

Public Document Pack



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Friday, 23 August 2024

Tel: 01285 623553

e-mail: Democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Monday, 2 September 2024 at 4.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

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

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

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

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive any apologies for absence.

The quorum for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is 3 members.
2. **Substitute Members**
To note details of any substitution arrangements in place for the meeting.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.
4. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2024.
5. **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
To consider actions outstanding from minutes of previous meetings
6. **Chair's Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7. **Public Questions**
A maximum of 15 minutes is allocated for an “open forum” of public questions at committee meetings. No person may ask more than two questions (including supplementary questions) and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. The maximum length of oral questions or supplementary questions by the public will be two minutes. Questions must relate to the responsibilities of the Committee but questions in this section cannot relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

The response may take the form of:
 - a) A direct oral response (maximum length: 2 minutes);
 - b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
 - c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.
8. **Member Questions**
A maximum period of fifteen minutes is allowed for Member questions. Questions must be directed to the Chair and must relate to the remit of the committee but may not relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

9. **Report back on recommendations (Pages 13 - 18)**

For the Committee to note the Cabinet's response to any recommendations arising from the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

10. **Neighbourhood Planning Update (Pages 19 - 34)**

Purpose

To update Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council's activity supporting parish-led neighbourhood plans across the district.

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to

1. Notes the update
2. Agrees any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet on 5 September.

Invited

Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services
Joseph Walker, Community Partnership Officer

11. **National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the Implications for Cotswold District**

To follow

12. **Building the Budget (Pages 35 - 44)**

Purpose

To provide members of Overview and Scrutiny committee an outline of the Council's budget setting process, key decision points, and a brief outline of the administration's approach to the annual budget consultation.

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to:

1. Note the report on Building the Budget.
2. Consider and recommendations it wishes Cabinet to consider for the 2025/26 Budget Consultation.

Invited

Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

13. **Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One (Pages 45 - 70)**

Purpose

This report sets of the initial budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year.

Recommendation(s)

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Reviews and notes the financial position set out in this report.
2. Consider and recommendations it wishes Cabinet to consider for the Cabinet meeting on 5 September 2024.

Invited

Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

14. **Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One (Pages 71 - 144)**

Purpose

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

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to:

1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q1.
2. Agree any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet ahead of the meeting on 5 September

Invited

Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst

15. **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Purpose

To receive any verbal updates on the work of external scrutiny bodies:

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Angus Jenkinson
Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Dilys Neill

16. **Work Plan and Forward Plan (Pages 145 - 160)**

For the Committee to note and review its work plan and to select Cabinet decisions for pre-decision scrutiny at future committee meetings.

(END)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
22/July2024



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 22 July 2024

Members present:

Gina Blomefield – Chair
David Cunningham
Angus Jenkinson
Dilys Neill

Gary Selwyn –Vice-Chair
Tony Slater
Clare Turner
Jon Wareing

Tristan Wilkinson
Patrick Coleman

Officers present:

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

Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director
Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst
Jon Dearing, Interim Executive Director
Gemma Moreing, Business Information Lead
Stuart Rawlinson, Business Manager
Resources, Data and Growth

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Joe Harris – Leader

OS.75 Apologies

The Committee introduced themselves.

Apologies were received from Councillor Michael Vann.

OS.76 Substitute Members

Councillor Patrick Coleman acted as a substitute for Councillor Michael Vann.

OS.77 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

OS.78 Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22/July2024

The Chair explained that minor amendments had been made to the minutes prior to the meeting.

- OS.69 Councillor Turner seconded Councillor Jenkinson's motion to review resources allocated to Biodiversity (not Councillor Selwyn).
- Start and end time of meeting showing incorrectly

There were no further amendments to the minutes.

OS.79 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair explained that the Asset Management Strategy would be added to the Work Plan so that the Committee would receive a recurring yearly update on it.

OS.80 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, which highlighted the work that the Committee had achieved throughout the year.

The Chair also asked that Members kept their questions succinct, noting the full agenda.

OS.81 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

OS.82 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

OS.83 Report back on recommendations

The Committee had made a recommendation to Cabinet to increase resourcing to Ecology. The Leader of the Council explained that this would be taken into account as part of the Publica Review. The response from Cabinet would be formally reported at its meeting on 25 July 2024.

OS.84 Publica Review- Detailed Transition Plan

The Democratic Services Business Manager explained that the Council had sought legal advice, and as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not a decision-making body (unlike Cabinet or Full Council), Officers employed by Publica could remain in the room for the duration of the item.

The purpose of the report was to consider the Detailed Transition Plan and to note its content.

The Leader of the Council introduced the item, he explained that:

- The shareholder Publica councils had felt that they had experienced difficulty making decisions under Publica, which had led to the decision to transition most of the Council's employees to directly employed contracts.
- Employees would be transferred through a phased approach.

- He hoped that the transition would better reflect member priorities and promote a cultural shift in the Council.

The Chief Executive explained that the first phase of staff would be transferred to the Council in November and staff consultation would be undertaken imminently. He asked that members refrained from asking specific questions on team structures.

Members discussed the report, and the following points were raised during this discussion:

- The same processes for reviewing vacancies filled by agency staff would be followed, so this was not included in the cost. If any of these underlying assumptions regarding temporary staffing changed the Committee should be updated.
- The Leader stated that he believed that the decision would allow the Council to have greater autonomy over staffing costs, as the other member councils would not have to be consulted on staffing and service decisions.
- Members stated that it was important to engage with staff and ensure continuity and retention. The Chief Executive explained that engagement with staff had taken place, which had included question and answer sessions. The transition date of 1 November included the necessary timeframe for carrying out consultation with staff who were affected by the changes.
- The impact of the increased employer pension contributions resulting from the transition was discussed. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that due to how the Local Government Pension Scheme functioned, there would be no short-term financial impact arising from the increased employer pension contributions. The next triennial review was due in March 2025 and any impact would be assessed then .
- It was recognised that Business Continuity was important for maintaining services. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the largest risks were the numbers around the financial details not being accurate, (although they were confident in the accuracy of these) and keeping 'business as usual' operating through a period of change. The Leader added that delivering cultural change was important to the transition, but that this could be difficult to monitor.
- The Committee thought that there were a lot of aspirations for what the transition would achieve, but that some of these goals were not necessarily translated into tangible objectives.
- Members asked for more numbers around the information within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which the Deputy Chief Executive stated they would provide a written response to.
- The Committee felt that it was important to receive an update on the success of the phase one transition before Phase 2 commenced.

The Chair summed up the debate, stating two key outcomes that she believed had arisen from the Committee's discussion;

1. That the Committee receives a report reviewing the implementation of Phase 1, before proposals for Phase 2 are brought forward for decision.
2. That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that more clarity is provided on what success looks like, sounds like and feels like and what key actions will deliver the Council's objectives (service quality, greater control and cost reductions).

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

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. NOTED the report
2. AGREED to receive a report reviewing the implementation of phase one before proposals for phase 2 are brought forward
3. AGREED to recommend that Cabinet provide more clarity on what success looks like, sounds like and feels like and what key actions will deliver the Council's objectives (service quality, greater control and cost reductions).

Voting Record

10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

OS.85 Channel Choice and Telephone Access Update

The Interim Executive Director introduce the item. They stated that a trial had been undertaken to close phone lines at 2pm, this was considered successful as contact by phone had decreased and utilisation of digital services had increased. Making this change permanent would save the Council £125,000 per annum.

The purpose of the report was to propose that the trial becomes a permanent arrangement following the data gathered. The trial of reduced telephone access hours from 9am – 2pm, to the public was considered to have proved the concept, with customers continuing to shift to digital channels.

The Committee discussed the report and raised the following points;

- It was recognised that there would be certain 'peak times' during which there would be more demand on the customer services team, and the Committee asked whether more staff could be dedicated to the service during this time. The Interim Executive Director stated that the service could be flexible, in part owing to the large amount of ex-Customer Services staff in other Council departments. However, the Leader emphasised that proposals were led by the Council needing to make difficult financial decisions.
- The method under which the number of calls were monitored was raised. The Interim Executive Director stated that the number of attempted calls during closures were monitored.
- Providing an inclusive service for residents who were digitally excluded was important, and the Leader confirmed that the Council had been working with community networks to help reach digitally excluded residents. He also challenged the assumption that all people preferred to contact the Council by phone, as some residents could find it stressful. The Interim Executive Director would circulate routes by which Members could access personal support when they could not access service via the standard routes.
- Members felt that the service had improved as a result of proposals, as higher satisfaction metrics were reported.

The Chair summed up the debate, summarising the following recommendation to Cabinet.

- That the Cabinet ensures services are accessible to everyone including those who cannot access via digital channels and ensure the route for support is publicised.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. NOTED the report
2. AGREED to recommend that Cabinet ensures services are accessible to everyone including those who cannot access via digital channels and ensure the route for support is publicised.

The resolution was proposed by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Wilkinson.

Voting Record

9 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions

OS.86 2023-24 Final Revenue and Capital Outturn Report

The Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) introduced the item. The purpose of the report was to set out the outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year.

The report outlined the updated material variances, including;

- Improved treasury management investment income due to continued higher investment balances and interest rates. Outturn for the financial year was £1.783m; an income surplus of £0.966m
- ICT underspend not previously forecast of £169,000 due to lower than budgeted cybersecurity, software and IT licence costs.
- Additional expenditure incurred during the financial year was £113k in respect of Elections costs, including staff costs, postage costs and equipment expenditure.
- There was an underspend of £0.986m across the total Publica contract sum for all Councils. The amount that was applicable to Cotswold District Council was £0.305m. The underspend had largely arisen due to vacancy management. £0.086m saving achieved from reduction in contact centre staffing and travel costs

Members discussed the report, raising the following points;

- Additional information was requested on the ICT underspend, the Deputy Chief Executive stated that they would provide this
- The Deputy Chief Executive explained that costs set aside for judicial reviews did not include assumptions on recovering these costs.
- The Leisure contract deficit was discussed. The Deputy Chief Executive that the 10-year contract with Freedom Leisure included the repayment of this.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTED the report.

OS.87 Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Four

The Chief Executive introduced the item. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance.

The report was discussed, raising the following points;

- The Deputy Chief Executive explained that if anyone was impacted by changes in bin collections, they could report this via the Council's website. They would distribute more information on this to the Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 22/July2024

- Further information would be provided on the number of Long-Term Empty Properties, and the Senior Performance Analyst stated that a report was going to the Cabinet in September.
- The Committee suggested that planning enforcement numbers should be reported on as part of Quarter one.
- The Interim Executive Director would distribute further information about street name plates in the second phase of the replacement programme.
- Members reported that green bins were collected even though there was no license for them, the Chief Executive stated they would pick this up with Ubico.
- The future reports would include clear references to which Council services were statutory and which were discretionary.
- Future reports would also include improved benchmarking with other similar councils.
- The reference to affordable housing in Evenlode was actually on Evenlode Road in Moreton-in-Marsh.

RESOLVED: To NOTE the report

OS.88 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Chair introduced the item.

Members discussed the report which was presented for the first time in this format, commending its quality and clarity of content which reflected the work of the Committee over the year. This included the special meeting called with GWR which had laid the way to an improved working relationship with CDC.

The Committee suggested that one recommendation was missed from the summary. The Democratic Services Business Manager stated that they would pick this up and make the amendment to the report before it goes to Full Council.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that the report be received by Full Council at the Meeting on 31 July.

OS.89 Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees

The Members who represented the Committee on the Gloucestershire County Council Health Overview (HOSC) and Scrutiny and Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC) had circulated written updates, which they summarised;

- The GEGSC had not met in 2024 owing to ongoing cancellations by the County Council. Cllr Jenkinson had written to the chair of this committee to express concern.
- The recent meeting of HOSC had centered around updates about cancer waiting times and the South West Ambulance Service. There were backlogs and delays in both of these areas but there was a new cancer diagnosis centre at Gloucester Docks and research trials were well funded.

OS.90 Work Plan and Forward Plan

The Interim Executive Director summarised the work plan, there were no further comments from the committee on this.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
22/July2024
RESOLVED: To NOTE the work plan.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.00 pm

Chair

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

Proposed Cabinet response to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny on Ecological Emergency Update

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 May 2024.

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
1. That Cabinet considers the necessity to increase resourcing for ecology, given our goal (green to the core), declared climate and ecological crisis and increased legal monitoring obligations.	Y	We are actively exploring resourcing levels across Planning & Sustainability and specifically Ecology, in order to meet workload demands and council priorities. We have a clear idea of the resources needed and are working through more detailed costings currently.	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services/ Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)/ Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainability

This page is intentionally left blank

Proposed Cabinet response to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny on Channel Choice and Telephone Access

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 July 2024.

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
1. That the Cabinet ensures services are accessible to everyone, including those who cannot access services via digital channels and ensure the route for support is publicised.	Y	All access channels remain open, and with the increase in residents helping themselves digitally, the team have more time to help those who are digitally excluded and/or vulnerable. The office opening hours have not changed, so customers are still able to access the Council's services in this way. The emergency line remains available every afternoon and during the election period we were able to make lines available 9am-5pm in the weeks leading up to the election, and 6am -10pm on election day.	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Council Transformation and the Economy	Michelle Clifford/ Jon Dearing

This page is intentionally left blank

Proposed Cabinet response to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny on Publica Detailed Transition Plan

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 May 2024.

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a report reviewing the implementation of Phase 1 before proposals for Phase 2 are brought forward for decision.	Y	Officers and Cabinet undertake to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a report reviewing the implementation of Phase 1. This report will encompass review of the successes, challenges, and lessons learned during Phase 1. It will provide valuable insights and data that will help to inform the planning and development of Phase 2.	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
2. That Cabinet provide more clarity on what success looks like, sounds like and feels like and what key actions will deliver the Council's objectives (service quality, greater control and cost reductions).	Y	Ultimately success will be measured against timely delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities, and key performance indicators. Cabinet will task the programme director and programme team to collate and develop specific metrics and benchmarks that will inform what 'success' looks like. These will include detailed descriptions	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive



		<p>of service quality improvements, enhanced control measures, and where appropriate cost reduction targets. Key actions to achieve these objectives will also be clearly identified, ensuring a transparent and measurable path to achieving the Council's goals.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--

Agenda Item 10



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY –2 SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing, Assistant Director Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council’s activity supporting parish-led neighbourhood plans across the district.
Annexes	Annex A1: Table of Plans Annex A2: Map of Neighbourhood Areas
Recommendation(s)	That Overview and Scrutiny: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Notes the update 2) Agrees any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet on 5 September.
Corporate priorities	Responding to the Climate Emergency Delivering Housing Supporting Communities Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Consultees/ Consultation	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services
-----------------------------	---



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates members on the Council's activity, supporting parish-led neighbourhood development plans ('Plans'). Members will have seen numerous reports on emerging Plans, as there are quite a few decision points for the Council in the journey taken by a Plan. It is the purpose of this report to set the broader context for these individual decisions.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since the Localism Act 2011, parish councils around the district have been empowered to bring forward their own planning policy documents, known as Neighbourhood Plans, which through due process can become part of the Local Development Framework, sitting alongside the Council's Local Plan. At the point of writing, there are 9 Plans made in the district, covering 10 parishes, and further Plans working their way through the statutory process.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 Over the 13 years since its introduction, Neighbourhood Planning has moved from a new 'disruptive' power to tackle planning status quo to being a well-established part of the English planning system, with extensive and growing coverage, particularly in parished areas but also in cities through Neighbourhood Forums. There are now 9 'made' neighbourhood plans in Cotswold District, following the Council's decision in March this year to make the Down Ampney Neighbourhood Plan following its support at referendum on 29 February. 'Made' is the official term for a plan entering into full legal effect, the equivalent of 'adopt' for the Local Plan. There are further Plans coming forward: Stow on the Wold and the Swells Neighbourhood Plan recently passed examination and is scheduled to go forward to referendum later in September; Chipping Campden and Cirencester Plans have both carried out consultation on their pre-submission drafts this year, with Moreton-in-Marsh likely to follow soon, and Bourton on the Water and Siddington have actively started work on a Plan. Across the district, further areas are designated as neighbourhood areas, but are not necessarily actively developing Plans. Please see Annex A1 and A2 to see status and coverage of neighbourhood areas and Plans.
- 3.2 Looking through a different lens, approximately 25% of the district's population live within an area with a made Plan, a number that is likely to increase to circa 50% with the next year or so, as Cirencester and other plans complete the process.

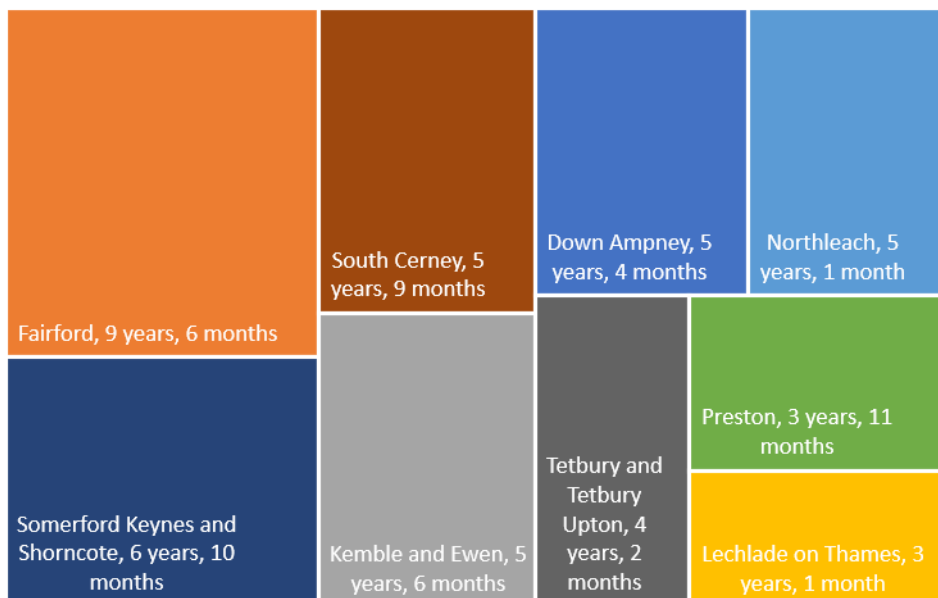


- 3.3** In Cotswold, Plans are brought forward by parish councils. In areas covered by a parish council, whether known as a parish or town council, the parish council must be the lead body. If one of the district's parish meetings sought to prepare a Plan, they would need to create a neighbourhood forum, a structure more typically associated with urban neighbourhood plans. Plan may be prepared either directly, through a working group, or frequently through an 'arm's length' steering group comprising of local volunteers, with sign-off through the parish.
- 3.4** The Council's role is to not to lead but to support neighbourhood planning – there is a legal duty to support, although this is not fully explored in legislation or guidance. The Planning Act 1990, Schedule 4B para 3 states: "A local planning authority must give such advice or assistance to qualifying bodies as, in all the circumstances, they consider appropriate for the purpose of, or in connection with, facilitating the making of proposals for NDPs in relation to neighbourhood areas within their area". This applies to NDP's through S38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. There is no requirement to give financial assistance. On this basis, the Council has not set performance targets or service metrics – the number of Plans, and the time it takes to develop a Plan is largely outside of Council control. It is noteworthy however that the stages that require Council involvement are set out in Regulation with specific timeframes which have been observed carefully.
- 3.5** At the beginning and the end of the statutory process, there are stages that require the Council's involvement, often referred to by the regulation number with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (since modified). With the first parishes that embarked on this work, the Council had to run a designation process, with a statutory consultation period and decision. Since 2014, parishes proposing to designate their parish area still need to seek Council approval, but the Council has no discretion in the matter.
- 3.6** Outside of multi-parish/cross boundary proposals, the first decision point is usually to sign off the Council's representation to the pre-submission, 'Regulation 14' consultation – the statutory consultation all parishes must run on a complete draft of their Plan. This is followed up, sometimes quite quickly, with a decision on the submission draft to determine whether it meets the submission requirements set out in 'Regulation 15' to go forward to 'Regulation 16' publication and consultation – a consultation run by the Council where responses are sent directly to an Independent Examiner. There is a further decision to agree the Council's representation to this second 'Regulation 16' consultation. Following the conclusion of the Independent Examination, the Council must make a decision on the report, this 'Regulation 18' decision being the trigger for referendum. Finally, following a referendum, the Council needs to determine whether to make the Plan for it to enter into legal effect. Members of Overview and Scrutiny will have seen a number of reports covering these stages in recent months and years.



- 3.7** This process does mean that Plans are often relatively advanced before the Council has formal involvement. However, the Council regularly liaises with parish representatives interested in neighbourhood planning, and more frequently with those actively pursuing neighbourhood plans. Offering informal advice on emerging plans has a twofold benefit: it can help communities move from local fact finding through to presenting putative planning policies which may survive the process, and it can help the Council steer Plans to limit disagreement down the line.
- 3.8** The diagram below provides a visual indication of the time being taken to prepare Plans, focused solely on Plans which have been made. The average time taken to complete a NDP (from area designation to the plan passing referendum) goes well beyond 2 years as estimated by DCLG/MHCLG. It has also increased over time from the 29 months in 2016 to 39 months by 2019. Locally, Plans have been taking longer. One factor is Covid19, where lockdowns delayed formative work being led by communities, and directly affected the ability of Plans to move forward to referendum.

Time taken from designation to being Made



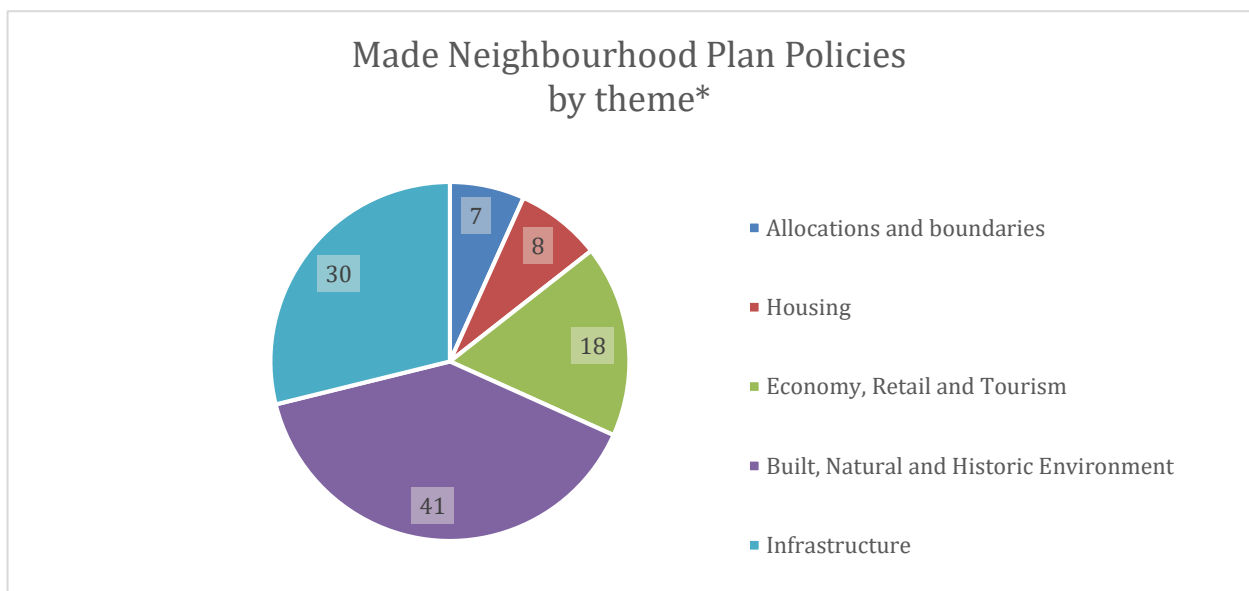
- 3.9** Plans in the district vary in terms of their ambition – in terms of the number of policies/breadth of policies, and in terms of the effect. Policies must be in ‘general conformity’ with the Local Plan; that is, they should not seek to undermine strategic policies, but can differ on issues of local impact. They should also have regard to national regulations and guidance. This includes an expectation that policies should not duplicate the NPPF or the Local Plan. Trying to find the space for distinctive policy, which has regard to national

policy and is in general conformity with the Local Plan, whilst not duplicating existing policy is far from an easy task, and often presents a steep learning curve for community volunteers. Neighbourhood Plan interviewees in a 2019–20 Government funded study frequently commented that the process was more difficult, convoluted and complicated than they had expected, with many reporting that, had they fully understood the scale of the task from the outset, they would have been much more reluctant to embark on the project.

3.10 Understandably, most parishes appoint consultancy support, sometime to provide start to finish support, or to support on the more technical parts of the process. There is a national support grant package, administered through ‘Locality’ which consists of a grant towards general costs and technical assistance packages for various technical studies that might be required. For a simple Plan, this grant may largely cover costs, but many parishes have also had to invest their own funds.

3.11 As neighbourhood plans are not compulsory, they are not required to have policies to address the totality of planning concerns - communities only present policies on areas that they wish to. A useful example, albeit outside Cotswold District, is Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan, which only includes one policy, designating Local Green Spaces. Within Cotswold, Northleach with Eastington has 6 policies, whereas Fairford has 19. Collectively, Made Plans add 104 policies.

3.12 The chart below provides a picture of the focus of policies within Made Plans, where policies have been grouped by the Chapters in the Local Plan.





** Neighbourhood Plans are by definition non-strategic, but can allocate sites and create 'green gaps' to protect settlement settings, akin to the Policy themes in the Local Plan 'DS' and 'S' policies.*

- 3.13** This chart shows that Neighbourhood Plans cover a wide range of spatial issues – but should not be read as indicative of the emphasis of Plans as a whole – the number of policies on a theme is not necessarily reflective of the local emphasis given to the topic. It does speak to the difficulty of creating new policy in particular areas, such as housing, and the opportunity that NDPs present to add local granularity, for example policies identifying Non-Designated Heritage Assets or community facilities. It should be noted that every Plan in Cotswold to date has designated Local Green Spaces – these policies are included in 'Built, Natural and Historic Environment' above, in line with the Local Plan layout, but such sites are often important local community infrastructure, and indeed often underpin the local tourism offer besides.
- 3.14** Plans have a limited lifetime. Typically, the plan period will date from its making to the end of the current Local Plan period, that being the period where there is a degree of certainty as to the strategic planning picture. As Cotswold heads towards the later years of the current Local Plan, and starts work on the vision for beyond 2031, emerging neighbourhood plans may start to stretch out their plan periods. For Plans already in place, there is an option to review, and a statutory process to enable this. The review process allows for some minor changes through a stripped back version of the process that is used to make a Plan. More ambitious updates will have to re-run a process very similar to their initial work, albeit usually with the advantage of having clearer parameters on community aspiration, and an existing evidence base (while this may need refreshing, a lot of the work on historic assets, landscape etc will remain current). To date, no Plan within Cotswold has formally started a review.
- 3.15** The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduces some changes which have not yet been enacted. Some of these changes are directed at neighbourhood planning, including changes to the Basic Conditions, and the introduction of a new neighbourhood planning power – the 'neighbourhood priorities statement' which doubtless will have some impact. Potentially, the biggest change could well be the introduction of National Development Management Policies, which could further constrain the space for neighbourhood plans to craft locally distinctive policies.
- 3.16** At the time of writing, a new draft of the National Planning Policy Framework has been released for consultation, until late September. Members may be aware of some of the significant changes this proposes, but sections dealing specifically with neighbourhood planning have not been altered. That said, should the increased housing numbers proposed

through the consultation be adopted, the added development pressure will no doubt impact on neighbourhood planning groups.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1** The Council has a statutory duty to support neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood planning, but the exact nature of this duty is ill-defined. As a minimum, the Council must process neighbourhood area designations, carry out environmental screenings, carry out the Regulation 16 consultation and commission independent examinations, run referendums and formally make plans. The Council has greater discretion in how actively it supports plans through this process. In theory, the Council could step back its advice and support outside of these statutory stages. However, without an open-door approach to offering advice, it is more likely emerging plans would reach these statutory stages with procedural shortcomings to correct, necessitating remedial work, and impacting negatively on work with parish councils.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** The Council's neighbourhood planning function seeks to fulfil the Council's duty to support neighbourhood planning positively, and to maintain working relations with emerging neighbourhood plans to help them frame their ambitions and meet their objectives through presented plans. Work continues to support communities already underway with Plans, and those still exploring their options. The Local Plan refresh, the next Local Plan period and new legislation and policy direction nationally are likely to spark review of made Plans or new activity.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** From 2012 up until end of March 2024, the Council benefited from a grant programme, set up under the 'New Burdens' doctrine to meet the extra costs of supporting specific neighbourhood plans. In recent years, this has taken the form of a £20,000 grant triggered by the decision to send a Plan to referendum – thus 'at risk' for the cost of any technical studies and the independent examination, and as a known resource to support the referendum. Costs vary, depending upon the complexity of the Plan being examined, and the size of the neighbourhood area subject to referendum, but to date, this payment has covered the cash costs to the Council. At the time of writing, no successor scheme has been launched, leaving the Council without funding towards this statutory duty.



- 6.2** It should also be noted that the national support grant for communities developing neighbourhood plans also closed at the end of the financial year and was not confirmed for 2024-25 until late May – this may well have stalled, albeit temporarily, community endeavour.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** As noted above, the Council has a duty to support neighbourhood plans. As the body that gives legal force to Plans prepared, and examined by third parties, there is an element of legal risk associated with this role: should a neighbourhood plan be challenged in the final stages, the challenge would be through judicial review of the Council. Please note commentary on risk below.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** Across the neighbourhood planning function, there are two principal risks: first, a risk to Council service delivery, if ill-expressed or undeliverable policies are enacted through neighbourhood plans to the detriment of Council Development Management or Planning Policy functions, and; second, that Plans do not deliver for the parish that has put them forward, undermining the community effort, and at some reputational impact on the Council. Upon occasion, these two risks are counterposed – an emphasis on quality and implementation may impact negatively on the community aspiration.
- 8.2** The risk to the Council from poorly expressed or undeliverable policies is mitigated to a high degree, through full engagement in the consultation on Plans, from the formative pre-submission consultation, through to the publication stage, where representations then go to the independent examiner to review. This ensures that where the Council has concerns over emerging policy, it seeks to first address these with the community bringing it forward, and failing that, ensures the Examiner is aware of its concerns. Diligence at this stage mitigates the risk of poor policy being made, and also mitigates the risk of legal challenge from other interested parties.
- 8.3** Of course, changes to proposed policies in the final stages will mean the modification of community proposals, at risk to communities achieving their ambitions. The Council seeks to mitigate this risk through early engagement, to try to avoid policies being presented which will not meet the necessary standards, or to ensure that communities realise where policies are trying to push the envelope of accepted policy.



