 External legal support is being sought to provide a suitable contract for selling PV power to tenants. The estimated cost of such external legal support is non-material in the context of the overall project investment cost (approximately £1,100 or 0.3% of capex). The final iteration of the financial model, which will govern the Section 151 Officer's approval to proceed, will include the external legal support cost, which will not have a material impact on project RoI.
- 6.3 As a landlord, the Council will have a responsibility to meet Government's Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for non-domestic buildings. The current regulations require all tenanted non-domestic buildings to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of no lower than a rating of E. From 1st April 2018 any commercial property that has an EPC of lower than an 'E' cannot be rented out to new tenants, or renew any existing tenancy contracts until at least an 'E' rating is obtained. From 1st April 2023 all tenanted commercial properties must have an EPC rating of no lower than 'E' to continue being leased. There are exemptions to the MEES for properties such as listed buildings. The installation of Solar PV would therefore make a notable contribution to lowering the EPC. The Government is also currently reviewing the potential to introduce a further target of an EPC of B by 2030. The Council is currently preparing a plan to consider the works required in non-compliant buildings.
- 6.4 Save the above there are no other legal implications arising directly from this report.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 At a high level, key financial risks may be broken down into: a) uncertainty on quantity of electricity generated and either sold to tenant or consumed in Trinity Road; b) uncertainty over whether electricity will continue to be consumed at the assumed rate (either by the tenant or Council), and c) uncertainty over the price charged to the tenant, or the value of displaced purchased electricity for Trinity Road.
- 7.2 On uncertainty over quantities of energy: Generation of solar PV is known to a high degree of confidence (typical variability of +/- 5-10% in an individual year, much less variability over the project length). Consumption of PV generated electricity can be modelled with high confidence given that the tenanted site and Trinity Road have highly granular historic data on energy consumption.
- 7.3 On uncertainty over maintaining consumption: The Council has a medium-long term commitment to Trinity Road, and the agile working strategy will bring new tenants and staff on site. The Cirencester tenant has a long-term commitment to the site and operates a stable business. For both sites, electricity consumption in the future is more likely to rise than fall, since over time decarbonisation will push energy services (notably space heating) away from gas and towards electricity.
- 7.4 On uncertainty over price / cost: For Trinity Road the financial modelling takes known (or close to known) prices for two years, and then assumes electricity cost will follow a central estimate provided by a professional consultancy. Nonetheless it should be noted that no economic models claim to accurately predict future energy cost. For the tenanted property the tenant has disclosed their year-ahead electricity price. An agreement with the tenant would include both the starting price for PV power sold into the premises, and an escalator.
- 7.5 The business cases have been prepared based on capex costs provided by the preferred bidder. There is a risk that there are unforeseen costs, particularly relating to roof structures and therefore a contingency sum has been built into the business case to mitigate this risk. There is a risk however that an issue arises with significant costs that affect the viability of the scheme. Every effort will be made to avoid this and a decision to proceed would be made in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.
- 7.6 The current construction and materials market is volatile and inflationary pressures have seen costs rise dramatically in the last 12 months. Bidders have been asked to hold fixed prices for 90 days from bid submission, for the initial installations. Any delays in decision

making or placing purchase orders could see prices rise. It should be noted that further phases of installations on additional buildings will be the subject of a re-tender process, with learning from this initial phase embedded. Further phases should be relatively quick and easy to tender as specifications, tender evaluation and the financial model are likely to stay fairly similar. It should be noted however that costs are likely to rise if inflation continues to increase material costs.