8.4 As noted above, there is currently a risk that neighbourhood planning is underfunded, pending certainty over grant funding to the Council, and the stop-start pattern of funding for communities.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 Neighbourhood Plans are independently examined prior to referendum and entering into legal force. There is not a specific equalities impact as such, but Plans are examined against Human Rights legislation, and need to have regard to national planning legislation and guidance.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Neighbourhood Plans are examined against the Basic Conditions, which includes meeting environmental requirements. Neighbourhood Plans also need to be in general conformity with the Local Plan, which means as the requirements of the Local Plan become stricter, there will be stronger direction to neighbourhood plans. In the meantime, many Cotswold communities seek to promote climate change policies which go beyond the extant Local Plan; Fairford Neighbourhood Plan presents an example of a 'made' policy, and the climate change policy in the post-examination Stow and the Swells Neighbourhood Plan, will be the most ambitious yet.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None

(END)

Annex A1: Schedule of Neighbourhood Planning Activity

Neighbourhood Area	Status	Date Made	Designation date	Key points	Includes a Principal Settlement	Does it identify non-designated heritage assets?	Does it seek to protect Local Green Spaces?	Site Allocations	Design*
Down Ampney	Made	06/03/2024	30/10/2019	LGS designation, strong policies on water management	y		y		Guide
Fairford	Made	05/06/2023	20/11/2013	Ambitious and comprehensive plan, including site allocation, strong policies on Non-designated heritage assets and flooding, Green Gap	y	y	y	y	Guide
Kemble and Ewen	Made	11/05/2021	28/10/2015	Emphasis on design and identification of assets for protection.	y		y		Guide
Lechlade	Made	17/11/2016	10/07/2013	First made plan. Strong vision around shared space in the town	y		y		policy
Northleach	Made	22/03/2019	14/02/2014	Aspiration to create town car park to enable town centre improvement, and to create a green ring for recreational purposes	y		y		Policy
Preston	Made	11/05/2021	17/05/2017	Vision to prevent coalescence with Cirencester	n		y		policy
Somerford Keynes and Shorncliffe	Made	11/05/2021	07/09/2014	Wholly community led and drafted	n	y	y		policy
South Cerney	Made	08/12/2021	03/10/2016	Very inclusive of the rural parts of the parish	y	y	y		Guide
Tetbury with Tetbury Upton	Made	13/12/2017	08/01/2013	Protects open spaces, making a sensible distinction between amenity use and setting	y		y		policy
Stow and the Swells	Post-examination		04/09/2015	Decision in July 2024 to proceed to referendum. Ambitious Plan curtailed by examination, but retains some strong policies, notably on climate change	y	y	y	y	Guide

Annex A1: Schedule of Neighbourhood Planning Activity

Neighbourhood Area	Status	Date Made	Designation date	Key points	Includes a Principal Settlement	Does it identify non-designated heritage assets?	Does it seek to protect Local Green Spaces?	Site Allocations	Design*
Chipping Campden	Regulation 14 - presubmission consultation		14/02/2014	Focussed plan, with relatively few policies. CDC representation suggests some changes to aid progress through examination.	y		y		Guide
Cirencester	Regulation 14 - presubmission consultation		10/09/2018	Seeking to establish a strong vision for the town. Relatively complex relationship with the Town Centre Masterplan, but very much working in partnership with CDC.	y	y	y		Policy
Chedworth	Informal draft shared with CDC		27/01/2021	Stalled - early draft shared, and SEA/HRA screened	n				Guide
Moreton-in-Marsh	Informal draft shared with CDC		20/09/2018	Plan outline shared in April 2024, giving us a reasonable clear idea on priorities. Community Consultation on priorities in early 2023. Expecting an early draft for informal comment soon	y				
Ampney Crucis	Designation		24/06/2020	Although formally designated, the parish is to our knowledge not actively pursuing an NDP	n				
Andoversford	Designation		30/01/2020	Designated, but very little contact with CDC, and limited progress	y				
Blockley	Designation		02/01/2017	Although formally designated, the parish is to our knowledge not actively pursuing an NDP	y				
Ebrington	Designation		14/02/2014	Although formally designated, the parish is to our knowledge not actively pursuing an NDP	n				
Siddington	Designation		29/06/2023	Area designated, but progress limited due to hiatus with Government grant scheme	n				

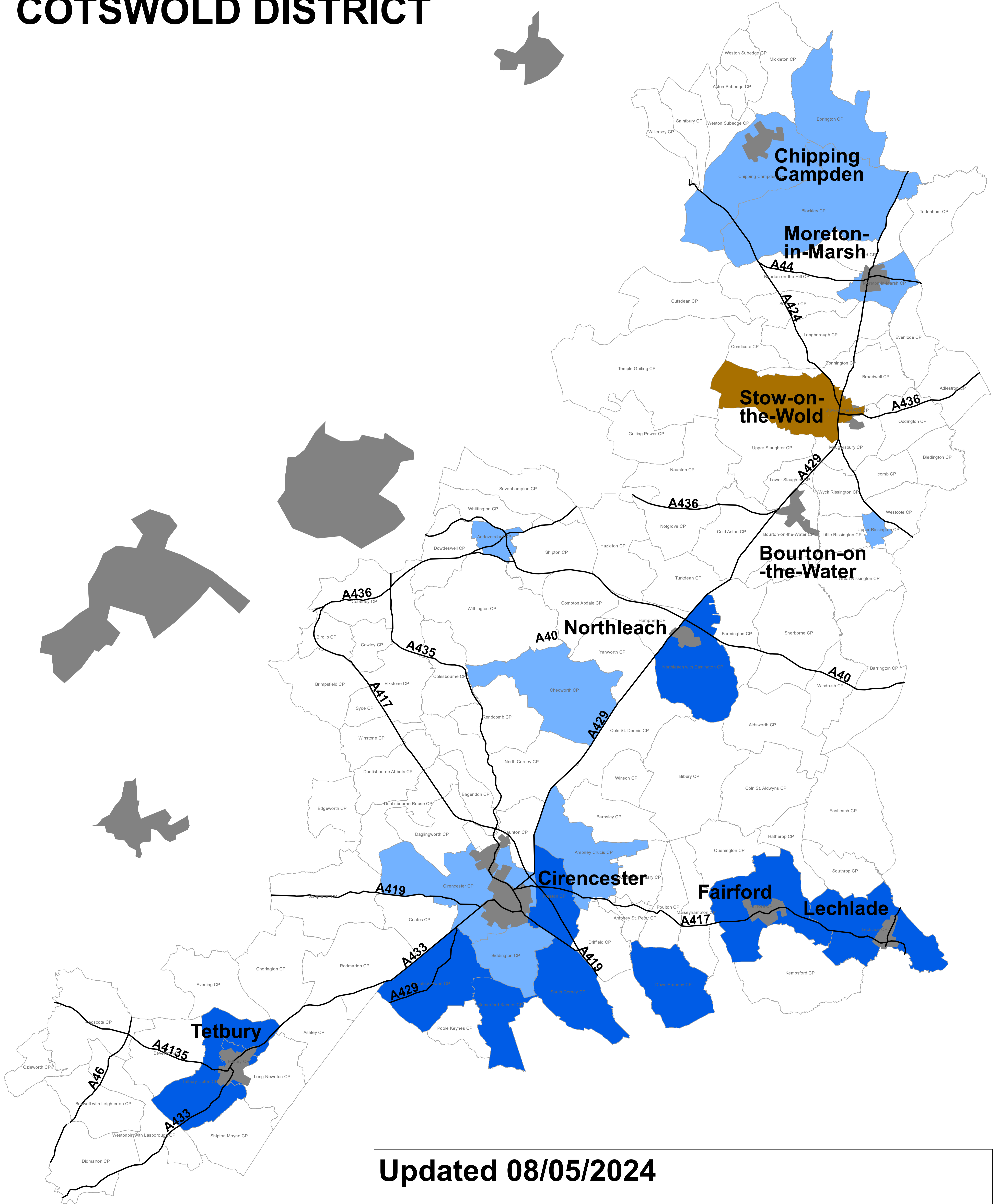
Annex A1: Schedule of Neighbourhood Planning Activity

Neighbourhood Area	Status	Date Made	Designation date	Key points	Includes a Principal Settlement	Does it identify non-designated heritage assets?	Does it seek to protect Local Green Spaces?	Site Allocations	Design*
Upper Rissington	Designation		22/02/2018	Although formally designated, the parish is to our knowledge not actively pursuing an NDP	y				
Birdlip	preliminary discussion			Recent discussion - October 2023 - following town and parish council forum. Some interest in a plan but no formal process undertaken as of yet	n				
Bourton on the Water	preliminary discussion			Parish has created a scoping document, identifying themes, which it has shared with CDC	y				
Mickleton	preliminary discussion			Early discussions pre-2020, and recent briefing to the parish clerk	y				
Willersey	preliminary discussion			Recent discussion - autumn 2023	y				

* Most plans contain a design policy - some of these establish local criteria directly, whereas others give weight to a separate design guide

This page is intentionally left blank

COTSWOLD DISTRICT



Updated 08/05/2024

- 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan
- Passed Examination, policies are a material consideration
- Neighbourhood Areas

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 12



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 02 SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject	BUILDING THE BUDGET
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide members of Overview and Scrutiny committee an outline of the Council's budget setting process, key decision points, and a brief outline of the administration's approach to the annual budget consultation.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Overview and Scrutiny Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report on Building the Budget. 2. Consider and recommendations it wishes Cabinet to consider for the 2025/26 Budget Consultation.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering good services
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides members of Overview and Scrutiny committee an outline of the Council's budget setting process, key decision points, and a brief outline of the administration's approach to the annual budget consultation.
- 1.2 In common with the almost all local authorities, the council faces several external budget pressures that are impacting on its finances over the medium-term. Whilst inflation has fallen back over the course of the calendar year, there remains uncertainty around interest rates and inflationary pressures in the current financial year which exert an influence over the Council's budget both directly and indirectly.

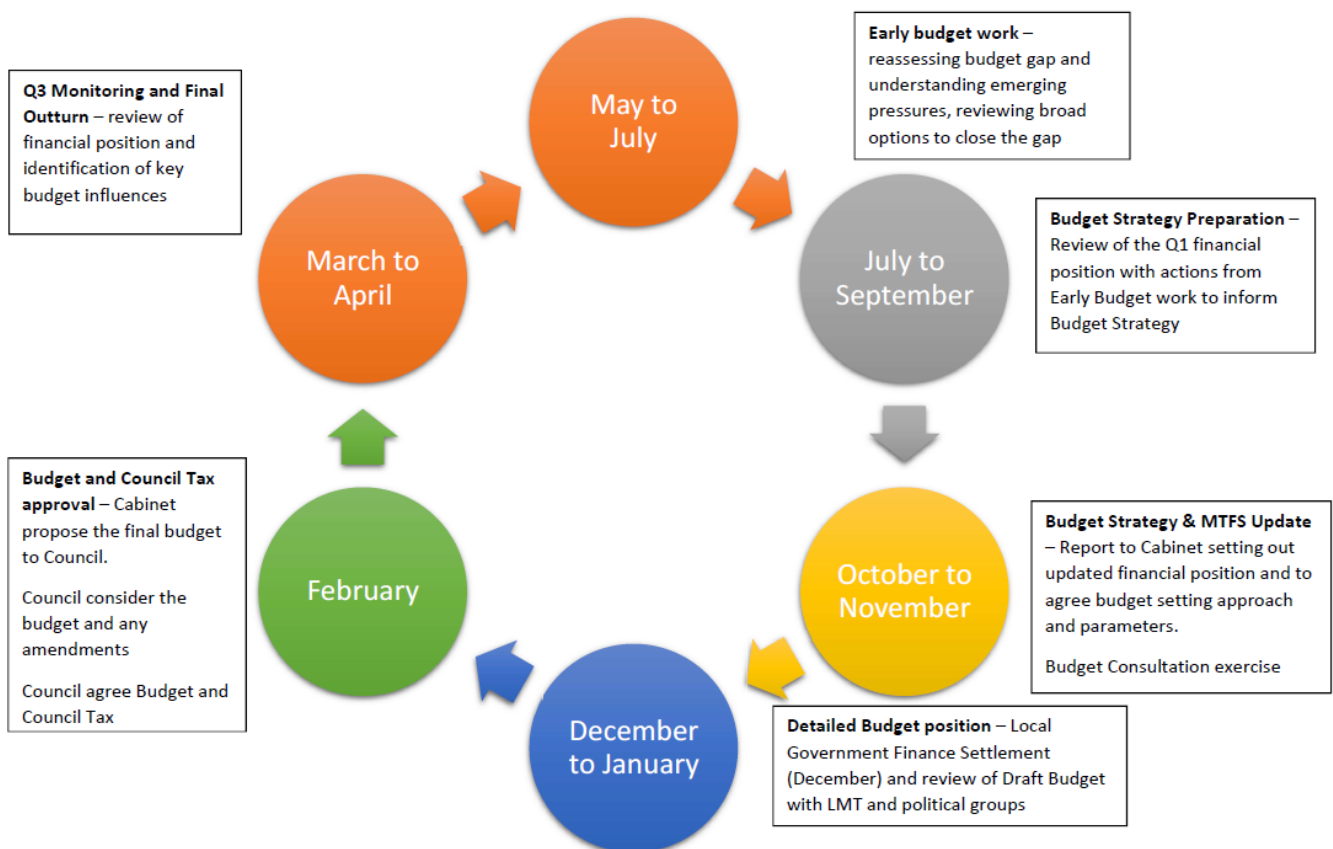
2. ANNUAL BUDGET CYCLE

- 2.1 All local authorities are required on an annual basis to set a balanced budget and approve the level of Council Tax.
- 2.2 There is a robust legislative framework setting out what Councils must do and by when. The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992) set out what the council has to base its budget calculations upon and require the council to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer).
- 2.3 The setting of the budget is a function reserved to full Council, who will consider the draft budget which has been prepared by the Executive (i.e. Cabinet). Once the budget has been agreed by full Council the Executive cannot make any decisions which conflict with it, although virements and year-in-year changes can be made in accordance with the council's financial regulations. The budget must be set before 11 March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.
- 2.4 The Local Government Association's [*Must know guide: The annual budget process*](#) is a useful reference guide for members on the way Council budgets are prepared and includes the following salient points in the introduction:
 - The annual budget process is probably the single biggest, most complex exercise that any council undertakes as part of its annual cycle.
 - Getting this process right is vital to the council's success and contributes significantly to what it achieves for the local area. Without a sustainable budget which supports long-term financial resilience many other plans and aspirations may well founder



3. COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET SETTING

- 3.1 The Council's constitution sets out the Budget and Policy Framework Rules (Part D4), Financial Procedure Rules (Part D9), and the Council Budget Protocol (Part G Appendix D) that outlines the roles and responsibilities for preparing and proposing the budget and the way in which the budget presented to Council and approved.
- 3.2 In practice, the budget setting process should be seen as a continuous cycle – as soon as the annual budget is formally set in February focus shifts towards the following year's budget and how financial performance (as reported in the quarterly Financial Performance Reports) may influence the direction. The diagram below provides an overview of the cycle.





- 3.3** As shown in diagram above, there are two reports that are presented during the budget setting cycle that provide members with updates on the key considerations.
- November O&S and Cabinet: Budget Strategy and MTFS Update report.
 - February O&S, Cabinet and Council: Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report
- 3.4** November's Budget Strategy and MTFS Update report is the most relevant to consider at this meeting following discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 08 January 2024 on the 2024/25 Budget Consultation Feedback Report.
- 3.5** This report will set out the Budget Strategy to support the preparation of the 2025/26 revenue and capital budgets and provide an update Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast. This will include:
- Review of the external economic environment (inflation, interest rates) and the assumptions underpinning the MTFS (e.g. Pay Award, General Inflation).
 - Changes to Government policy and/or consultations that will influence the Council's financial projections.
 - Review of the prior year's outturn report and the current year forecast – what impact does this have on the budget strategy and MTFS (i.e. have savings and cost reductions been achieved, performance on fees and charges).
 - Review of the risks and uncertainties from the current MTFS – are they relevant, optimistic, or pessimistic?
 - Changes in demand for services or other demographic shifts (e.g. temporary accommodation for homeless)
 - Political considerations on Council Tax, Fees, and Charges
 - Review of the Capital Programme and Capital Financing position including availability and revenue impact of internal capital financing (e.g. Capital Receipts, reserves) and options for external capital finance e.g. Prudential Borrowing).
- 3.6** A Budget Consultation exercise is undertaken each year following Cabinet approval of the Budget Strategy and MTFS Update report. As set out in the LGA Must know document:
- “Formal consultation on the budget needs to be legally compliant, and that includes taking account of the government’s statutory guidance on best value. Section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 states that councils must consult taxpayers, service users and other interested persons when deciding how to fulfil their Best Value duty. Although there is no specific requirement to consult widely on the budget, (the council must consult with non-domestic rates payers on its plans for expenditure under Section 65 of the Local Government*



Finance Act 1992), it is an important element of achieving best value and many councils take the opportunity of setting the budget to meet their statutory best value responsibility”

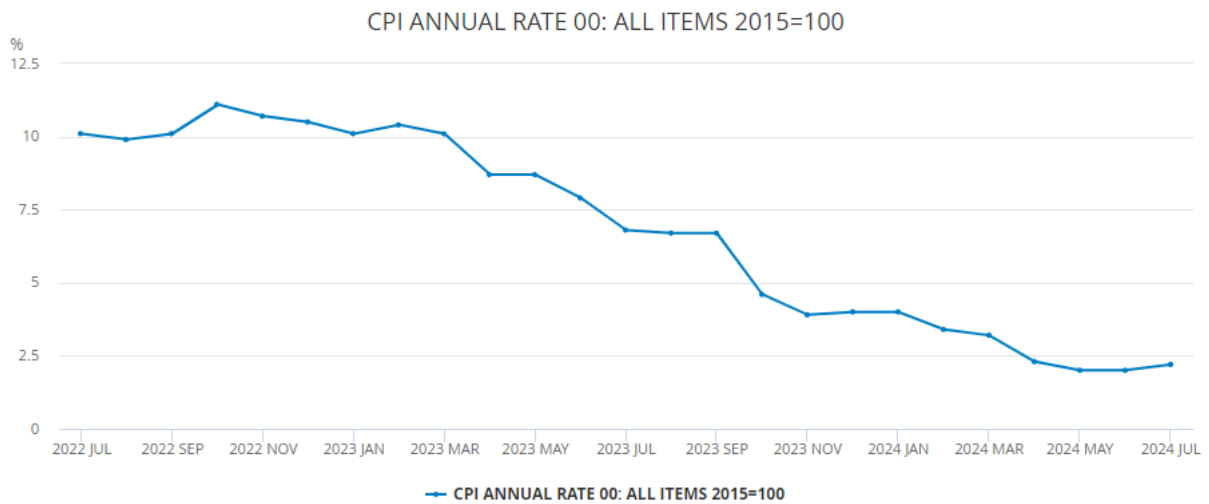
- 3.7 Consultation provides members with the opportunity to engage with residents on the Council’s financial position (in particular the size and scale of the financial challenge), what it will need to do to address this, and the priorities for the coming year.
- 3.8 The 2024/25 budget consultation exercise asked residents for their views on the Council’s budget proposals:
- Whether residents agreed with the administration’s approach to the budget.
 - Whether the Council should make proposed changes to Waste and Recycling services.
 - Whether residents agreed with the approach to increase Council Tax.
 - Asked residents for their view about potential changes to parking charges.
 - Invited residents for comments on the Council’s priorities or any other aspect of the Council’s spending and service delivery.

4. EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

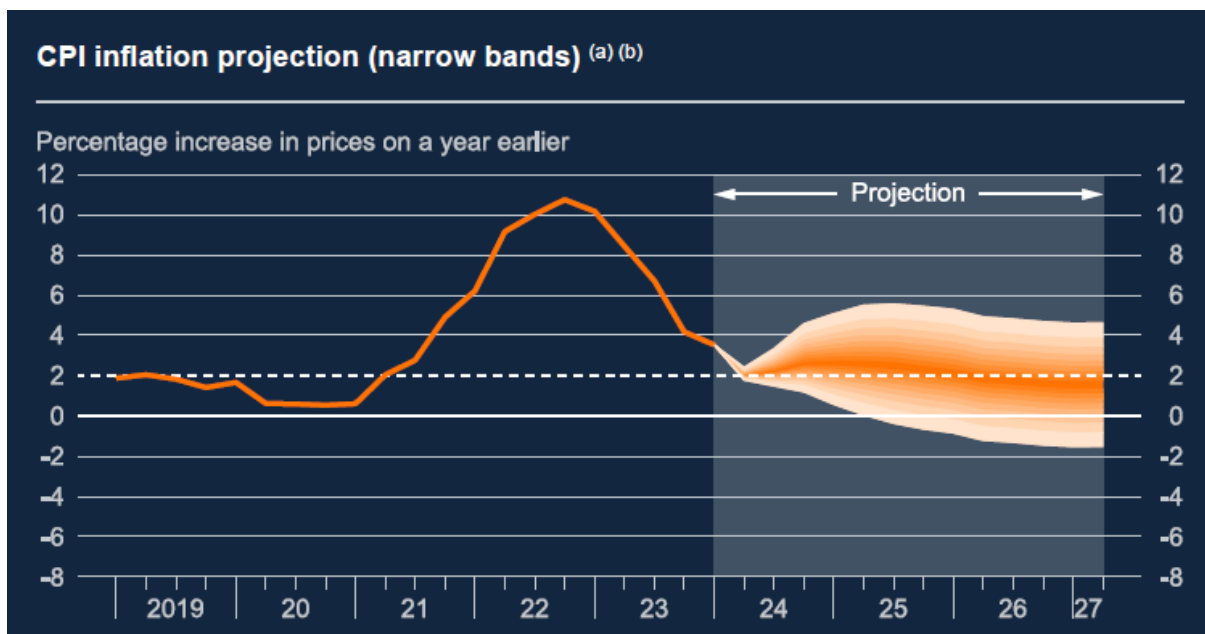
- 4.1 The following section is taken from the Q1 Financial Performance report. The *2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy* report to Council in February 2024 outlined the external economic pressures on the Council that were likely to have a material impact on the budgeted and MTFS. An update on economic environment is provided below.

Inflationary Pressures

- 4.2 The level of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, for July 2024 is 2.2% (up from 2.0% in June 2024). Although it is not the Government's preferred measure of inflation, the Retail Prices Index is 3.6% (2.9% in June 2024). Core inflation (as defined by the Office for National Statistics as the CPI Rate excluding energy, food, alcohol, and tobacco) fell to 3.3% (3.5% in June 2024). It is this measure that concerned the Bank of England and led to increases in interest rates during 2022 and 2023 with easing of the base rate in July 2024.



- 4.3 Although general inflation has reduced since the start of the calendar year, the Council is subject to specific inflationary pressures on its services (e.g., fuel costs on waste and recycling service) which have tended to track higher than CPI and RPI.
- 4.4 The forecast for inflation is to remain close to the Bank of England’s target of 2.0% (CPI) with analysts commenting on the August 2024 rate that the slow and gradual deflation remains with the expectation of further interest rate cuts in the latter half of the year. The graph below shows the different CPI forecasts that are published in the quarterly Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee report (August 2024).



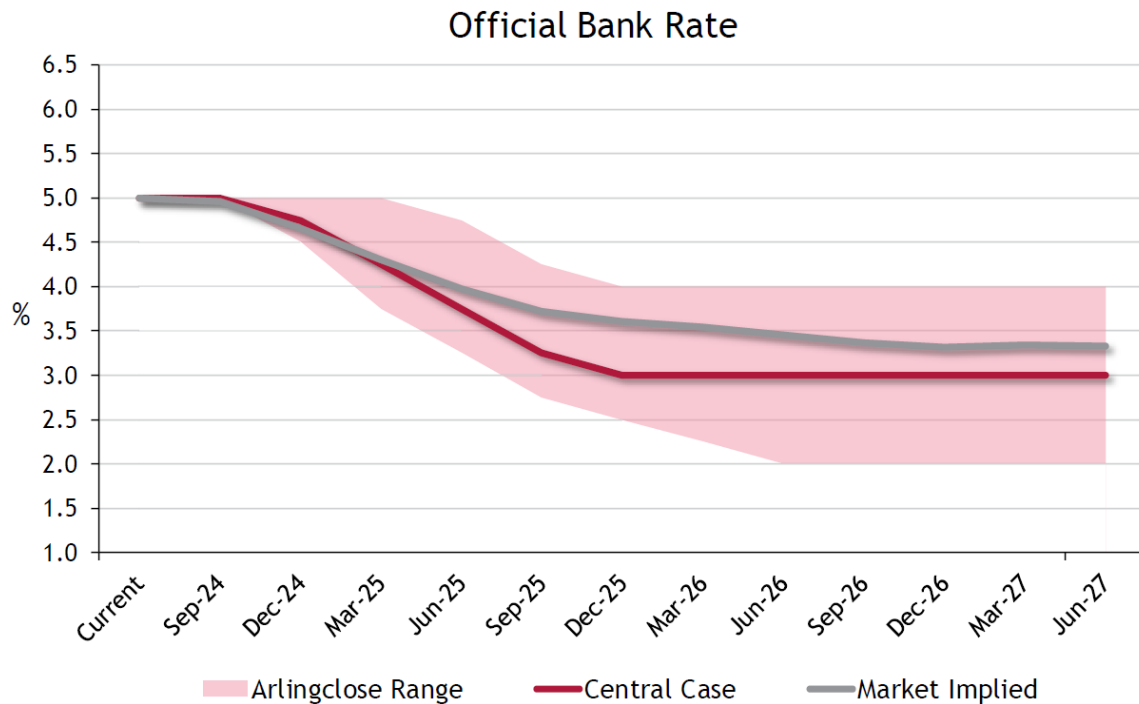


Inflationary Pressures – Pay Award

- 4.5 The assumption made for the 2024/25 budget was for an average Pay Award of 5% across Publica and Council staff with 6% budgeted for across Ubico. Inflationary provision of just under £1m has been included in the budget for the pay award across Publica and Ubico contracts and for retained staff costs.
- 4.6 Local Government employers made a final offer to the unions in May 2024. With effect from 01 April 2023, the offer made by employers was:
- an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive (equating to an increase of between 2.50% and 5.77% depending on the paygrade)
 - an increase of 2.50% on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer
 - an increase of 2.50% on all allowances
- 4.7 For reference, the financial implications of the employers offer outlined above is within the inflation allowance in the current year's budget.
- 4.8 The unions have rejected this offer and are seeking a pay increase of £3,000 or 10% at every spinal column point (whichever is the higher). **The estimated additional financial impact of the union proposal would be around £0.600m.**
- 4.9 At the time of drafting this report it is unclear when the pay award will be settled and at what level.

Interest Rates

- 4.10 The Bank of England increased interest rates fourteen times since December 2021 to mitigate inflationary pressures with the base rate reaching 5.25% in August 2023. The MPC voted to reduce rates by 0.25% to 5.00% at their last meeting at the beginning of August 2024 (5-4 in favour of a reduction to 5.00% with the 4 members voting for no change). The council's treasury management advisors have forecast further reductions during the year with an expectation that the base rate may reduce to 4.25% by March 2025. The next MPC meetings are scheduled for 19 September 2024, 07 November 2024 and 19 December 2024.



- 4.11** Whilst there is no immediate plan to prudentially borrow to support the Capital Programme, the Council may need to undertake borrowing over the medium-term although this is dependent on several factors. Clearly, with PWLB interest rates remaining relatively high compared to the previous 12 years, this will impact the expenditure required to service any borrowing the Council undertakes. The capital financing position is set out in more detail in section 4 of this report.
- 4.12** The Council has limited and reducing internal resources to support the capital programme (capital receipts, earmarked reserves). This is not unique to Cotswold District Council with reports in specialist press (e.g., Public Finance) of Councils shelving or scrapping planned capital projects as other costs continue to rise and/or the need to find savings to balance the budget.
- 4.13** With interest rates expected to remain relatively high during the financial year, the Council will need to ensure capital expenditure and capital financing decisions are made ‘in the round’. This will ensure that existing and new capital schemes are not considered in isolation and are prioritised against the Council’s Corporate Plan and reference to affordability and deliverability.
- 4.14** Cabinet adopted the Asset Management Strategy (AMS) in May 2024 which set out the principles for managing assets and provides a clear strategy for decision making and investment



in the Council's land and property assets. To support the AMS, detailed asset management plans for each asset will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting in November 2024.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** The report sets out the budget setting process and the decisions that members will need to take prior to the presentation of the budget and consideration of the Council Tax Level in February 2025.
- 5.2** The Budget Strategy and MTFS Update report to Cabinet in November 2024 will set out the Council's financial prospects for 2025/26 with specific proposals around savings and funding subject to consultation. Feedback from the consultation process together with any further budget adjustments for 2025/26 will be reported to the Cabinet in January 2025.
- 5.3** The final budget proposals, including the outcome from the Local Government Finance Settlement, will be presented to the Cabinet in February 2025, and will subsequently be debated at Council later in February 2025.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** None.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)

Agenda Item 13



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 02 SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject	FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q1 2024/25
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report sets of the initial budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year.
Annexes	None (Will be included in Cabinet Report)
Recommendation(s)	That Overview and Scrutiny Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reviews and notes the financial position set out in this report.2. Consider and recommendations it wishes Cabinet to consider for the Cabinet meeting on 05 September 2024.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering good services
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides members with the initial outturn forecast and monitoring position statement for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to notify members of any significant variations to budgets identified in the second quarterly budget monitor exercise, highlight any key financial issues, and to inform members of options and further action to be taken.
- 1.3 In common with the almost all local authorities, the council faces several external budget pressures that are impacting on its finances over the medium-term. Whilst inflation has fallen back over the course of the calendar year, there remains uncertainty around interest rates and inflationary pressures in the current financial year which exert an influence over the Council's budget both directly and indirectly.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the outturn forecast for the financial year informed by Q1 budget monitoring.
- 2.2 Based on the budget monitoring exercise undertaken for Q1 and an assessment of the risks and uncertainties facing the Council, the outturn forecast is an adverse variation of £0.145m



Table ESI – Revenue Budget Outturn Forecast (Q1)

	2024/25 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Revenue Budget				
Subtotal Services	18,320	3,615	18,442	121
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,778)		(1,778)	0
Revised Subtotal Services	16,542	3,615	16,663	121
Corporate Income & Expenditure	(1,481)	(406)	(1,605)	(124)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	0	148	148
Net Budget Requirement	15,061	3,209	15,206	145
Funded by:				
Council Tax	(6,597)		(6,597)	0
Retained Business Rates	(5,014)		(5,014)	0
Government Funding - Grants	(3,206)		(3,206)	0
Government Funding - NHB	(287)		(287)	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	(473)		(473)	0
TOTAL Funding	(15,577)	0	(15,577)	0
Budget shortfall/(surplus)	(516)		(371)	145

Table ES2 – Revenue Budget – Reconciliation of variations (Q1)

Variations at a glance	Positive variation (£'000)	Adverse Variation (£'000)
Fees & Charges	(65)	59
Commercial Property - Rental income shortfall (risk)		23
Elections		54
Car Parks (Business Rates)	(58)	
Bank Charges		26
Other service variations		10
Mobilisation costs - rezoning of Waste & Recycling		72
Treasury Management Income	(125)	
Savings Target	0	0
Publica Review - Phase 1		148
Subtotal	(247)	392
Net Outturn Variation		145

2.3 The material forecast variations are listed below with further details in Section 4 of this report.



- Forecast income variations – Underachievement: Land Charges (£24k), Cemeteries (£35k). Additional income: Bulky Waste (£38k), Green Waste (£15k)
- Commercial Property rental income (£23k adverse variation)
- Car Park Expenditure – underspend on business rates £58k
- Elections – Overspend of £54k forecast due to expenditure with Civica on the trial of Tablets that cannot be claimed through the Parliamentary Election expenses scheme.
- Bank Charges – Additional cost arising from increased volume of card and bank charges of £26k. A revised contract for debit and credit card fee processing charges will be in place later in the financial year.
- £72k additional expenditure for Communications and Customer service support for the rollout of the Waste and Recycling rezoning.
- Treasury Management and interest receivable performance (£0.125m positive variation)
- Publica Review impact (part-year) of £0.148m included as a provision.

2.4 The Cabinet Transform Working Group (CTWG) will consider the forecast outturn, financial risks and uncertainties set out in this report. CTWG will specifically be considering proposals from service delivery partners to contribute to the Council's Savings plans and will be closely monitoring the achievement of savings targets.

2.5 The outturn forecast is a net overspend/adverse variance of £0.145m. Without positive action, the outturn variation would reduce the level of budgeted surplus in-year (i.e. it would reduce the planned transfer to the Financial Resilience reserve at year end from £0.516m to £0.371m). Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast outturn position.

2.6 A summary of the Capital Programme outturn forecast is shown in the table below.



Table ES2 – Capital Programme Outturn Forecast

Capital Programme	2024/25 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2023/24 (£'000)	2024/25 Adjs (£'000)	2024/25 LAB (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Leisure & Communities	1,310	0	0	1,310	71	1,279	(31)
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	2,289	262	0	2,551	404	3,351	800
Environment	1,857	218	383	2,458	0	2,192	(266)
Retained & Corporate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	350	0	0	350	0	150	(200)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	573	179	0	752	0	752	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	0	0	134	0	134	0
Land, Legal and Property	300	580	0	880	0	880	0
Transformation and Investment	0	274	0	274	0	274	0
TOTAL Capital Programme	6,813	1,513	383	8,709	475	9,012	303

- 2.7** Whilst the table indicates a net overspend of £0.303m this is due to a timing difference on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) funding. The Capital Programme, as approved in February 2024, includes £0.700m of funding from the Better Care Fund support DFG expenditure. Through the pooling arrangements in place with Gloucestershire County Council, expenditure of up to £1.5m in 2024/25 is provided. An amendment to the Capital expenditure and financing budget will be presented to Cabinet later in the financial year.
- 2.8** Therefore, the underlying position on the capital programme (excluding DFGs) is a forecast underspend of £0.497m.
- 2.9** Financial Sustainability – The 2024/25 revenue budget, as approved by Council in February 2024, is for a surplus of £0.516m which will be transferred to the Financial Resilience Reserve. It should be noted that without any improvement in the forecast during the year, corrective action, or additional savings the outturn variation would reduce the surplus to £0.443m. Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and further management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the current forecast outturn.
- 2.10** Financial Performance reports will be presented to members at the December 2024 and March 2025 Cabinet meeting with the outturn position likely to be finalised for the July 2025 Cabinet meeting.

3. EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

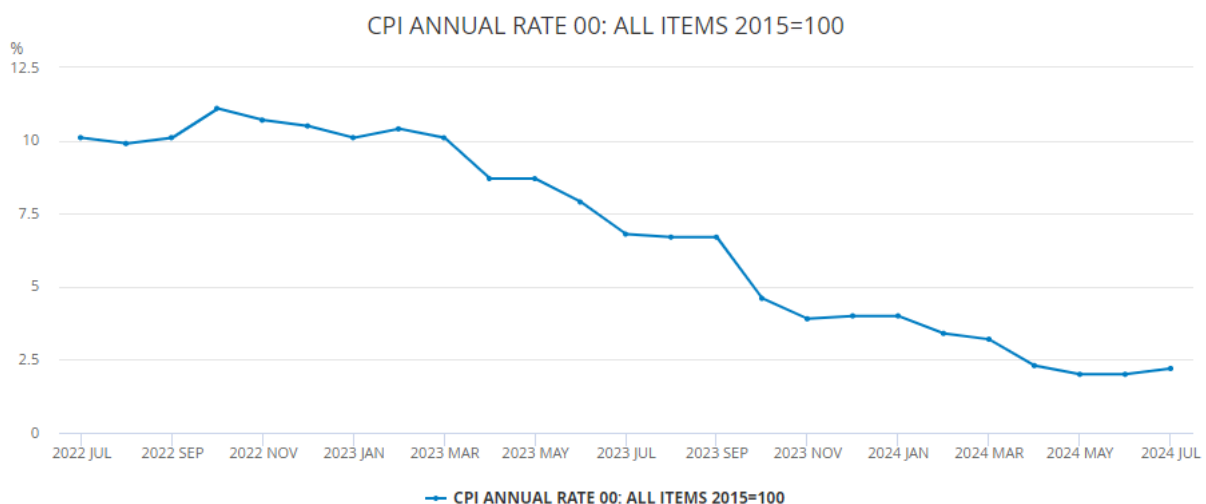
- 3.1** The *2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy* report to Council in February 2024 outlined the external economic pressures on the Council that



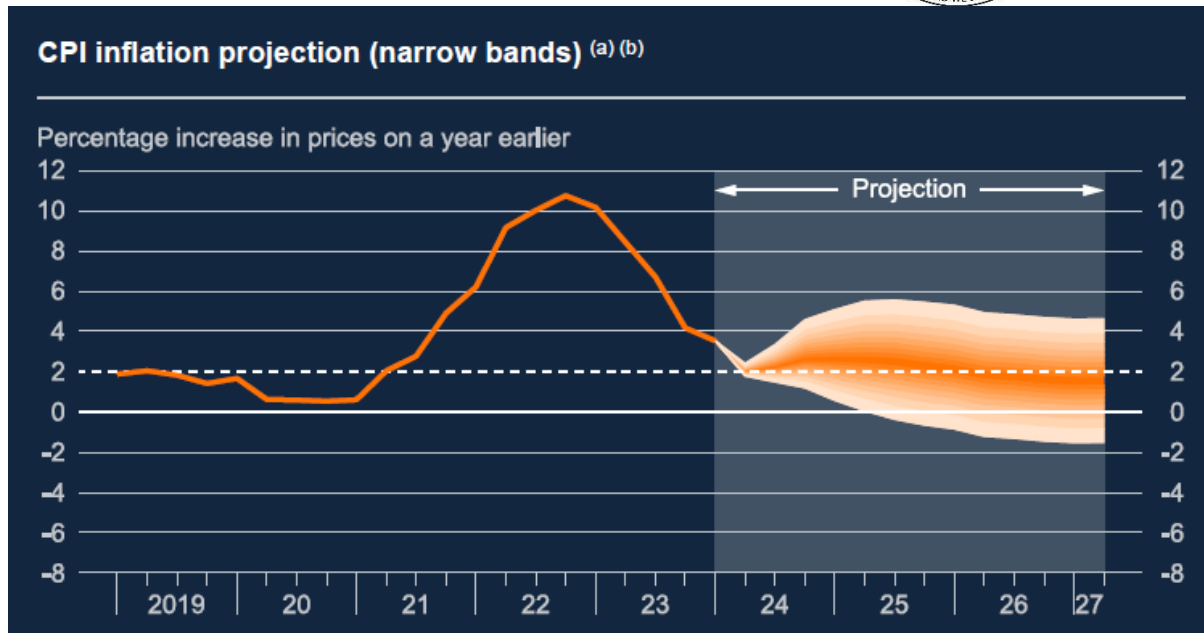
were likely to have a material impact on the budgeted and MTFS.
An update on economic environment is provided below.

Inflationary Pressures

- 3.2** The level of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, for July 2024 is 2.2% (up from 2.0% in June 2024). Although it is not the Government's preferred measure of inflation, the Retail Prices Index is 3.6% (2.9% in June 2024). Core inflation (as defined by the Office for National Statistics as the CPI Rate excluding energy, food, alcohol, and tobacco) fell to 3.3% (3.5% in June 2024). It is this measure that concerned the Bank of England and led to increases in interest rates during 2022 and 2023 with easing of the base rate in July 2024.



- 3.3** Although general inflation has reduced since the start of the calendar year, the Council is subject to specific inflationary pressures on its services (e.g., fuel costs on waste and recycling service) which have tended to track higher than CPI and RPI.
- 3.4** The forecast for inflation is to remain close to the Bank of England's target of 2.0% (CPI) with analysts commenting on the August 2024 rate that the slow and gradual deflation remains with the expectation of further interest rate cuts in the latter half of the year. The graph below shows the different CPI forecasts that are published in the quarterly Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee report (August 2024).



Inflationary Pressures – Pay Award

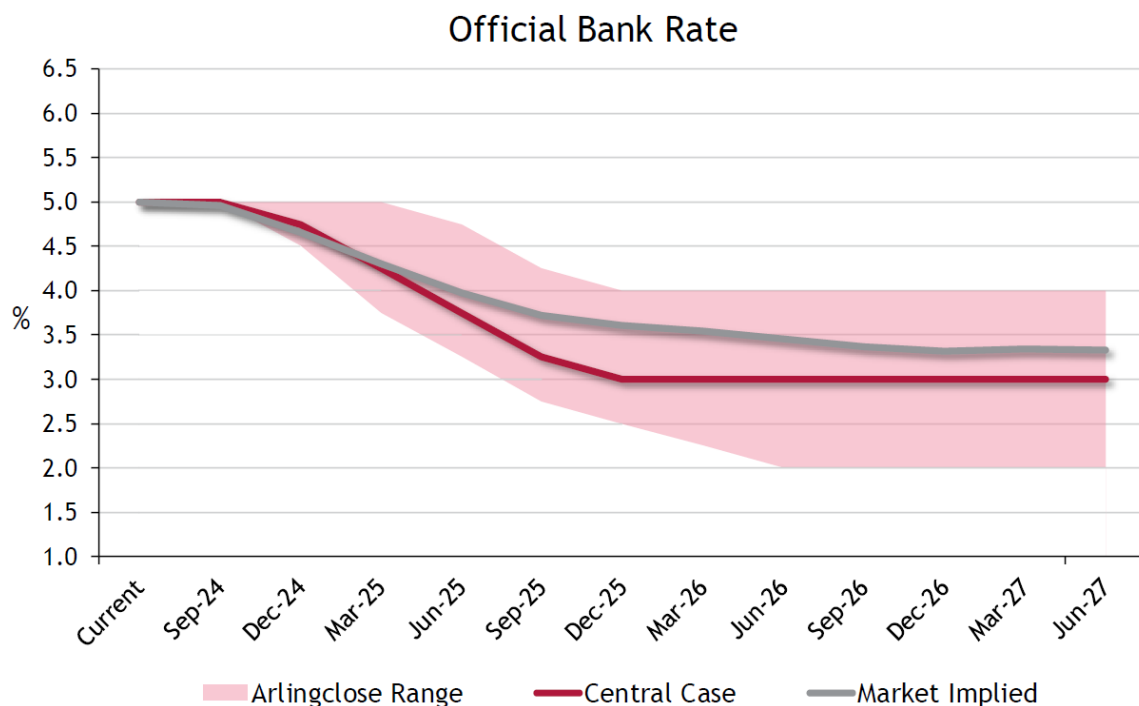
- 3.5** The assumption made for the 2024/25 budget was for an average Pay Award of 5% across Publica and Council staff with 6% budgeted for across Ubico. Inflationary provision of just under £1m has been included in the budget for the pay award across Publica and Ubico contracts and for retained staff costs.
- 3.6** Local Government employers made a final offer to the unions in May 2024. With effect from 01 April 2023, the offer made by employers was:
- an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive (equating to an increase of between 2.50% and 5.77% depending on the paygrade)
 - an increase of 2.50% on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer
 - an increase of 2.50% on all allowances
- 3.7** For reference, the financial implications of the employers offer outlined above is within the inflation allowance in the current year's budget.
- 3.8** The unions have rejected this offer and are seeking a pay increase of £3,000 or 10% at every spinal column point (whichever is the higher). **The estimated additional financial impact of the union proposal would be around £0.600m.**



3.9 At the time of writing this report it is unclear when the pay award will be settled and at what level.

Interest Rates

3.10 The Bank of England increased interest rates fourteen times since December 2021 to mitigate inflationary pressures with the base rate reaching 5.25% in August 2023. The MPC voted to reduce rates by 0.25% to 5.00% at their last meeting at the beginning of August 2024 (5-4 in favour of a reduction to 5.00% with the 4 members voting for no change). The council's treasury management advisors have forecast further reductions during the year with an expectation that the base rate may reduce to 4.25% by March 2025. The next MPC meetings are scheduled for 19 September 2024, 07 November 2024 and 19 December 2024.



3.11 Whilst there is no immediate plan to prudentially borrow to support the Capital Programme, the Council may need to undertake borrowing over the medium-term although this is dependent on several factors. Clearly, with PWLB interest rates remaining relatively high compared to the previous 12 years, this will impact the expenditure required to service any borrowing the Council undertakes. The capital financing position is set out in more detail in section 4 of this report.

3.12 The Council has limited and reducing internal resources to support the capital programme (capital receipts, earmarked reserves). This is not unique to Cotswold District Council with reports in specialist press (e.g., Public Finance) of Councils shelving or scrapping planned



capital projects as other costs continue to rise and/or the need to find savings to balance the budget.

- 3.13 With interest rates expected to remain relatively high during the financial year, the Council will need to ensure capital expenditure and capital financing decisions are made ‘in the round’. This will ensure that existing and new capital schemes are not considered in isolation and are prioritised against the Council’s Corporate Plan and reference to affordability and deliverability.
- 3.14 Cabinet adopted the Asset Management Strategy (AMS) in May 2024 which set out the principles for managing assets and provides a clear strategy for decision making and investment in the Council’s land and property assets. To support the AMS, detailed asset management plans for each asset will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting in November 2024.

4. REVENUE BUDGET

- 4.1 The Revenue Budget was approved by Council at their meeting on 21 February 2024 with no adjustments made during the financial year to date.

Table 1 – Revenue Budget reconciliation

Budget Item	(£'000)
Original Budget (Council, 21 February 2024)	15,061
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Latest Budget	15,061

- 4.2 The revenue budget will be in a state of flux during the financial year as budgets will be amended to reflect the transfer of services from Publica to the Council in Phase I of the Publica Transition. Whilst it is not anticipated that the net budget position (£15.061m) will change, the composition of the budget (i.e. subjective split between Pay and Non-Pay budgets) and net service budgets will be amended. These changes will include:
- Reversal of Publica Contract Sum budgets for Phase I services
 - Establishment of relevant Pay and Non-pay budgets for Phase I services in-line with the indicative amounts included in the [Publica Review - Detailed Transition Plan](#) report approved by Council on 31 July 2024.



- A review of the remaining balance of the Publica Contract Sum with consideration of further adjustment to Phase 2 services and those services that will remain with Publica.
- 4.3** With Phase I effective from 01 November 2024, members should expect to see material adjustments to service budgets in the Q3 and Q4 financial performance reports with a revised revenue budget for 2024/25 included with the 2025/26 Budget and MTFS proposals to Cabinet and Council in February 2025.
- 4.4** As at 30 June 2024 Q1 the Council's net expenditure (excluding Funding and Parish Precepts) was £3.209m against the profiled budget of £3.451m.
- 4.5** At their meeting on 31 July 2024, Council approved the implementation of Phase I of the Publica Transition based on the Detailed Transition Plan (DTP). The report set out that the net additional impact on the revenue budget in the current financial year is estimated at £0.148m (i.e. from the effective date of the Phase I transfer of 01 November 2024). The Publica Transition will have a significant impact on the budget over the coming months and will be monitored closely. Management action taken should cost pressures start to come through. Any variation from this estimate will be reported to members through the regular quarterly financial reporting to Cabinet.
- 4.6** The outturn forecast for 2024/25 of £15.134m results in a forecast variance of £0.073m. Table 2 provides members with an overview of the material outturn variations that have been forecast across services with Tables 3 and 4 providing detail on the non-service revenue expenditure and income budgets.



Table 2 – Revenue Budget Outturn Forecast Summary

	2024/25 Original Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Revenue Budget					
Environmental & Regulatory Services	620	620	147	606	(14)
Business Sup. Svcs - Finance, HR, Procurement	1,285	1,285	485	1,285	0
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,423	2,423	536	2,423	0
Assets, Property & Regeneration	829	829	229	853	24
Publica Executives and Modernisation	139	139	35	139	0
Revenues & Housing Support	930	930	147	930	0
Environmental Services	4,496	4,496	833	4,495	(1)
Leisure & Communities	2,342	2,342	87	2,342	0
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,653	1,653	384	1,653	0
Democratic Services	1,176	1,176	(38)	1,230	54
Retained and Corporate	2,426	2,426	771	2,484	58
Subtotal Services	18,320	18,320	3,615	18,442	121
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,778)	(1,778)		(1,778)	0
Revised Subtotal Services	16,542	16,542	3,615	16,663	121
Corporate Income & Expenditure	(1,481)	(1,481)	(406)	(1,605)	(124)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	0	0	148	148
Net Budget Requirement	15,061	15,061	3,209	15,206	145
Funded by:					
Council Tax	(6,597)	(6,597)		(6,597)	0
Retained Business Rates	(5,014)	(5,014)		(5,014)	0
Government Funding - Grants	(3,206)	(3,206)		(3,206)	0
Government Funding - NHB	(287)	(287)		(287)	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	(473)	(473)		(473)	0
TOTAL Funding	(15,577)	(15,577)	0	(15,577)	0
Budget shortfall/(surplus)	(516)	(516)		(371)	145



Table 3 – Corporate Income and Expenditure Q1

	2024/254 Original Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Corporate Income and Expenditure				
Contingency	200	200	200	0
Other non-service expenditure	52	52	52	0
Other non-service savings	(7)	(7)	(7)	0
Contingency, other non-service income and expenditure	245	245	245	0
Savings & Transformation Items	(714)	(714)	(714)	0
Treasury Management - Interest Payable	9	9	9	0
Treasury Management - Interest Receivable	(1,333)	(1,333)	(1,458)	(125)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	12	12	12	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	0	0	0	0
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	301	301	301	0
	(1,481)	(1,481)	(1,605)	(125)

Table 4 – Provisions and Risk Q1

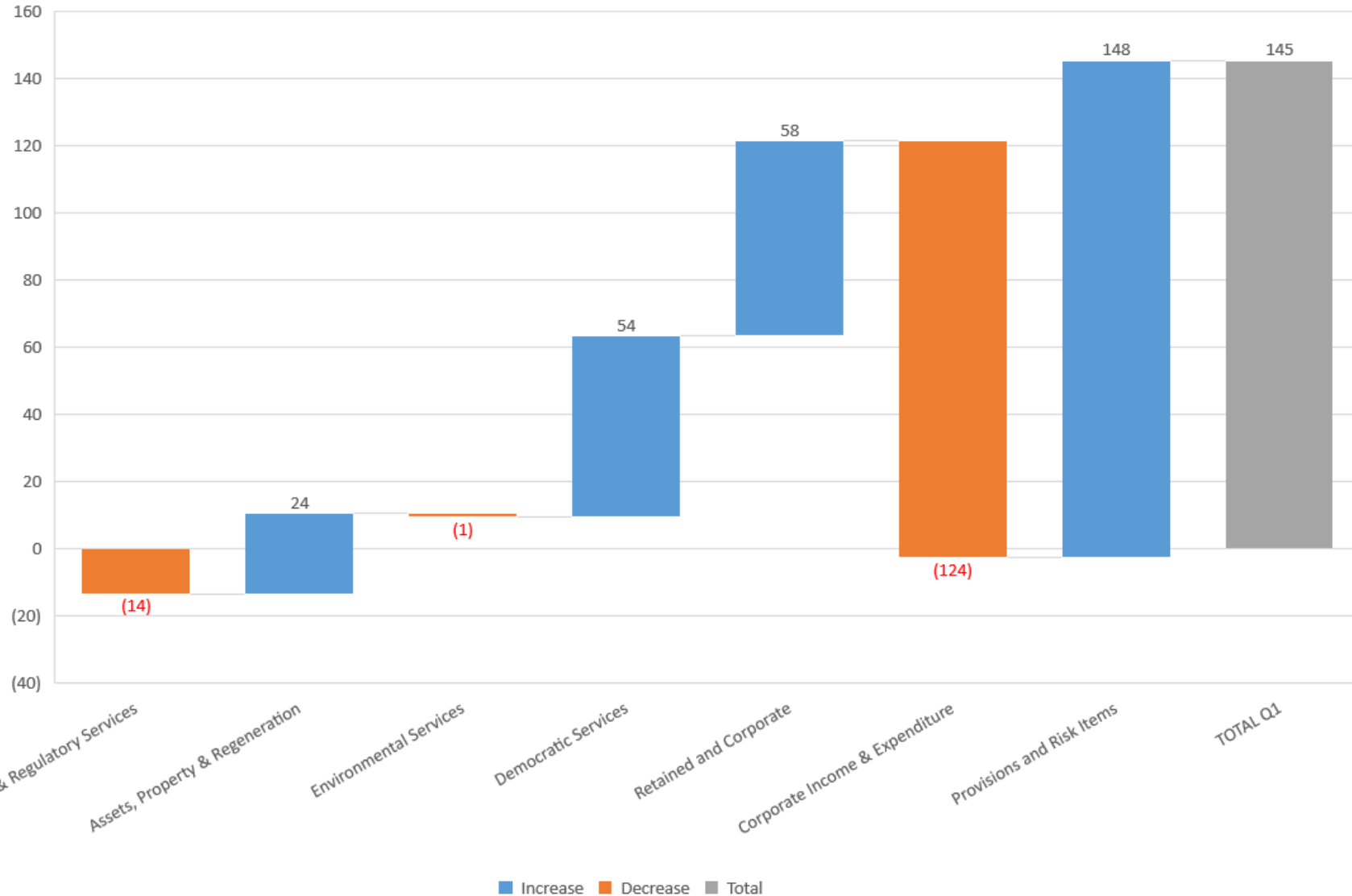
	2024/25 Original Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Provisions and Risk				
Savings/Contingency Risk				0
Ubico Contract				0
Publica Contract				0
Phase One Publica Review - as per July report			148	148
	0	0	148	148

Key variations

- 4.7** As outlined in paragraph 4.6, the forecast outturn position is a net overspend/adverse variance of £0.145m. Without positive action, the outturn variation would reduce the level of budgeted surplus in-year (i.e. it would reduce the planned transfer to the Financial Resilience reserve at year end from £0.516m to £0.371m). Clearly, this is not a desirable outcome and management action must be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast outturn position.



Summary of key Revenue Budget variations - Q1 2024/25

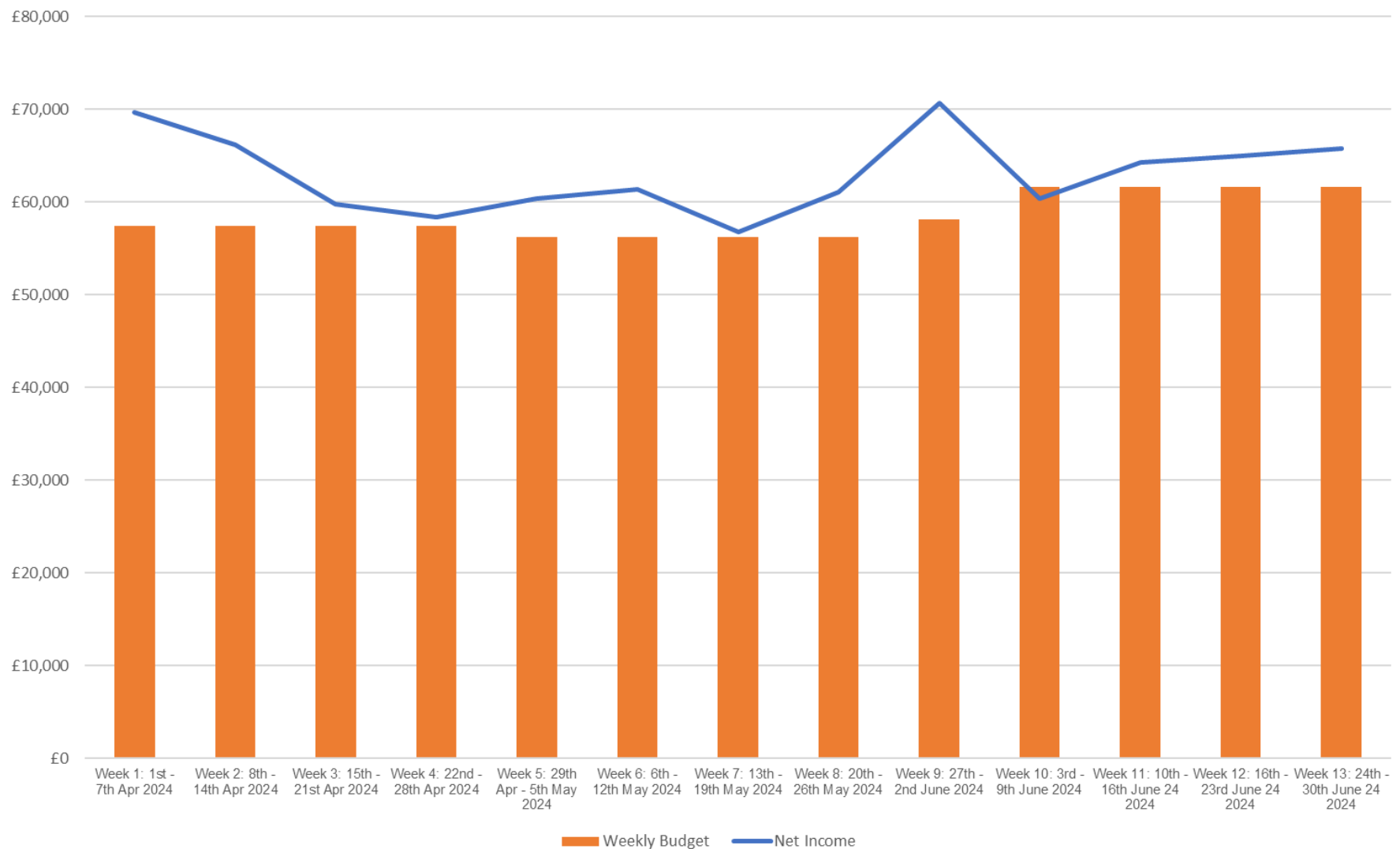




- 4.8** The material items which have had an impact on the Council's revenue budget are summarised below with narrative explaining the reasons(s) for the variation in the paragraphs that follow.
- Forecast income variations – Underachievement: Land Charges (£24k), Cemeteries (£35k). Additional income: Bulky Waste (£38k)
 - Commercial Property rental income (£23k adverse variation)
 - Car Park Expenditure – underspend on business rates £58k
 - Elections – Overspend of £54k forecast due to expenditure with Civica on the trial of Tablets that cannot be claimed through the Parliamentary Election expenses scheme.
 - Bank Charges – Additional cost arising from increased volume of card and bank charges of £26k. A revised contract for debit and credit card fee processing charges will be in place later in the financial year.
 - £72k additional expenditure for Communications and Customer service support for the rollout of the Waste and Recycling rezoning.
 - Treasury Management and interest receivable performance (£0.125m positive variation)
 - Publica Review impact (part-year) of £0.148m included as a provision.
- 4.9** The 2024/25 revenue budget included £1.350m of material increases to fees and charges and cost reductions:
- Car Parks Fees (£0.481m) additional income
 - Garden Waste Fee (£0.169) additional income
 - Waste and Recycling (£0.375m) cost reduction
 - Streets Service (£0.150m) cost reduction
 - Planning Fees (£0.100m) additional income
 - Customer Service contact centre (0.075m) further cost reduction
- 4.10** The outturn forecast for Q1 indicates these income increases, and cost reductions should be achieved in full:
- Income from Car Park fees is currently 8% above the budgeted level (6% above budgeted level when Permits and Fines are included). The graph below provides a week-by-week comparison of actual fee income against the budget up to 30 June 2024.
 - Garden Waste fee income received is £15k above the budgeted level at Q1 although likely to be higher by Q2.
 - Cabinet approved the reduced telephone access arrangements (Customer Service contact centre) on a permanent basis at their meeting on 25 July 2024.



Car Park Fee Income - Q1 Actuals vs. Budget





Garden Waste Fee	Fee	Licences	No. subject to LCTS discount	Estimated additional Income (£)	TOTAL Income (£'000)
MTFS Assumption	£64.00	22,230	1,305	0	1,465
Q1 Forecast (20 June 2024)	£64.00	21,730	1,257	49	1,480
Current position (20 August 2024)	£64.00	22,613	1,324	0	1,490

- 4.11** However, it is too early in the financial year to assess with certainty achievement of the cost reductions for the revised Waste and Recycling rounds and Streets Service. These will be analysed in detail in the Q2 Financial Performance report which will be considered by Cabinet in December 2024.
- 4.12** Where income shortfalls have been forecast, it is expected that Business Managers and Assistant Directors evaluate options for corrective action. It is unlikely income will recover in the current financial year and may have a detrimental impact on the Council's finances over the medium-term. The evaluation must include an assessment of the service cost and income, market positioning, and unit cost and benchmarking data analysis. Options should outline, if possible, how the service can be financially sustainable.
- 4.13** Income from land charges is below budget with net income received forecast to be £24k below budget at the end of the financial year due (based on the current profiled position). The income budget was reduced for the year by £19k (from £0.208m to £0.189m) recognising the downward trend on income in 2023/24 in part to the rise in free unofficial Personal Searches (through Personal Search Agents). Service performance data indicates the service is exceeding the target for completing land charge searches within 10 days but does not provide information on activity levels. Further analysis of service cost and income will be undertaken for the Q2 Financial Performance report.
- 4.14** There is a risk that the Council will not receive the budgeted level of commercial rental income given the challenging economic conditions across retail and office sectors and downward pressure on rents. An income shortfall of £23k is currently forecast but will be reviewed alongside the wider Asset Management Strategy.
- 4.15** An overspend of £54k is forecast for the Elections service. This is due to expenditure with CIVICA on the trial of Tablets at the Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2024 and the General Election in July 2024. These costs cannot be claimed through the national election expenses scheme. Trials have been undertaken to assess whether the use of Tablets



and software would streamline the election process by reducing the opportunity for polling station errors and streamlining the count process with ballot paper accounts reconciled through the Tablet and software.