- 7.7 The business case is predicated on income being generated from the sale of energy to tenants (or for Trinity Road, purchased electricity cost being avoided). There is little income from sale to the grid at tenanted premises at this point in time but this will continue to be reviewed. For Trinity Road any electricity 'spilled' to the grid will be able to attract a market value. There is risk around the continual purchase of the energy if the tenant breaches the purchasing agreement, fails to pay invoices for energy, or terminates the tenancy and a prolonged void period occurs. As some of these risks will be largely determined by the demand for that unit, information on risk is provided on a building specific basis (see Annex D).
- 7.8 At present the volatile energy market means that purchase of green energy from the Council should be attractive to tenants. However, future market conditions are unknown and significant cost reductions could mean the Council energy offer is less attractive to tenants.
- 7.9 The cost for replacement batteries has not been included within the 20 year model as research shows that batteries should last the twenty year life of this business case. In addition replacement could not be costed at today's prices as the technology will change and costs are likely to reduce as the technology becomes more commonplace. Extended warranties will be explored but breakdown and repair or replacement costs will remain a risk.
- 7.10 Certain pre-investment risks cannot be resolved until further technical work is carried out as step one of the contract. These include gaining permission to connect from the electricity distribution operator, and confirming suitability of roof structures to support panels. Whilst unlikely, if such risks manifested and were unresolvable, installations would not be able to proceed. However the scheduling of activity means that any such blocks would precede any commitment of capital investment, and therefore capital would not be at risk.



8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 There is no identified Equalities Impact from this proposal.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Installing Solar PV will reduce the use of fossil fuels in the Councils estate (it will reduce 'Scope 2' emissions in the Council's annual carbon emissions reporting). It will provide tenants with a renewable form of energy, which may also offer them cost savings.

9.2 Information on the estimated carbon savings from the commercial PV installations is shown below:

Trinity Road:

Annual avoided emissions impacts:			
Average avoided monthly kWh		11,245 kWh/month	
	Nitrogen Oxides	185	kg/yr
	Methane	88	kg/yr
	Carbon Dioxide	34,132	kg/yr
Annual avoided emissions equivalencies:			
Avoided emissions equivalencies	CO ² avoidance	84,486	average passenger vehicle miles
	CO ² emissions	4.2	average home's annual electricity use
	Carbon sequestered by	1,551	tree seedlings grown for 10 years

Tenanted property:

Annual avoided emissions impacts:			
Average avoided monthly kWh		3,020 kWh/month	
	Nitrogen Oxides	50	kg/yr
	Methane	24	kg/yr
	Carbon Dioxide	9,168	kg/yr
Annual avoided emissions equivalencies:			
Avoided emissions equivalencies	CO ² avoidance	22,692	average passenger vehicle miles
	CO ² emissions	1.1	average home's annual electricity use
	Carbon sequestered by	417	tree seedlings grown for 10 years

9.3 The project has a number of climate and ecological impacts which have been considered and mitigated where possible. For a full breakdown, please see Annex C.

- While delivering renewable energy to the selected buildings and to the grid will reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), there will also be emissions produced from the manufacture, delivery and installation of the solar panels, known as the embodied carbon. However research shows that carbon savings and energy generation across the lifetime of the solar panels will be significantly more than the carbon emitted or energy consumed in their manufacture and installation¹. Additionally, the Council have requested that contractors minimise the embodied carbon of the contract.
- The mining and material extraction processes associated with manufacturing the solar panels will affect soil and waterway health in manufacturing and mining locations.
- There are known issues around the sustainability of materials used for solar panels over which we do not have control. However, the Council have requested that consideration be given to decommissioning so that the panels can be repaired as needed and recycled at end-of-life.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

10.1 The Council could decide not to install Solar PV for its own offices and commercial estate.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2030:

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

The Cotswold Climate Investment:

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/cotswold-climate-investment/>

(END)

¹ e.g. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/solar-wind-nuclear-amazingly-low-carbon-footprints/>

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Annex C - Climate Impact Assessment

Commercial Rooftop Solar PV



Criteria	Score	Justification
GHGs	2	<u>Moderate, long-term positive impact.</u> This project will reduce GHGs by delivering renewable electricity to the buildings and to the grid. There is some increase in GHGs from manufacture, delivery, installation and recycling of solar panels (embodied carbon) but this is generally accepted as being lower than the carbon savings from decarbonising the grid (operational carbon) ¹ . The Council sought to mitigate embodied carbon by asking contractors to account for this when selecting solar technologies. However, the overall carbon benefit is only 'moderate' as the scope of work does not include measures or financial incentives to reduce the overall energy use of the building. Additionally, the carbon benefits of battery storage (where this is proposed) are unclear.