- 4.16** Car Park Expenditure (Business Rates) – the expenditure budget for business rates for the Council's Car Parks is £0.306m and this is forecast to be underspent by £58k this year (2023/24 underspend £71k). In previous years, this underspend has mitigated income shortfalls (Fees, Permits, Fines) but current performance levels on car park fees indicate this will not be required in-year. The level of business rates for 2025/26 will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process and an over-provision of budget will be released.

Treasury Management

- 4.17** Dividends from the Council's longer-term investments (Pooled funds and Real Estate Investment Trusts) of £0.170m were received in the first quarter of the financial year achieving a return of 4.98%. Interest from short term cash deposits with the Debt Management Office (DMO) was £0.156m due to interest rates remaining at a higher level than assumed in the budget and MTFS.
- 4.18** It should be noted that the budgeted level of investment income for 2024/25 is £1.3m – an increase of £0.515m over the 2023/24 and recognises the current interest rate position and improved returns. This is a prudent estimate for the year but is lower than the final 2023/24 level of investment income of £1.784m given the forecast interest rate reductions over the financial year.
- 4.19** It is not expected that the current interest rate level will be maintained over the MTFS period, as set out in Section 3 of this report, with expectations of investment income in 2025/26 reducing to around £1m with a further reduction to £0.5m by 2026/27.
- 4.20** Whilst the Bank of England has reduced the base rate by 0.25% and a further modest rate cuts expected during the financial year, the outturn forecast only considers the Q1 variation. The level of investment income for the year will depend on the performance of both short-term investments (Money Market Funds, deposits with the DMO) and dividends from the long-term investment. It is too early in the financial year to assess with certainty the prospects for Q2 to Q4. The table below provides members with a high-level overview of the Council's Treasury Management investments on 30 June 2024.



Table 6 – Treasury Management Investments on 30 June 2024

[NOT FINAL]

Investment type	Balance invested at 30/06/24 (£'000)	Investment Income received to 30/06/24 (£'000)
Bank of England DMDAF	tbc	82
Money Market Funds		
Federated Money Market Fund	tbc	26
DGLS Money Market Fund	tbc	23
Insight Liquidity Money Market Fund	tbc	13
Lloyds Instant Access		8
Other Short-term deposits	tbc	5
Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT)		
Fundamentum Housing REIT	953	8
Cash Plus Fund		
Federated Cash Plus Fund	tbc	0
Pooled Funds		
CCLA Property Fund	2,143	30
Shroders Income Maximiser Fund	821	23
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	968	11
M&G UK Income Fund	1,788	51
Investec Diversified Fund	1,793	24
Columbia Threadneedle Bond Fund	1,915	25
		326

4.21 Should Treasury Management investment returns continue to be above the budgeted level and subject to the outturn forecast, it is recommended that a proportion is transferred to the Treasury Management Risk earmarked reserve to manage higher borrowing costs in the short-term and to mitigate potential changes to the accounting treatment of gains and losses on pooled funds from March 2025.

4.22 Council approved the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy) at their meeting on 21 February 2024. Audit and Governance Committee have responsibility for reviewing and monitoring treasury management arrangements in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and receiving performance reports. The Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the



CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

- 4.23** The CIPFA Code was updated in 2021 and includes the new requirement, mandatory from 01 April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are expected to be included in the Council's usual revenue and capital monitoring reports. Section 6 and **Annex x** of this report provides members with an overview on the non-treasury position.

Corporate Income and Expenditure, Provisions and Risk

- 4.24** As outlined in Tables 3 and 4 there are variations forecast across the Corporate Income and Expenditure budgets. These budgets support the General Fund Revenue budget and are typically the non-service items such as Treasury Management, financing, contingency budget, and provisions for risk.
- 4.25** As outlined earlier in this section, the performance of the Council's Treasury Management Investments is largely due to the higher than anticipated interest rates. The outturn forecast based on the Q1 returns is additional income of £0.125m and does not project this forward into Q2-Q4 given the forecast of further base rate reductions by the Bank of England.
- 4.26** Should the strong performance of Treasury Management Investments continue in Q2 and Q3, it is recommended that a further sum is transferred to the Treasury Management Reserve to mitigate the potential change to accounting treatment of Pooled Funds from March 2025.
- 4.27** As outlined earlier in this report, forecast additional expenditure of £0.148m for Phase I of the Publica Transition is included as a risk provision in the Q1 outturn forecast.
- 4.28** The *Publica Review – Detailed Transition Plan* report, approved by Council at their meeting on 31 July 2024, outlined the financial implications associated with Phase I. For the purposes of the Q1 outturn forecast it is assumed the estimated part-year impact of £0.148m remains unchanged. As with all estimates, a number of critical judgements and assumptions have been made in terms of the additional cost of service delivery from 01 November 2024. The Q2 and Q3 Financial Performance reports to Cabinet will update members on actual additional costs as they are incurred with a reconciliation against the estimates included in the DTP and this report.



4.29 The Table below shows the latest forecast for the Publica Transition Cost which is funded from the £0.500m set aside in the Council Priority: Publica Review earmarked reserve.

<< Table to be included in final draft >>

5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

5.1 Council approved the Capital Programme for 2024/25 at their meeting on 21 February 2024. The Capital Programme has been updated reflecting decisions made by Cabinet and Council since February:

- Additional Capital scheme – Off-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) £0.393m funded by external grant/Council matched funding (Council, 15 May 2024)
- Carry forward of unspent Capital budgets of £1.513m, as detailed in the Financial Performance Report 2023/24 Outturn report (Cabinet, 25 July 2024).

5.2 The revised capital programme for 2024/25 is £8.709m. Given the budget profile of some of these schemes there has been a relatively low level of expenditure in Q1 with a net total spend of £0.475m.

Table 8 – Capital Programme budget reconciliation

Capital Programme Reconciliation	(£'000)
Original Budget (Council, 21 February 2024)	6,813
ORCS Grant Scheme (Council, 15 May 2024)	383
Slippage from 2023/24 (Cabinet 25 July 2024)	1,513
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Latest Budget	8,709



Table 9 – Capital Programme Outturn Forecast Q2

	2024/25 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2023/24 (£'000)	2024/25 Adjs (£'000)	2024/25 LAB (£'000)
Capital Programme				
Leisure & Communities	1,310	0	0	1,310
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	2,289	262	0	2,551
Environment	1,857	218	383	2,458
Retained & Corporate	0	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	350	0	0	350
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	573	179	0	752
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	0	0	134
Land, Legal and Property	300	580	0	880
Transformation and Investment	0	274	0	274
TOTAL Capital Programme	6,813	1,513	383	8,709

	2024/25 LAB (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q1 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Capital Programme				
Leisure & Communities	1,310	71	1,279	(31)
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	2,551	404	3,351	800
Environment	2,458	0	2,192	(266)
Retained & Corporate	0	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	350	0	150	(200)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	752	0	752	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	0	134	0
Land, Legal and Property	880	0	880	0
Transformation and Investment	274	0	274	0
TOTAL Capital Programme	8,709	475	9,012	303

5.3 The outturn forecast for the current year is an overspend of £0.303m although this is based on the forecast position against the approved budget for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Excluding the DFG variation (see paragraph 5.4 below) the underlying position on the capital programme (excluding DFGs) is a forecast underspend of £0.497m.



5.4 The Capital Programme, as approved in February 2024, includes £0.700m of funding from the Better Care Fund support DFG expenditure. Through the pooling arrangements in place with Gloucestershire County Council, expenditure of up to £1.5m in 2024/25 is provided. An amendment to the Capital expenditure and financing budget will be presented to Cabinet later in the financial year.

5.5 The other variations forecast on the Capital Programme are:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Points – the forecast position is for an underspend of £80k following completion of the EV Chargepoints at Rissington Road and Trinity Road. Additional EV Chargepoints are being installed through the Off-Street Residential Chargepoints Scheme (ORCS).
- Planning Documents and Scanning Solution – at the time of writing this report it was not clear whether this budget would be committed in 2024/25. This relates to the replacement or upgrade of the IDOX system used by Development Management and is likely to be subject to a detailed options appraisal following the transfer of the Development Management service to the Council as part of Phase I. For the purposes of this report, it is assumed there will be no expenditure in the current financial year although this will be kept under review.

5.6 The forecast assumes that all other capital schemes remain on target.

5.7 At their meeting on 31 October 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Capital Programme should be kept under review to ensure the revenue impact of capital expenditure and financing decisions were fully considered.

Capital Receipts and Disposals

5.8 There have been no disposals or capital receipts during Q1.

Table 10 – Capital Financing Statement Forecast

Capital Financing Statement	2024/25 OB (£'000)	Slippage From 2023/24 (£'000)	2024/25 Adjs (£'000)	2024/25 LAB (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Forecast (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Capital receipts	5,006	902		5,908	5,603	(305)
Capital Grants and Contributions	1,732	232	192	2,156	2,842	686
Earmarked Reserves	0		192	192	113	(79)
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	0			0	0	0
Community Municipal Investments (CMI)	75	379		454	454	0
Prudential Borrowing	0			0	0	0
	6,813	1,513	383	8,709	9,012	302



- 5.9 The Capital Financing position set out in the table above will be reviewed by the s151 Officer during the year as expenditure forecasts are updated to ensure a balanced use of capital resources and mitigation of current and future interest rates.

6. NON-TREASURY MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- 6.1 The CIPFA Code was updated in 2021 and includes the new requirement, mandatory from 01 April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are expected to be included in the Council's usual revenue and capital monitoring reports.

Prudential Indicators

- 6.2 The detailed Non-Treasury Management prudential indicators are included in **Annex x** with the commentary below providing members with a high-level summary.
- 6.3 Whilst there is no underlying need to borrow with the Capital Programme financed through internal resources and external grants and contributions, any additional capital expenditure proposed during the year will need to consider the availability and cost of capital financing. The mid-year Treasury Management report to Audit and Governance Committee will set out the wider impact on the Capital Financing Requirement.

7. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

- 7.1 The report outlines several risks and uncertainties around the wider economic environment. Some further risks are briefly outlined below.
- Publica Review – as set out in paragraphs 4.27 and 4.28 this report assumes the additional (part-year) cost of Phase I remains £0.148m. Members will be kept informed of progress with Phase I and the Q2 and Q3 Financial Performance reports will include a detailed reconciliation between the actual costs incurred and the estimated impact.
 - Publica Review (Agency Staff) – as outlined in paragraphs 5.12 and 5.13 of the *Publica Review – Detailed Transition Plan*, there is a risk where the cost of agency staff costs may exceed the available budget at service level. Detailed analysis will be undertaken on service pay and agency staff costs once the details of staff transferring to the Council in Phase I is finalised. Any material service variations will be reported to members.



- Publica Review (Provision for Redundancy) – as outlined in paragraphs 5.10 and 5.11 of the *Publica Review – Detailed Transition Plan*, a prudent estimate of £0.300m was reported as the Council’s share of the estimated redundancy costs associated with Phase I of the transfer of services from Publica to the Council. The improved closing balance level on the Financial Resilience Reserve recognised this commitment and will be utilised to fund the actual costs incurred. As with other elements of the Publica Review outlined above, the Q2 and Q3 Financial Performance reports will include a detailed reconciliation between the actual costs incurred against the estimate.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This monitoring report presents an update on the Council’s financial position. As the report sets out, an overspend of £0.073m is forecast for the financial year which. Without mitigating or corrective action this would reduce the level of the budgeted surplus that would transfer to the Financial Resilience Reserve at year end which is not considered appropriate given the scale of the financial challenge over the MTFS period.
- 8.2 Cabinet will continue to consider the impact of the forecast outturn and the impact on earmarked reserves as part of their oversight of the savings and transformation programme.
- 8.3 It is recommended that Cabinet review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico and provide an update in November 2024 and February 2025 as part of the 2025/26 Budget reports on options to mitigate the financial position as currently forecast across the MTFS period.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The financial implications are set out in this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Under Part 2 Local Government Act 2003, the Council must, from time to time during the year review the calculations it has used to set its budget. The Council’s Chief Financial Officer is required to report to the Council on the robustness of estimates made for the purposes of calculating the annual budget, and on the adequacy of proposed financial reserves. Members must have regard to that report when making decisions about the calculations in connection with which it is made.



11. RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 Section 7 of this report sets out the financial risks and uncertainties.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT

12.1 None.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 14



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2 SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject	COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2024-25 QUARTER ONE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation(s)	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q1. 2. Agree any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet ahead of the meeting on 5 September
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Services • Responding to the Climate Emergency • Delivering Housing • Supporting Communities • Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold District Council retained senior managers, Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A high-level commissioning statement was approved by Cabinet in January 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica must ensure that it provides the necessary information to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. In essence, Publica as contracting agent for the Council must ensure that the Council has sufficient information to challenge the performance of services provided by Publica and others. A similar approach is taken in relation to financial performance data, which will be presented to the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer; and where it will be for the Chief Finance Officer to advise in terms of assurance.
- 1.2 The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 2.1 The Council adopted Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28 ('the Plan') in January 2024. The Plan sets out the Council's Aim, and key priorities, and sets out the key measures of success.

- 2.2 Progress on key actions identified in the Corporate Plan for Q1 include:

Delivering good services

- Works are largely complete for the leasing of the spare office space at Trinity Road, although BT is still trying to resolve a fault in the line. Occupation by Watermoor Point was delayed due to the temporary use of the space for election preparation; however, the space is due to be handed over in July.
- The detailed transition plan, building on the recommendations from the Local Partnerships report, has been finalised and was presented to and approved by Cabinet and Full Council in July.
- The Asset Management Strategy was presented and approved by Cabinet in May. The Council has adopted the strategy and instructed its consultants, Carter Jonas, to review its existing assets in line with the strategy.

Responding to the climate emergency

- On street residential charge point scheme (ORCS) funding has been secured for last tranche of installations for Electric Vehicle Charge Points, with the business case approved at July Cabinet recommending site allocation. Work to prepare for the installations is underway to ensure Distribution Network Operator (DNO) connections can be secured within the required timeframes.



- Terms of reference are currently under development to create a Climate Board.
- Options to optimise the delivery of high-quality retrofit support are currently being explored and considered. A successful Gloucestershire-wide consortium bid to the South West Net Zero Hub (SWNZH) has enabled the Council to employ a retrofit engagement officer. Additionally, the Council is contributing to the development of a Gloucestershire-wide retrofit support offer through the Climate Leadership Gloucestershire (CLG) partnership.
- The partial Local Plan update to prioritise environmental sustainability is ongoing with the public consultation held on the draft Local Plan policies from 1st February to 7th April. Consultation responses are now under review, and further supporting evidence is being gathered for the final version of the plan prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

Delivering Housing

- New Strategic Housing Manager was appointed in May and work has begun exploring alternative models and financing for additionality, along with seeking partnerships to support the Council's ambitions.
- Monitoring of housing needs continues, with recent increases in homelessness across local authorities. Housing is collaborating with Strategic Housing to secure more long-term temporary accommodation and is also working with local businesses to boost short-term options. A potential property in Cirencester is currently under review for suitability.
- The Cotswold Housing First project is praised countywide as a model of success, with outcomes exceeding national averages. The Housing Team is collaborating with Bromford and P3 to maintain this success. Currently, 6 individuals are accommodated, with external funding awarded to P3 for 2 additional spaces, bringing the total to 8, with referrals currently being considered.
- A Planning Application for the zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney was submitted in June.

Supporting communities

- A Town and Parish forum event was originally scheduled for 19th June, but postponed due to General Election and was rescheduled for 16th July with a focus on health interventions.
- The sewage summit took place on 8th July at the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, with all three water companies—Thames Water, Severn Trent Water, and Wessex Water—in attendance, along with the Environment Agency and representatives from Earth Watch. A report on the summit is expected to be presented to the Council in September.



- On going collaboration with Life Cycle has enabled a further 10 new community bike stands to be installed across the District with funding available for a final 14 stands.
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) have appointed a new officer to support the flood warden programme with an initial focus on consolidating the scheme, and ensuring registered flood wardens are still active.
- Site meetings have been held with Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold Lakes Trust to discuss the design details for a new crossing on the Spine Road.
- The Spring Round for Crowdfund Cotswold closed in April with one early submission quickly meeting its target and a further six projects as part of the main round, collectively worth over £110k. Four projects were awarded a total of £23,000 grant, with two deferred. As of 1 July, one of the four has already hit its funding target.
- The 'Getting Connected' courses for digital inclusion have positively impacted over 60 older adults, with notable participation in Bourton on the Water, Fairford, and Tetbury, where attendees have formed social groups and increased digital inclusion.

Supporting the economy

- Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital, and sustainable aviation, to promote employment opportunities. Discussions with key stakeholders about promoting apprenticeship opportunities are ongoing, and a campaign is planned once the new government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
- A legal agreement between Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council has been agreed to deliver a programme of activities using grant funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to help those furthest from the employment market.
- Three UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funded projects are underway. The first project aims to identify and promote businesses as Sustainability Champions. The second project is focused on encouraging the development of new experiences. The third project aims to enhance and add new functionality to the Cotswolds tourism website (www.cotswolds.com).
- The report for the update to the Green Economic Strategy is being finalised and is expected to be presented to Cabinet in October with a draft strategy for consultation, with the aim of bringing a final version to Cabinet in December/January.

- 2.3** Off target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at the end of Q1 are detailed below. Whilst this report is a retrospective account of progress in Q1, where possible, the current status is also included for assurance.

Delivering good services

Instigate second phase of activity to replace worn and damaged street nameplates



Q1 update: Following a review of processes and signs currently completed and pending, roll out of a further 71 replacement street signs has now been agreed and a delivery plan is being prepared by Ubico.

Current Status: The delivery plan is ongoing, with necessary checks on underground services required for any civil works as part of health and safety requirements. A meeting is scheduled for early September to review progress.

Responding to the climate emergency

Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on Council owned assets.

Update: The installation of solar panels at Trinity Road has commenced with the battery pack and controls having been installed. Scaffolding will be erected in July for the installation of PV panels, which will be completed in phases to limit on site disruption. Terms have provisionally been agreed with New Brewery Arts and a Power Purchasing agreement is being prepared by legal, however, final agreement is not yet in place.

Current Status: The Solar PV and battery installation at Trinity Road is nearly complete and is expected to be commissioned by September, if not sooner.

- 2.4 An overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex A and the Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex B.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive, with notable progress in Collection Rates, Planning Determination Times, and Gym Memberships. Customer Satisfaction continues to be strong, with the Council topping the Gov Metric league table in May. However, the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections and the percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales are showing a negative trend.

3.1 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (Tracking Well Toward Achieving the Year-End Target. 33.75% collected in Q1)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected (Tracking Well Toward Achieving the Year-End Target. 29.12% collected in Q1)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (4 days against a target of 5 days)
- Customer Satisfaction (99% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (100% against a target of 70%)



- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (85% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (21% against a target of 30%)
- Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (91% against a target of 90%)
- Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) (29 delivered against a target of 25)
- Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 90%)
- Residual Household Waste per Household (kg) (88.74 against a target of 97)
- Number of gym memberships (3,823 against a target of 3,700)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (113,340 visits against a target of 112,000)

3.2 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (22 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (6 days against a target of 4 days)

Although the Council is currently above target for processing times, there has been an improvement compared to the same period last year, with processing times decreasing by approximately 7 days for Council Tax Support New Claims and 6 days for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances.

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

The Resolution: Q1 commenced with the usual small backlog of work for changes in circumstances at the end of Q4 due to end-of-year processing, which is expected to be cleared over the next few weeks. The reduction in HB Change applications means that any delay in assessing an application due to outstanding evidence has a more noticeable impact on the average processing days. Additionally, the managed migration of HB to Universal Credit commenced in April, with some minor glitches reported in the system. While the migration was planned in stages, some stages have been brought forward, which will further decrease the number of changes received and may potentially increase processing times.

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.71% against a target of 0.35%)

The Council has exceeded its target for this quarter, largely due to a significant overpayment identified by officers early in the period. At the time of writing, the overpayment percentage stood at 0.56%. While this figure is gradually decreasing each week, it is anticipated that levels will remain above the target until Q3. Any penalties imposed by the Government for exceeding the target will be based on the end-of-year figures.



The Resolution: To address the issue of overpayments, the service is implementing several key measures. Approximately 20% of the Housing Benefit (HB) caseload is undergoing Quality Assurance checks, with a focus on areas prone to high error rates, such as earnings calculations, to identify and correct errors before they lead to overpayments. Enhanced training and ongoing support are being provided to staff to ensure accurate and efficient processing of HB claims, reducing the likelihood of errors. The service is also refining internal processes to streamline HB assessments and minimise delays, including the implementation of automated systems where possible. Additionally, the Council is actively participating in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) initiative, which aims to combat fraud and error through close collaboration with the DWP.

The service remains aware of the potential impact of increased workloads on delays in processing HB changes, which could affect HB subsidy. These combined efforts are intended to reduce overpayments due to local authority errors and help ensure that the Council meets its targets in the upcoming quarters.

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (88% against a target of 90%)

In Q1, the Council answered 88% of FOI requests within 20 days, up from 83% in Q4, falling below the national target of 90%. Most FOI requests continue to be received by Development Management and Environmental, Welfare, and Revenue Services. To reduce the number of information requests, the Council is reviewing the information currently available on its website and aims to publish additional guidance and Frequently Asked Questions.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (69% against a target of 95%)

During Q1, The Council completed 9 out of 13 high-risk food inspections within the target timescale.

The Resolution: Despite high-risk work being prioritised, the team experienced resourcing challenges during Q1, resulting in some inspections missing the target deadlines. To address this and enhance overall performance, the target deadline for inspecting high-risk food businesses has been advanced by 28 days. This proactive measure provides management with additional time to address any outstanding inspections before the original deadline, ensuring that all high-risk inspections are carried within the target timescales. To further support the team and mitigate the effects of these resourcing challenges, extra resource has been brought in to assist with the workload. As a result, the previously missed inspections have now been completed.

High-risk work is naturally prioritised, which can have an impact on lower-risk scheduled inspection rates. To improve the management of these inspections, the service has implemented a useful dashboard. This tool is instrumental in monitoring team performance and tracking the progress of lower-risk inspections, ensuring that they are not overlooked despite the focus on higher-priority tasks. With these combined efforts, the service aims to

maintain a balanced approach to inspections, addressing both high- and low-risk areas effectively.

Missed bins per 100,000 Collections (141 against a target of 80)

The Council experienced a notable increase in missed bins in comparison to last quarter and the same period last year.

The Resolution: The rise in missed bins this quarter is primarily due to challenges with Garden Waste collections, which experienced a high number of missed pickups, particularly in June. To address these issues, additional training has been provided for the affected crews, supported by increased supervisory presence, and the optimisation of collection rounds is expected to improve performance.

Furthermore, the recent reorganisation of collection routes, which affected approximately 60% of households, has contributed to the increase in missed bins. Although this reorganisation only impacted five days of QI, it has caused significant disruption as crews adapt to the new routes. The effects of this disruption continued into July and August, resulting in elevated levels of missed collections.

To manage and mitigate these issues, the service has implemented daily stand-up meetings with both the internal team and Ubico. These meetings focus on addressing current problems, tracking performance, and ensuring timely resolution of ongoing issues. As a result of these efforts, the number of missed collections is gradually decreasing. Further improvements are anticipated as crews become more familiar with the new routes and optimisation strategies take effect.

The team remains dedicated to closely monitoring the situation and taking additional steps as needed to ensure reliable and efficient waste collection going forward.

- 3.3 A full performance report is attached at Annex C.
 - 3.4 As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where benchmarking data is not currently available or outdated, this is noted, and further investigations will be undertaken to look at options.
4. **CABINET**
- 4.1 This report will be reviewed by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 September 2024. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to the Cabinet meeting.



5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None specifically because of this report. However, a failure to meet statutory deadlines or standards in some services may expose the Council to legal challenge and/or financial liability.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 Contained in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Contained in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

Our Cotswolds, Our Plan: Action Plan 2024 Update - Progress by end of Q1 2024-2025

Green	On target
Amber	Off target but action being taken to ensure delivery (where this results in a reviewed target date, this is made clear in the table)
Red	Off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation
Complete	Action completed
Not Scheduled to Start	
Cancelled	
On Hold	

Objectives	Priorities	Actions	Commencement	Target Date	Cabinet Member, Lead officer(s)	RAG Rating	Comment for Q1	
Delivering good services	Ensure our workforce can deliver for the council and our community	Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability	Nov-23	Projected timeframe of two years, until 2025	Cllr Joe Harris Robert Weaver	On Target	The detailed transition plan, building on the recommendations from the Local Partnerships report, has been finalised and was presented to and approved by Cabinet and Full Council in July.	
		Lease spare office space at Trinity Road	Dec-23	Jul-24	Cllr Mike Evemy Claire Locke Suzanne Barton		On Target	Works largely complete although BT are still trying to resolve a fault. Occupation by Watermoor Point (WP) has been delayed by the temporary use of the space for Election preparation but space should be handed to WP in July.
	Ensure effective oversight of our services, to ensure value for money and good standards	Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley			
	Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets	Continue to ensure that the Council's MTFS five year strategy reflects economic conditions and the government's funding settlement	Feb-24	Reviewed annually	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley	On Target	The Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2024-25 were presented and approved at the Full Council Budget meeting in February 2024. To be reviewed in February 2025.	
		Implement the Council's new asset management strategy and asset plans	Apr-24	Review April 2025	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley	On Target	The Asset Management Strategy was presented and approved by Cabinet in May. The Council has adopted the strategy and instructed its consultants, Carter Jonas, to review its existing assets in line with the strategy.	
	Play our part in maintaining and enhancing the public realm across the district	Instigate second phase of activity to replace worn and damaged street nameplates	Feb-24	Feb-25	Cllr Joe Harris Claire Locke	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	List has been reviewed and agreed, with all available budget now allocated. Ubico preparing full delivery plan.	
	Responding to the climate emergency	Reduce CO2 from Transport: We will actively encourage and support the transition to EVs and increased use of public and sustainable transport such as cycling and walking.	Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown Claire Locke	On Target	Business case will be submitted to Cabinet in July. Work to prepare for installations being progressed to ensure DNO connections can be secured within the required timeframes.
			Work with partners to implement the Sustainable Transport Strategy	Adoption as part of the Local Plan - projected June 2025	Apr-28	Cllr Juliet Layton Charlie Jackson	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	

		June 2025		James Brain	Quarter	
	Taxi Transition - explore the opportunity for the creation of an EV Taxi policy	Apr-24	Nov-24	Cllr Mike McKeown Jon Dearing Mandy Fathers	On Target	The policy regarding Electric Vehicles (EV) for licensed vehicles is set to be reviewed later this year.
Cut Council Carbon Footprint, implementing sustainable practices in all council operations, emphasising energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, across our buildings, fleet and suppliers.	Create a Climate Board, agree governance arrangements and key outcomes.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGreggor	On Target	Terms of reference to be developed
	Support and promote community owned renewables initiatives	Dec-23	Review June 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGreggor	On Target	Workplan for new Climate Lead being created to outline priorities. Process to appoint Retrofit Officer underway.
Increase renewable energy generation within the district, ensuring local benefit	Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on Council owned assets.	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown Claire Locke	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Work has commenced at Trinity Road to install the Solar PV, with the battery pack and controls being installed. Scaffolding will be erected in July for the installation of PV panels, which will be completed in phases to limit on site disruption. Discussion progressing with New Brewery Arts but final agreement is not yet in place.
Champion initiatives to address the ecological emergency and nature recovery, focusing on reducing CO2 and conserving and enhancing the district's biodiversity and natural beauty.	Implement the new requirements around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Jan-24	Review July 2024	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding	On Target	Progress persists in the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), especially concerning the allocation of secured funds to fulfil necessary mitigation measures. The first mandatory BNG applications have been received and are presently under review. The primary focus has shifted towards decision notices, S106s and the legal support and capacity that is required.
	Continue to promote and deliver Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen	Jan-23	Review July 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGreggor	On Target	Cotswold Home Solar continues to be promoted and delivered
Reduce CO2 from Buildings: Foster community-led climate action, supporting residents and businesses adopting renewable heating and improving energy efficiency.	Consider the business case on optimising the delivery of high quality retrofit advice and support	Jul-24	Jul-25	Cllr Mike McKeown Cllr Juliet Layton Olivia McGreggor	On Target	Options to optimise delivery of high quality retrofit support are currently being explored and considered. A Gloucestershire-wide consortium bid was submitted to South West Net Zero Hub (SWNZH). This bid has been successful and CDC can employ a retrofit engagement officer. CDC are also contributing to creation of a Gloucestershire-wide retrofit support offer being developed through CLG (Climate Leadership Gloucestershire) partnership. Finally, CDC bid for funding from the MSC Foundation as part of a consortium. The bid was unsuccessful.
	Subject to proposed legislative changes, complete full review of the Local Plan	Jan-24	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding Matt Britton	On Target	CDC is currently partially updating its adopted Local Plan to make it green to the core. A consultation was held on the draft Local Plan policies between 1 February 2024 and 7 April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered and further supporting evidence is being produced before a final version of the Local Plan will be consulted on early in 2025. The Local Plan update will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate before June 2025 for an Independent Examination in Public led by a government appointed Inspector.
Ensure our planning policies deliver our				Cllr Juliet Layton		

	Ensure our planning policies deliver our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure	Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds	Sep-23	Sep-24	Adrian Harding Matt Britton	On Target	City Science have been commissioned to help deliver the new Cotswold Design Code (note guide!). A draft Design Code has been shared for comment. The final Design Code is currently being worked up.
		Work with Cirencester Town Council on the coordination of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan policies	Jan-24	Review February 2024	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding Matt Britton	On Target	A consultation was held on the draft master plan between 1 February 2024 and 7 April April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered, which will inform a more detailed version of the masterplan. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the masterplan. CDC has also been working with Cirencester TC on their Neighbourhood Plan policies and comments have been provided on the draft NDP policies.
Delivering Housing	Working with our partners to explore innovative routes to deliver more affordable homes	Explore innovative approaches to housing delivery	Feb-24	Aug-25	Cllr Joe Harris Robert Weaver Alan Hope	On Target	New Strategic Housing Manager appointed in May and work has begun exploring alternative models and financing for additionality, along with seeking partnerships to support the Council's ambitions.
		Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney	Dec-23	Apr-28	Cllr Joe Harris Robert Weaver Claire Locke	On Target	Planning application submitted so awaiting outcome.
	Understanding everyone's housing needs	Support refugees to retain adequate housing	Jul-23	Review March 2025	Cllr Joe Harris Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold	On Target	This is an ongoing situation with the Housing Team working with s151's and our countywide partners to ensure that no refugee is left to rough sleep.
		Continue to monitor housing needs, using Homeseeker Plus, to inform housing strategy and implementation	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Joe Harris Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold	On Target	Monitoring housing needs is ongoing with recent increases in homelessness noted. Causes for these increases are varied, but homelessness is rising in most local authorities, leaving more households competing for the same amount of available affordable accommodation. Housing is working with Strategic Housing to source additional long term temporary accommodation as well as working with local indepenant business to increase the supply of short term accommodation. A possible suitable property in Cirencester has recently come onto the market and is currently being investigated for viability.
					Cllr Joe Harris		The Cotswold Housing First project is recognised across the

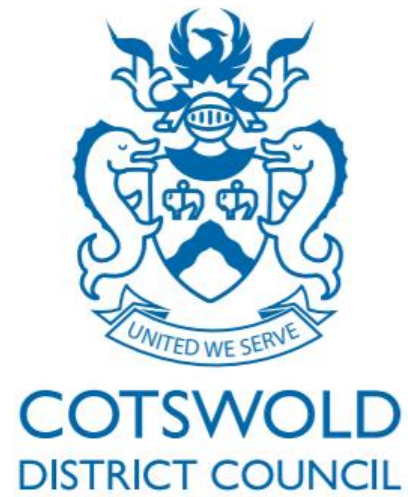
		Continue to build on the success of the Housing First Project with a new county wide approach	Jan-24	Mar-25	Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold	On Target	county as being an exemplary example of how projects of this type should be approached. Successful outcomes are above national averages and the Housing Team continue to work closely with Bromford and P3 to ensure the continued success of this project. There are currently 6 individuals accommodated in Housing First, however external funding has been awarded to P3 to extend the offer to a further 2 clients, giving us 8 spaces in total. Referrals are currently being considered
	Adopting and implementing our new housing strategy	Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Joe Harris Adrian Harding Matt Britton	On Target	
Supporting communities	Strengthen our links with town and parish councils and key stakeholders	Continue the annual programme of Town and Parish Council Forum engagement events	Jan-24	Jan-25	Cllr Joe Harris Angela Claridge	On Target	Event scheduled for 19th June, but postponed due to General Election. Now scheduled for 16th July, with focus on health interventions.
	Address the challenges of flooding and water quality and sewerage discharges	Identify opportunities to influence policy and host a sewage summit with the outcome being reported to the Council in May.	Jan-24	Oct-24	Cllr Lisa Spivey Phil Martin Matt Britton	On Target	The date for the sewage summit has now been finalised and will take place on the 8th July in the Corinium Museum in Cirencester. All 3 Water companies will be attending, along with the EA and representatives from Earth Watch. A report to Council will be present in September following the event.
		Identify gaps and bolster the Cotswold Flood wardens programme	Jan-24	Jun-24	Cllr Lisa Spivey Robert Weaver Phil Martin	On Target	After a year of recruitment and retention challenges, there is an officer in post. Her initial focus is on consolidating the scheme, and ensuring registered flood wardens are still active - at the end of June /early July this exercise is ongoing, but there are confirmed roles in Bourton-on-the Water, Bledington, Cirencester (2), Lechlade, Evenlode, Moreton-in-Marsh (2), Bibury(2) and Southrop.
	Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Water park	Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road	Jan-24	Review in January 2025	Cllr Juliet Layton Andy Barge Philippa Lowe	On Target	Site meetings have been held with Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold Lakes Trust regarding the design detailing for a new crossing. COMF moneys are funding the final stage of the design work and then a decision will need to be made on progressing towards delivery. There remains the opportunity to access UKSPF/REPF and CIL to enable the works.
		Install cycle racks, in consultation with the local community	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Andy Barge Philippa Lowe	On Target	On going collaboration with Life Cycle has enabled a further 10 new community bike stands to be installed with funding available for a final 14 stands.
		Work with partners to embed the Nature Recovery Plan for the Waterpark	Jan-24	Review every six months	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding Sophia Price		
	Embed Healthy Homes Act into the Cotswold Design Code	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter		

Healthy place making through the Local Plan	Introduce a requirement for Community Access Defibrillators in new developments	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	
	Focus on green infrastructure, to enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	
Develop and deliver a District Council cultural strategy	Commence development of the cultural strategy	Feb-24	Sep-24	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	
Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing	Continue to deliver an asset based community development approach	Jan-24	Apr-28	Cllr Lisa Spivey Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	<p>Ongoing engagements with community groups, such as the Chesterton Community Project Group, Bromford Housing, and The Salvation Army, aiming to enhance resilience and improve residents' health. The 'Getting Connected' courses for digital inclusion have positively impacted over 60 older adults, with notable participation in Bourton on the Water, Fairford, and Tetbury, where attendees have formed social groups and increased digital inclusion.</p> <p>Planning is complete for the 'DIGI DAY' project in 2024, designed to further support digital knowledge through expert guidance. Successful engagement at the St. Lawrence Church Chesterton Afternoon Tea and Chesterton Primary School Family Hub drop-ins has provided insights into resident needs and improved support for families.</p> <p>Improvements to Argos Alleyway are near completion, transforming it into a safer, brighter space. Community Fun Day events, planned with PCSO's, Bromford, Young Gloucestershire, and local schools, attracted over 300 attendees in Northleach, Stow, Moreton, and Bourton. The 'Big Dig Day' at Chesterton School fostered local family engagement and led to the formation of a gardening club.</p>
	Celebrate success - promote the work being done by partners across the district to inspire communities	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	Planning for the Unsung Hero Awards has commenced. The scheme will be launched in July with first awards being awarded on September 25th at Full Council.
	Continue to promote community activity through Crowdfund Cotswold	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Lisa Spivey Andy Barge Joseph Walker	On Target	The Spring Round closed in April. There was one early submission which was quickly successful in meeting its target and six projects as part of the main round, collectively worth over £110k. Four projects were awarded a total of £23,000 grant, with two deferred. As of 1 July, one of the four has already hit its funding target
	Monitor and review delivery of the District leisure contract with Freedom Leisure	Aug-23	Aug-25	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson David Stanley Andy Barge	On Target	Regular meetings have been scheduled to review performance and to identify and mitigate any risks.

	Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages	Continue to deliver the Healthier District and Connected Communities objectives and priorities set out in the Active Cotswolds Action Plan, and implement the Playing Pitch Strategy's action plan.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Jacqueline Wright Cllr Paul Hodgkinson Angela Claridge Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	Please see Active Cotswold Programme for updates
		Work with partners to develop a consistent, countywide approach to identify opportunities to support to care leavers	Jun-24	Review December 2024	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson David Stanley Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	Through Intergrated Locality Partnership (ILP) funding we have enabled Gloucestershire Young Carers and The Door to offer further support via a safe gaming platform with remote access to youth workers. Further youth clubs are also now in place for young carers.
Work with partners to ensure vital services cover the district, and offer support to our residents if crises hit		Continue to be a proactive member of the Cotswold Food Network Steering Group and support initiatives under the network's umbrella	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	The Community Support Food Sustainability Officer role has continued to invigorate partner organisations interested in supporting people to grow their own food and access food support. A second meeting targeting Food Provision Support, in July, brought together 30 attendees looking at working better together and sharing good practice, across the district. We've brought key organisations together to look at better uses of data, to prioritise the most important issues. Our next meeting is scheduled for October. Through ILP funding, via the SLC's fund, we've also allocated funding to support the development of Food Provision working group workshops, mapping, data capacity and a feasibility study, alongside acommunity grant scheme.
		Continue to work with the NHS Integrated Locality Partnership to support youth mental health	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	The Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP) continues to support reducing health inequalities annd working with us on the distribution of the Strengthening Local Communities (SLC) funding, targeting frailty, reducing isolation and providing youth support. Coordinating priorities of the ILP/Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises(VCSE).
		Maintain a multi-service response to the cost of living crisis, and other challenges to community wellbeing	Jan-23	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Claire Locke Jacqueline Wright	On Target	Utilising the connections to our partner organisations via the Cotswold Community Network (CCN) meetings and our district lead role with the Holdiay Activities and Food programme (HAF), we support all ages in accessing support during the cost of living crisis.
		Continue to raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the fear of crime and ensure residents know how, and where, to get support	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Lisa Spivey Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	The Cotswold Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) continue to work with their new Action Plan. The Police and Crime Commissioner has been re-elected with a similar list of priorities going forward including improvements to road safety, particularly older drivers.
					Cllr Lisa Spivey/Cllr Claire Bloomer		

	Keep residents safe, through awareness raising around domestic abuse and fraud	Deliver Rural Domestic Abuse Champions programme in partnership with other rural Gloucestershire districts and Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services	Feb-24	Mar-25	Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	GDASS continue to offer a large number of training dates, attended online, with an aim to train employees at Cotswold and our partner organisations.
		Train frontline staff to identify Domestic Abuse and review internal processes to recognise and support victims of abuse	Feb-24	Jul-24	Cllr Lisa Spivey/Cllr Claire Bloomer Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	GDASS continues to offer training sessions to increase the number of Rural Domestic Abuse Champions, in the district. Training is being rolled out to CDC staff, Members and Town and Parish Councillors.
		Coordinate activity under Home Office's safer Streets Fund to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and violence against women and girls	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Lisa Spivey Andy Barge Jacqueline Wright	On Target	Violence against Women and Girls(VAWG) and reducing anti social behaviour continues to be a priority. We have added Serious Violence Duty (SVD) to our CSP plan and remain the lowest area in the county. Using information from the Gloucestershire SVD dashboard VAWG numbers in the district have dropped slightly from last year. The Safe Places scheme gives all residents a safe place to go to, in Cirencester and Bourton, with new venues being added gradually as we go through the summer months.
Supporting the economy	Work with partners to develop the skills of our residents	Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs, through promotion of apprenticeship opportunities	Feb-24	Apr-28	Cllr Tony Dale Philippa Lowe Paul James	On Target	Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital and sustainable aviation to promote employment opportunities. Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders about how to promote apprenticeship opportunities. A campaign will be launched once the new Government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
		Deliver a programme of activities in year 3 of the Shared Prosperity Fund to help those furthest from the employment market	Apr-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tony Dale Philippa Lowe Paul James	On Target	Being delivered through Gloucestershire County Council's Employment and Skills Hub Outreach programme. Output and outcome targets have been agreed. A legal agreement between the two councils has been agreed and is in the process of being executed.
	Attract and manage investment to boost the local economy	Consider the results of the digital and green survey of community buildings, and enable improvements through Rural England Prosperity Fund	Apr-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tony Dale Philippa Lowe Paul James	On Target	Three projects funded by the REPF grant scheme for village halls have been completed. A grant panel to make recommendations on several other applications is due to be held on 10th July.
		Continue to deliver against the six priorities set			Cllr Tony Dale		Three UKSPF funded projects are now underway: one to identify and promote businesses as Sustainability champions: one to

	<p>Support local businesses and farms, to enhance the vibrancy of our towns and villages, and to manage the opportunity and impact of the visitor economy</p>	<p>Continue to deliver against the six priorities set out in the Cotswold Tourism destination management plan</p>	Jan-24	Mar-25	Philippa Lowe Chris Jackson	On Target	<p>and promote businesses as sustainability champions; one to encourage the development of new experiences; one to bring enhancements and new functionality to the tourism website (www.cotswolds.com)</p>
		<p>Continue to support the Local Visitor Economy Partnership, to ensure better coordination of tourism activity and delivery against national growth targets</p>	Jan-24	Review January 2025	<p>Cllr Tony Dale</p> <p>Philippa Lowe Chris Jackson</p>	On Target	<p>Seven workstreams have been agreed by the partnership, each with an agreed action plan: these include two sustainability strands (one on transport & active travel, the other on business practices & biodiversity), business support and travel trade.</p>
	<p>Work with local and county partners to grow a strong and sustainable economy</p>	<p>Undertake a refresh of the Green Economic Strategy</p>	Feb-24	Apr-24	<p>Cllr Tony Dale</p> <p>Philippa Lowe Paul James</p>	On Target	<p>A report will be brought to Cabinet in October with a draft strategy for consultation, with the aim of bringing a final version to Cabinet in December/January.</p>
		<p>Continue to support the development of the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village</p>	Jan-24	Jan-25	<p>Cllr Tony Dale</p> <p>Philippa Lowe Paul James</p>	On Target	<p>The outline planning application has been validated now and will work its way through the process. In parallel, officers and the cabinet member continue to work with the RAU on related issues, including funding opportunities.</p>
		<p>Continue to work with The Growth Hub to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups, with a focus on the outreach provision supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund</p>	Jan-24	Mar-25	<p>Cllr Tony Dale</p> <p>Philippa Lowe Paul James</p>	On Target	<p>Funding for 2024-25 was approved by the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member in line with the Cabinet resolution. Officers meet monthly with representatives from the RAU/Growth Hub to monitor progress against outputs/outcomes and are confident the targets will be achieved. The Outreach Navigators continue to work across the district and have held a number of events and discovery meetings at the Moreton Area Centre, which are being well-supported.</p>



COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT
April 2024 - June 2024

Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28

Our Ambition

To tackle some of the big challenges faced by our residents while providing a good level of key services.

Our Priorities



Delivering Good Services



Responding to the Climate Emergency



Delivering Housing



Supporting Communities



Supporting the Economy

Executive Summary Highlights

- On street residential charge point scheme (ORCS) funding has been secured for last tranche of installations for Electric Vehicle Charge Points, with the business case approved at July Cabinet recommending site allocation. Work to prepare for the installations is underway to ensure Distribution Network Operator (DNO) connections can be secured within the required timeframes.
- The Asset Management Strategy was presented and approved by Cabinet in May. The Council has adopted the strategy and instructed its consultants, Carter Jonas, to review its existing assets in line with the strategy.
- The new Strategic Housing Manager was appointed in May and work has begun exploring alternative models and financing for additionality, along with seeking partnerships to support the Council's ambitions.
- The Planning Application for the zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney was submitted in June.
- The sewage summit took place on 8th July at the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, with all three water companies—Thames Water, Severn Trent Water, and Wessex Water—in attendance, along with the Environment Agency and representatives from Earth Watch.
- The 'Getting Connected' digital inclusion courses have positively impacted over 60 older adults, with significant participation in Bourton on the Water, Fairford, and Tetbury, where attendees have formed social groups and boosted their digital skills.
- The Spring Round for Crowdfund Cotswold closed in April with one early submission quickly meeting its target and a further six projects as part of the main round, collectively worth over £110k. Four projects were awarded a total of £23,000 grant, with two deferred. As of 1 July, one of the four has already hit its funding target.
- The Unsung Hero Awards scheme, designed to recognise the efforts of volunteers across the district who dedicate their time to helping others, was launched in July. The first awards will be presented on September 25th at Full Council.

Delivering Good Services



The Context

As a council, our purpose is to provide vital services to our residents, businesses, and visitors. The council is committed to delivering services effectively and efficiently, ensuring they reflect our dedication to addressing climate change and offering value for local taxpayers. The council's services will uphold high standards and deliver value for money. We will collaborate with our contractors and partners, including town and parish councils, to sustain valuable services and contribute to the preservation of the Cotswolds environment that we all take pride in.

Actions we are taking

Implementation of projects highlighted in the for the Water Park have continued to focus on making it easier for people to walk and cycle around the area, dispersing visitors more widely and enabling people to be more physically active.

Some unspent funds from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) were redirected to enable delivery of more new cycle stands, working alongside businesses and organisations with a focus on the Water Park Area.

Officers have been working with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Cotswold Lakes Trust to complete a new cycle entrance into Neigh Bridge to ensure connection to the wider cycle network and ensure safe and easy access for cyclists.

The delivery of a safe crossing point on the Spine Road remains a priority and discussions and site meetings have been held with GCC and Cotswolds Lakes Trust to progress options for design detailing for a new crossing.

The first stage of finalising design is using funding allocated from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). Once the commissioned design work is finalised a decision will need to be made regarding the split of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The overarching aim of the improvement work in the Planning service is to provide a trusted, inclusive and transparent planning service. In that regard, performance improved markedly and the Government has confirmed that it no longer is minded to consider designating the Council for poor performance. Following the work already undertaken on the pre-application service, validation checklist, fee schedule, communication with applicants and timeliness of communication at key stages of the process, the recent priority has been the reduction in backlogs in the enforcement function and designing and testing the new enforcement form. These have now been introduced and are expected to deliver a reduction in repeat customer contact and chasing, as well as a reduction in the number of non-breach cases from the improved online reporting facilities and back office triage. The main piece of work that has recently gone live is the new process associated with the requirements to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) alongside the determination of Planning Applications.

The further improvement works arising from the Planning Advisory Service report and agreed upon by Cabinet have been added to the action plan, with delivery largely completed or on track. In light of the Council's decision to repatriate the Development Management function, some elements of the improvement programme have however, had to be abandoned or severely curtailed as they relied upon shared services and contracts.

Responding to the Climate Emergency



The Context

Nationally, the government's recent decision to extend deadlines for decarbonisation targets has sparked debates regarding its impact on the UK's progress towards net-zero emissions. While the shift in deadlines for ending the sale of new fossil-fueled cars and gas-fired boilers may not significantly alter industry trajectories, concerns persist regarding potential repercussions on the nation's climate commitments and international reputation as a leader in combating climate change. Professor Piers Forster, Chair of the Climate Change Committee, urges greater transparency from the government regarding the effects of these policy adjustments on future emissions and the likelihood of meeting targets.

In response to the Climate Change and Ecological Emergencies declared by the Council in July 2019 and a year later respectively, a comprehensive commitment to update the Local Plan in alignment with green principles has been established. This commitment is reinforced by national policies such as the Clean Growth Strategy and the UK Net Zero Strategy, signaling a broader governmental push towards environmental sustainability. Despite impending reforms to the English planning system, the Council remains steadfast in its efforts to update the Local Plan, anticipating a smoother transition facilitated by government arrangements.

Actions we are taking

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 identified the Council's different spheres of influence over carbon emissions in the District. These range from relatively easier interventions with lower impact (e.g. direct and indirect control of the Council's own operations) through to relatively harder interventions with potentially much higher impact (e.g. enabling District-wide action and engaging with all stakeholders).

The update process, initiated following a unanimous resolution in June 2020, encompasses a thorough review of Local Plan policies to ensure alignment with evolving environmental priorities. Public consultations, notably the Regulation 18 consultation in 2022, have yielded valuable insights, shaping the emerging Local Plan. Digital engagement tools have facilitated broader community participation, including previously underserved demographics.

In parallel, the Council is fortifying its evidence base through various studies, encompassing green infrastructure, sustainability appraisals, and housing strategies. Noteworthy initiatives include the development of a Sustainable Transport Strategy and the ongoing Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan project, both pivotal in shaping future transport infrastructure and urban development.

'Direct Control' actions

The business case and Council investment decision for solar PV and battery storage at the Council's offices at Trinity Road, along with another tenanted site, were approved by Cabinet and Council in July 2023. Delays were encountered due to concerns over the weight of the panels and adjustments have been made to the original design, integrating the PV panels into the roof structure. The new design, incorporating a mix of the commonly used 'hook and rail' system, received approval

from both Planning and the Structural Engineer. Works started on site in July and are expected to be completed during August. Additionally, four dual electric vehicle charge points have already been installed in the Trinity Road car park, providing accessible charging facilities for the public.

‘Indirect Control’ actions

Waste and recycling collection, aside from being the Council’s single largest source of emissions, presents all councils with huge challenges and potential opportunities in the environment, the climate emergency, and digital services. While the bulk of waste collection vehicle replacements are scheduled for some years, attention is now turning to the potential for electrification of part of the waste collection fleet. The new leisure services operator is in place, and Capitol Grant Funding has been secured, which will enable the installation of further solar PV power on the Cirencester leisure centre, further reducing the cost of electricity for the site.

‘Place Shaping’ actions

Efforts are underway to bolster the evidence base for drafting climate policies within the Local Plan (LP) partial update, integrating feedback from the Regulation 18 public consultation and insights gleaned from examinations of other authorities' ambitious climate policies. Concurrently, sustainable transport consultants are aligning LP policies with findings from the District-wide Sustainable Transport Strategy research. Additionally, consultants have been tasked with updating the evidence base and formulating policies for renewable energy and sustainable construction, both integral components of the updated LP. However, progress on further installations of electric vehicle charge points in Council-owned carparks has been impeded by delays with contractors and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN). Despite setbacks, chargers at Trinity Road are now connected, with units planned for installation later this month. Furthermore, funding has been secured for the next tranche of installations under the On-street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS), and a business case is currently in preparation.

‘District-wide enabling’ actions

Cotswold Home Solar was launched at the start of September and had strong initial interest. The communications team is working on ways to refresh and sustain a marketing campaign to make sure as many residents as possible can make use of the scheme. Retrofitting homes to reduce costs, energy consumption and carbon emissions is an essential component of national emissions reduction but remains a huge challenge. The announcements of the energy security strategy (Powering up Britain) include some measures that support home energy retrofit, but the national retrofit strategy, such as it is, remains the preserve of a non-statutory body (the Construction Leadership Council) and the national retrofit hub is in a very early stage of development. The increase in the Boiler Upgrade Scheme grant to £7.5k announced in September 2023 should encourage more households to fit low carbon heat pumps.

‘Engaging’ actions

This remains a very important part of the Council’s overall climate crisis response, and there is much work to do to help build confidence and momentum among all District-wide stakeholders, from residents to businesses and public sector bodies. We are now working on the creation of a District-wide network of individuals and organisations motivated by the climate challenge and researching user needs in order to provide real value, aiming to replicate the success of West Oxfordshire District Council’s ‘Green Light’ communications platform.

Options to optimise the delivery of high-quality retrofit support are currently being explored and considered. A successful Gloucestershire-wide consortium bid to the South West Net Zero Hub (SWNZH) has enabled the Council to employ a retrofit engagement officer. Additionally, the Council is contributing to the development of a Gloucestershire-wide retrofit support offer through the Climate Leadership Gloucestershire (CLG) partnership.

Delivering Housing

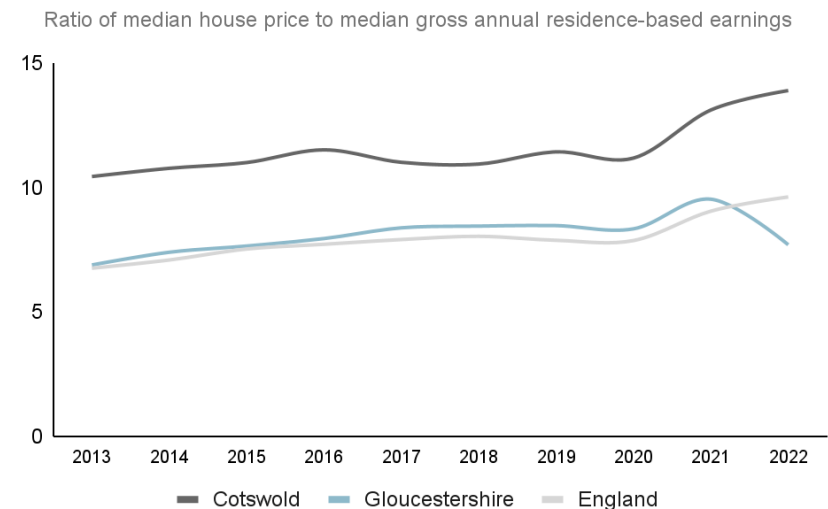


The Context

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

House prices and rents are relatively high. At the end of September 2022, the median property price in Cotswold District was £400,000, compared to £275,000 in England. House prices are falling due to the cost of living crisis, while rents are increasing. There is a shortage of good quality rented accommodation, that is genuinely affordable. Affordable housing helps to meet the District's housing needs and can include low cost home ownership or rented accommodation which typically has a discount of around 20% on the market rent; however, this may still not be truly affordable for some residents. Social rented homes have a rent that is lower than affordable rent and therefore provide homes for those on lower incomes or in receipt of full Housing Benefits.

The relatively high house prices and increasingly high rents, coupled with the lower than average earnings from local jobs, mean housing affordability is a significant challenge for residents in the District and is being made worse by the cost of living crisis.



Actions we are taking

The Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy and Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet on 8 February 2021 and set out the delivery strategy for the Council to accelerate the provision of social rented and affordable homes for local people. The current focus is to facilitate the affordable housing identified within the Local Plan and through rural exception sites and community-led housing opportunities, and to work with Housing Associations to maximise affordable housing delivery. The Council plans to go further and bring forward additional affordable homes through enabling and direct intervention, which may include the provision of land and other funding. In addition, any development the Council acquires or builds must be carbon zero in support of the Council's Climate Change emergency commitment.

Although this will increase the cost of affordable housing, it will reduce ongoing revenue costs for tenants. Based on the outcomes from the councillor workshop in October 2020, discussions with local Registered Providers (RPs), and a review of delivery options, Officers recommended that the Council establish a formal partnership with one lead Registered Provider.

An expressions of interest exercise resulted in Bromford being selected as the preferred RP, with the Kemble site to be taken forward via a Contractual Joint Venture (JV). Due to challenges with the site, including ecological challenges, the Kemble site was paused, and an alternative scheme on the derelict Broadleaze site at Down Ampney is being prepared for delivery first. Following a review of the Kemble site in the context of the cost of living crisis, the substantial subsidy that would be needed to deliver these homes and the ecological constraints, it was concluded that housing development on this site is not viable. In January 2023, Cabinet agreed to lease the land for use as allotments and community gardens. A revised valuation of the land based on its redesignation to community gardens has been undertaken to facilitate a lease agreement.

The Council and Bromford continue to collaborate on delivering carbon-zero affordable homes at the Down Ampney site, formalising their partnership with a Collaboration Agreement in November 2022. A communication strategy has been developed to ensure effective engagement with all stakeholders, including the Parish Council, local residents, and the community. A planned program of consultation began on October 10, 2022, with a second round of consultation in March to present detailed designs, house types, and layouts prior to the submission of the planning application. It was previously noted that the planning application would be influenced by the Habitat Regulations Assessment due to the site's location within the Zone of Influence for North Meadow, Cricklade. Consequently, the application could not be processed until a Mitigation Strategy was in place. Swindon Borough Council completed the mitigation strategy, allowing applications in the affected area to proceed. However, delays occurred in submitting the planning application due to concerns raised during the public consultation about drainage issues. Initial drainage designs were rejected by Bromford Housing Association for being non-adoptable. Although revised designs were eventually approved, this delay caused the Council to miss the submission deadline before the new Biodiversity Net Gain regulations came into effect. Despite this setback, the Ecological Appraisal was finalised, and the planning application was submitted in June. It is anticipated that the site may not be sufficiently large to meet the required offset. Alternative options, such as tree planting on other Council-owned sites or a financial contribution, are currently being reviewed.

The Old station, Sheep street was previously assessed for service provision such as homelessness accommodation and other housing options, but the conversion was found to be unaffordable. In December 2022, Cabinet agreed to develop the Old Station and Memorial Cottages for cultural and community use, working with local organisations to produce detailed designs, obtain quotations for the renovations and seek external grant funding. The Council have been working with New Brewery Arts, who prepared designs and costings to extend and renovate both buildings to provide Art studios, related offices and space that could be used for multiple community and small business purposes. Unfortunately, in December, New Brewery Arts concluded that the capital costs involved and the relatively limited grant funding that could be secured meant neither building is viable for renovation and conversion. In response, the Council issued a 'Call for Interest' in early March to attract a new partner capable of securing funding and development proposals. Following a review of opportunities and future options, a report was presented to Cabinet in July, which agreed to dispose of the Old Station and Memorial Cottages as separate assets in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy adopted by Cabinet in May 2024. Meanwhile, funding approved by the Council in February 2024 will be used to address structural repairs needed for the unstable wall at the Old Station.

In March 2021, the Council allocated commuted sum grants to two projects to deliver low carbon affordable housing. A sum of £478,500 was allocated to provide 100% social rent on a scheme of 15 units at Davies Rd, Moreton in Marsh; previously an open market scheme with 40% affordable housing only. A further allocation of £102,000 will be used to enhance the environmental sustainability of the homes. Cottsway Housing Association successfully submitted an application to Homes England for match funding. The completed homes were attending at an opening by CDC and the CEO of Homes England, to mark the construction of energy efficient homes in Cotswold.

The second project has an allocation of approximately £332,000 from commuted sums grants for a scheme of 14 homes at Sunground, Avening, a rural exception site, which will be 100% low carbon affordable housing. The scheme has received Homes England funding through Bromford, which is developing the scheme on behalf of Gloucestershire Rural Housing Association (GRHA). The scheme will provide nine social rented and five shared ownership homes for local people, incorporating rainwater harvesting, air-source heating, solar panels and biodiversity measures. This marks the third scheme supported by Cotswold District Council in answer to the Climate Emergency, and tackles fuel poverty among our residents.



Supporting Communities

The Context

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

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

Actions we are taking

We want Cotswold District to be the best in the country for health and wellbeing, and promoting healthy lifestyles and providing opportunities for people of all ages to be active is key. A Leisure Strategy determined by local priorities and outcomes was developed with the aim of providing effective and sustainable physical activity and sport opportunities for local communities via investment in our stock of leisure facilities and other non-facility interventions. In March 2021, Cabinet authorised officers to work in partnership with other organisations on the feasibility of the projects in the Strategy. Specialist Leads for each of the three themes (Healthier District, Connected Community and Active Environment) have developed action plans for each area. Progress on the projects are being monitored by the Active Cotswolds Programme Board and reported to the Portfolio Board.

The spring round of Crowdfund Cotswold concluded in April. An early submission quickly met its target, while six additional projects, collectively valued at over £110,000, participated in the main round. Four projects received a total of £23,000 in grants, with two being deferred. By 1 July, one of the funded projects had already reached its funding goal.

Funding for the Holiday Activity and Food programme potentially draws to an end, early next year. Therefore, we have secured £50K funding through the Strengthening Local Communities fund, to offer 12 – 14 events, throughout 2025, equally distributed between the south and the north of the district. These events will offer activities for all children to enjoy, during each school holiday, offering information from key support organisations for all ages, and providing food during the events.

We will be offering a forum for all ages to share their thoughts on what's good and what could be better, in their communities. Using the Asset Based Community Development model, we will work with local community champions in each area to target needs of each community. Cotswold, in collaboration with Tewkesbury, Stroud, and Forest of Dean, funded a joint post to promote Rural Domestic Abuse Champions across districts. The post, offering training via Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS), aids in identifying and supporting individuals in abusive rural relationships. To date, 11 new champions have been trained with 7 existing champions fully trained while 17 are awaiting further training. GDASS continue to offer a large number of training dates, attended online, with an aim to train employees at Cotswold in the early stages of planning.