¹ e.g. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/solar-wind-nuclear-amazingly-low-carbon-footprints/>

Air quality	0	<u>Not net change.</u> Increasing renewable energy generation reduces the use of fossil fuels for electricity generation which is responsible for air pollution. However, this impact is minor in the grand scale of the energy system and is counteracted in the short-term by the air pollution associated with the transportation of materials and contractor travel.
Sustainable transport	0	<u>No net change.</u> No impacts identified and no measures included in the tender specification to incentivise a shift towards active travel.
Land use change	0	<u>No net change.</u> Solar panels are on roofs, not on the ground, so there is no impact on land use.
Biodiversity	0	<u>No net change.</u> No impact unless panels are on roofs found to be used by nesting birds or bats. Biodiversity surveys will be undertaken where applicable.
Soil and waterway health	-2	<u>Moderate negative impact beyond the delivery location.</u> Mining and other processes relating to the manufacture of solar panels affects soil and waterway health in these mining and manufacturing locations.
Climate change adaptation and resilience	0	<u>No net change.</u> Though installing renewable energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels and supports tenants in being better prepared for phasing out fossil fuels, the project does not impact on adaptation to future climate impacts.
Energy use	0	<u>No net change.</u> We are displacing the energy currently used from one source to another but not changing the amount of energy used as energy efficiency measures were not incorporated into the project. There is a risk that the selected electricity price for tenants may increase energy use if the cost is significantly lower than their existing contracts but this is unknown at this stage. However, use of renewable energy is positive.
Sustainable materials	-2	<u>Moderate, short-term negative impact.</u> Solar panels are usually manufactured internationally so have significant embodied carbon. Many of the materials/metals used are not sourced sustainably but the Council does not have much influence over this. However, solar panel materials can be recycled at end-of-life (such as aluminium and glass) and panel recycling technology continues to improve so a high level of material recovery is expected by the time these panels reach end-of-life.
Waste	-2	<u>Moderate, long-term negative impact.</u> The production of solar panels will inevitably mean waste will be produced when they reach end-of-life. The Council included a requirement in the tender documentation for contractors to consider decommissioning and end-of-life, with 25-year product guarantees for the panels. It is therefore assumed that the solar panels will be repaired as needed and recycled at end-of-life, to mitigate the waste impact.

Food	0	<u>No net change.</u> No impact on food.
Health	0	<u>No net change.</u> Reducing air pollution from fossil fuel use will have a negligible impact on health at a local and national level given the scale of this project. Depending on purchasing agreements, the project may alleviate financial stress of some tenants by improving resilience to market fluctuations. To be updated following agreements.
Housing	0	<u>No net change.</u> No impact on housing.
Education	1	<u>Moderate, short-term positive impact.</u> Apprenticeship and/or training opportunities were included in the contractor's social value offering, alongside community engagement to provide information on the benefits of renewable energy. The final social value commitments are still to be agreed with the Council.
Built community	0	<u>No net change.</u> The addition of solar will not impact the sense of place, green space, or connectivity infrastructure.
Cultural community	0	<u>No net change.</u> This is not a community-based solar model and no other cultural impacts or benefits are anticipated.
Accessibility	2	<u>Moderate, long-term positive impact.</u> The project presents no barriers to access and may improve access to energy information as part of the metering and monitoring included in the work. Metering and monitoring will be available to tenants and the Councils. The Council will be funding the capital costs of the solar panels to remove the financial barrier to installing them.
Local economy and jobs	2	<u>Moderate, long-term positive impact.</u> Slight, long-term positive impact. In providing lower, more stable energy costs to companies occupying the tenanted units, this project also aims to support the economic stability of those businesses. The chosen contractor has also stated that they are committed to working with local engineers.
Safety	-1	<u>Moderate, short-term negative impact.</u> There are health and safety risks associated with the work but these are mitigated by the contractor's health and safety practices, and the Council included this consideration in the tender criteria. There is risk of harm through the supply chain, associated with forced labour in the production of solar panels, and contractors have been asked to consider this. There is a risk of vandalism and this will be monitored post-project.

Democratic voice	1	<u>Moderate, short-term positive impact.</u> Tenants have been engaged throughout the process so far and will continue to be involved in the shaping of the project, particularly during the purchase agreement process.
Equity	0	<u>No net change.</u> No impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

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