Cotswold have re launched, in conjunction with the Police, the 'Safe Places' scheme. So far, we have at least 18 venues, in Cirencester and 10 in Bourton on the Water, signed up to offer a safe place to anyone feeling vulnerable or in danger. The Police Cadets will take on visiting Tetbury, Lechlade and Fairford during the summer to sign up cafes, pubs, etc, who want to offer a safe place during daytime and evenings. Each place will be listed on the Safe Places app <https://www.safeplaces.org.uk/> which can be downloaded, and will provide your nearest safe venue wherever you are, organisations will also display a Safe Places sticker in the window.

The Community Wellbeing Team continues to engage with various community groups, including the Chesterton Community Project Group, Bromford Housing, and The Salvation Army, to enhance resilience and improve residents' health. The 'Getting Connected' digital inclusion courses have positively impacted over 60 older adults, with significant participation in Bourton on the Water, Fairford, and Tetbury, where attendees have formed social groups and boosted their digital skills.

Community Fun Days have been planned in collaboration with the PCSO's, Bromford, Young Gloucestershire and local schools in Northleach, Stow, Moreton and Bourton and over 300 people attended.

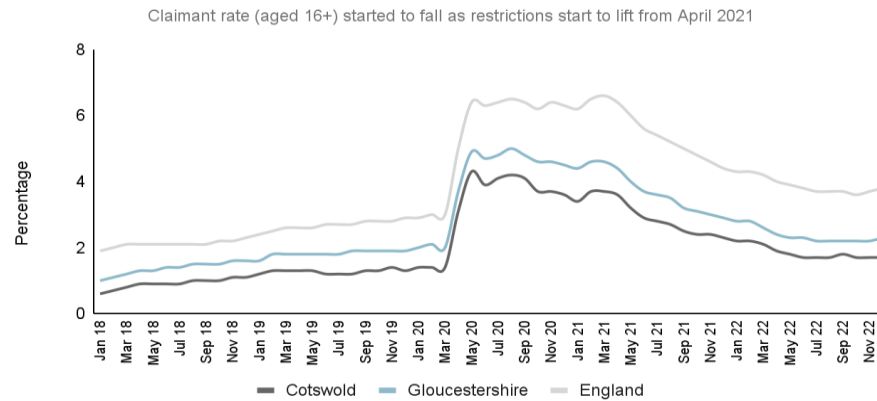
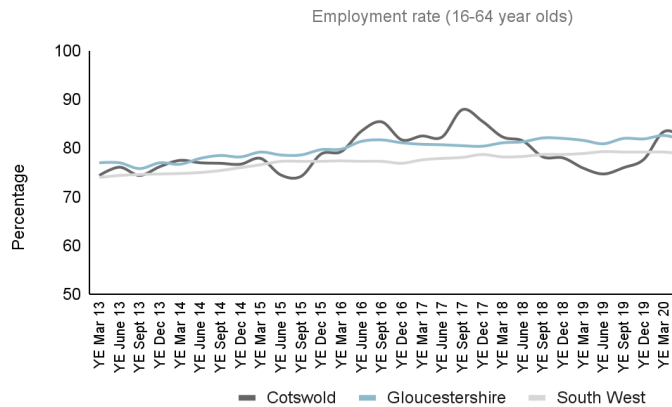
The Council has worked with the Chesterton primary school and the friends of the PTA to initiate, plan and run the DIG DAY earlier this year. This event was very successful and as a result a gardening after school club was formed. This day successfully enabled engagement with the local families.

Supporting the Economy



The Context

The District supports an economically active population of an estimated 42,600 and has strengths in finance and business services, ICT including science and technology, retail, and accommodation and food services. Around 90% of businesses are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. Median wages for people working in the District are below the national average, and affordability of housing is a significant issue for the District, which can result in skill and labour shortages. Historically, unemployment has been relatively low but increased during the pandemic. It has fallen back significantly and now stands at 1.9% - the lowest in the county, but still slightly above the pre-pandemic level. The national and global economies have faced further uncertainty as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sharply rising prices, particularly for energy and fuel, which continues to impact on disposable income and living standards. Although energy and fuel costs, and the overall inflation rate, have dropped back, they are still significantly higher than prior to the invasion.



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey

Source: ONS, Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

Despite the poor spring weather, which saw rainfall consistently well above average, and the continuing, if lessening, economic pressures from rising costs, most businesses within the visitor economy have reported high levels of business activity. Consumer demand, despite the cost of living crisis, has remained strong and advance bookings have been steady.

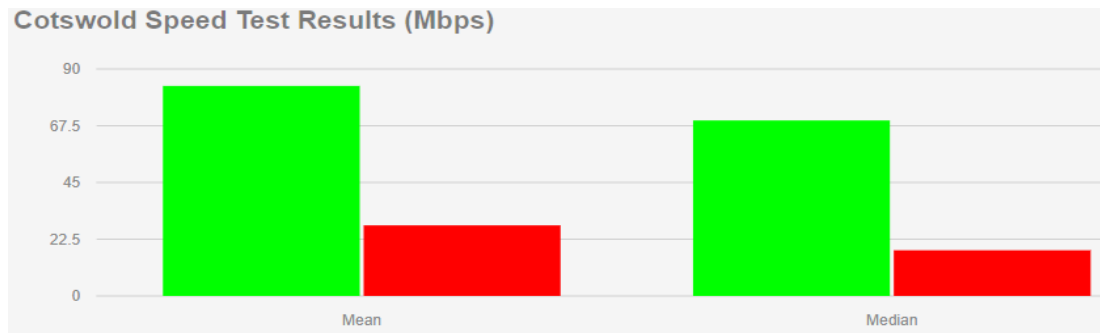
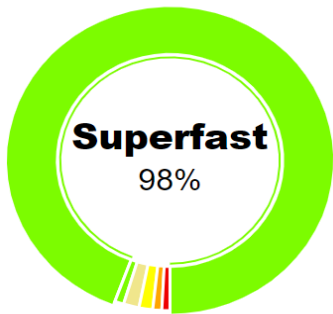
The one area that continues to be a particular worry is the availability of staffing with a number of businesses foreseeing problems with ensuring adequate staffing levels over the busiest summer months.

Overall, businesses within the visitor economy report substantial progress compared to 2023 levels and express a relatively positive outlook for the key peak season, though they are eager for improved weather conditions. This optimism is mirrored on a national scale, where VisitEngland's sentiment tracker indicates generally favourable trends. Key barriers to UK holidays have decreased: the rising cost of living has decreased by 3% (from 35% to 33%), personal finances by 5% (from 28% to 23%), and the rising cost of holidays and leisure by 3% (from 25% to 22%). The only significant barrier to experience an increase is the UK weather, which rose by 1% (from 30% to 31%).

The number of job postings remains high, reflecting continuing challenges in recruitment, but has fallen back from its peak. There are many companies at the cutting edge of innovation and the opportunity to grow key sectors like agritech, cyber and digital, medical equipment and environmental technologies.

The lack of a reliable broadband connection especially in rural districts can add to social isolation as well as reduce opportunities to be economically active. Openreach has been working in Cirencester and has announced plans to deliver full fibre to Tetbury, South Cerney, Lechlade, Northleach, Fairford and Bourton-on-the-Water by 2026 at the latest. However, there are still some areas where broadband is poor and even superfast connectivity is not sufficient for some businesses to operate in the way they wish to. The Council has been working with the Fastershire Project to address these areas. The Fastershire Project ceased at the end of March 2024 to be replaced by Project Gigabit, run by BDUK. The contract for Project Gigabit's 'Lot 18', which includes parts of the Cotswold District was awarded to Gigaclear and an announcement made earlier this year. We will be seeking details of how their programme is going to be rolled out.

The County Council has introduced the Gloucestershire Digital Household Grant to use 4G technology to deliver connectivity in remote locations where fibre is not practical or is prohibitively expensive and residents have speeds of less than 30mbps. The first phase of the scheme started in the Forest of Dean but is likely to be extended to the qualifying households in the Cotswold district towards the end of the year. The coverage of superfast (>30mbps) has increased slightly and ultrafast (>100mbps)/full fibre has moved up quite quickly according to figures on the ThinkBroadband website. This reflects the ongoing work by the infrastructure providers and the fact that commercial activity is concentrated on providing a full fibre service to the 'easier to reach' areas whereas the last 2% who do not yet have superfast broadband fall firmly within the 'difficult to reach' category, which the County Council scheme is seeking to address.



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

Actions we are taking

The Green Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25 sets out the challenges and issues for the District, and how they will be addressed. It identifies the key areas that will deliver growth in the District, as well as a recovery plan for the local economy. The strategy is in the process of being refreshed and a new draft will be brought to Cabinet later in the year. It will be informed by the new Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which was approved by the County Council's Cabinet in May and will be considered by the new City Region Board in September 2024. Both officers and the Cabinet Member have been involved in providing feedback on the draft of the County Economic Strategy.

The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which was set up to advise, oversee and challenge the implementation of the Strategy and provide a link to the main institutions and the wider business community in the District, continues to meet regularly and provide valuable advice and assistance. The group has representation from key stakeholders including Cirencester College, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cotswold Airport, Fairford and Lechlade Business Club, the Federation of Small Businesses and Gloucestershire County Council. Most recently, the Group met at the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh and received a presentation about the company's operations and plans for the future, as well as providing guidance on the refresh of the Green Economic Growth Strategy.

In 2022, the Council was awarded £1 million over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. The Council's Local Investment Plan, which sets out how the Council proposes to use the money, was approved by the government in early December 2022.

The fund has three themes – Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and, in year three, People and Skills. Year one projects have been completed, including ‘Clean and Green’ initiatives, new offices at The Growth Hub/Farm491 and a feasibility study for the Old Station building in Cirencester. Cabinet in March 2023 agreed to allocate up to £135,000 a year for 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Growth Hub in Cirencester to provide business support. One positive benefit of this funding is that the Growth Hub has been able to expand its outreach programme across the District, particularly in the north in areas like Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Campden. The Business Navigators for the outreach programme have been using the Council’s Moreton Area Office as their base when working in the area. The first business event in the north of the District, a marketing workshop, was held on 20th February and was attended by over 20 businesses and a second event in June covered the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing. Cabinet has already approved a number of projects for 2024-25, including contributions to the former House of Fraser in Cirencester and a net zero housing exemplar scheme in Down Ampney. An open application process for the remaining funding closed on 17th May and the Assessment Panel met in June, making recommendations to the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member. Projects to be funded include a walking app for Chipping Campden, improvements to the sheds for Men in Sheds and the Youtopia youth project by World Jungle.

A further £764,292 was allocated to the Council from the Rural England Prosperity Fund over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. This is a capital-only fund to support rural businesses to diversify with new products and services and to provide new community infrastructure. An addendum to the Local Investment Plan was submitted to the government at the end of November 2022 and it was approved in early April 2023. The approach has been to allocate funding for business grants, for active travel and for community projects, including assisting village halls with sustainability-related improvements. The Council has procured a delivery partner for the business grants (ALP Synergy Ltd) and the village hall grants (Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) jointly with the Forest of Dean District Council. Around £400,000 of business grants have been approved out of the overall allocation of £410,000 and these are at various stages of delivery. Six grants for village halls have been approved and a further round of applications closed on 12th July with a good number of applications which may well use up the remaining funding, for which just over £100,000 was allocated. A number of active travel and community and heritage buildings applications have been approved and some applications are still awaiting further information before a decision can be made as to whether to fund them.

Town centres are crucial, both economically and for civic pride. The number of vacant retail units in town centres serves as an indicator of their health and reflects the Council’s efforts to support their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey conducted in August 2021 revealed that Cirencester had a town centre vacancy rate of 11%, which was three percentage points below the national average. This rate improved to just under 6% in April 2022 and to just under 5% in October 2022. As of early April 2024, the vacancy rate stood at 5.1%, with several of the remaining units either under offer or undergoing refurbishment. Notably, the former House of Fraser in the Market Place, which was the longest-standing vacant building, has now been leased to the Grace Network. Renovations are underway, and the building is expected to be occupied later this year. In the smaller towns within the District, vacancy rates are generally low, though even a few vacancies can significantly impact percentages. Currently, there are no concerns, but we remain vigilant about the pace of high street changes and the potential effects of the cost of living crisis. We will continue to monitor these developments closely. Additionally, the conversion of retail spaces to residential use in smaller towns is a concern as it may impact the town’s ‘critical mass’ and its ability to attract visitors.

The Cotswolds.com website run the tourism team is firmly established as the leading site for the Cotswolds, no 1 on Google with 1.6 million users and 3.8 million views in the last 12 months. However constant updating and improvements are needed to maintain and improve on this position. To this end, Cotswolds Tourism has successfully bid for two separate funding pots: UKSPF funding for website enhancements and via the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) a Visit England grant for asset creation.

The Asset Creation Grant has allowed us to commission new imagery for the website and the UKSPF funding has allowed us to invest in a visual refresh for the website and additional functionality. The new functionality will include a microsite builder allowing better promotion of key strategic priorities, such as sustainability and accessibility, and give us the ability to better highlight niche and specialist interests and activities. Behind the scenes work has started and the improvements will go live at the end of the summer.

Other UKSPF funding has been secured to create Sustainability Champions and for Help to Thrive. The Sustainability Champions have been chosen to represent all areas of the visitor economy and businesses at very different stages on their sustainability journey. They will act as exemplars for other similar businesses as part of our efforts to encourage more sustainable business practices with the visitor economy. The Help to Thrive project is two pronged, helping businesses – and not necessarily businesses that would traditionally be thought of visitor economy businesses - to create new experiences that will appeal to visitors; the second prong is looking at helping businesses understand the best ways to get these new (or any existing experiences) to a wider audience via digital marketing and working with the group and trade market.:

Cotswolds Tourism operates as a membership organisation with all marketing paid for by the income generated. Membership currently stands at 418 businesses and income generated in the last year at £100k. The main marketing tools are the Cotswolds.com website and the Cotswolds Tourism social media channels that now have over 160k followers. With the new membership manager in post we have also restarted networking events and were delighted to see a total over 150 businesses signed up to the first two events.

The Cotswolds Plus LVEP, working across the wider area and led by Cotswolds Tourism, is now firmly established with a seven workstreams and associated action plans agreed: these include two covering Sustainability (public transport & active travel; business practices & bio-diversity), Business Support, Data & Research, Travel Trade, Accessibility & Inclusion, Skills & Training.

As part of the national promotion of the new tourism structure, Visit England organised a parliamentary drop-in session for Local Visitor Economy Partnerships at the Houses of Parliament, which Cotswolds Tourism attended. Unfortunately, this session coincided with the announcement of the recent general election.

The Council is working with partners to bring sites forward which will support the Council's ambition to grow high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact businesses in key areas including agritech, digital/cyber, medical equipment and environmental technologies, and to enhance the opportunities available for local people, particularly young people so that they have the skills they need to secure employment in the District. The Council is working with:

- The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) to bring forward their Innovation Village project. The Council's Chief Executive, the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transformation, the Business Manager for Economic Growth and Prosperity and the Economic Development Lead held a number of

meetings with the then new Vice Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer and Director of External Relations at the RAU, encouraging them to be ambitious with their plans for the Triangle/University Gate site. The RAU came up with a concept of an 'Innovation Village' which will help to address global challenges around sustainable farming and food security. The plans include teaching and research space, incubator and grow-on business units and hospitality space, although this is likely to evolve as the project progresses. The Council assisted the RAU to secure £100,000 from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Strategic Economic Development Fund to assist with the cost of project management over a two-year period. A public launch of the project took place on 20 January 2023 and attracted considerable media attention. The council continues to liaise actively with the university on this project. A planning application was submitted for the scheme in April 2024 and has now been validated. (Ref: 24/01143/OUT).

- The former Mitsubishi site in Cirencester, is now renamed Watermoor Point and is home to a number of businesses. The office element is now over 90% let. The owners have also introduced an innovative and flexible co-warehousing solution, offering businesses a private, secure space within the warehouse, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 square feet. Businesses also benefit from shared mechanical handling equipment and an on-site qualified forklift driver. Watermoor Point has been granted planning permission to install an additional 310 PV solar panels in addition to its existing 50kWh array, demonstrating its commitment to sustainability.
- ZeroAvia, which relocated from Cranfield to Cotswold Airport in 2021, is a leading innovator in decarbonising aviation and is developing a hydrogen-electric powered aircraft. The Council has been working with the Inward Investment Team at GFirst LEP (now part of Gloucestershire County Council) to support ZeroAvia which has increased its staff numbers from 15 to 150 onsite, with the plans to continue to grow significantly. The Council and Inward Investment Team will continue to support ZeroAvia in its ongoing growth. The company has undertaken a further successful test flight, staying in the air for 35 minutes – the longest test flight to date. Other sustainable aviation businesses, such as Vertical Aerospace and S&C Thermofluids, are already based at Cotswold Airport and the council is working with the airport's owners and others to promote it as a hub for such innovative businesses.
- Bathurst Developments in relation to the first phase of employment land at The Steadings development. They have appointed a developer partner. A reserved matters planning application was considered by the Planning and Licensing Committee in March 2024 and authority was delegated to the Interim Development Control Manager to approve the application subject to a number of conditions being satisfied.

The Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College was officially launched at an event held in May 2022. The centre will give the District a great opportunity both to develop a workforce with the digital skills needed in the 21st century, and also to grow its digital and cyber sectors. The Council continues to work closely with the College, particularly to identify partnerships with business which would be mutually beneficial. The College was also awarded £4m of funding from the Government for a new T-level building, which has now been completed and will help to provide high level skills in the District. T Levels are based on the same standards as apprenticeships, designed by employers and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. It is equivalent to 3 A-levels and involves an industry placement. The Economic Development Lead has met with staff from the College to assist them with identifying potential placements for students. The College has most recently been awarded £3.5 million, in June 2023, to create a Student Wellbeing Hub.

On infrastructure, the Development Consent Order (effectively the planning application) for the A417 Missing Link was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by Highways England in June 2021. The examination finished in May 2022 and the scheme was approved by the Secretary of State in November 2022. Kier Highways has been appointed main contractor. The project, which at around £460m, is the biggest infrastructure investment in the District and indeed the whole county for a generation, is designed to reduce congestion and improve road safety on this important link between Cirencester and Gloucester and, more widely, the M4 and M5 motorways. While new road building projects can be seen as environmentally damaging, much effort has been focused on delivering opportunities for environmental improvements as well as economic benefits. There will be opportunities for local suppliers, contractors and skills. Kier started on site with various preparatory works and are now advancing with the more visible phases of activity. Last year Kier and National Highways presented to a meeting of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group and we intend to ask them to return to the Group at some point during 2025 when the project has progressed further.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
April 2024 - June 2024

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Revenues, Benefits and Housing	Percentage of Council Tax Collected	Green	6
	Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected	Green	7
	Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims	Orange	8
	Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events	Green	9
	Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances	Orange	10
	Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay	Red	11
	(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties	Grey	12
	(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels	Grey	13
Customer Experience	Customer Satisfaction - Telephone	Green	14
	Customer Satisfaction - Email	Grey	15
	Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face	Green	16

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Customer Experience	Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time		17
	Complaints		18
	Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days		20
Development Management and Land Charges	Building Control Satisfaction		21
	Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		22
	Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		23
	Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		24
	Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice		25
	Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed		26
	Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days		27
	Number of affordable homes delivered		28

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Waste and Environment	Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action		29
	Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales		30
	% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day		31
	Percentage of household waste recycled	Awaiting Data	32
	Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)		33
	Missed bins per 100,000		34
Leisure	Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships		35

A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking).

When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. It does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

Benchmarking has been included wherever possible ranking against Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Nearest Neighbours model which uses a range of demographic and socio-economic indicators to identify the local authorities most similar to your own. Cotswold's identified Nearest Neighbours are Chichester, Derbyshire Dales, East Hampshire, Lichfield, Maldon, Malvern Hills, Ribble Valley, Stratford-on-Avon, West Devon, West Oxfordshire and Wychavon. Additional investigations are underway to provide it for those metrics that are missing comparisons.

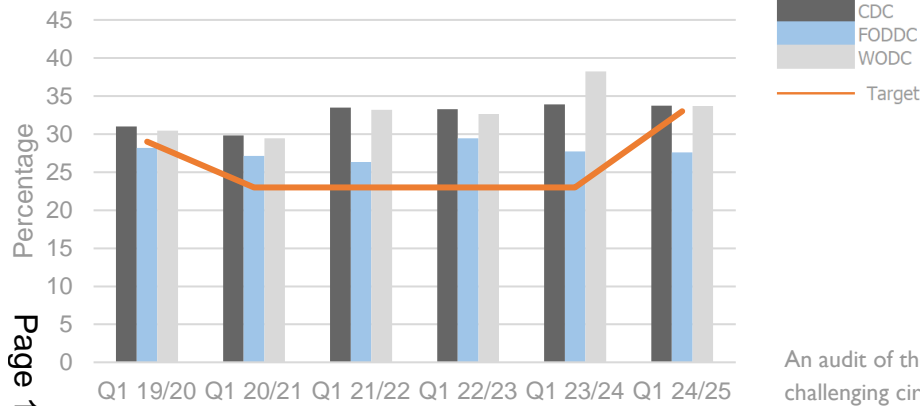
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared to last year is progressing.

Overall Performance

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive, with notable progress in Collection Rates, Planning Determination Times, and Gym Memberships. Customer Satisfaction continues to be strong, with the Council topping the Gov Metric league table in May. However, the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections and the percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales are showing a negative trend.


The Council remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and actively investing in the development and implementation of automation and self-serve options for customers. By providing accessible and efficient self-help tools, customers can address their queries and concerns independently, leading to a decrease in the need for repeated interactions with services. It will continue to monitor and assess the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

Percentage of Council Tax Collected



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter: N/A

Against last Year: 

Slightly decreased since last year

Q1 – Higher is Good

Target: 33%
Actual: 33.75%

Page 114

How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using CIPFA Nearest Neighbours – Latest dataset is 2023-24 Collection Rates

2023-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	98.36	3/12	Top
Ribble Valley	99.12	1/12	Top
West Devon	98.3	5/12	Second
Derbyshire Dales	97.82	8/12	Third
Wychavon	96.71	10/12	Bottom
Malvern Hills	96.67	12/12	Bottom

An audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. Whilst the recovery of arrears had been suspended for a time, it has since been reinstated, and the current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting the previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

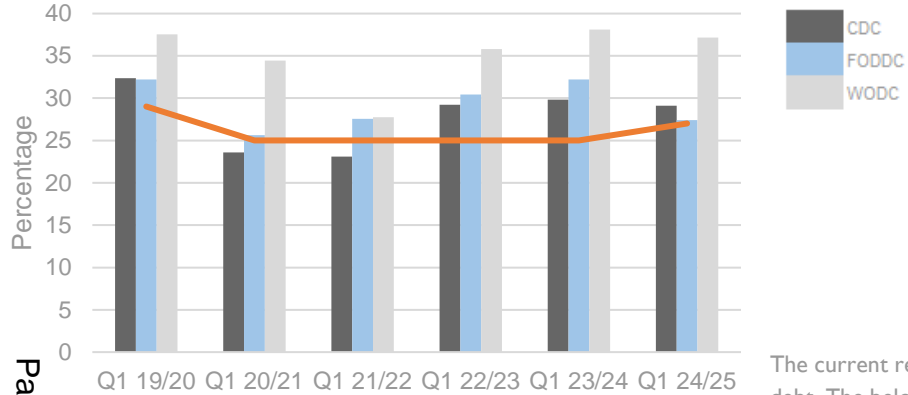
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£551,479.12	£817,496.69	£924,064.79	£1,519,208.25	£3,812,248.85
% collected	4.79%	5.95%	8.18%	13.77%	

By March 2024, authorities in England had collected £38.5 billion in council tax for 2023-24, along with an additional £907 million in aged debt. They achieved an average in-year collection rate of 95.9%, marking a 0.1 percentage point decrease from 2022-23 (source: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)).

Regression analysis has been conducted on previous years' collection rates for specific quarters to ensure the targets more accurately reflect whether the Council is on track. As such, the Q1 target has been increased to from 23% to 33%.


By the end of Q1, the Council observed a slight decrease of 0.18% in the amount collected compared to the same period last year. Despite this, the collection rates have surpassed pre-pandemic levels for the same period by around 2.8%.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter **N/A**

Against last Year 

Slightly decreased since last year

QI – Higher is Good

Target **27%**

Actual **29.12%**

Page 115

How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using CIPFA Nearest Neighbours - Latest dataset is 2023-24 Collection Rates

2023-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	96.91	11/12	Bottom
Lichfield	99.53	1/12	Top
Ribble Valley	98.69	3/12	Top
East Hampshire	97.81	5/12	Second
Derbyshire Dales	97.31	9/12	Third
Stratford-on-Avon	96.44	12/12	Bottom

The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

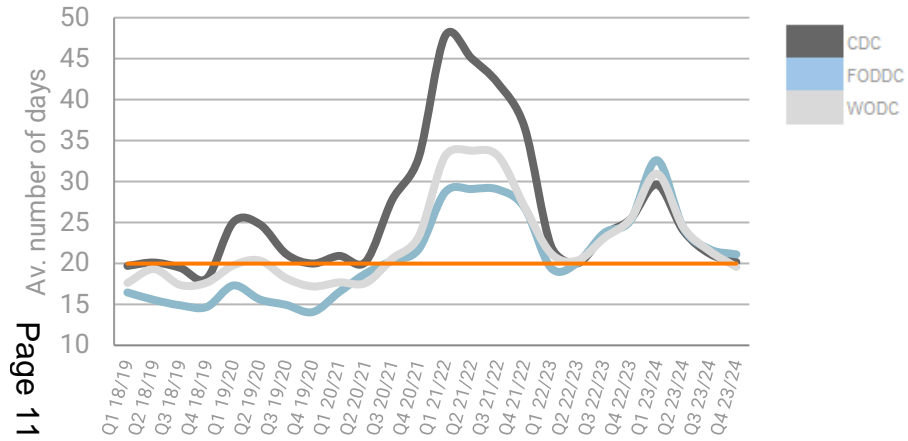
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£140,368.02	£290,434.83	£452,018.30	£603,318.87	£1,034,121.72
% collected	-2.50%	0.73%	-26.44%	40.02%	

The arrears outstanding for previous year's debts for Business Rates include some data where the amount outstanding now is greater than that brought forward at the beginning of the financial year. There are some processes that can increase the amount that needs to be collected, such as Rateable Value changes and amendments to liability. As Business Rates deal with large amounts of money, the outcome can outweigh the amount that has been collected.


Regression analysis has been conducted on previous years' collection rates for specific quarters to ensure the targets more accurately reflect whether the Council is on track. As such, the QI target has been increased to from 25% to 27%.

During QI, the Council observed a slight decrease of c. 0.7% in the amount collected compared to the same period last year. The service remains committed to supporting businesses, actively reaching out through reminders, phone calls, and emails to encourage dialogue with the Council. All in year recovery processes are up to date.

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly increased since last quarter but improved since last year

Q1 – Lower is Good

Target  20

Actual  22.42

How do we compare?

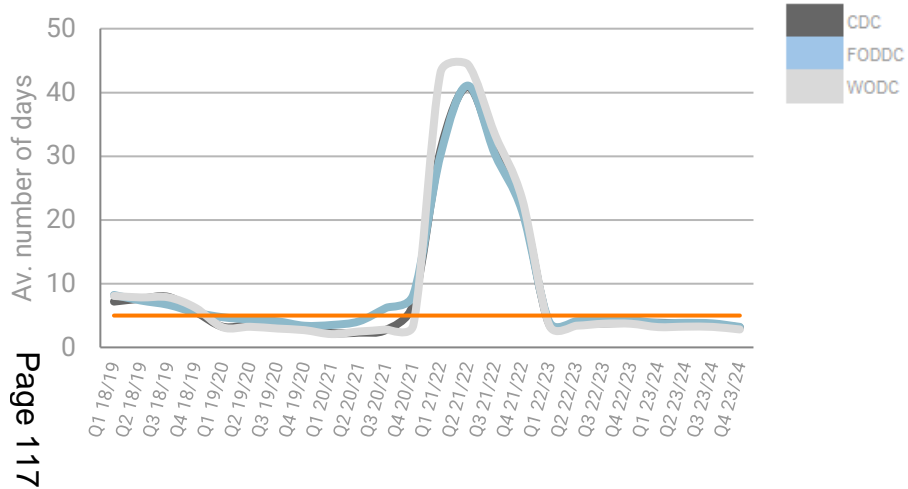
Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of March 2024 and the percentage change from March 2023 for each authority, plus the data for all authorities in England

	Number of Claimants at end of March 2024	Percentage Change since March 2023	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank (Higher = less claimants)
Cotswold	3,912	-0.86%	6/12
Ribble Valley	2,153	3.41%	1/12
Lichfield	5,191	6.09%	9/12
Wychavon	6,733	1.52%	12/12


The Councils processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims remain slightly above target by just over 2 days; however, they have markedly improved compared to the same period last year, with a decrease in processing times of around 7 days. There was the usual small backlog of cases at the end of Q4 arising from end-of-year processing, which is expected to be cleared over the next few weeks.


The automation of tasks received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers has released capacity for officers to process manual claims, with options for further automation currently under discussion.

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

Q1 – Lower is Good

Target

5

Actual

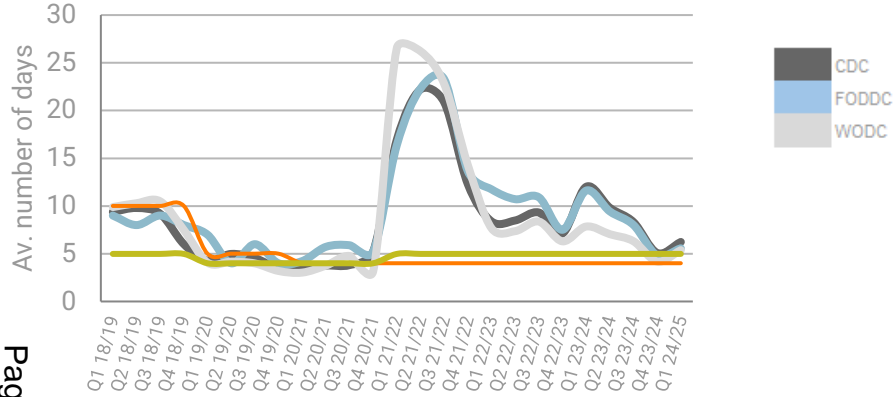
3.56

The processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events continue to comfortably meet the target of 5 days, with processing times decreasing compared to both the last quarter and the previous year.

How do we compare?

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

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q1 – Lower is Good

Target

4

Actual

6.25

Page 118

How do we compare?

Speed of processing for HB CoCs – LG Inform. Latest dataset is Sept - Dec '23 (Q3 2023-24)

Q3 2023-24 Benchmark

	Days	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	5	3/12	Top
Derbyshire Dales	2	1/12	Top
Chichester	6	7/12	Second
Lichfield	8	9/12	Third
Malvern Hills	9	10/12	Bottom
Wychavon	10	12/12	Bottom

Please see [Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims.](#)

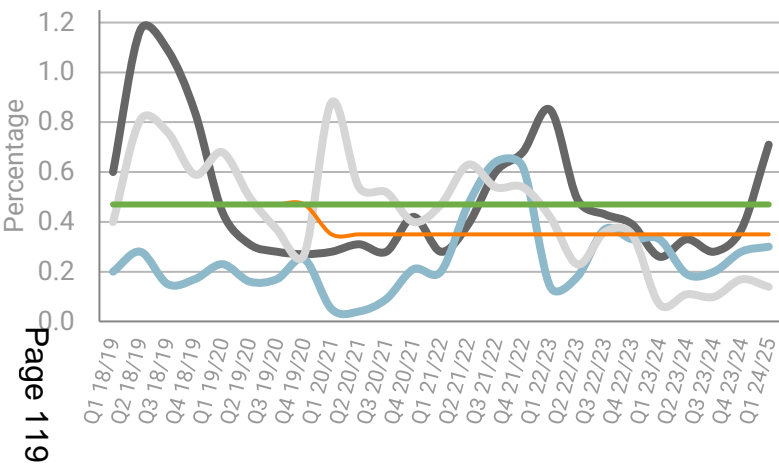
Q1 commenced with the usual small backlog of work for changes in circumstances at the end of Q4 due to end-of-year processing, which the team has worked hard to reduce. Although the Council is currently above target for processing times, there has been an improvement compared to the same period last year, with processing times decreasing by approximately 5.5 days.

It should be noted that the number of expected changes affecting Housing Benefit (HB) is reducing significantly, as can be seen by comparing the number of HB changes assessed to the number of Council Tax Support (CTS) changes assessed. The decrease in HB changes received amplifies the impact of delays in assessing an application due to outstanding evidence required for average processing days.

HB Changes – 804
CTS Changes – 4,501


The managed migration of HB to Universal Credit commenced in April, with some minor glitches reported in the system. While the migration was planned in stages, some stages have been brought forward, which will further decrease the number of changes received and may potentially increase processing times.


Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay



Page 119

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter and last year

Q1 – Lower is Good

Target	0.35%
Actual	0.71%

The Council has exceeded the target this quarter due to a significant overpayment identified by officers near the start of the quarter. Although this percentage is gradually decreasing each week, it is anticipated that the levels will not fall below the target until Q3. Any penalties imposed by the Government due to exceeding the target will be calculated based on the end-of-year figure.

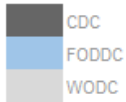
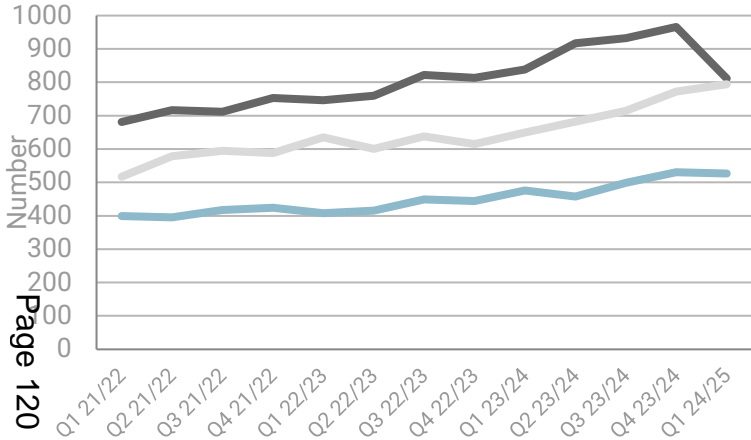
The service is mindful of the impact of increased workloads on delays to processing HB changes which could impact on HB subsidy.

In order to reduce HB overpayments due to local authority error, approximately 20% of the HB caseload undergoes Quality Assurance checks. These checks target areas with high error rates, such as earnings calculations. Additionally, the service is actively participating in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) initiative to combat fraud and error.


How do we compare?
TBC

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

(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



Direction of Travel

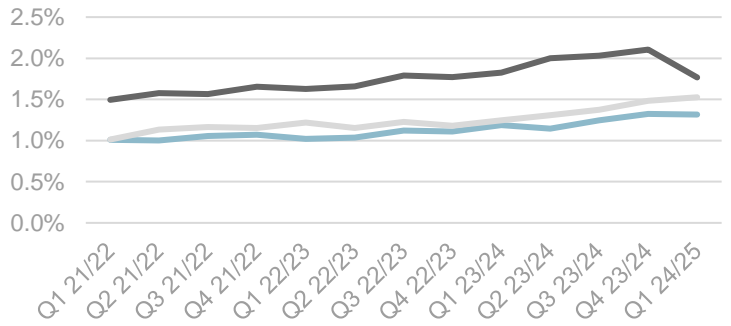
Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter and last year

Q1 – Lower is Good
No Target
811

% Long Term Empties of the Total Housing Stock



Properties continue to be added and removed from the list, however, the Council observed a large number of properties removed from the list over the last quarter. The service reports that properties are staying on the LTE list longer with most properties individually owned which have to be followed up individually which is resource intensive, and will not result in the removal of large numbers from the LTE list. A range of work is being undertaken to both understand the reasons why properties are coming onto the list so that they can be managed and reduced as well as ensuring that the data is up to date so that these properties are having the correct levy applied and charged for. Approximately 60% of the total Long Term Empty Properties have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for under two years.

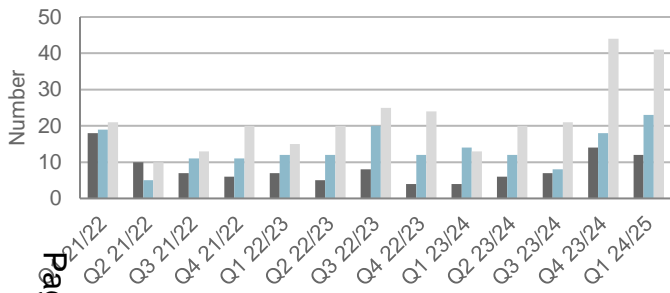
Maintaining registers of long-term empty properties, can help monitor the situation, target interventions, and communicate with property owners more effectively. The LTE list is constantly being addressed with all owners being contacted by email, phone or letter in an attempt to bring properties back into use.

How do we compare?

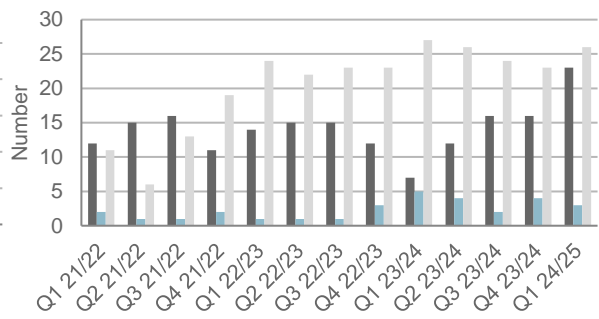
No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels

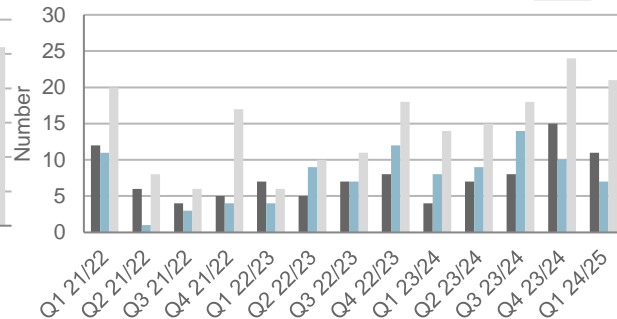
Households in B&B/hotel type accommodation



Households in hostels



Successful 'Move on' into suitable independent/LT accommodation



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter	B&B/Hotels	↓
Against last Year	B&B/Hotels	↑
Against last Quarter	Hostels	↑
Against last Year	Hostels	↑
Against last Quarter	Move Ons	↓
Against last Year	Move Ons	↑

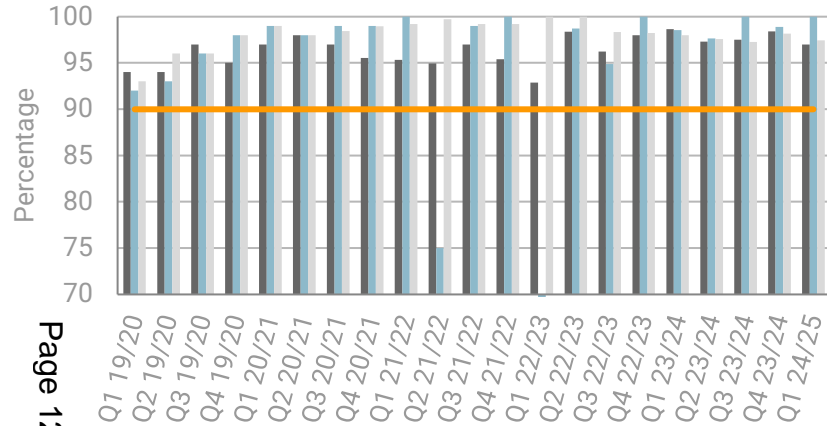
Homelessness continues to be a significant challenge for all three Councils, adding considerable pressure to Housing services, systems, and pathways. During Q1, there was a noticeable rise in homelessness applications. This increase is due to various factors, including heightened demands on the countywide support system. The situation is further complicated by several issues: an influx of individuals leaving refugee hotels, reduced capacity in adult homelessness pathways, and a shortage of affordable housing options outside the social rented sector. Additionally, uncertainties surrounding the general election, including potential policy changes like the abolishment of no-fault evictions, have further exacerbated the growing homelessness issue. This has led to increased competition for available social rented accommodations, resulting in longer stays for individuals transitioning from hostels and B&Bs.

The team persistently works towards preventing homelessness, successfully averting homelessness for 48 households during Q1—37 within the statutory 56-day period and 15 before statutory duties were triggered. It's important to note that these figures are approximations and have not yet been officially confirmed through the reporting system.

How do we compare?


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


Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



QI - Higher is Good

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly declined since last quarter and last year

Target

90%

Actual

97%

Page 122

How do we compare?

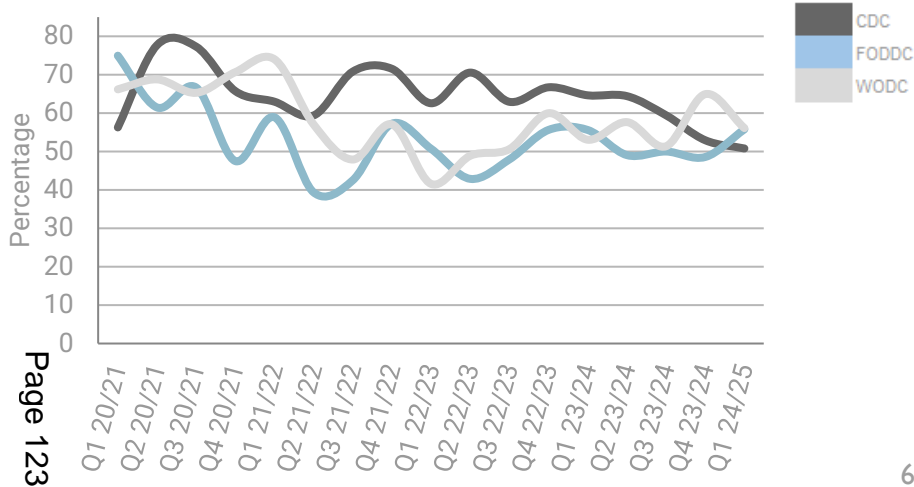
The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included i.e. Forest in the below table. This is a national comparator

	April Rank	April Net Sat.	May Rank	May Net Sat.	June Rank	June Net Sat.
Cotswold	2	95%	1	96%	6	93%
Forest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West	3	95%	6	91%	1	99%

Services provided via the telephone consistently yield high satisfaction.



The Council continues to achieve top-tier performance levels when a sufficient number of surveys are included in the Satisfaction Index. Although this is a very small proportion of our calls, the numbers are comparable to those of other District Councils, hence the 'league tables' being a useful comparator.

Customer Satisfaction - Email



Page 123

Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

Q1 - Higher is Good

No Target

50.83%

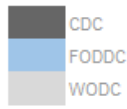
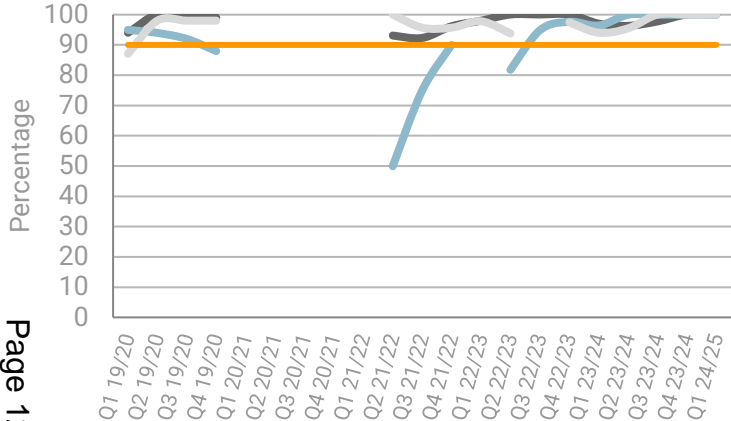
602 residents responded to the survey, of which 306 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 50.83% satisfaction for the quarter, down from 52.97% during Q4.

All outbound emails sent by customer services from Salesforce contain a link to the survey.

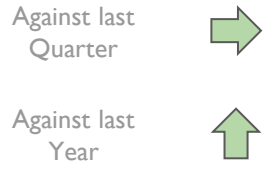
A piece of work was undertaken to review the responses from the email surveys due to the more negative responses. Upon review, it appears to be dissatisfaction surrounding service failure such as missed bins, container deliveries, responses from Planning or Housing etc. System and process improvements by the individual services are being implemented, which may affect these figures in the future.

How do we compare?
Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face



Direction of Travel



Increased since last year and stayed the same since last quarter

QI - Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	100%

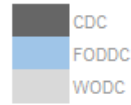
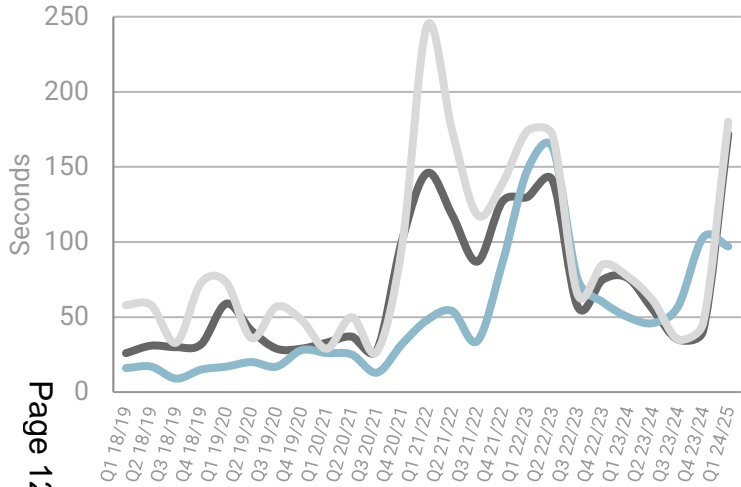
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high, with a 100% satisfaction rate for the quarter, with all 66 individuals surveyed satisfied with the service.

How do we compare?

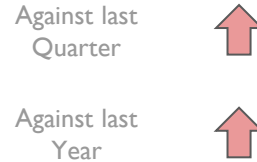
Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Note that any gaps in the data indicate no surveys were returned. This is especially apparent when the offices were closed during the pandemic.

Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



Direction of Travel



Increased since last quarter and last year

Q1 - Lower is Good

No Target

172 Seconds

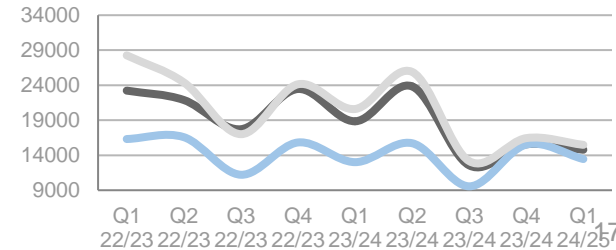
How do we compare?

SPARSE are investigating pulling together Customer Services benchmarking data and if there is sufficient demand and suitably similar metrics to provide comparison across similarly rural local authorities we will work with them to assess any crossover in metrics and potential presentation.

The average wait time at the Council has significantly increased compared to the last quarter, driven by several key factors. Among these is a notable surge in call volumes, particularly due to the General Election, which led to a substantial number of inquiries. Additionally, there was a marked increase in calls related to garden waste services, council tax, and the reorganisation of collection rounds for waste, further burdening the system. Staff resourcing challenges compounded the problem, with the team experiencing vacancies equivalent to six full-time employees. These factors together resulted in much longer wait times. To address this, the service is actively recruiting to fill these vacancies.

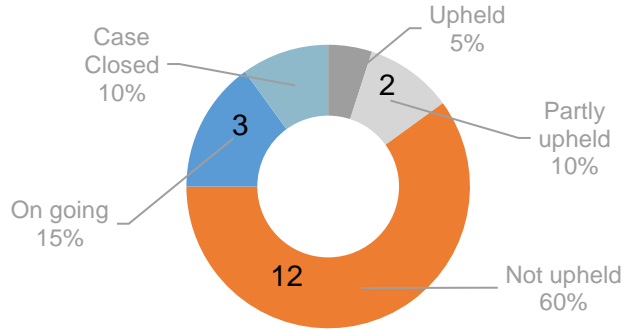
The Council saw a decline of around 4,000 calls compared to the same period the previous year, as depicted in the chart to the right. This data reflects an overarching trend of lower call numbers over time, a trajectory expected to persist owing to sustained initiatives in Channel Choice, aimed at fostering customer self-service options.

Call Volume over Time




Number of complaints upheld


Complaints by Status



Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Steady since last quarter and last year

No Target

Page 126

How do we compare?

The number of complaints and enquiries received in the period by the Ombudsman. The decisions made in the period by the Ombudsman. Compliance with recommendations recorded during the period by the Ombudsman. – Latest Dataset is 2022-2023.

2022-23	Complaints Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	1	100	1.1	N/A	0	8/12	Third
Derbyshire Dales	6	0	0	N/A	N/A	1/12	Top
Chichester	1	100	0.8	100	0	4/12	Second
Lichfield	2	100	1.9	100	0	12/12	Bottom

During Q1, the Council experienced an increased number of complaints received in comparison to last quarter. The majority of the cases were not upheld.

See the table on the following page for a breakdown of those upheld and partially upheld.

A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st October 2021.

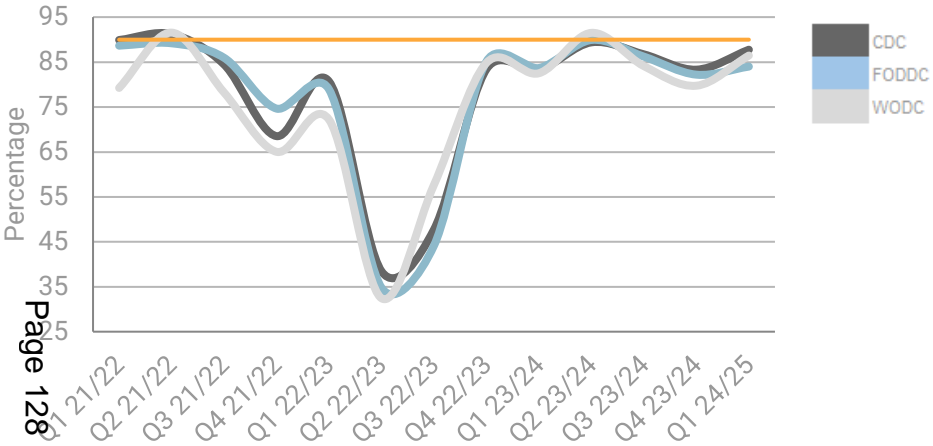
The new process has the following stages:

- Stage 1: Relevant service area responds to complaint within 10 working days
- Stage 2: Complaint is reviewed by Corporate Responsibility Team, response is signed off by relevant Business Manager, and sent to complainant within 10 working days
- Stage 3: Complaint is reviewed by relevant Business Manager, signed off by relevant Group Manager, and sent to complainant within 15 working days

Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Parking	Unhappy with response as customer felt it was dismissive.	Although the procedure was correct it was agreed that the advisor should have explained the situation in more detail.	Partly Upheld	1
Waste	Littering outside property by waste crews.	Dealt with by Service with crews returning to pick up the excess litter.	Partly Upheld	10
Waste	Green bin not emptied with no action taken until complaint.	Dealt with by service	Upheld	10

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

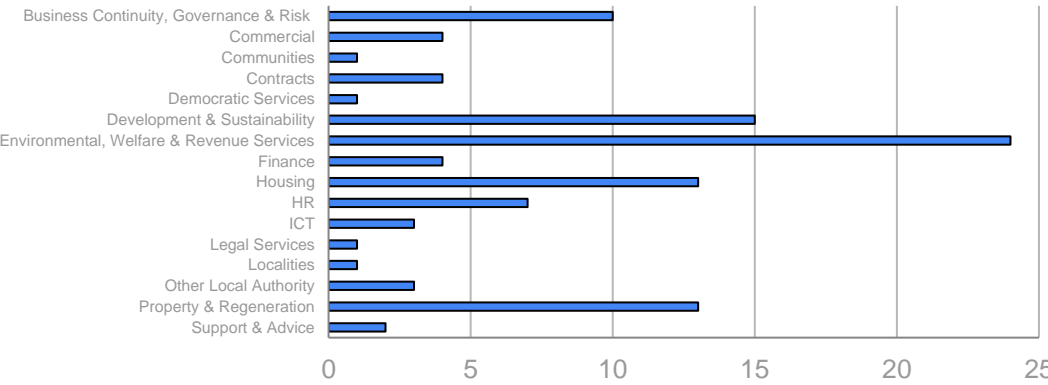
Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

QI - Higher is Good

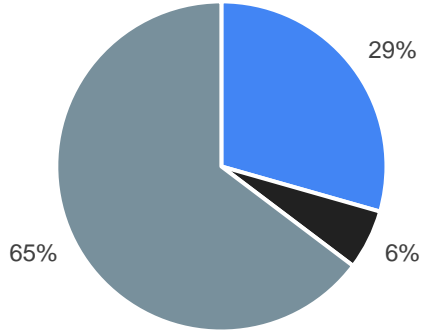
Target	90%
Actual	87.74%

Requests by Service Area



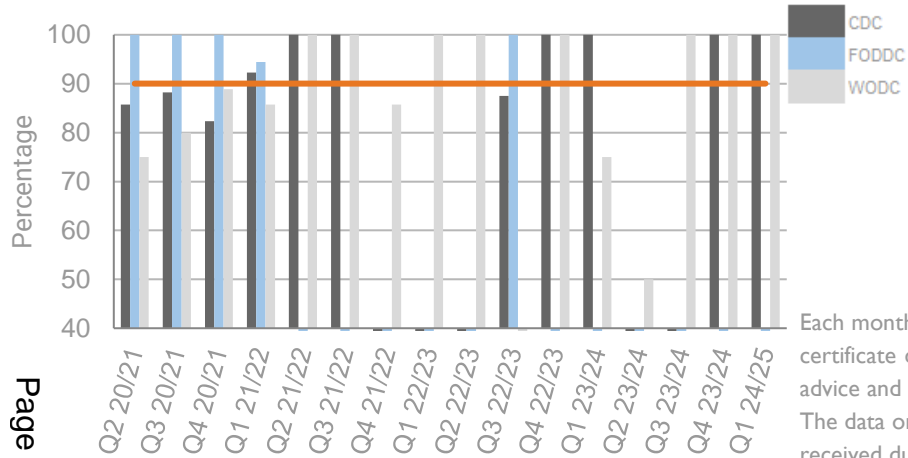
Reasons for Delays in Responding to FOI Requests Beyond the 20-Day Deadline

- Awaiting clarification from requester
- FOI admin backlog
- Service Area not provided information in time



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

Building Control Satisfaction



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year →

No Data

QI – Higher is Good

Target

90%

Actual

100%

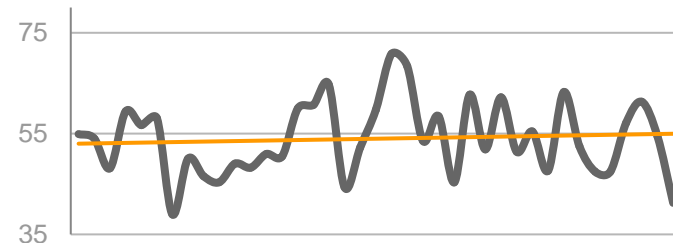
Page 129

Each month, the service conducts telephone interviews with customers who have received a completion certificate during the month. The customer rates the service on helpfulness of staff, quality of technical advice and other information, responsiveness, value for money, and overall satisfaction.

The data on satisfaction surveys still faces challenges with a low number of returns with only one survey received during Q1.

Due to legislative changes, Building Control has become a regulated activity. From 1st April, all individuals must hold specific qualifications or experience and register with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) as Registered Building Inspectors (RBIs). The team has been preparing for these changes, with many individuals undertaking courses and assessments. All team members, except one surveyor who is awaiting exam results, have passed and are now appointed as RBIs.

The below chart shows market share over time from April 2021

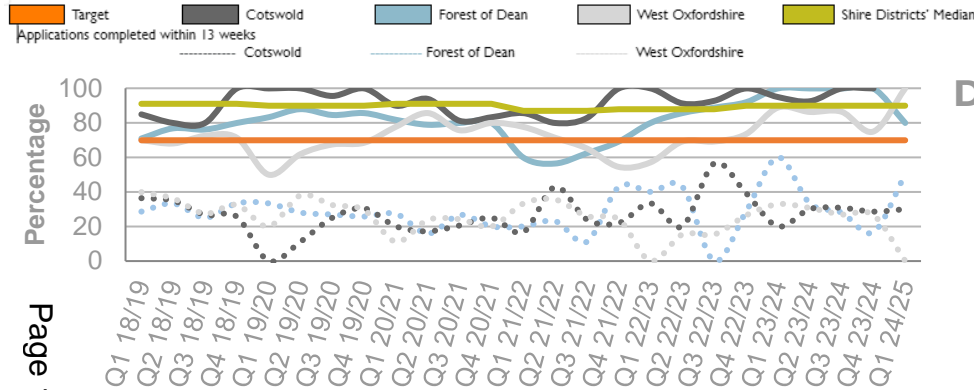


How do we compare?

Percentage of share in the market

	April	May	June	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	61%	54%	41%	131
Forest	69%	63%	39%	88
West	81%	71%	78%	178

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



Page 130

How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is Jan - March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	100	1/12	Top
West Devon	100	1/12	Top
Maldon	93	3/12	Second
Stratford-on-Avon	85	8/12	Third
Ribble Valley	75	10/12	Bottom
Lichfield	67	12/12	Bottom

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Steady since last quarter and last year

Q1 - Higher is Good

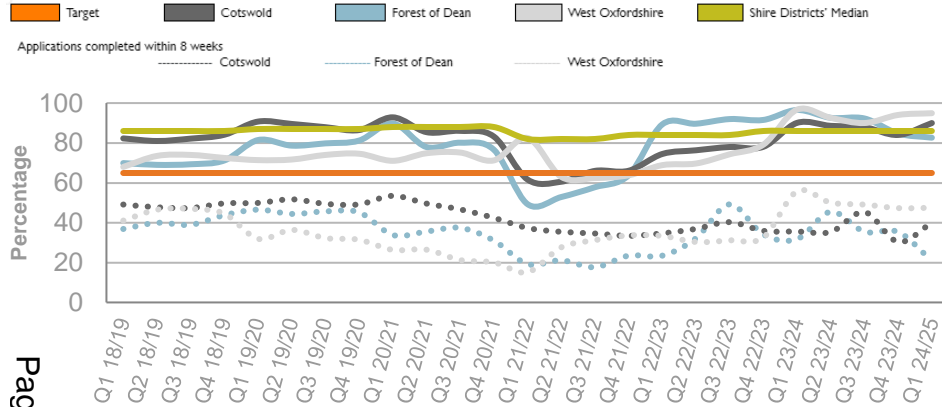
Target 70%
Actual 100%

The service continues to perform very well processing Major applications within time with 100% of those determined being within the agreed timescales during Q1.

Ten major applications were determined during Q1, compared to five applications in the same period of the previous year.

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

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



Q1 - Higher is Good

Target 65%

Actual 90%

Page 131

How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is Jan - March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

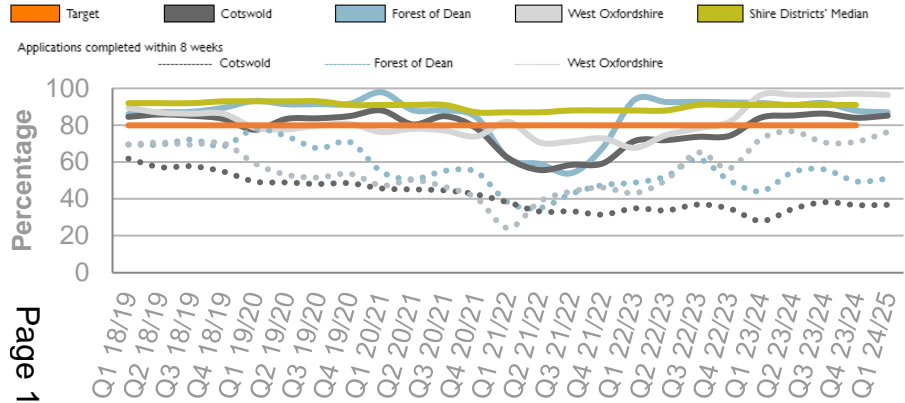
Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	84	6/12	Second
Derbyshire Dales	96	1/12	Top
Ribble Valley	90	3/12	Top
Maldon	80	8/12	Third
Wychavon	76	10/12	Bottom
East Hampshire	62	12/12	Bottom

The Council has continued to perform well in processing minor applications within the allotted timeframes, with a slight increase in the number of applications determined within the agreed timeframes compared to last quarter, despite the service being understrength throughout the quarter. A permanent recruitment campaign is currently underway. There have been multiple changes of personnel in recent months, including the DM Manager and Enforcement Manager.

80 minor applications were determined in Q1.

The Development Management Improvement Plan, initiated following the PAS report, remains actively pursued, with significant progress achieved on many key recommendations. Work is underway to create a concise householder application report template.

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



Page 132

How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is Jan - March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	84	11/12	Bottom
Maldon	97	1/12	Top
West Devon	94	3/12	Top
Derbyshire Dales	92	5/12	Second
Stratford-on-Avon	89	9/12	Third
Malvern Hills	83	12/12	Bottom

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly improved since last quarter and last year

QI - Higher is Good

Target **80%**

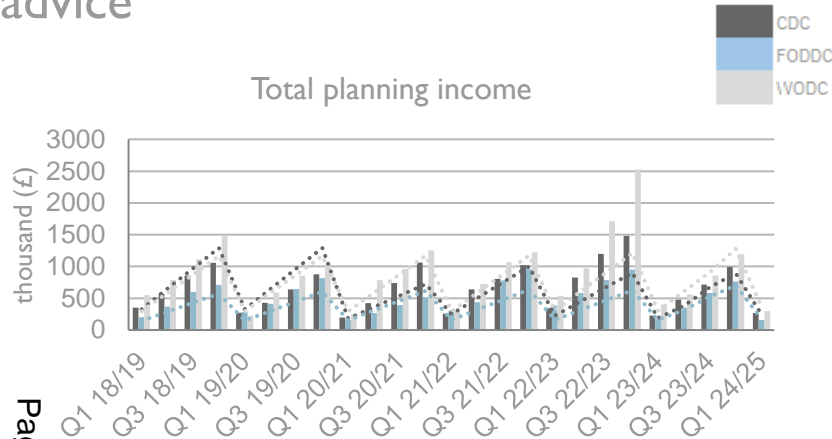
Actual **85.25%**

Determination times for Other applications have slightly improved by around 1% since last quarter and this time last year.

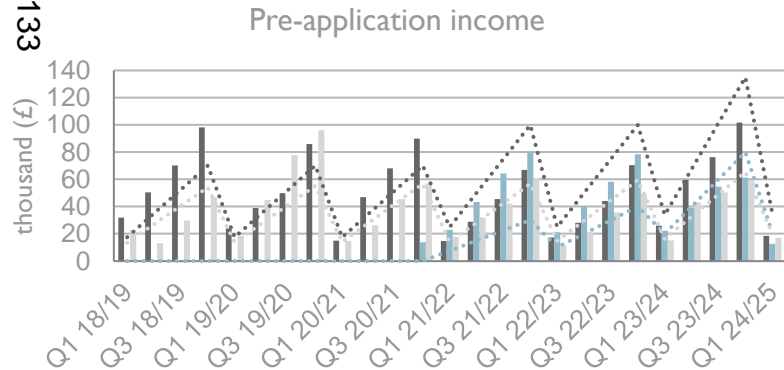
278 Other applications were determined in Q1.

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

Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice



Page 133



Direction of Travel

Total Planning Income

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Pre-Application Income

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Total Income decreased since last quarter but increased since last year
Pre-App Income decreased since last quarter and last year

Q1 – Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target

250,470

Actual

266,134

Pre-Application Income (£)

Target

35,500

Actual

18,572

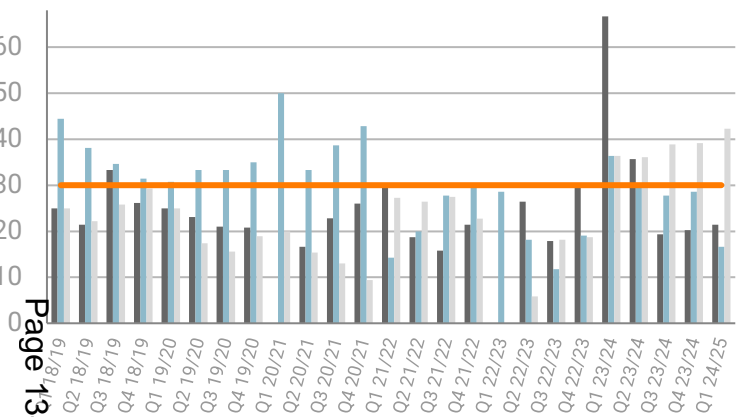
By the end of Q1, planning income for the Council exceeded its target. Notwithstanding this, the service reported a lower number of Major and Minor applications, which typically generate higher fees. This decline may be linked to the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain for these application types.

Despite an increase in pre-application fees, the Council did not meet its target.

How do we compare?

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) planned to benchmark back in 2021. No data is available in the public domain.

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



Page 134
How do we compare?
Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform. Latest dataset Jan - March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	42	12/12	Bottom
Derbyshire Dales	0	1/12	Top
Litchfield	0	1/12	Top
Chichester	20	5/12	Second
Wychavon	31	8/12	Third
Stratford-on-Avon	40	11/12	Bottom

Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

Q1 – Lower is Good

Target 30%

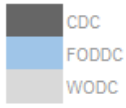
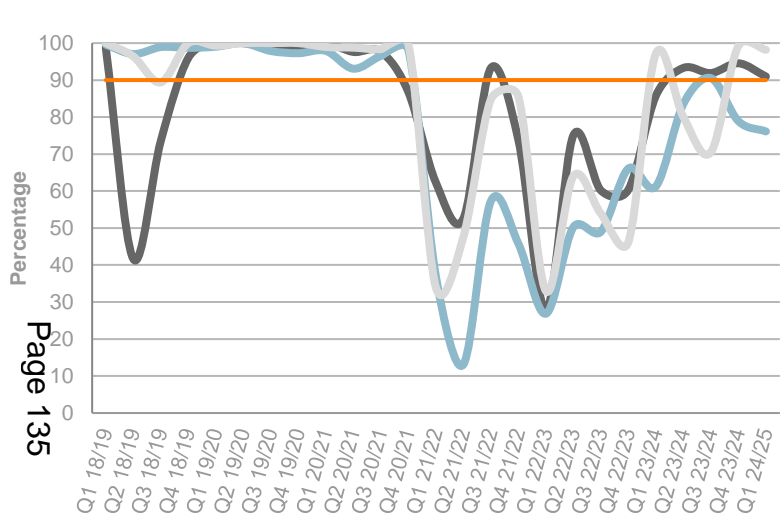
Actual 21.43%

This indicator seeks to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed.

Between 1 April 2024 and 30 June 2024, fourteen appeals were decided, with eleven supported, resulting in a 21.43% allowance rate.

The enforcement project, focusing on enhancing the front end for registering enforcement issues, is currently in progress, with the new user forms allowing cases to be triaged quicker. It is anticipated to result in a decrease in repeat customer contact/chasing, as well as a reduction in the number of non-breach cases due to improved online reporting facilities and back office triage.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days

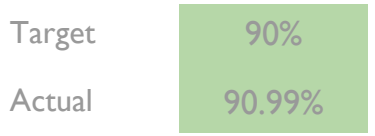


Direction of Travel



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q1 - Higher is Good



During Q1, the Council exceeded its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days.

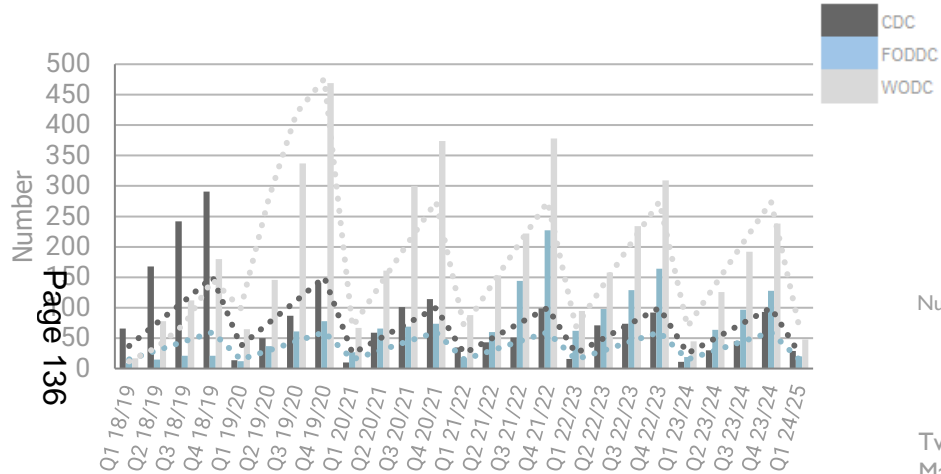
Efforts to strengthen relationships with the answering teams have improved communication and workload management. This enhanced collaboration has enabled team members to address tasks more efficiently, ultimately boosting overall productivity.

The HMLR project, aimed at creating a national local land charges service to speed up searches, has commenced and is currently in the early stages.



How do we compare?

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

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

Number of completions improved since last year but declined since last quarter

2023-24 – Higher is Good

Target	25
Actual	29

Twenty-nine properties were completed in Cotswold during Q1, located in Moreton-in-Marsh and Kempsford. The low-carbon affordable housing scheme at Davis Road has been finished, with the opening attended by officers from CDC and Homes England. This development includes 15 houses and maisonettes, offering one, two, and three-bedroom options, all featuring sustainable elements such as air-source heating, solar roof panels, electric vehicle charging points, and enhanced insulation. Each property has achieved an Energy Performance Certificate 'A' rating.

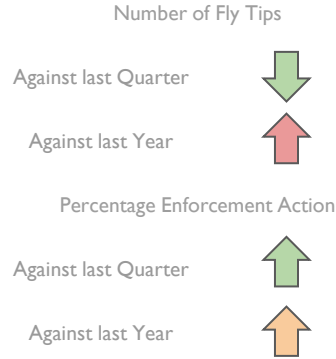
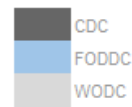
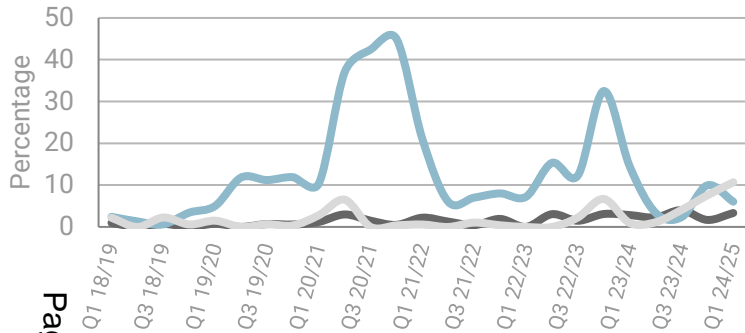
The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years.

How do we compare?

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

Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action

(defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)



No Target

Number of Fly Tips Collected
233

Percentage Enforcement Action
3.35%

Fly Tips – Decreased since last quarter but increased since last year
Enforcement Action – Increased since last quarter and last year

Page 137

How do we compare?

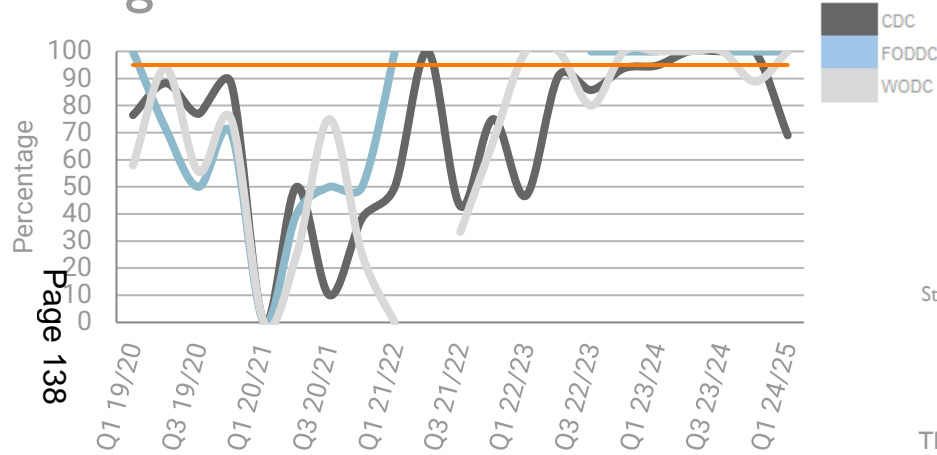
Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England – G.U.K. The latest dataset available is 2022-23

2022-23 Benchmark	Total Fly Tips	Total Enforcement Actions	Total FPNs	% FPNs per Fly Tip	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	1092	99	22	2.01	2/12	Top
Wychavon	878	178	6	0.68	5/12	Second
Chichester	844	109	1	0.12	8/12	Third
West Devon	327	0	0	0	12/12	Bottom

During Q1, the number of fly-tipping incidents fell across the partnership, reflecting the success of recent initiatives aimed at reducing illegal waste disposal. This decrease can be attributed to enhanced surveillance, increased public awareness campaigns, and the implementation of stricter penalties.

New vehicle liveries have been applied to buses to raise awareness about the household waste duty of care. This initiative has been funded through the Fly-Tipping grant scheme.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

Steady since last quarter but increased since last year

QI - Higher is Good

Target	95%
Actual	69%

The Council completed 9 out of 13 high-risk food inspections within the target timescale. The team is currently experiencing some resourcing issues leading to the missed inspections. To mitigate the impact of these missed inspections and improve performance, the target deadline for inspecting high-risk food businesses has been advanced by 28 days. This change provides management with additional time to address any outstanding inspections before the original deadline, thereby helping to ensure that all high-risk inspections are completed in a timely manner. The missed inspections have since been completed.

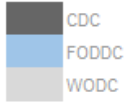
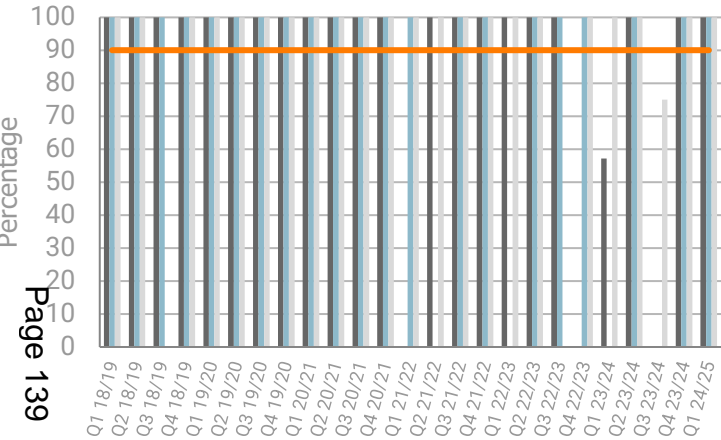
High risk work is naturally prioritised, which can have an impact on lower risk scheduled inspection rates. The service now has a useful dashboard, which is helpful for monitoring team performance and tracking lower risk scheduled inspections within the team.

How do we compare?

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

% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day

(including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year ↑

Steady since last quarter and increased since last year

QI - Higher is Good

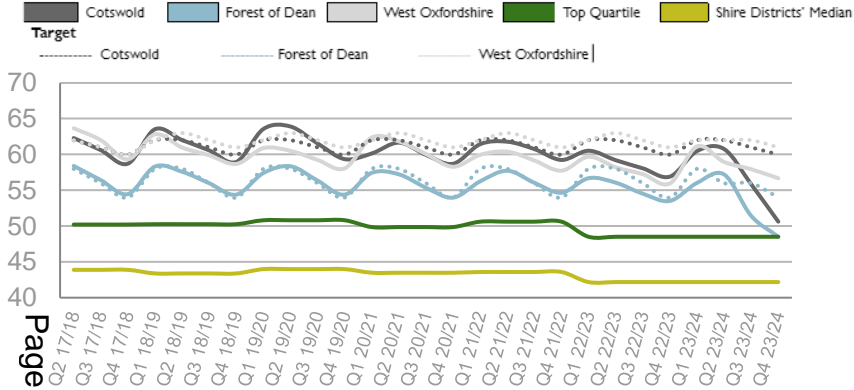


Four notifications were received during Q4 which was assessed within one working day.


How do we compare?


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

Percentage of household waste recycled



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

Q1 - Higher is Good

Target 62%

Actual

How do we compare?

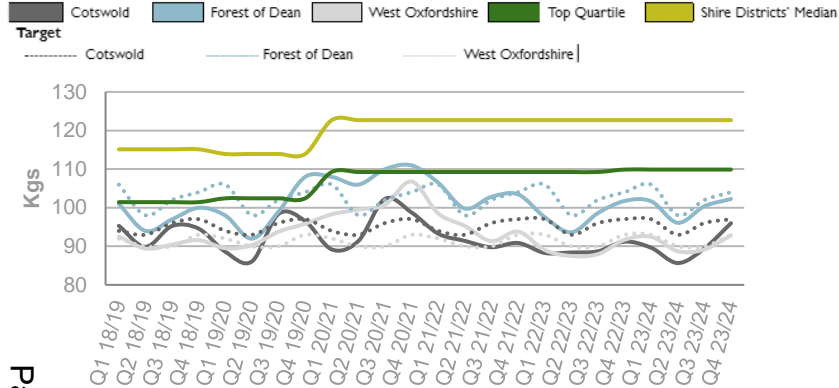
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in April – June '23 (Q1 2023-24) – **Within this Dataset 6 authorities are missing data**

Q1 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	60.2	2/6	Top
Stratford-on-Avon	70	1/6	Top
West Oxfordshire	60.13	3/6	Second
Derbyshire Dales	49	4/6	Third
Litchfield	50.3	5/6	Bottom
Malvern Hills	47.01	6/6	Bottom


The team is currently awaiting the recycling rates for June from Gloucestershire County Council. The recycling rates for April and May stand at 59.5%, which is approximately 1% lower than the same period last year.


Notes: The quarterly recycling targets are profiled to account for seasonal differences. The combined recycling data is also presented cumulatively which will flatten out some of these differences.

Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter and last year

Lower is Good

Target 97

Actual 88.74

Page 141
How do we compare?
Residual household waste per household (kg/household) – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in April – June '23 (Q1 2023-24) – **Within this Dataset 6** authorities are missing data

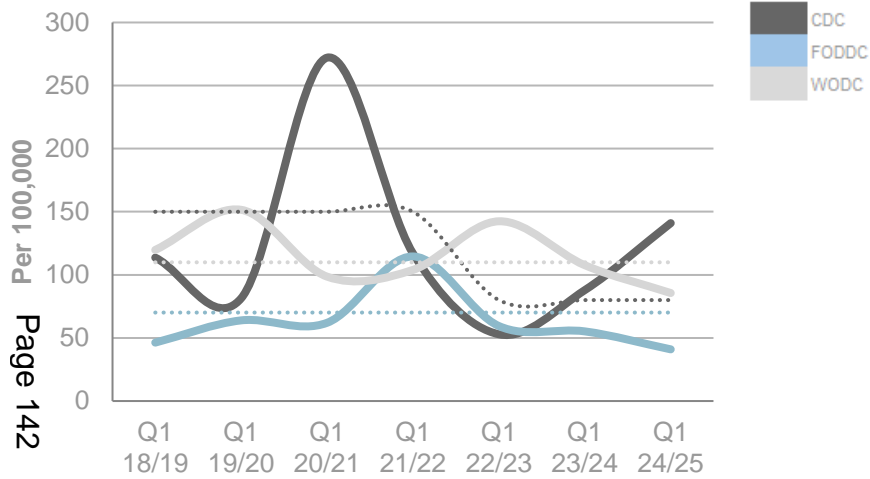
Q1 23-24 Benchmark	Kg	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	89.62	3/6	Second
Stratford-on-Avon	71	1/6	Top
Derbyshire Dales	83.38	2/6	Top
West Oxfordshire	92.43	4/6	Third
Malvern Hills	97.68	5/6	Bottom
Litchfield	112.88	6/6	Bottom

The pattern of residual waste throughout the year is cyclical and targets are profiled according. We typically see an increase in Q3 due to the Christmas period.

In general, the Council is experiencing lower presentation of all types of waste.

Based on the data available, the residual waste per household is lower than or in line with the comparative period of the previous year.

Missed bins per 100,000



000,000 Per 100,000 Page 142

CDC
 FODDC
 WODC

Lower is Good

Target

80

Actual

141

Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Increased since last quarter and last year

How do we compare?

Missed collections per 100,000 collections (full year) - APSE

2022-23 Benchmark	Missed collections per 100,000 collections	Family Group Rank	Family Group Quartile	Whole Service Rank	Whole Service Quartile
Cotswold	109.89	12/14	Bottom	39/45	Bottom

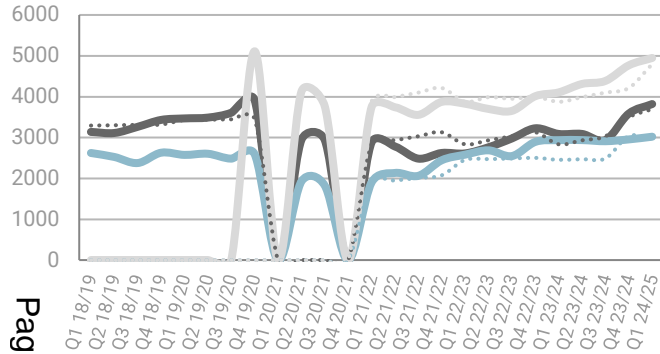
The Council experienced a notable increase in missed bins in comparison to last quarter and the same period last year. The rise in missed bins is primarily due to issues with a specific Garden Waste round, which encountered a high number of misses during the quarter. This situation is partly attributable to the challenging geographical locations along the route. To address this, additional training has been provided for the affected round, and it is anticipated that optimising the rounds will lead to improvements. Furthermore, the recent reorganisation of collection rounds, affecting approximately 60% of households, has contributed to the increased number of missed bins as crews adjust to the new routes.

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

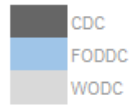
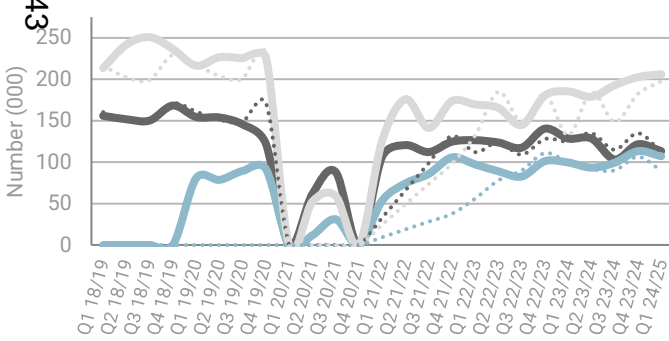
The missed bins target was revised to 80 per 100,000 scheduled collections from 2022-23 Q1 to reflect improvements made over the previous year. 34

Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships

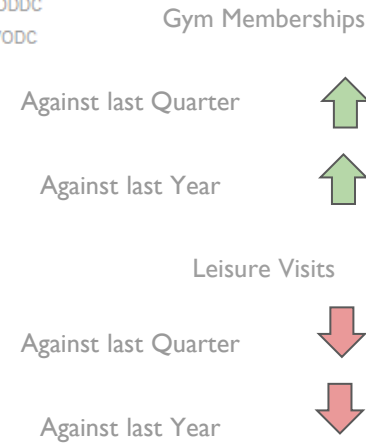
Number of gym memberships



Visits to leisure facilities



Direction of Travel



Higher is Good

Gym Memberships	
Target	3,700
Actual	3,823
Leisure Visits	
Target	112,000
Actual	113,340

Gym Memberships – Slightly declined since last quarter and last year
Leisure Visits – Declined since last quarter and last year

Visits to leisure facilities in Cotswold decreased by 8,000 compared to the previous quarter and by around 15,000 compared to the same period last year. This decline is attributed to ongoing works at the leisure centre, which began in May and were aimed at improving accessible facilities and providing better changing and fitness spaces for those needing extra support.

However, during Q1, gym memberships continued to rise compared to both the previous quarter and the corresponding period last year.

Learn to Swim participation figures have remained steady but experienced a slight decline. This trend is attributed to the national shortage of swim instructors and the backlog reduction resulting from the COVID-19 facility closures.

Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

How do we compare?

The Data Team are currently working with partners to compile the data return for APSE performance networks which will then provide benchmarking for this metric.

This page is intentionally left blank



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN
1 SEPTEMBER 2024 – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

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

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

Timeliness: Is it timely to consider this issue?

Organisational priority: Is it a Council priority?

Public Interest: Is it of significant public interest?

Influence: Can Scrutiny have meaningful influence?

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

Call in

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

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Monday 2 September 2024		
Sewage Summit report To consider a report arising from the Sewage Summit hosted by Cotswold District Council.	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Phil Martin, Assistant Director for Business Services Phil.Martin@publicagroup.uk
Building the Budget	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Neighbourhood Planning Update	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Joseph Walker, Community Partnership Officer joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Local Plan Review Progress Update	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One Note the 2023/24 Q1 service performance report	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Monday 4 November 2024		
Climate Emergency To evaluate the achievement of Net-Zero goals where the Council has direct responsibility and the delivery of measurable contributions in other areas.	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability - Cllr Mike McKeown	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director - Planning and Sustainability charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk
Draft Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and

Strategy	Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Community Safety Partnership Update	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Jacqueline Wright, Business Manager - Leisure and Wellbeing Jacqueline.Wright@Cotswold.gov.uk
Waste Services Update Focus on greening the fleet, efficiency of collections & data behind service changes	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Simon Anthony, Business Manager for Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk
Feedback on Waste Round Rezoning	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Simon Anthony, Business Manager for Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk
Monday 6 January 2025		
Public Conveniences Update on Changes		Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk
Update on Strategic Plan for North Cotswolds	Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Two	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Two	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Empty Homes Strategy (potential Cabinet item TBC)		
Update to HR Policies (potential Cabinet report tbc)		

Monday 3 February 2025		
Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Monday 3 March 2025		
Monday 31 March 2025		
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Tuesday 6 May 2025		
Asset Management Strategy	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN
INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
SESSION AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION**

Forward Plan – August 2024 – May 2025

The Forward Plan

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

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

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

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

Key Decisions

Key Decisions

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

(a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

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

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

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

Matters To Be Considered in Private

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

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

Documents and Queries

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

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

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

Contact Details:

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

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

Telephone: 01285 623000; Fax: 01285 623907

The Council's Executive Arrangements

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

By law, the Cabinet can comprise a Leader of the Council, together with up to nine other Members to be appointed by the Leader (one of whom has

to be appointed as Deputy Leader). The Leader will be elected by the Council, for a four-year term; and the Deputy Leader appointment is also for a four-year term.

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

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

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

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

Joe Harris	Leader	Coordination of executive functions, Policy framework including the corporate plan, Publica, Council communications, Democratic services, Housing and homelessness, Clean and green campaign and street cleaning, Town and parish council liaison
Mike Every (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, 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 Parking	Public health, Mental health, Car parking operations and strategy, Leisure centres, Museums, Culture , Young people
Lisa Spivey	Communities and Public Safety	Improving social mobility and social isolation, Flooding and sewage, Safeguarding, Domestic abuse, Police liaison and crime, Refugees, Crowdfund Cotswold, Member Development
Claire Bloomer	Cost of Living and Inclusion	Cost of living support, Liaison with 3 rd sector, Diversity and inclusion, Supporting women and minorities

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
5 September 2024 - Cabinet						
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Infrastructure Funding Statement	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Jasper Lamoon Jasper.Lamoon@publicagroup.uk
Community Infrastructure Levy Spending	Yes	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Jasper Lamoon Jasper.Lamoon@publicagroup.uk
Decision taken under Urgency Powers - Productivity Plan	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer caleb.harris@cotswold.gov.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the implications for Cotswold District	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Sep 2024	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk
25 September 2024 - Full Council						
Amendments to the Constitution - Report of the Constitution Working Group	No	Open	Council	25 Sep 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) Angela.Claridge@Cotswold.gov.uk
Community Governance Review - Upper Rissington	No	Open	Council	25 Sep 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Sarah Dalby, Elections Manager sarah.dalby@cotswold.gov.uk
District Boundary Review - Council Size Proposal	Yes	Open	Council	25 Sep 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager andrew.brown@publicgroup.co.uk
Sewage Summit report	No	Open	Council	25 Sep 2024	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Phil Martin, Assistant Director for Business Services

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
						Phil.Martin@publicagroup.uk
Treasury Management Outturn 2023/24	No	Open	Council	25 Sep 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
3 October 2024 - Cabinet						
Green Economic Growth Strategy refresh	Yes	Open	Cabinet	3 Oct 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Public Health Funeral Policy	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Oct 2024	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk
Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Oct 2024	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk
Long-Term Empty Property Strategy 2024	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Oct 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance -	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
- 2029					Cllr Mike Evey	Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk
Community Welfare Grants	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Oct 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Joseph Walker, Community Partnership Officer joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
7 November 2024 - Cabinet						
Draft Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet	7 Nov 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Asset Management Plan - Adoption of Asset Plans	Yes	Fully exempt Likely to contain commercially and financially sensitive information	Cabinet	7 Nov 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk
Update on the Council's involvement in and support for Cost of Living related	No	Open	Cabinet Council	7 Nov 2024 27 Nov 2024	Cabinet Member for Cost of Living and Inclusion - Cllr Claire Bloomer	Jacqueline Wright, Business Manager - Leisure and Wellbeing Jacqueline.Wright@Cotsw

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
initiatives						old.gov.uk
27 November 2024 - Full Council						
Programme of Meetings	No	Open	Council	27 Nov 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer caleb.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
5 December 2024 - Cabinet						
Contract Award for the Parking ICT system	No	Fully exempt	Cabinet	5 Dec 2024	Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Parking - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk
9 January 2025 - Cabinet						
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update	Yes	Open	Cabinet	9 Jan 2025	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Two	No	Open	Cabinet	9 Jan 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagr

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
						oup.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Two	No	Open	Cabinet	9 Jan 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
22 January 2025 - Full Council						
6 February 2025 - Cabinet						
Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	6 Feb 2025 26 Feb 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Collaboration Agreement	No	Open	Cabinet Council	6 Feb 2025 26 Feb 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Emma Cathcart, Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit emma.cathcart@cotswold.gov.uk
26 February 2025 - Full Council						
6 March 2025 - Cabinet						

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
19 March 2025 - Full Council						
3 April 2025 - Cabinet						
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Apr 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Apr 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
8 May 2025 - Cabinet						
21 May 2025 - Full Council						
Key decisions delegated to officers						
Decision on future regeneration of The Old Station and Memorial Cottages, Cirencester	Yes	Fully exempt Likely to contain commercially sensitive information	Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) Cabinet Council	25 Jul 2024 31 Jul 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evey	Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update	Yes	Open	Cabinet Chief Executive Officer	11 Jan 2024 6 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Rural England Prosperity Fund	Yes	Open	Cabinet Chief Executive Officer	17 Jul 2023 19 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Disposal of Property in Bourton on the Water	Yes	Open	Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) Cabinet	9 May 2024	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk Jasmine McWilliams, Estates Manager jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk