

Public Document Pack



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wednesday, 25 September 2024

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CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Thursday, 3 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet
(Councillors Joe Harris, Mike Evemy, Claire Bloomer, Tony Dale, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey)

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 Cabinet is 3 members.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members and Officers, relating to items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 14)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 September 2024.
4. **Leader's Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.
5. **Public Questions**
To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than one minute each and relate to issues under the Cabinet's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

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

The response may take the form of:

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

6. **Member Questions**
No Member Questions have been submitted prior to the publication of the agenda.

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

A Member may only ask a question if:

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

An answer may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other

- published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

7. Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance

To receive any recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or to consider any matters raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee have not met since the previous meeting of Cabinet.

8. Petition: Retain the Public Toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold (Pages 15 - 18)

Purpose

For Cabinet to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution) which has been referred to Cabinet by full Council.

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to either:

1. Agree to the petition request to keep open the public conveniences in the High Street / Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold and instead close the public conveniences in Mangersbury Road; or
2. Agree to note the petition and take no further action.

9. Green Economic Growth Strategy Refresh (Pages 19 - 70)

Purpose

To agree a refreshed version of the Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation and to note the adoption by Gloucestershire County Council of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

Recommendations

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for a four-week period of consultation as set out in Section 4.
2. Receive a further report setting out the results of the consultation and any amendments to the strategy arising from it to enable Cabinet to consider the strategy for adoption.
3. Note the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy by Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet.

10. Public Health Funeral Policy (Pages 71 - 82)

Purpose

To consider and approve a new policy in respect of Public Health Funerals

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the Public Health Funeral Policy

11. **Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy** (Pages 83 - 102)

Purpose

To consider and approve a new Policy in respect of the enforcement of Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the Policy set out in Annex A

12. **Long-Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 - 2029** (Pages 103 - 128)

Purpose

To present an updated Long Term Empty Property Strategy to support the management of long-term empty properties within Cotswold district

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the implementation of the Long-Term Empty Property Strategy for 2024 - 2025

13. **Assets of Community Value - Process Review** (Pages 129 - 144)

Purpose

To evaluate the current procedures and practices involved in the determination of Assets of Community Value (ACV). This review aims to assess the efficacy and transparency of the process by which assets are nominated, reviewed, and ultimately listed or rejected as ACVs. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current process, this review seeks to provide actionable insights and recommendations to enhance decision-making, and ensure compliance with legal and policy frameworks, to better serve the interests of the community.

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Consider the recommendations in the annexed review;
2. Agree to the proposal to formally notify ward members on validation of Asset of Community Value nominations.

14. **Menopause Policy** (Pages 145 - 156)

Purpose

To seek members' approval to adopt the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure as shown in Appendix A.

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure for implementation.
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with Cabinet Member for the Cost of Living and Inclusion to make subsequent amendments that may be necessary in line with legal changes and best practice.

15. **Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members**

To note the decisions taken by the Leader and/or Individual Cabinet Members.

The schedule of decisions will be circulated at the meeting as a late paper following the Cabinet Member Decision Making Meeting scheduled for 3 October 2024 (2.30pm).

(END)

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Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 5 September 2024

Members present:

Mike Evely
Paul Hodgkinson

Juliet Layton
Mike McKeown

Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and
Chief Finance Officer
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business
Manager
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer

Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst
Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning
Lead
Jasper Lamoon, Infrastructure Delivery Lead
Gemma Moreing, Business Information Lead

Observers:

Councillors Patrick Coleman and Nikki Ind

22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Claire Bloomer, Joe Harris, and Tony Dale.

23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members present.

24 Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 25 July 2024 were considered as part of the document pack.

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Cabinet took the exempt minutes included at item 16 as read.

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 25 July 2024 (Resolution)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

For	Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey	4
Against	None	0

Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Mike Evey	1
Carried		

25 Leader's Announcements

The Deputy Leader made the following announcements:

- The shocking outcome of the Grenfell Tower inquiry was noted and the failures through the various public bodies as outlined in the published report. It was noted that public institutions should always seek to serve the public.
- The Deputy Leader wished to congratulate all of those residents participating in the Olympics and Paralympics.

26 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

27 Member Questions

There were no Member Questions.

28 Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance

There were no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and no issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee.

29 National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the implications for Cotswold District

The purpose of the report was to advise Cabinet of the current NPPF consultation and agree proposals for submission of a consultation response on behalf of the Council.

Before Cabinet heard the introduction to the report, the Chair noted the revised recommendation for this item which read as follows:

Agree to delegate the submission of the Council's response to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services (a delegated decision meeting has been scheduled for 12 September 2024 at 4pm).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton, proposed the revised recommendation to Cabinet.

- The response to the UK Government's NPPF consultation was being prepared by officers from the Forward Planning Team, and the recommendation would then allow for a public individual Cabinet Member decision-meeting to approve the final consultation response.
- The short timeframe for officers to deliver a final draft response required the delegation to be made in order to ensure there was enough time to consider all of the consultation questions carefully.
- The report outlined the challenges facing the District from the current proposed changes to the NPPF.

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- Whilst the Council was supportive of the need to build more affordable housing, it was noted that the updates to housing requirements would present challenges for the District where restricted areas like National Landscapes were prominent.
- It was highlighted that the Council should be in receipt of a response to the consultation from the UK Government by December 2024.

Cabinet asked whether the Cabinet could confirm that this was national consultation to all local authorities as opposed to the Council's consultation on the Local Plan update. The Interim Forward Planning Lead highlighted that anyone was able to respond to the consultation with their views on the changes to the framework for determining planning applications.

Following a question regarding the separation of development management policies from the NPPF, it was highlighted that it was likely that National Development Management Policies would be created to standardise many of the development management policies currently within Local Plans.

The protection of National Landscapes was an important principle which needed to be maintained within the NPPF.

Cabinet welcomed the UK Government's desire to increase in the number of social rented houses which was needed across the District, and the weighting on the expansion of infrastructure.

It was noted that the level of increase in the housing supply was significant and would require tough decisions in order to meet those requirements. It was also highlighted that the requirement of 70% of new housing to be in rural areas would be unsustainable, especially for communities where infrastructure was not as developed.

It was noted that the Council would need to work at pace in order to update its Local Plan to meet the requirements.

Cabinet thanked the Interim Forward Planning Lead for his hard work in the drafting of the responses for the Cotswolds.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Lisa Spivey.

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the implications for Cotswold District (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet		
I. Agree to delegate the submission of the Council's response to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services (a delegated decision meeting has been scheduled for 12 September 2024 at 4pm).		
For	Mike Evemy, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

30 Community Infrastructure Levy and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Spending **2024**

The purpose of the report was to review officer recommendations on external bids for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (Cotswold Beechwoods SAC) funds held by the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton, proposed the recommendations with an additional recommendation which read:

Agree to fund bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC) on the understanding that the funds for the bus stop ‘opposite the War Memorial’ will not be released until an agreement is reached between GCC and Bourton-on-the-Water PC on the final design and layout.

During the presentation of the items, the following points were outlined:

- The 7 bids were considered using the scoring matrix at Annex A.
- The bids were then outlined in turn:
 - Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway (submitted by Sustrans) was for £181,301, to develop outline designs for a greenway between Kemble and The Steadings near Cirencester which was recommended for approval.
 - Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link (submitted by Gloucestershire County Council) was linked to Bid 1 for a design for a cycle path from Cirencester which would link the path recommended for approval in Bid 1. The assessment of the application showed the requirement for a further cost breakdown to be provided. Therefore, conditional approval was recommended.
 - Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (submitted by Gloucestershire County Council) was for £137,700 to deliver 3 new bus stops in Bourton to service local bus services. Whilst this was recommended for approval, this was done subject to the new recommendation being considered for the third bus stop.
 - Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh (submitted by Gloucestershire County Council) was for £146,030.17 which was recommended for approval.
 - Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub (submitted by Gloucestershire County Council) was for £66,300 for upgrades to the bus shelters in Cirencester which was recommended for approval.
 - Bid 6 – Moreton-in-Marsh Transport Hub/Interchange and Station Improvement Works (submitted by Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council/Great Western Railway) was for £2,216,000 to create a new transport interchange and provide upgrades to the current station facilities. Due to the lack of planning permission, this was recommended for refusal although the Council noted its support for the project. The report also encourages a resubmission of the application in the future.
 - Bid 7 – Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access (submitted by National Trust) was for £30,000 for improvements to the current footpaths and facilities to support the Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. The project was recommended for approval.

The Chair then invited Councillor Jon Wareing was invited to address Cabinet regarding Bid 3 as a District Councillor for Bourton Village and a Bourton-on-the-Water Parish Councillor. Councillor Wareing was delighted by the new arrangement brokered by Councillor Hodgkinson as a Gloucestershire County Councillor for Bourton-on-the-Water following the

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lack of consultation before. It was noted that for subsequent projects needed local consultation at the beginning which would help avoid future aggravation.

Cabinet welcomed the support for sustainable public transport which was a common theme as part of these bids.

Cabinet asked about The Forum Interchange Hub and whether new bays would be in the same place due to the current traffic disruption by the current bus stops. It was noted by the Community Infrastructure Lead that the new bays would likely be in the same place. The Chair noted that it would be helpful if the County Council would take this into account when considering the upgrade.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Mike McKeown.

Community Infrastructure Levy and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Spending 2024 (Resolution)

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. **AGREED** to fund the following bids:

- Bid 1 – Kemble to Steadings Greenway (Sustrans)
- Bid 2 – Cirencester to Kemble Cycle Link (GCC)
- Bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC)
- Bid 4 – Footpath in Moreton-in-Marsh (GCC)
- Bid 5 – The Forum Interchange Hub (GCC)
- Bid 7 – Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access (National Trust)

2. **AGREED** to fund bid 3 – Bourton-on-the-Water Interchange Hub (GCC) on the understanding that the funds for the bus stop ‘opposite the War Memorial’ will not be released until an agreement is reached between GCC and Bourton-on-the-Water PC on the final design and layout.

3. **NOTED** bid 6 – Moreton-in-Marsh Transport Hub / Interchange and Station Improvement Works (MiM TC/GWR) and encourage resubmission once the issues raised at paragraph 8.3 have been resolved.

For	Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

31 Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24

The purpose of the report was to notify Cabinet of the Infrastructure Funding which provides an overview of all Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 monies collected, held and spent. As well as setting out the Council's recovery policy in regards to unpaid CIL debts.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services introduced the report and outlined the reports contents:

- The funding statement at Annex A was an annual report, which showed a collection of £1.7 million, £3.4 million worth in demand notices, £280,000 collected for Town and Parish Councils, and £2.3 million in CIL relief granted.
- The Council's CIL Strategic Fund held £3.3 million as of 31 March 2024.
- The Council secured £144,000 and 52 affordable housing units in Section 106 agreements signed in 2023/24.
- In 2023/24, the Council collected a total of £861,000 and spent £998,000 of the Section 106 funds it held.
- CIL was collected at £95.88 for residential development and £71.89 for retail development per square metre.
- A new Infrastructure delivery plan was expected to be formulated by Spring 2025 which would be much more environmentally friendly.

The Chair seconded the proposals and noted the CIL Recovery Policy which was needed in order to enforce against those not paying the required amounts. It was also noted that the report set out in broad detail the money being allocated from the Council's CIL and S 106 reserves.

Cabinet noted the infrastructure improvements particularly for key road networks which were much needed.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Mike Evey.

Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet		
1. NOTED publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement.		
2. AGREED to the CIL Recovery Policy		
For	Mike Evey, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

32 Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One

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

The Chair asked the Chief Executive to introduce the report:

- The report was introduced to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 September 2024.
- The report was noted to be in arrears in terms of service performance reporting, but that an advice note was provided within the report to provide an indication of any current changes to service performance.
- The key positive performance areas were noted above target:
 - Percentage of Council Tax collected was on track to meet the end of year target and current progress in quarter 1 was 34%.
 - Percentage of Non-Domestic rates were on target around 30%.
 - Council Tax support change of events was at 4 days compared a target at 5.
 - Customer satisfaction was at 99% compared to a target of 90%.
 - Planning applications were all above the current target.
 - Affordable housing delivered was 29 against a target of 25.
 - Gym memberships were up at 3,823 against an expectation of 3700.
 - Leisure visits were at 113,340 above target to attract more into the facilities.
- The following areas were noted as being below target:
 - Processing times for Council Tax Support (new claims) was at 22 days against a target of 20.
 - Housing benefits (change of circumstances) was at 6 days against a target of 4.
 - High risk food premises inspected was just under 70% against a target of 95% within the timescales. This was noted as being dealt with through further resources and monitoring.
 - Missed Bins per 100,000 was 141 against a target of 80 which was largely down to challenges from garden waste collections and the reorganisation of routes.

The Deputy Leader then spoke regarding the missed bin collections as the portfolio holder for waste and recycling. It was highlighted that recent issues have been due to staff shortages at Ubico due to staff sickness combined with the changes. The Deputy Leader apologised to residents for any inconveniences caused by these issues with collections. It was noted that a more formal review would be done once the service had returned to standards expected. It was highlighted that the changes to rounds would help to engender a new culture change to support other crews where needed.

Cabinet noted that whilst there were areas for improvements, and there were many positive markers in performance. It was highlighted that this was a credit to the staff who worked at the Council to provide these services.

Cabinet asked about customer satisfaction by email being lower than expected and wished to know the background to this. There was also a question around call waiting times which had gone up, and what flexibility there was in the system. The Deputy Leader noted that email satisfaction was where it had been historically, which was more in regard to the contents of the email as opposed to the service provided. The Senior Performance Analyst also noted the vacancies in the service during the reporting period which had now been addressed. On email

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satisfaction, many of the complaints were due to the processes as opposed to customer services.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q1.

33 Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One

The purpose of the report was to set out the initial budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Mike Evemy, introduced the report:

- Table ES2 in Para 2.3 showed the current variances to the budget where areas like garden waste and bulky waste income were up against the budget and cemeteries and land charges were below the expected budget.
- There were some additional adverse variances for Elections which included the cost of tablets trialled in polling stations.
- The waste rezoning was noted as having some additional costs around communications and providing an extra Saturday collection.
- A provision of £148,000 was to be used for any additional costs arising from the Publica Review.
- The Capital Programme outturn forecast showed a forecasted spend of £8.7m.
- Whilst inflation had fallen, the economic environment was still quite fragile.
- The Pay Award for 2024/25 had still not been settled with the trade unions following an offer through Local Government Employers of 2.5%. However there was provision for an award up to 5% for Council and Publica staff and 6% for Ubico staff.
- Car park fee income was ahead of budget other than one week in June 2024.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S.151 Officer also addressed the details of the report:

- There was a drafting error in 8.1 which referenced a £73,000 overspend rather than £145,000 overspend which was the actual amount.
- Publica was reporting to its board a £69,000 underspend for the Council specifically which was not factored into the Council's budget.
- On the Capital Programme, the overspend forecast for Disabled Facilities Grants would be updated through the drawdown of money from the Better Care Fund provided by Gloucestershire County Council.

Cabinet noted that the position was positive despite the many challenges that existed with local government funding especially when upper tier authorities required further funding for areas like special needs education.

The Deputy Leader referred to the commitment for a multi-year settlement for Local Government in the future which would provide stability for the sector.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Paul Hodgkinson.

Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One (Resolution)

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- I. Review and NOTED the financial position set out in this report.

2. AGREED to the recommendation in paragraph 8.3 that Cabinet continue to review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast financial position		
For	Mike Evemy, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Lisa Spivey	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

34 Decision taken under Urgency Powers - Productivity Plan

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

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on behalf of the Leader of the Council in his absence.

The following points were made:

- The decision taken was outlined in Paragraph 2.2 as one which would have come to a Cabinet meeting in early July 2024, but this was moved to 25 July 2024 because of the election.
- Councils were required to submit their Productivity Plans by 19 July 2024 and this would therefore have not been possible to have been done within the timeframe.
- Whilst an extension was granted for 29 July 2024, the decision-making processes could not be done in time.
- The Productivity Plans were submitted as part of the 2024 Local Government Finance settlement.

There were no comments on this item from Cabinet.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the decision taken.

35 Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members

The purpose of the report was to receive the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or individual Cabinet Members.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the schedule of decisions.

36 Matters exempt from publication

Cabinet did not enter private session.

37 Exempt minutes from the meeting of Cabinet on 25 July 2024

Cabinet agreed the exempt minutes as part of agenda item 3 and therefore did not discuss them in private session.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.09 pm

Chair

(END)

Agenda Item 8



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	PETITION REFERRED TO CABINET IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN THE HIGH STREET / MARKET SQUARE, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD
Wards affected	Stow
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	For Cabinet to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution) which has been referred to Cabinet by full Council.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to the petition request to keep open the public conveniences in the High Street / Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold and instead close the public conveniences in Mangersbury Road; or 2. Agree to note the petition and take no further action.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	NONE



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council received a petition titled “Cotswold District Council retain the public toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow on the Wold” on 11 September 2024.
- 1.2 The petition was considered by full Council on 25 September 2024 and Council resolved to refer the petition to Cabinet.
- 1.3 Cabinet is requested to decide what (if any) action to take in relation to the petition.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council’s Constitution includes a Local Petition Scheme (Part F) which enables residents of the district to submit petitions to the Council.
- 2.2 Petitions can either be submitted on paper directly to the council offices or via the e-petition service the Council has on the website.
- 2.3 A petition will be considered at Full Council if it reaches a threshold of 850 signatures by residents.

3. PETITION IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

- 3.1 The Council received a hard copy of a petition on 11 September 2024.
- 3.2 The petition calls for ‘Cotswold District Council to retain the public toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold’.
- 3.3 The petition has a verified number of signatures of 1198 and therefore meets the Constitution’s threshold for a Full Council debate.
- 3.4 The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the Public Conveniences Review Group in September 2023 to review the future provision of public conveniences and make recommendations to Cabinet. The Review Group reported to Cabinet in February 2024 and, among other things, recommended that:

That the Council commits to retaining at least one district council provided public conveniences facility in each town and village within the district that currently has one.

That the Council opens discussions with the relevant Town Councils about the transfer of responsibility for four sites in towns that have more than one district council provided facility, or where town councils are not willing, the Council seeks to close the facilities and repurpose the buildings to generate a commercial opportunity, as set out in Exempt Annex B. This approach is expected to result in a maximum annual revenue saving of £39,061.

- 3.5 Cabinet agreed the two recommendations above at its meeting on 1 February 2024. Since then the Council has been in discussions with Stow Town Council to establish whether the Town Council would be willing to take on responsibility for the public conveniences facility



on the High Street/Market Square in Stow-on-the-Wold while the Council would retain responsibility for the facility at Mangersbury Road in Stow-on-the-Wold.

- 3.6** The Council has since entered into a new cleaning and maintenance contract which provides for cleaning and maintenance of one public convenience facility in Stow-on-the-Wold (currently the Mangersbury Road facility). The High Street/Market Square toilets are due to close on 1 October 2024 pending the decision of Cabinet on 3 October 2024.
- 3.7** Any reconsideration of the Council's approach is a matter for Cabinet as it is an executive function. Council on 25 September 2024 resolved to:
- Note the petition signed by 1,198 people requesting the Council to retain the public toilets in High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold.
 - Agree to refer consideration of the petition to Cabinet, as it is the relevant decision-making body, for discussion and decision at its meeting on 3 October 2024

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1** Cabinet could decide to agree to the request of the petition to keep open the public convenience facility in the Market Square/High Street, and instead close the Mangersbury Road facility (recommendation 1).
- 4.2** Alternatively, Cabinet could decide to note the petition and take no further action (recommendation 2). This would mean continuing with the current approach of closing the Market Square/High Street facility and keeping open the Mangersbury Road facility.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Cabinet in February 2024 agreed with the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Public Conveniences Review Group "to retaining at least one district council provided public conveniences facility in each town and village within the district that currently has one." Cabinet recognised that closing some facilities would reduce costs whilst maintaining the service.
- 5.2** The net cost of providing public conveniences at Stow-on-the-Wold is broadly similar for the High Street/Market Square facility and the Mangersbury Road facility. The closure of one of the public convenience facilities at Stow-in-the-Wold would reduce the Council's costs on a similar basis. Officers have confirmed this position with the external contractor who open, close and clean & service the Council's public conveniences.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The provision of public conveniences by the district council is a discretionary service.



7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In the event of the Council not responding to the petition, then this would be in breach of scheme set out within the Constitution.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 This report does not have a negative impact on equalities. The local petition scheme process enables residents to engage with the council on concerns within the District.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant impacts arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

(END)

Agenda Item 9



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY REFRESH
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation; Email: tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Philippa Lowe, Business Manager (Economic Growth & Prosperity) Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To agree a refreshed version of the Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation and to note the adoption by Gloucestershire County Council of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.
Annexes	Annex A – Draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation. Annex B – Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (Summary Version)
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for a four-week period of consultation with key stakeholders and using the Council's communication channels. 2. Receive a further report setting out the results of the consultation and any amendments to the strategy arising from it to enable Cabinet to consider the strategy for adoption. 3. Note the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy by Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold Economic Advisory Group All councillors



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cotswold District Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted in December 2020 to cover a four-year period. This report sets out the work that has been undertaken towards refreshing the strategy and seeks approval for the draft of the updated strategy to go to public consultation.
- 1.2 A great deal has changed in the global context to the strategy since 2020, but much of it remains relevant. In addition, the County Council has recently adopted the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which sets out much of the context to our district strategy.
- 1.3 The approach has therefore been to create a shorter, more visual district-level strategy which covers specific key sites, sectors and projects rather than repeat what is in the county strategy. The report asks Cabinet to note the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council adopted its Green Economic Growth Strategy in December 2020 and has been working actively to deliver the strategy since that time, with regular updates being provided to Cabinet and, more recently, through Member Briefings.
- 2.2 The strategy was for a four-year period, expiring in December 2024, so it is right that a new draft document is brought before Cabinet now to approve for public consultation. A further report will be brought to Cabinet once the consultation period has closed and Officers have had the opportunity consider the comments received and make recommendations to Cabinet on any amendments required.
- 2.3 The Administration came to power following the May 2019 elections and set a priority of supporting the local economy, which was subsequently reflected in the Council's Corporate Strategy adopted in 2021, which had a theme to "enable a vibrant economy". The role of Economic Development Lead was created and filled in July 2020, giving the Council the capacity to proactively engage on economic issues.
- 2.4 A great deal has changed in the context of economic policy since 2020 – the full effect of the Covid pandemic and the resulting changes in behavioural patterns, the impact of Brexit becoming clearer, the onset of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the election of a new government being just a few examples. That said, much of the 2020 strategy document is still relevant. The objective of low environmental impact, high value jobs being created to provide career opportunities for young people is still a very valid goal. The identification of key growth sectors in agritech, cyber/digital and environmental technologies has proved accurate, with a number of businesses operating in these sectors in the district growing significantly.



3. GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND LINKS TO THE DISTRICT STRATEGY

- 3.1 The adoption of a Gloucestershire Economic Strategy also provides a more local context in which to set our district strategy. The strategy, which covers the period 2024-34, uses the tagline “Driven by innovation, built on heritage” and identifies four strategic priorities – sustainable growth, inward investment, employment & skills and business innovation & support. The strategic priorities are supported by two cross-cutting themes – Greener Gloucestershire and Inclusive Gloucestershire.
- 3.2 The document also sets out a longer-term economic vision up to 2050, as follows:
“By 2050, Gloucestershire will be a hub for the UK’s intelligence, security, and cyber agencies. We will be a centre for world-leading, sustainable businesses in the cutting-edge industries of digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and green and nuclear energy, while preserving our rich cultural and natural heritage. Gloucestershire will build on its strength as a prominent location in western England with ease of access to regional hubs in, and beyond, the Western Gateway. We will sustain our unique mix of nationally important rural landscapes and vibrant urban centres by delivering a stronger, more sustainable economy that benefits the whole county.”
- 3.3 The Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation and Officers were involved in various stages of the development of the County Strategy. The strategy was adopted by the County Council’s Cabinet in May 2024 and was considered by the Gloucestershire City Region Board at its September meeting. A summary version of the strategy is attached to this report as Annex B and Cabinet is asked to note its contents. The full version of the strategy can be found [here](#). The strategy is backed up by an evidence base of over 400 pages, a summary of which can be found [here](#).
- 3.4 Given the adoption of the County Strategy, it is not felt necessary to ‘reinvent the wheel’ or repeat information set out in that document. Instead, our strategy will set out the role we can play as a district in delivering the ambitions for the county, including site and sector-specific proposals and finer-grain issues such as the evolution of our market town centres.
- 3.5 As the Council is not starting with a blank sheet of paper, as was the case in 2020, and the Gloucestershire strategy provides much of the context, the objective has been to produce a shorter, more focused district economic strategy. with a smaller number of clearly-defined actions.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that a four-week period of consultation takes place, starting immediately, using the Council’s website and social media channels, the Business Matters newsletter and the network of key stakeholders.



4.2 It should be noted that the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which is made up of a number of business representatives and key economic stakeholders, has been involved in the development of the draft strategy.

5. FUTURE WORK

5.1 Following the period of consultation, the comments received will be considered and the strategy amended as necessary. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet in December or January, depending on the level of changes required.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 The Council could choose not to adopt a new Green Economic Growth Strategy and rely entirely on the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy. This is not recommended as the county strategy does not address district-level issues, including bringing forward specific sites for development.

6.2 The Council could choose to rely on the existing strategy. This is not recommended as the economic context has changed considerably since the existing strategy was adopted in 2020.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy is due to be refreshed and this report is an important milestone in the process of achieving this. The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy provides a helpful local context to the strategy.

7.2 It is therefore recommended that the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29 is approved for public consultation and a further report is brought back to Cabinet after the consultation has taken place and the responses have been considered.

7.3 It is also recommended that the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy is noted.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All activities in the strategy will be funded from existing budgets. There are no other financial implications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 Not having a current economic strategy in place could lead to business not having the clarity and confidence needed to make investment decisions. In addition, it could make it more difficult to secure government and other external funding. There is also a reputational risk to the Council of not having a current strategy in place.

10.2 There are no other risks considered to be posed by adopting the strategy for the purposes of public consultation.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

11.1 The Green Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver inclusive growth which benefits all people within the Cotswold District.

12. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Business has a significant role to play in the journey to net zero and this strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will support businesses in the transition.

12.2 Measures to combat climate change represent an opportunity for business and the environmental technology sector is seen as a potential high growth sector for the district.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

(END)

Cotswold District Council

Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2029

(To be put into template by Graphic Designer once content agreed)

Introduction

Cotswold District Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted in December 2020 following a period of public consultation. Prior to this, an economic strategy had not been in place for some time. The strategy covered a four-year period, which will expire in December 2024.

The strategy was written at a time when the country was still facing pandemic-related restrictions and was designed to help the local economy recover from the economic impact of Covid. The strategy served that purpose well and is, to a large extent, still relevant today. Nonetheless, a good deal of the global context has changed since 2020 and it is appropriate to refresh the strategy to bring it fully up to date.

The vision for the 2020 strategy was “to nurture a dynamic, vibrant and balanced economy in the Cotswold District, growing high value, highly-skilled, low environmental impact businesses in our district... and enhancing the opportunities available for local people, particularly young people.” That vision is still our goal today.

Our successes, working collaboratively, since 2020 include:

- Media coverage of the Cotswolds as a place to do business has improved. The area is well-known as a tourist destination, with its beautiful towns and villages and rolling hills, but is less well-known for its many innovative and successful businesses. That is now changing – the Cotswolds has been acknowledged as a high investment destination for agritech, digital and zero carbon aviation.
- Central government funding has been secured, ranging from £160,000 to support town centres to £1 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, £764,292 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and £162,500 to install Changing Places toilets at four locations in the district.
- Town Centres have proved resilient despite a very difficult climate, with the vacancy rate in Cirencester falling from 11% in August 2021 to less than 5% at the last count in October 2024. Vacancy rates remain low in all our other town centres.

- The former Mitsubishi UK headquarters at Watermoor in Cirencester have been successfully repurposed as serviced offices and storage known as Watermoor Point. The site is now home to almost 100 organisations and supports nearly 700 employees. The success of Watermoor Point has shown that transition can be achieved at scale and with speed and that there is active demand for quality business space from new and expanding businesses. The District Council is looking to add to the stock of space by letting its excess office accommodation at Trinity Road in Cirencester.
- The Royal Agricultural University has launched its £100 million plus Innovation Village project on its Cirencester campus with active support from key stakeholders. An outline planning application has now been submitted to the District Council.
- The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group has been established, bringing together key stakeholders in the local economy to advise the Council on delivery of its Green Economic Growth Strategy. The Group has provided a valuable source of advice and challenge, as well as connecting key local partners to have conversations and forge links that otherwise may not have happened and proving influential at a county level through links with GFirst (now integrated within Gloucestershire County Council). The Group has explored a variety of important topics ranging from skills and young people to Net Zero to the A417 Missing Link project.

We look forward to working with our partners to build on this success and tackle new challenges over the period of this strategy.

Councillor Tony Dale

Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation

Cotswold District Council

What has changed since the Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted in December 2020?

- A new UK government has come into power with a new set of policies designed to deliver economic growth.
- The Covid pandemic has had many lasting effects including on consumer behaviour and working patterns.
- The impact of Brexit has become clearer, particularly in relation to difficulties in trading with Europe for smaller businesses.
- The cost-of-living crisis, with higher fuel bills as well as food inflation and higher mortgage rates and rents, has impacted on disposable income.

- Businesses generally have seen higher costs, including fuel prices and labour costs have had a major impact on businesses, which cannot always be passed onto the customer. The construction sector has seen costs rise significantly which has an impact in the wider economy.
- The transition to a digital-based economy has increased.
- Recruitment has become a greater challenge as many people withdrew from the labour market - either foreign workers returning home or more mature people deciding to retire early.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already here in some forms and its influence and potential are developing fast. AI is both a major opportunity and a risk for business. The world has become increasingly unstable and although conflicts may seem a long distance away, their impact can be felt at home, both through higher prices as a result of the disruption caused by the wars and by the increased risk of cyber attacks from hostile states.
- Food security and agricultural sustainability are acknowledged as significant longer-term risks - how do we feed the nation at the same time as protecting soil quality, dealing with natural phenomena such as flooding and meeting demand for land for other uses including housing and renewable energy?
- The effects of climate change have become even more tangible, with more regular flooding and changes to seasonal weather patterns, which has implications for business. Business has a big role to play in meeting the legal requirement for net zero. There are opportunities for business in the green economy by responding to the global challenge of climate change at a local level.

Executive summary

Cotswold District Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted in December 2020 for a four-year period, so an updated strategy is needed to take its place. While much of the strategy remains relevant today, a good deal of the global and indeed national context has changed.

The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, adopted in May 2024, provides much of the local context, so that has not been repeated in detail in this document, which instead concentrates on more local-level actions, including specific projects and sites.

The Green Economic Growth Strategy has guided the work of the Council's Economic Development function over the last four years and has been overseen by the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group. The new strategy will direct the Council's work in this area over the coming years.

Many of the actions will need to be delivered in partnership. This has proved to be the most effective approach in light of limited capacity within the Council itself and also because, for example, many of the key employment sites are not in the

Council's ownership, so its role is to enable and facilitate others to achieve their ambitions.

The Cotswold economy performs well by most measures, but there is no room for complacency – there are many opportunities that the Council wishes to see realised for the benefit of local people. The Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village, the Centre for Sustainable Aviation at Cotswold Airport at the Centre for National Resilience at the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh are just three of them. Key issues facing the local economy over the next few years will include retaining and developing talent in the area, as well as bringing more people back into the labour market to help address recruitment and skills issues. Improving transport in the district and promoting apprenticeships and other training options are central to achieving this ambition.

Promoting sustainable tourism, helping our town centres to continue to evolve and supporting business to work towards net zero and understand the opportunities and risks associated with Artificial Intelligence are also important challenges to address. The Council will endeavour to secure external funding wherever possible and to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

Policy Context

National

In recent years, the previous Government's focus has been on 'Levelling Up' - aiming to reduce the imbalances, primarily economic, between areas across the UK. Although a worthy ambition, it has not been necessarily that helpful for the Cotswold District which is seen, with some justification, as a relatively affluent area – albeit with some pockets of deprivation. For the purposes of the Levelling Up Fund, Cotswold was classed as a 'Level 3' area (i.e. the lowest priority). The Council did not submit bids to rounds one and two, as no projects were 'shovel ready', and could not apply for round three as the Government did not open up a competitive process. That said, the Council has received £1 million from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund over three years (2022-23 to 2024/25) and £764,292 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund over two years (2023-24 and 2024-25), both of which form part of the wider Levelling Up agenda. These are covered in more detail later in this document.

Following the general election of July 2024, a new Labour government was elected on a manifesto pledge to "kickstart economic growth" by "strengthening our economic institutions and giving investors the certainty they need to fuel growth". Further detail on economy-related programmes is expected in the coming months.

Setting clear priorities in this document is helpful when it comes to submitting funding bids and the Council will closely monitor where projects in the district can help the

Government to meet national priorities, with the aim of securing funding – for example for the Royal Agricultural University Innovation Village.

Due to boundary changes, there are now two Members of Parliament serving the Cotswold District – Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative) in the North Cotswolds and Dr Roz Savage (Liberal Democrat) covering the South Cotswolds. Close working with our Members of Parliament will be important to ensure the voice of the Cotswold economy is heard at a national level.

Regional

Western Gateway – Gloucestershire is part of the Western Gateway, the pan-regional partnership for South Wales and Western England, which runs from Swindon to St Davids in Pembrokeshire. It works on a number of different themes, ranging from net zero to transport and innovation to investment, with the aim of “powering a greener, fairer future for our area and the UK”.

County

The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy was adopted in May 2024 following approval by the Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet. The strategy has been developed by the County Council in partnership with GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership. GFirst has now been integrated into a new ‘Growth and Enterprise Team’ in the County Council.

The adopted strategy uses the tagline “Driven by innovation, built on heritage”.

There are four strategic priorities in the strategy:

- Sustainable Growth
- Inward Investment
- Employment and Skills
- Business Innovation and Support

The strategic priorities are supported by two cross-cutting themes – Greener Gloucestershire and Inclusive Gloucestershire.

The document also sets out a longer-term economic vision for the county until 2050.

“By 2050, Gloucestershire will be a hub for the UK’s intelligence, security, and cyber agencies. We will be a centre for world-leading, sustainable businesses in the cutting edge industries of digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and green and nuclear energy, while preserving our rich cultural and natural heritage. Gloucestershire will build on its strength as a prominent location in western England with ease of access to regional hubs in, and beyond, the Western Gateway. We will sustain our unique mix of nationally important rural landscapes and vibrant urban centres by delivering a stronger, more sustainable economy that benefits the whole county.”

The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy is overseen by the new Gloucestershire City Region Board, on which the council is represented.

District

The administration at Cotswold District Council was elected in 2019. A post of Economic Development Lead was created in 2020 to deliver the Council's priorities around growing the local economy. A 'Green Economic Growth Strategy' was adopted in December 2020 following a period of consultation and a priority to 'Enable A Vibrant Economy' was included in the Council's Corporate Plan adopted in 2021.

The Liberal Democrat administration was re-elected in May 2023 with an increased majority and has confirmed its commitment to and approach to growing the Cotswold economy is unchanged. 'Supporting the Economy' remains a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-28.

The District Council is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan, which sets out where development will take place in the district. In terms of the economy and employment, the plan seeks to:

- a. Support the local economy and enable the creation of more high-quality jobs in the District, which help young people to have rewarding careers locally.
- b. Encourage the vitality and viability of town and village centres as places for shopping, work, leisure, cultural and community activities, including maintaining Cirencester's key employment and service role.
- c. Support sustainable tourism in ways that enable the District to act as a tourist destination which spreads the benefits of tourism throughout the District rather than being concentrated in 'honeypot' areas.

Economic health dashboard

By most measures, the Cotswold economy performs well. Here are a few of the key indicators:

Claimant count – 2.0% (1030 people) - the lowest in the county, compared with the Gloucestershire average of 2.8%, the South West average of 2.9% and the UK average of 4.3%.

Job postings – in June 2024, Cotswold district had 1941 unique job postings – double the number of people looking for work.

Gross value added – The size of the Cotswold economy

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
£million	3,888	3539	3750	4109

Number of businesses – births/deaths/micro businesses

	2021	2022
Business births	560	470
Business deaths	540	570
Active enterprises	5945	5875

This slight decline follows the Covid pandemic and will continue to be monitored as more recent information becomes available.

Apprenticeships

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Starts	380	440	410	310
Achievements	190	160	190	150

Town centre vacancies – Across the district the average town centre vacancy rate is 4.8%, compared with the national average of 14%.

Broadband coverage – The figure for superfast broadband (30bmps and above) is 98.3% and for full fibre is 65.6%. This is broadly in line with the national average but better than many rural areas.

Footfall – Footfall, defined as the number of people entering an area during a given time, has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels across all of our market towns. Until recently, the Council has subscribed to the Town and Place AI footfall platform, which is measured using mobile phone location data, which has enabled us to track the recovery. It should be noted that the figures do not discriminate between residents and visitors.

These measures will continue to be monitored as measures of the health of the local economy.

Key Local Assets

Cotswold Lakes – Known for many years as the Cotswold Water Park, the Cotswold Lakes area covers some 42 square miles, falling into both Cotswold District and Wiltshire Council areas. It is made up of 180 lakes, formed from historic gravel extraction. The area has an important conservation role and part of it has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is home to a significant number of leisure businesses, to a number of holiday park sites and other 1accommodation and to some important businesses, including Bosch Rexroth and Hercules Site Services.

The decision to rebrand the area from the Cotswold Water Park to Cotswold Lakes, to better reflect the offering of the area, was endorsed by the Council in July 2024, but it is acknowledged that it will be a gradual process.

Cotswold Airport – The airport, based near the village of Kemble, is the largest privately-owned airport in the UK and is home to a significant number of businesses. In particular it has a clustering of businesses in the sustainable aviation sector, including ZeroAvia, Vertical Aerospace, S&C Thermofluids and Air Salvage International. There is an aspiration by the Airport, supported by key partners, to build upon this clustering to become a ‘Centre for Sustainable Aviation’.

Fire Service College – The Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh is the biggest provider of fire training in the UK and trains firefighters from across the world. The wider site has now been renamed the ‘Capita Centre for National Resilience’ to reflect its broader role. There are a number of other businesses and organisations in related areas who have a presence on the site, including the Fire Protection Association and National Highways. There is an opportunity to increase the importance and economic value of the site by attracting other businesses in the resilience field.

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) - The RAU, based on the edge of Cirencester, is one of the UK’s leading land-based universities and is the oldest agricultural college in the English-speaking world. It has a vision to be the UK’s global university for sustainable farming and land management. The university is also one of the UK’s smallest, with around 1200 students. Its potential for growth in student numbers is constrained, not only by the facilities on-campus but also the shortage and cost of housing for students in the surrounding area.

The RAU’s strategy is to grow in different ways. It has created international links with China and Uzbekistan. The University has also launched its Innovation Village project on land at its Cirencester campus, with a vision “a vibrant home to a community of entrepreneurs, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, committed to addressing the major global challenges we all face including climate change, sustainable land use and food production, biodiversity loss, and heritage management.”

Cirencester College – Based on the edge of Cirencester, near the RAU, the College is one of the biggest sixth form colleges in the region with around 3000 students. Its site on the edge of Cirencester has developed significantly in recent years, with the opening of the Applied Digital Skills Centre and T-Level building and additional student amenity areas. It plays a leading role in equipping the future workforce of the area.

RAF Fairford – This US Air Force base is a major employer and undoubtedly has a significant economic impact, both through its core purpose and as the home of the Royal International Air Tattoo. In recent years, certain US Air Force functions have transferred to the base and, as a result, it has seen a significant investment in facilities on the site, running into tens of millions of pounds.

Campden BRI – Campden BRI is a membership-based food innovation and research organisation based in Chipping Campden. It is a major employer, with around 300 employees on-site. It is a major employer, with around 300 employees on-site and other facilities in Leamington Spa and Budapest. It has over 2500 members in 80 countries. It provides the food and drink industry with practical scientific, technical and advisory services to ensure product safety and quality, process efficiency and product and process innovation.

Top Local Companies - Measured on turnover.

Source: SoGlos Top 100 Business in Gloucestershire 2023.

St James's Place (Cirencester) - Wealth Management
Masstock Arable (Andoversford) - Agricultural systems
Nuvias Global (South Cerney) - IT
Sodra Wood (Cirencester) - Timber importing
Corin Medical (Cirencester) - Orthopaedics manufacturing
Procurri Europe (Cirencester) - IT
Daylesford (nr Moreton in Marsh) - Food, retail and tourism
Pegasus Group (Cirencester) - Planning Consultants
National Star (Ullenwood) - Specialist education
Shipton Mill (Tetbury) - Flour mill
Kubus Group (Kemble) - IT
Lodge Service International (Cirencester) - Security
Socomec (South Cerney) - Electrical engineering
PBShop (Fairford) - Online book shop

Key Partners

As a small district council, our economic development function is limited. It is therefore vital to work with other partners to maximise the impact of the Council's finite resources – both by bringing in external funding and influencing how others deploy their investment.

In early 2021, the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group was established to provide guidance and oversight on the delivery of the Green Economic Growth Strategy. Membership of the group includes representatives:

Campden BRI, Cirencester Chamber of Commerce, Cirencester College, Cotswold Airport, Gloucestershire County Council, Growth Hub, Fairford and Lechlade Business Group, Federation of Small Business, Fire Service College, Royal Agricultural University, St James's Place plc, Studee, Watermoor Point

Other key partners include town and parish councils, Gigaclear, Openreach, other businesses and third sector organisations.

Key Sectors

Agricultural Sustainability – The Cotswold District is an agricultural area, with hundreds of farms of various types and sizes. The presence of the Royal Agricultural University underlines the importance of farming to the area. In the previous strategy, 'agritech' was highlighted as a key growth sector. This remains the case, but the focus has been widened to 'agricultural sustainability', encompassing climate change and food security, albeit some of the solutions to these challenges will be found through the use of technology.

Farm491, an agritech incubator based at the Alliston Centre on the RAU Campus is an important resource in this regard and the development of the RAU Innovation Village will build upon its success.

Cyber/Digital - There are more cyber and digital businesses in the Cotswolds than many people appreciate. Much of the focus around cyber security is inevitably on Cheltenham because of GCHQ and the development of the Golden Valley cyber park. However, the Cotswolds is home to a number of leading-edge digital businesses, including Anya Health, Neon Play, Beam Connectivity, Studee.com and Core to Cloud. Remote working means that recruitment in this sector is drawn from a wide talent pool and the quality of life in the Cotswolds makes the area an attractive base.

Net Zero High Growth – Responding to the climate crisis is one of the Council's top priorities. It is right that business should play its part in the journey to Net Zero.

The district already has some high-profile businesses who are tackling some of the challenges of climate change. ZeroAvia is based at Cotswold Airport and is developing a hydrogen powertrain for aviation, Since relocating to Cotswold Airport in 2021, it has grown from 10 staff to around 200. There are other businesses involved in decarbonising aviation who are also based at Cotswold Airport, including Vertical Aerospace, S&C Thermofluids and Air Salvage International.

Cotswold District has a large number of listed buildings, which help to make the charm and attractiveness of many of our towns and villages. However, many of

these buildings can be inefficient in terms of energy use. The Council aspires to be an exemplar in the retrofit of historic buildings. The Council is employing a Senior Conservation and Retrofit Officer who will give advice, guidance and training to building owners on the best way to approach such works.

The Council has played a leadership role in climate action through installing electrical vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in its car parks and solar panels on its buildings, as well as promoting agile working to reduce unnecessary travel.

Other (opportunity-based) -

Financial Services – As the home to St James’s Place plc, one of the UK’s biggest wealth managers, with around 1000 employees at their head office in Cirencester, financial services is clearly an important sector for the Cotswold district. The scale of their operation means that SJP are a dominant player in the area, but there are other businesses, including Cirencester Friendly Society and Lumleys Insurance.

Classic Cars – There are a number of businesses in the classic motor industry ranging from the Classic Motor Hub, Windrush Car Storage, South Cerney Engineering and 911 Rennsport, amongst many others. As a relatively affluent area with beautiful countryside, motoring is a popular pastime, leading to the Cotswolds being something of a hub for the classic car sector.

Culture – The Cotswold District has many positive cultural assets, including the Corinium Museum, The Barn Theatre, New Brewery Arts and the Sundial Theatre in Cirencester, the Goods Shed in Tetbury and the Cidermill Theatre in Chipping Campden. Cultural events in the district include the Longborough Festival Opera and the Chipping Campden Music Festival. New events such as the Cirencester History Festival and the Cotswold Homes and Interiors Festival add to the diversity of the offer.

The landscape, along with historic features such as Chedworth Roman Villa and Crickley Hill Iron Age hillfort are all part of the cultural offer.

The Council is in the process of working with partners to put together a Culture Enabling Strategy to encourage a ‘Creative Cotswolds’. The importance of cultural activity in economic terms is recognised, in addition to the health and wellbeing benefits it brings. The Council will have a largely enabling role rather than one of direct delivery.

Food and Drink – The Cotswolds is known for its local produce, ranging from the Hawkstone, Corinium and Cotswold Lakes breweries, the Daylesford Organic range, Rave and Fire & Flow Coffee, the Poulton Hill, Little Oak and Larkhill vineyards, Trufflehunter and local markets, to name just a few.

Medical Equipment – There are a number of medical-related businesses in the district, including Corin Medical in Cirencester, Summit Medical at Bourton-on-the-Water and Insight Medical at Tetbury.

Homes and Interiors – The Cotswolds is one of the most desirable places to live in the UK and homes in the area have their own unique style. As a result, there are many homes and interiors-related businesses in the area, with some high-profile names like Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Internationally-renowned landscape and beautiful towns and villages
- Local assets like the Royal Agricultural University, Fire Service College, the Cotswold Lakes, Cotswold Airport and RAF Fairford
- Successful companies like St James's Place, Corin Medical, Bosch Rexroth etc.
- Strong underlying economy
- Very popular tourist destination
- Relatively wealthy demographic
- Digital connectivity, on the whole, is good for a rural area
- Skilled, well-educated and healthy population linked to a good general quality of life
- Town centres are performing well.

Weaknesses

- High property price to income multiplier makes housing unaffordable for many
- Low levels of unemployment means that the labour market is tight and recruitment can be difficult
- Broadband and mobile phone coverage is limited in a few isolated areas of the district, although improvements are continually being made, and 5G coverage is poor
- Some parts of the district are poorly connected to the motorway network and there is congestion in some areas e.g. on the Fosse Way
- Public transport in areas of the district (bus and rail) is poor, making it difficult to get around without a car
- Lack of EV charging points – although this is being addressed
- Lack of activities, high housing costs, poor public transport and lack of opportunities mean many young people leave the area
- Lack of grow-on space for businesses
- Lack of digital/social media presence amongst small businesses in the area

- Electricity grid is at capacity in some areas of the district. The cost and time taken to expand capacity acts as a brake on business expansion.

Opportunities

- To grow key sectors like sustainable agriculture, cyber/digital and net zero technologies
- Available employment land has been allocated and more sites are being identified through the Local Plan Review
- Cirencester town centre could be the best town centre of its size in the country
- A417 missing link will improve connectivity when completed
- Potential for Centre for Sustainable Aviation at Cotswold Airport
- Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh as a wider Centre for National Resilience
- Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village could attract high value businesses
- New culture events like Cirencester History Festival and Cotswold Homes and Interiors Festival
- Artificial Intelligence could improve productivity
- Projects funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund could make a real difference
- Cultural Strategy for the area could deliver enhanced outcomes
- Changes to apprenticeship levy rules could make them, and other skills training routes, more attractive for employers. With institutions like Cirencester College, the area is well-placed to promote apprenticeships and T-Levels.

Threats

- Climate Change
- Perception of the area as relatively wealthy and remoteness of area from the M5 motorway and the 'Central Economic Growth Corridor' (as described in the county economic strategy) could make it more difficult to attract government and other funding
- Artificial Intelligence could lead to job losses if it replaces functions carried out by workers
- Poor transport infrastructure in some parts of the district e.g. A429 is effectively a Roman road and there are only two railway stations – at Kemble and Moreton-in-Marsh

Other topics

Town Centres

Town centres in the Cotswold District play a key role in providing goods and services to local people and visitors and to provide a focal point for events and activities.

Our Town Centres have performed well in the face of changing consumer behaviour and, in particular, the growth of online shopping, not to mention the Covid pandemic. Vacancy levels are low across the district and town centres have a distinctive mix of independent retailers and an attractive environment. As the largest town, Cirencester has seen its vacancy rate drop from 11% in 2021 to around 5% at the time of writing. It is particularly exciting to see the former House of Fraser store on Cirencester's Market Place, which has been empty since early 2019, being brought back into use as a department store for the circular economy operated by social enterprise The Grace Network. This has the potential to be a national exemplar.

It is important, however, not to be complacent in a fast-moving environment. The former Tesco store in the town centre is a large vacant unit, albeit one where a planning application for a retirement living development has been received. Although the council only has limited influence, through the planning process, this is an opportunity to knit this end of the town centre together. Some areas of the public realm in Cirencester, such as Cricklade Street, are in poor condition and need addressing.

The emerging Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan will help shape the future of the town centre. For more information, see <https://your.cotswold.gov.uk/en-GB/folders/cirencester-tc-masterplan>.

The challenge in smaller town centres is to maintain a critical mass with the loss of some retail units to residential as a result of changes in planning classes – particularly the introduction of Class E, which allows conversion from retail to residential.

Many town centre businesses need support to transact online and to regularly post on and interact with social media in order drive both online and physical footfall.

Workforce

A well-trained and motivated workforce is critical to business success.

Unemployment in Cotswold district rose during the pandemic but has been on a largely downward trajectory since and at the time of writing is at 1.9% - the lowest in the county. Businesses have reported difficulties in recruiting due to a tight labour market and, indeed, this is true for many organisations including the council.

Low levels of unemployment mask the fact that the workforce has shrunk since the pandemic, with many withdrawing from the labour market for health, family or lifestyle reasons.

To avoid continuing difficulties with recruitment, it will be necessary to bring some of this cohort back to the labour market by offering appropriate support and incentives. The Council is, through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, supporting the countywide Employment and Skills Hub Outreach (ESHO) Project, which is designed to address this issue. It is delivered locally by the Churn Project.

In addition, the Council is keen to retain talent in the area by enabling young people to have rewarding careers in the Cotswolds. It is inevitable that some young people will leave the area in search of opportunities in big cities and elsewhere, although many will return later in life. Our objective is to provide opportunities for those who wish to stay and a partnership between business, educational institutions and training providers is key to this.

Apprenticeships have a vital role to play as an alternative to university. Apprenticeships are available in more disciplines than ever before. Major employers like St James's Place run their own successful apprenticeship schemes, but it is acknowledged that the administrative burden of apprenticeships on small businesses can be high and rules around the use of the apprenticeship levy can be complex and restrictive.

The new government set out plans in the King's Speech in July 2024 to reform the Apprenticeship Levy, allowing it to be used on a wider range of training options.

T-Levels provide a mix of college-based study and work placements. T-Levels can provide a pathway into apprenticeships. Securing work placements can be a challenge and the council will encourage employers to offer this opportunity.

The challenge of getting to and from the workplace can be a major limiting factor in matching apprenticeships and candidates.

The Council can play a role in facilitating links between employers, educational institutions and training providers.

Transport and Infrastructure

Getting around a large rural area like the Cotswold district can be challenging unless you have access to a car. Public transport is limited and although cycling and walking are encouraged, it is not always possible over longer distances.

A new innovation is The Robin, a demand-responsive, bookable bus service operated by Gloucestershire County Council. The service is designed to provide transport links from close to people's homes to connect with onward travel or to

access services where there is no other transport option. The Robin can be booked by app, website or phone call and now operates across north and south Cotswolds – see <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/the-robin/>.

The A417 Missing Link project is the biggest infrastructure project, not only in the Cotswold District but in the whole county, for a generation. The £460 million project will bring benefits, not only for road safety and reduced congestion but also for the local economy – both for the local supply chain and in shorter journey times, making places along, and at either end of, the route more attractive locations for business. The project is due to complete in 2027.

Gloucestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2020-41 (<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/gloucestershire-local-transport-plan-2020-2041/gloucestershire-ltp-2020-2041/>) sets out a number of ambitions for improving transport in the district, including a Sustainable Transport Hub for the North Cotswolds, dealing with pinchpoints on the A429 Fosse Way at Stow-on-the-Wold and Moreton-in-Marsh, enhancing the rail services at Moreton and Kemble Stations and improving the walking and cycling networks between key settlements through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/jggp3lqz/report-gloucestershire-cwcip_f03.pdf). Funding for many of these projects is as yet unidentified.

There is an aspiration for a better link between Cirencester and Kemble rail station. A study was undertaken by transport consultants ITP in 2023, funded by the Gloucestershire Strategy Economic Development Fund (SEDF). It looked at a number of options but recommended that a shuttle bus service offered the best value for money. The Local Transport Plan also includes an aspiration for a cycle path linking Cirencester with Kemble Station.

The Council will work with the County Council to bring forward transport improvements wherever possible.

Inward Investment

Inward investment is reliant on a supply of quality employment sites and premises. A number of key employment sites have been allocated in the 2018-31 Local Plan, which are at various stages. This includes:

Land at Willersey – Planning consent has been granted for the reconfiguration of the Autosleepers manufacturing facility.

The Steadings, Cirencester - Overall, there is 9 hectares of employment land within this development.

The Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh – There is an employment land allocation on-site which has yet to come forward. In addition, the site has potential to take a wider ‘national resilience’ role, building on the Fire Service College’s heritage.

As an area, land values are high which impacts on bringing sites forward for new development. Our goal is to unlock development on sites which have been allocated but have not yet come forward.

The Local Plan includes a number of policies relating to economic development and employment, including safeguarding established employment sites and promoting rural diversification.

Broadband coverage

Good quality broadband is vital for businesses and employees to function in the digital age.

Broadband coverage in the Cotswold district has improved significantly in recent years and now stands at over 98% for superfast (greater than 30mbps) and over 65% for full fibre.

Much of the credit for the improvements is due to the Fastershire Project, run over Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, which delivered improvements in areas which would not have been covered by commercial deployment. The project has now been wound up and responsibility transferred to the Government’s Project Gigabit. A contract has been awarded for East Gloucestershire, which will include much of Cotswold district.

Mobile phone coverage

There are areas of the Cotswold district where mobile phone coverage is poor, reflecting the large rural nature of the area. In particular, 5G coverage is amongst the lowest in the country. It could become a real issue in the future as the ‘Internet of Things’ develops and more devices are required to connect to each other, particularly in commercial settings, in the future. More work is needed to understand the potential impact and how coverage can be improved, particularly in key areas of the district.

Attracting external funding

The Council’s Economic Development function has been successful in securing and managing various pots of Government funding in recent years.

This has included:

£160,000 from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund to support our town centres in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic.

£162,500 to deliver four Changing Places toilet facilities for the severely disabled at Cotswold Farm Park, Cirencester Abbey Ground, Birdland and Cotswold Country Park & Beach.

£1 million over three years (2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and £764,292 over two years (2023-24 and 2024-25) from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). At the time of writing, it isn't known whether the UKSPF and REPF will be extended, either in terms of the deadline for delivery of projects or additional funding in future years.

The aims of the UKSPF are to improve pride in places and life chances. The REPF is designed to improve rural productivity and connectivity.

Projects funded by the UKSPF include:

- The repurposing of the former House of Fraser in Cirencester.
- The Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Outreach project to help people into work.
- A net zero exemplar social housing scheme at Down Ampney.
- The Cotswold Homes and Interiors Festival.
- A hospitality training facility at Cirencester College.
- An outreach service provided by the Growth Hub to support businesses in all parts of the district.
- New offices at the Growth Hub/Farm491.
- Various Cotswolds Tourism projects include enhancements to the Cotswolds.com website, training programmes for businesses and the 'Local Connections' project to introduce local businesses as suppliers to accommodation providers.

Projects funded by the REPF include:

- Over £400,000 of grants to businesses in the district, which are match-funded, creating investment and jobs.
- Grants to village halls, community and cultural buildings for improvements, particularly to help them to decarbonise.
- Active travel schemes, including footpath improvements.

We will continue to identify and bid for funding which helps the Council to deliver its objectives.

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

Tourism and the visitor economy are an important part of the economic landscape of the Cotswold District, accounting for 13% of jobs and over £380 million of business turnover. (2022 figures, South West Research Company).

The visitor economy is supported by the joint tourism team, working as a shared service between Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils. The Tourism Team also operates as Cotswolds Tourism, a local authority-led Destination Management Organisation. Cotswolds Tourism is a membership organisation and provides support to its members through marketing, networking events and training.

All activity undertaken by the joint tourism team is linked to the Destination Management Plan - (www.cotswolds.com/dmp)

The vision for Tourism in the Cotswolds is:

“To ensure that the Cotswolds is a vibrant year-round destination where visitors enjoy high quality, authentic experiences and tourism makes an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the local economy”.

The vision encapsulates the key challenge and opportunity for the Cotswolds: to fully embrace sustainable tourism, ensuring that the local economy is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Cotswolds Tourism overarching objectives, which are set out in the DMP, are all intimately linked with sustainability: supporting local businesses to achieve sustainable growth; spreading visitor numbers geographically and seasonally; championing the move to digital; striving to maximise the benefits of tourism, while minimising the impacts; and efforts to make the destination more accessible and inclusive.

Cotswolds Tourism also acts as the lead partner for the Cotswolds Plus LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). Working ‘behind the scenes’ to shape and deliver national strategy and activities, as well as to bring a coordinated approach on key issues such as sustainability, business support and research across the wider Cotswolds area, the partnership includes Cotswolds National Landscape, Marketing Cheltenham, Visit Gloucester, Visit Dean Wye and Gloucestershire County Council. As an official LVEP, Cotswolds Plus has direct links to VisitEngland and VisitBritain, and access to potential national funding sources.

The workplan of Cotswolds Plus consists of seven workstreams, two of which are focused on sustainability: Sustainability – transport and active travel, and Sustainability – business practices and biodiversity. Each workstream has an associated action plan. More details can be found at www.cotswolds.com/lvep

Business Support

The District Council’s does not directly provide business support services, other than through Cotswolds Tourism, although it does interact with businesses, not only

through its economic development function, but through other services such as planning, licensing and council tax.

The Council has funded the Cirencester Growth Hub in the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and, in particular, to provide an outreach support to businesses across the district.

The Council also issues a monthly newsletter, Business Matters, to a circulation of around 3,500. The newsletter highlights available support, funding opportunities and highlights positive business news in the district.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation and Economic Development Lead regularly visit businesses in the district and, where appropriate, share details of visits through social media.

Innovation

There are many innovative businesses in the Cotswold District, ranging from digital businesses to manufacturers. The presence of the Royal Agricultural University contributes to the clustering of agritech-related businesses in the area.

Between 2016 and 2021, businesses in the Cotswold district have been awarded £5.8 million of Innovate UK funding, representing 5% of the Gloucestershire total.

Our aim is to increase the proportion of funding secured by Cotswold-based businesses, by raising awareness and identifying businesses who may be in a position to apply.

How we'll work

- Collaboratively – We can't achieve the aims of this strategy on our own. We'll bring all of our partners together – from the County Council Town & Parish Councils, businesses and the Chambers of Commerce to Homes England and the Arts Council and Cotswolds National Landscape.
- Climate – We'll consider the implications on the climate emergency in everything we do.
- Inclusive – Our aim is to ensure all parts of our community benefit from economic growth, with no-one left behind
- Bold, ambitious and innovative – We will take tough decisions, show strong leadership and do things differently to ensure sustainable growth.
- Openness and transparency – An open culture is vital to ensure trust and confidence in the council.
- Value for money - We will use resources wisely but will invest in the fabric and future of the district.

- Listen, hear, act - We will consult with our residents, businesses and stakeholders to understand their aspirations, to inform our decision making.

Actions

As noted earlier, to be as effective as possible, working collaboratively alongside our key partners is critical. Much of our activity on the economy will be about encouraging and influencing other stakeholders. In some cases, the council will be more involved with the direct delivery of projects (rowing); in others, our role will be about facilitating, enabling and influencing (steering) and in others it will be to signpost, communicate and celebrate success (cheering). The actions below are marked as to whether they represent “rowing, steering or cheering”.

Add “rowing, steering or cheering” against actions.

Inward Investment

- Support the RAU Innovation Village as it moves forward, particularly with regard to securing external funding and suitable quality occupiers. **S**
- Support the creation of a Centre for Sustainable Aviation at Cotswold Airport. **S**
- Support the creation of a Centre for National Resilience at the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh. **S**
- Support the delivery of the employment land phases at The Steadings development. **S**
- Complete the delivery of UKSPF & REPF funded projects. **R, S**
- Maintain a monitoring brief for external funding opportunities. **R, S**

Business Support

- Continue to issue the Business Matters e-newsletter on a monthly basis. **C**
- Continue to work with the Growth Hub to offer support to businesses across the district. **S**
- Work with the Growth Hub and other partners to support businesses to work towards becoming net zero. **S**
- Work with the Growth Hub and other partners to support businesses to understand the opportunities and risk arising from the development of Artificial Intelligence. **S**

Retaining talent

- Work with Cirencester College and other partners to identify opportunities for work placements as part of T-Level courses. **S**

- Work with partners to increase opportunities for apprenticeships in the district, encouraging smaller businesses to see the benefits of running apprenticeship schemes. **S**

Town Centres

- Work with the developers of the former Tesco site in Cirencester to ensure the development maximises the benefit to and integrates with the town centre. **S**
- Support town centres throughout the district to evolve in the face of changing consumer behaviour and set up place-based partnerships where needed. **S**

Infrastructure

- Continue to work with National Highways and Kier to maximise the benefits to the local supply chain of the A417 Missing Link project. **S**
- Lobby Project Gigabit and the private sector providers to speed up delivery of full fibre broadband in the district. **S**
- Lobby mobile phone operators to improve mobile phone coverage in the district. **S**

Innovation

- Promote funding offered by Innovate UK and encourage businesses locally to apply, with the aim of increasing the amount of funding awarded to businesses in the district. **C**

Photos to use:

RAU Innovation Village

ZeroAvia

Campden BRI

Watermoor Point

House of Fraser

A417

Fire Service College

Cirencester College Digital Skills Centre

Changing Places

UKSPF & REPF project

Growth Hub/Farm 491

Food & Drink

Cotswold Lakes and other tourism pics

Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy

2024 – 2034

Driven by innovation, built on heritage

SUMMARY

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APRIL 2024



Introduction

Gloucestershire is world renowned for its natural heritage and rich culture, and widely recognised for its strong heritage in research and innovation, agriculture, manufacturing, and aviation excellence. It has new and emerging ambitions to be a global leader in digital communications, advanced manufacturing and engineering, and agri-tech; and a desire to seize opportunities to enhance its specialisms within the energy sector, including nuclear.

This 10-year economic strategy, covering the period 2024-25 to 2034-35, has been shaped and developed following extensive stakeholder engagement supported by a comprehensive updated body of local evidence. It outlines the county's existing strengths, opportunities, and challenges, and provides a clear statement of intent for Gloucestershire – to achieve greener and inclusive economic growth that delivers a stronger, more sustainable, economy; and sets us on the journey to achieving a new **Gloucestershire 2050 Vision**.

Gloucestershire 2050: Driven by innovation; built on heritage

By 2050, Gloucestershire will be a hub for the UK's intelligence, security, and cyber agencies. We will be a centre for world-leading, sustainable businesses in the cutting-edge industries of digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and green and nuclear energy, while preserving our rich cultural and natural heritage.




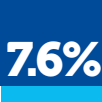


Gloucestershire will build on its strength as a prominent location in western England with ease of access to regional hubs in, and beyond, the Western Gateway. We will sustain our unique mix of nationally important rural landscapes and vibrant urban centres by delivering a stronger, more sustainable economy that benefits the whole county.

Gloucestershire's economy in 2023/24 – what does the evidence say?

Strengths and opportunities

	A strong history of strategy development through the Strategic Economic Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy ensuring business confidence in investment decisions.
	Highly productive core sectors and unique specialisms in cyber, agri-tech and advanced manufacturing, with no reliance on a single part of the economy.
	Strong levels of investment in innovation and research and development.
	A prominent and convenient location to live and work, within easy access to the South West, the Midlands, London, and Wales.
	A highly skilled workforce where 38.3% of residents hold qualifications at or above Level 4 (equivalent to the first stage of university-level learning). ¹

Challenges, weaknesses, and threats

	An economy still in recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic with some sectors predicting slower recovery than others.
 20.7%	Increasing economic inactivity which now sits at 20.7% of the resident population. ²
	A housing market where a median-priced property costs 8.9 times the median wage ³ – pricing out lower earners, and workers in key sectors.
 7.6%	7.6% of local residents live within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. ⁴
	Businesses continue to face the daily challenges of rising costs and to seek new ways to decarbonise their operations.
	An ageing population with more jobs than working age population by 2035. ⁵

¹ 2021 Census, ONS

² 2021 Census ONS

³ Median House Prices to Median Workplace Earnings, ONS

⁴ Indices of Deprivation, 2019, MHCLG and Mid 2020 Population Estimates, ONS

⁵ Oxford Economics

Gloucestershire’s framework for long-term sustainable economic growth

We will achieve our 2050 vision of a greener more inclusive Gloucestershire with a stronger, more sustainable, economy by successfully delivering four strategic priorities. These build upon the foundations established through the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership’s (LEP) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and establish the framework upon which we will deliver our Economic Strategy for 2024–25 to 2034–35.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PROPOSITIONS
<p>Sustainable Growth: By 2050, Gloucestershire’s ambitions for future housing and employment growth will have delivered new carbon-neutral communities. This growth will be evidence led and prioritised on a strategic basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Spatial Development Strategy: produce a county-wide strategy to ensure the viability of new developments and support the transition to a carbon-neutral society. 2 Gloucestershire City Region – Central Economic Growth Corridor: ensure long-term investment, which is coordinated, stable, and adaptable to local needs within the emerging City Region. 3 Infrastructure Delivery Plan: ensure a robust evidence base is produced to inform the planning and delivery of the infrastructure across Gloucestershire.
<p>Inward Investment: By 2050, Gloucestershire will have attracted new levels of inward investment fostering innovation, creating jobs, and promoting prosperity across the county. It will be recognised as the most advanced county for digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and energy production including green and nuclear energy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Strengthen key sectors: to build on Gloucestershire’s strengths in emerging technologies including cyber security, artificial intelligence and semi-conductors, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and energy production including green and nuclear energy to drive investment. 2 Additional opportunities to attract investment: to consolidate a world-class inward investment offer that continues to successfully promote investment from outside the county as a driver for growth.

Gloucestershire’s framework for long-term sustainable economic growth

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PROPOSITIONS
<p>Employment and Skills: By 2050, skills provision in Gloucestershire will be fully aligned to the local economy. Every resident will have the opportunity to access training and development, increasing skills and opening pathways to good employment opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Seamless access to skills and employment to reduce economic inactivity: to drive down economic inactivity and improve productivity by identifying skills needs and ensuring all residents are able to access relevant training opportunities. 2 Support businesses to develop the county’s talent: to ensure that businesses have access to a local workforce with the skills they need to flourish. 3 Anticipate future skills needs for a Greener Gloucestershire: to ensure that Gloucestershire’s workforce has the skills needed for the future, including bridging the green skills-jobs mismatch.
<p>Business Innovation and Support: By 2050, the Gloucestershire economy will have built on its strong research and innovation heritage to achieve greater collaboration between academia, industry, and government. It will be in the top 20% of local authorities for business survival and deliver an inclusive and highly productive economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Driving innovation: to maintain and strengthen Gloucestershire’s reputation as an innovative county. 2 Business support: to provide a strengthened level of relevant and appropriate business support which is fit for the needs of businesses today and in the future. 3 The future voice of business: to foster and enhance a dynamic forum where businesses can connect, collaborate, contribute to, and shape the needs and priorities of the county.

A separate Economic Strategy Action Plan has been developed which provides more information on the delivery priorities of this strategy and lists a summary of actions after each of the four strategic priorities.

Delivery Outcomes

In parallel with our strategic priorities there are two over-arching delivery outcomes, otherwise known as cross cutting themes, which are central to achieving our 2050 vision for the county: -

Greener Gloucestershire – A core aim of this strategy is for the county to be carbon neutral (also known as carbon net-zero) by 2045 at the latest, although many of Gloucestershire’s District Authorities hope to achieve this by 2030. To succeed it will be important that: -

- Gloucestershire will be at the forefront of new green industries and technologies.
- The county becomes a leader in biodiversity recovery and conservation.
- Gloucestershire’s skill provision meets the need for local businesses.

This will support our aim to future-proof the economy through local investment and innovation in low carbon initiatives, the delivery of carbon neutral communities and a connected sustainable transport system.



Sustainable Growth

Green energy sector grows and supports the county transition to a net zero economy.

The county becomes a leader in biodiversity recovery and conservation.

Improved soil quality reduces dependency on artificial fertilisers.



Inward Investment

Economic decarbonisation through sustained investment.

Green energy generation accelerates increased investment resulting in greater job creation.

Robust cultural and heritage visitor offer.



Employment and skills

Gloucestershire’s skill provision meets the need for local businesses.

Continual anticipation of the future skill need prevents skills gaps from arising.

Increased number of green jobs being created.



Business Innovation and Support

Gloucestershire will be at the forefront of new green industries and technologies.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are able to access support and guidance to become carbon neutral.

Improved idea exchanges between academic partners to consider future innovations.

Outcome: Greener Gloucestershire

Inclusive Gloucestershire – It is important that all Gloucestershire residents can access, benefit from, and positively contribute towards the economy. This includes economically inactive residents and those experiencing health inequalities.

Whilst Gloucestershire is a relatively affluent county, there are pockets of deprivation which can directly impact an individual’s ability to access economic opportunities.

We need to collaborate with local community organisations in affected neighbourhoods to better understand the causes of deprivation and develop appropriate initiatives to deliver change that drives social mobility and maximises an individual’s potential.

Successful delivery of these outcomes will only be possible with the collective contributions and leadership of public sector partners, local businesses, and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, which is integral to delivering services for residents in affected neighbourhoods.



Sustainable Growth

Communities and businesses flourish by taking advantage of the county’s strengths.

Robust digital infrastructure benefits our economy and society.

Regenerated and repurposed city and town centres are maintained as vibrant hubs of activity.



Inward Investment

Increased regional collaboration extends opportunities for high value investment and job creation.

Vibrant communities make the county an attractive place to invest.

Robust social value ambitions maximise local procurement routes.



Employment and skills

Residents can acquire the skills needed to take up employment opportunities.

Support is provided for groups who are struggling to access education or training and employment.

Increased flexible working patterns and inclusive practices enable people to enter the workforce who might otherwise be unable.



Business Innovation and Support

Employers drive inclusive economic growth by providing fair wages, high quality jobs, and healthy workplaces.

Anchor institutions make a significant contribution to the economy.

A robust Economic Growth Board positively impacts long-term sustainable economic growth.

Outcome: Inclusive Gloucestershire



Strategic Priority: Sustainable Growth

By 2050, Gloucestershire's ambitions for future housing and employment growth will have delivered new carbon-neutral communities. This growth will be evidence led and prioritised on a strategic basis.

To build a strong, responsive, and sustainable economy in Gloucestershire, it is vital to deliver effective spatial planning to meet the county's growth needs. Gloucestershire's population is expected to grow significantly in the coming years with a projected increase of 16.6% between 2018 and 2043.¹ Alongside this, between 2021 and 2031, Gloucestershire's economy is predicted to require 182,708 new workers.² To meet this demand, much-needed housing, employment land, transport and digital infrastructure needs to be delivered in a coordinated and sustainable way.



Proposition 1: Spatial Development Strategy:

Produce a county-wide strategy to ensure the viability of new developments and support the transition to a carbon-neutral society.

Gloucestershire needs a county-wide Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) to help coordinate and support long-term development across the county. The SDS must consider all strategic development activities that support the principles of sustainable growth.

The SDS will provide greater certainty and clarity over future development for residents, developers and businesses, and shape future local development plans.

In 2022, each of the seven local authorities and GFirst LEP formally agreed the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) as a first step to improve joint working on shared policy objectives with a view to resolving infrastructure delivery issues. The planning policy areas included within the GSoCG include: -

- climate change,
- housing,
- the economy and employment,
- the green belt,
- transport provision,
- digital networks,
- natural environment and green infrastructure,
- health and social infrastructure, and
- minerals and waste.

¹ 2018 based Sub-national Population Projections, ONS

² Oxford Economics

Proposition 2: Gloucestershire City Region **– Central Economic Growth Corridor**

Ensure long-term investment, which is coordinated, stable, and adaptable to local needs within the emerging City Region.

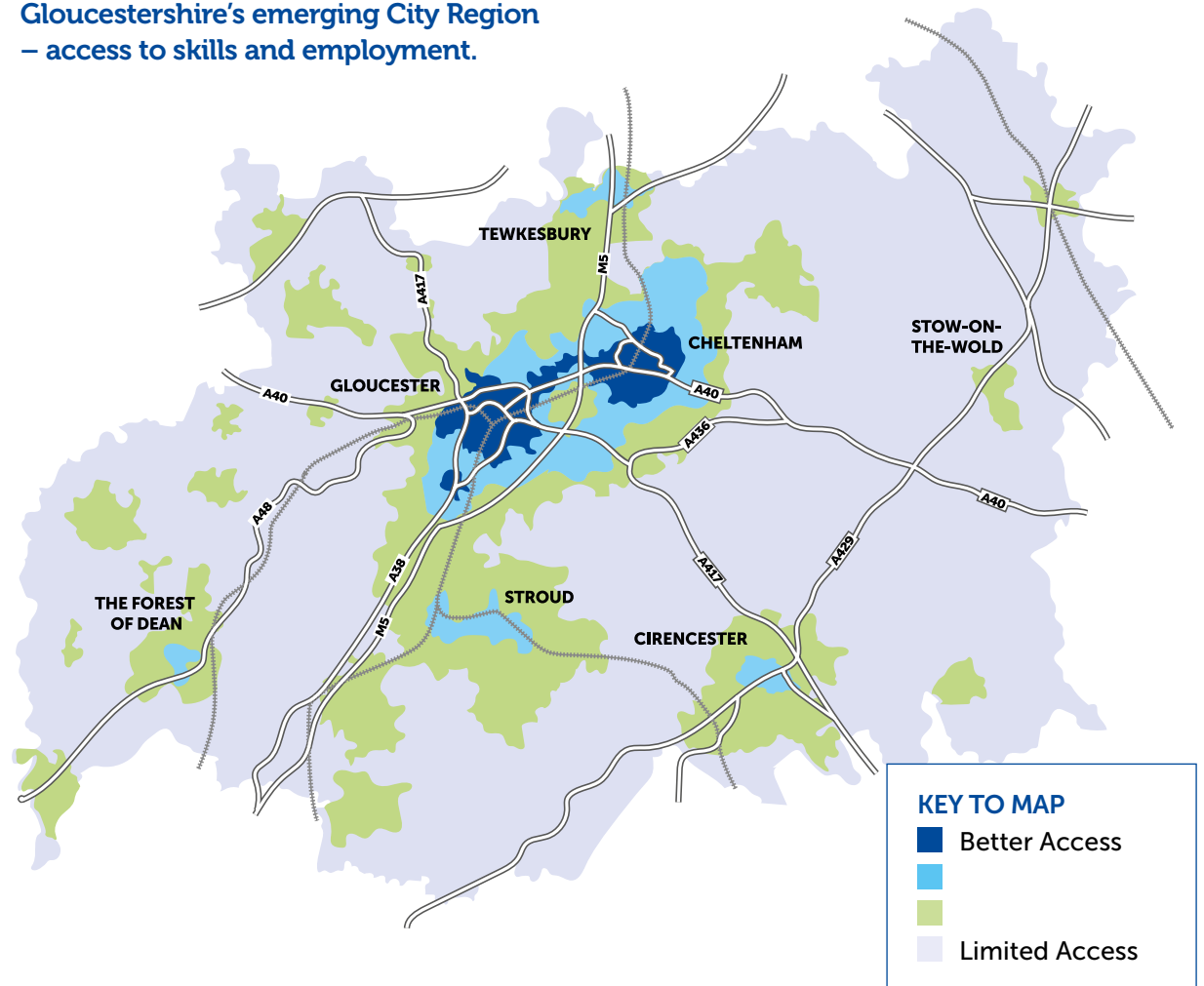
Future development needs will be considered on a strategic basis, reflecting a desire that where possible and practicable, development opportunities are prioritised in areas with the lowest natural capital value. This may result in one local authority accommodating the identified needs of another if it represents the most sustainable form of development and there is agreement from the relevant Local Planning Authorities in adopting this approach.

The concept of a Central Economic Development Corridor should seek to focus development in areas that already have established quality transport networks, which would facilitate the delivery of a mass rapid transit scheme to provide high frequency passenger transport access, offering a genuine alternative to the car for longer distance trips that are unsuitable for either walking or cycling. It would also enable a strategic review of regeneration projects to enhance urban centres and could include the repurposing of empty retail space into affordable housing where this is suitable.

In more rural areas of the county, car dependency will be reduced through a robust rural transport offer and support achieving carbon reduction targets.

Housing, and employment growth should be considered where local access to the rail network is provided either at an existing station or at a location supporting a new station.

Gloucestershire’s emerging City Region
– access to skills and employment.



Gloucestershire’s Central Economic Growth Corridor

Proposition 3 **– Infrastructure Delivery Plan:**

Ensure a robust evidence base is produced to inform the planning and delivery of the infrastructure across Gloucestershire.

A fundamental aspect of achieving sustainable development is providing infrastructure in the right place and at the right time. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the importance of identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure and accessible services to reflect current and future community needs.

Part of the commitment made by Gloucestershire’s authorities through the GSoCG was to undertake a strategic assessment to identify Gloucestershire’s future infrastructure needs to accommodate future growth. Following the completion of the Infrastructure Needs Assessment work, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared outlining the requirements of future infrastructure across the county, including a pipeline of delivery priorities.

While the council actively seeks a variety of sources to fund infrastructure delivery, developer contributions remain an important source of funding. This proposition will ensure that the costs of development are known by all parties when considering future growth.

What will success look like?



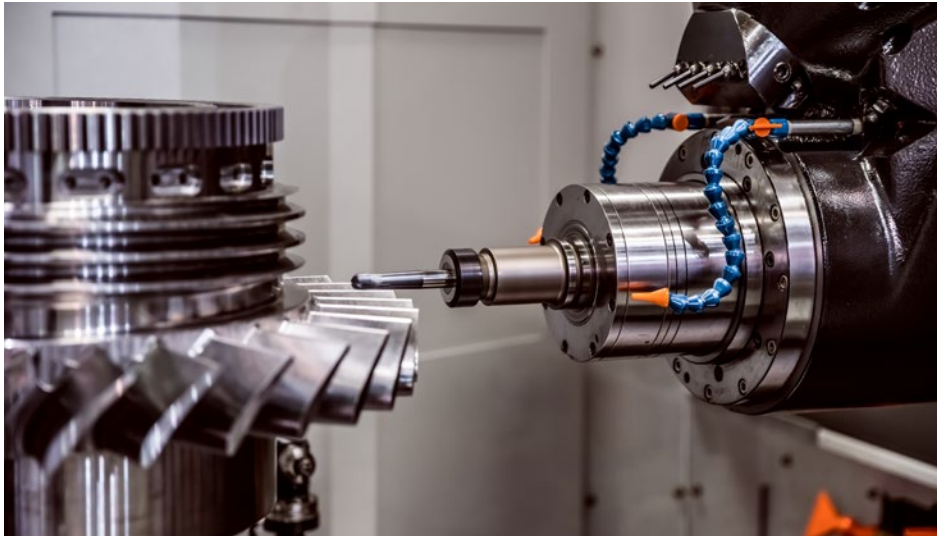
Actions required to deliver each proposition:

REF	ACTION
1. SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	
SG – 1.1	Develop a shared vision for long-term development.
SG – 1.2	Allocate resources to produce a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy.
SG – 1.3	Update the Local Transport Plan.
SG – 1.4	Continue to support the delivery of Strategic Highway improvements.
SG – 1.5	Improve regional rail connectivity.
2. GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION – CENTRAL ECONOMIC GROWTH CORRIDOR	
SG – 2.1	Progress the business case for a Mass Transit Scheme.
SG – 2.2	Review the concept of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Corridor as part of developing a shared vision for a countywide Spatial Development Strategy.
SG – 2.3	Identify the breadth and scope of regeneration projects.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN	
SG – 3.1	Complete the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground Action Plan.
SG – 3.2	Update the Local Development Guide.
SG – 3.3	Identify a new Digital Champion.
SG – 3.4	Produce a new digital strategy that outlines how digital connectivity can be improved to provide enhanced broadband and mobile digital coverage.
SG – 3.5	Provide clear guidance on and support for developers on Biodiversity Net Gain.
SG – 3.6	Complete a review of the existing infrastructure assets of the county council's service areas as identified within the Local Development Guide.
SG – 3.7	Complete an infrastructure needs assessment of countywide infrastructure.
SG – 3.8	Advance proposals that would regenerate soil quality throughout the county.
SG – 3.9	Produce a countywide Infrastructure Delivery Plan.



Strategic Priority: Inward Investment



By 2050, Gloucestershire will have grown its economy by attracting new levels of inward investment, fostering innovation, creating jobs, and promoting prosperity across the county. It will be recognised as the most advanced county in the UK for digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and energy production including green and nuclear energy.

Inward investment is a vital driver of prosperity and growth in an open economy, and Gloucestershire has historically been successful in attracting public and private investment into the county. Such investments have been directed towards world-class facilities, innovative enterprises, improvements in the transport network and the development of local skills facilities.



Proposition 1: Strengthen key sectors:

To build on Gloucestershire's strengths in emerging technologies including cyber security, artificial intelligence and semi-conductors, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and energy production including green and nuclear energy to drive investment.

Since the creation of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), which aimed to strengthen Gloucestershire's key sectors, we have developed inward investment propositions for Agri-tech, Cyber-tech, and Advanced engineering and manufacturing. This strategy expands the focus on cyber-tech to incorporate the 'Future of Communications,' extending the focus into the areas of Quantum, Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, and Semi-Conductors which are strengths within the region. All of these propositions include prominent global clusters of specialised high-value sectors, making the county an ideal destination for inward investment.





Proposition 2: Additional opportunities to attract investment:

To consolidate a world-class inward investment offer that continues to successfully promote investment from outside the county as a driver for growth.

For a successful inward investment offer, it is vital to develop a coherent message to potential investors and businesses and to have clear, suitable support structures. It is important to work with local, regional, national, and international partners to ensure that the county is able to effectively communicate the full package of support available.

There are significant opportunities to attract investment through the emerging green energy generation sector, and build on the county's cultural, recreation and tourism offer. Expanding on existing assets such as those at Berkeley and Oldbury, growing the energy generation sector can develop the county's green economy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

We must also consider emerging opportunities to promote community-based energy generation schemes and local area energy planning concepts.

Gloucestershire's inward investment offer involves promoting the county as an attractive place to live, visit, and do business. Through regeneration initiatives and maximising the benefits of the county's cultural and tourism offer there is an opportunity to attract people and businesses to invest in the county. To strengthen global awareness, it is also important to strengthen regional relationships by collaborating closely with partners across the Western Gateway to promote investment opportunities across Western England and South Wales.

What will success look like?



Actions required to deliver each proposition:

REF	ACTION
1. STRENGTHEN KEY SECTORS	
II – 1.1	Deliver an inward investment programme and business development framework that focusses on targeted lead generation on the county's key sectors and innovation opportunities.
II – 1.2	Work closely with national, regional, district, and relevant private sector partners to secure inward investment projects and capital investment.
II – 1.3	Work closely with Department for Business and Trade and district partners to develop and manage a coordinated programme and protocol to manage regular contact and relationships.
II – 1.4	Work with district partners, private sector partners and academia to identify potential opportunities for growing the current cyber eco system and future of communications cluster across the county.
II – 1.5	Work with the private sector to identify the global demand for new technology in the Food and Drink sector, Agriculture/Farming and Land-based businesses that will enhance their future growth and increase in productivity.
II – 1.6	Explore opportunities around local procurement to support existing SMEs in Gloucestershire across sectors such as Food & Drink – for example, the <i>Made in Gloucestershire</i> initiative.

1. STRENGTHEN KEY SECTORS	
II – 1.7	Collaborate with partners to further enhance and develop a robust cultural and heritage visitor offer, building on existing tourism eco system and assets.
II – 1.8	Explore potential opportunities to enhance and improve regional connectivity and transport links across the Western Gateway area.
2. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT	
II – 2.1	Work with public sector partners to identify opportunities for securing and encouraging new investment for business, key infrastructure, and capital investment to support development and regeneration opportunities in the county.
II – 2.2	Develop a shared social value toolkit tool to encourage a consistent approach to implement the county's social value aspirations to support inclusive growth.
II – 2.3	Ensure that the needs of future inward investors and FDI company growth aspirations are a key consideration within the development of a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy.
II – 2.4	Understand future energy demand and investigate new forms of energy such as nuclear, renewable, and other forms of green energy solution to support sustainable growth.
II – 2.5	Investigate future opportunities for potential/new community- level micro energy generation and storage solutions.



Strategic Priority: Employment and Skills

By 2050, skills provision in Gloucestershire will be fully aligned to the local economy. Every resident will have the opportunity to access training and development, increasing skills and opening pathways to good employment opportunities.

A strong local workforce is an essential element in delivering long-term economic growth. To enable this, residents must have access to the skills and development opportunities that will allow them to reach their potential. Providing this will contribute towards the county's ambition to improve productivity and ensure residents have fulfilling careers through a variety of job opportunities. Building this skilled workforce will require county-wide co-operation between the county council, Department for Work and Pensions, businesses, education and training providers the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and a wider network to ensure that skills needs are identified, and residents are provided with the tools to gain the skills they seek.



Proposition 1: Provide seamless access to skills and employment to reduce economic inactivity:

To drive down economic inactivity and improve productivity by identifying skills needs and ensuring all residents are able to access relevant training opportunities.

While many of Gloucestershire's businesses have experienced significant recruitment issues, 20.7% of the county's residents are economically inactive.¹ There is, therefore, an opportunity to provide people with the necessary skills to perform the available jobs.

To ensure those who want a job can access relevant courses for skills development, residents should be able to see and understand the journey from skills acquisition through to employment and be supported at each stage. This support should be accessible to all residents, regardless of disabilities, ill health and/or caring responsibilities.



Proposition 2: Support businesses to develop the county's talent:

To ensure that businesses have access to a local workforce with the skills they need to flourish.

Collaborating closely with residents to improve access to skills pathways can only be successful if businesses are also supported to identify their own needs and can offer opportunities to a more diverse potential workforce. The county is projected to have a deficit of high skills by 2030 as demand grows for higher skilled occupations.² This situation is exacerbated by the county's ageing population, and it is essential that the working-age population possess the skills to replace retirees. This strategy will promote vocational training, such as T-Levels and apprenticeships, and sector-based skills provision, tailored to current and future skills needs. We will improve our engagement with employers and training providers to improve understanding of skills needs and ensure that residents can access relevant opportunities.

¹ 2021 Census, ONS

² GFirst LEP, Local Skills Report, 2021



Proposition 3: Anticipate future skills needs for a Greener Gloucestershire:

To ensure that Gloucestershire’s workforce has the skills needed for the future, including bridging the green skills-jobs mismatch.

In 2050, the jobs and labour markets are likely to be different to today, and it will be important to monitor market trends and work with Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) providers to ensure they can offer the appropriate skills training. The three sectors forecast to see the greatest growth in jobs up to 2050 are Arts, entertainment and recreation, Administrative and support service activities, and Construction. ¹

Forecasting from the Local Government Association has estimated that a total of 12,500 direct jobs employed in the low carbon and renewable energy economy will be required in Gloucestershire by 2030; this is expected to rise to 20,000 by 2050. ² Notably, retrofit and climate mitigation are likely to provide opportunities for the Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction sectors.

Agriculture and agri-tech are likely to have a role to play in decarbonisation and carbon capture. Here, there is an opportunity for the county to be a leader in the emerging green economy and at the forefront of green skills development.

The broader “Future of communications” sector will also grow as more industries turn towards digitisation. To ensure residents can take advantage of emerging opportunities in the sector, it is vital for the sector to be visible and attractive.

What will success look like?



¹ Oxford Economics
² Local Government Association – Local green jobs

Actions required to deliver each proposition:

REF	ACTION
1. SEAMLESS ACCESS TO SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT TO REDUCE ECONOMIC INACTIVITY	
ES – 1.1	Secure funding for the ongoing delivery of the Employment & Skills Hub, Careers Hub and Skills and Careers Portal.
ES – 1.2	Identify new venues for the delivery of skills improvements programmes.
ES – 1.3	Create an Employment and Skills Forum.
ES – 1.4	Identify groups that are struggling to access education, skills training, or employment.
ES – 1.5	Support implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.
ES – 1.6	Continue to signpost residents to the most appropriate organisations delivering training pathway and/or employment support.

REF	ACTION
2. SUPPORT BUSINESSES TO DEVELOP THE COUNTY'S TALENT	
ES – 2.1	Ensure Gloucestershire's workforce has the relevant skills to meet the employment needs of the county.
ES – 2.2	Ensure Gloucestershire's skill provision meets the need for local businesses.
ES – 2.3	Ensure Gloucestershire's vocational training offer is fit for purpose.
ES – 2.4	Increase the number of active apprenticeships.
ES – 2.5	Promote the advantages of flexible working practices to employers to maximise access to potential employees.
ED – 2.6	Promote the development of healthy workplaces.
3. ANTICIPATE FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS FOR A GREENER GLOUCESTERSHIRE	
ES – 3.1	Identify future skills needs across the county.
ES – 3.2	Host an annual skills summit
ES – 3.3	Investigate specific green and digital skills and employment needs across the county.
ES – 3.4	Improve Gloucestershire's careers support offer.



Strategic Priority: Business Innovation and Support

By 2050, the Gloucestershire economy will have built on its strong research and innovation heritage to achieve even greater collaboration between academia, industry, and government. It will be in the top 20% of local authorities for business survival and deliver an inclusive and highly productive economy.

Gloucestershire possesses a well-established and robust business support infrastructure, from GFirst LEP's Growth Hub network and Business Groups, to business membership organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Circle to Success, and the county library network. The support offered helps businesses to navigate the complexities of starting, maintaining, and scaling-up their business and to overcome various barriers to growth. The integration of the LEP into the county council from April 2024, provides an opportunity through this strategy to review the existing business support offering, and make any appropriate changes to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Gloucestershire businesses.



Proposition 1: Driving Innovation:

To maintain and strengthen Gloucestershire's reputation as an innovative county with a vibrant and creative business community.

Innovation strength is core to the success of Gloucestershire's economy as identified by high levels of investment in research and development, standing at 3.3% of GVA, compared to the government's target of 2.7%¹ The county is recognised as having a strong background in innovation activity, with highly innovative businesses in cyber-tech, agri-tech, and high-tech engineering such as in manufacturing services and aerospace, all of which are strategically important. New innovation businesses are supported at the early stages of their life through the county's Growth Hub network, helping them innovate and grow to boost Gloucestershire's productivity. They are also able to access advice through Business West's network of specialist innovation under the UK Innovation EDGE programme.

There is an identified need to expand the innovation potential of industry to advance digital innovations and decarbonisation. It will be important to continue developing stronger and deeper partnerships between academia and businesses to deliver holistic support for SMEs, helping them develop and grow, whilst also providing them with the space and access to academic knowledge essential to successful innovation. To deliver this, the development of a potential future investment fund intended to encourage greater idea generation and entrepreneurship will be progressed.

¹ Smart Specialisation Hub report 'What does the 2.4% of GDP R&D expenditure target mean for Places', January 2019.

Proposition 2: Strengthen Business support:

To provide a strengthened level of relevant and appropriate business support which meets the needs of businesses today and in the future.

Gloucestershire's economy relies on a business support offering which is strategically positioned in diverse industries such as aerospace, engineering, manufacturing, cybersecurity, and creative fields. This must continually evolve to highlight and work with businesses on the most pressing issues. It is important to reach all businesses that need this support, especially micro-businesses and entrepreneurs who may not be aware of the service.



Proposition 3: Ensure the future voice of business:

To foster and enhance a dynamic forum where businesses can connect, collaborate, contribute to, and shape the needs and priorities of the county.

Gloucestershire currently has nine distinct business sector groups that serve as the dynamic 'engine room' where industry experts collaborate to provide advice on critical business and economic development decisions. The independent status of these groups is essential for building credibility and trust among businesses, making them more approachable and accountable. Therefore, they must remain independent of local authorities, retaining the impartiality and effectiveness that comes with their status. Crucial to this will be the development of a governance structure which allows businesses to contribute to the activity set up by and with the new Economic Growth Board.

The LEP integration into the county council offers the opportunity to review the current business sector groups to ensure that they remain fit for purpose for today and in the future. For example, the current challenges faced by local health and care services, combined with the county's ageing population, might suggest that now is the right time to introduce a new business group sector focused specifically upon Health and Social Care.

What will success look like?



Actions required to deliver each proposition:

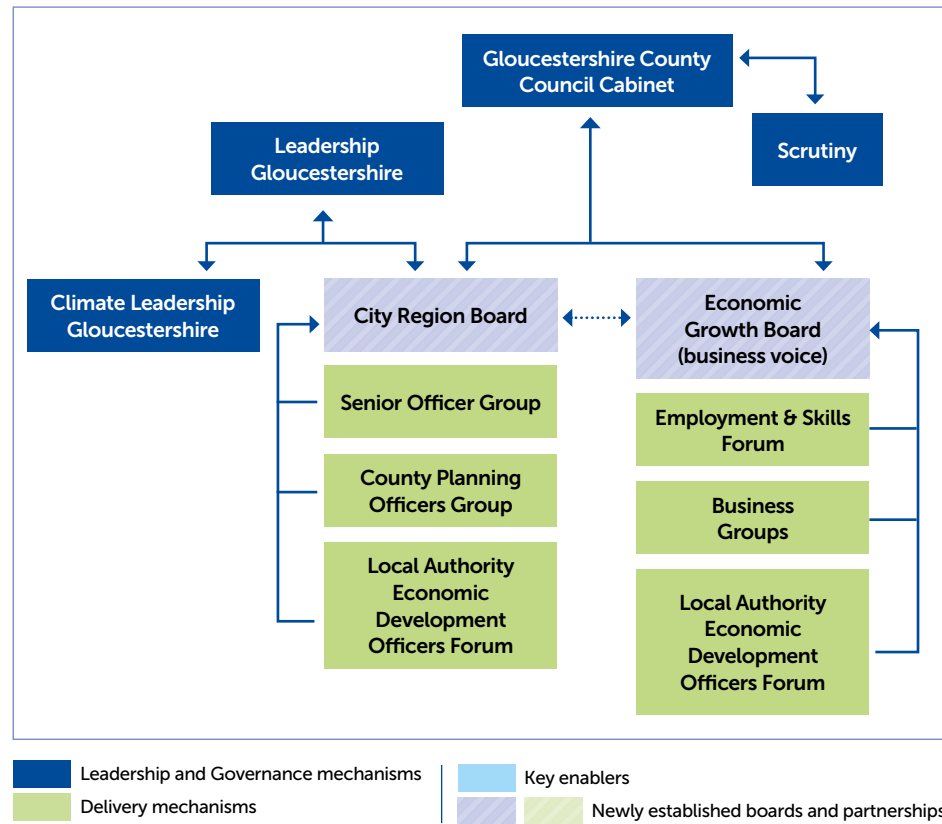
REF	ACTION
1. DRIVING INNOVATION	
BIS – 1.1	Understand the reasons for reduced business survival rates and seek to address the causes.
BIS – 1.2	Create a local innovation plan to use as the basis of future funding bids.
BIS – 1.3	Facilitate idea exchanges between academic partners to consider future innovations for business sectors.
BIS – 1.4	Develop a business case to support the creation of an Innovation Loan Fund.
2. BUSINESS SUPPORT	
BIS – 2.1	Continue to support the Gloucestershire Growth Hub network
BIS – 2.2	Review the existing Growth Hub offer in line with business need.
BIS – 2.3	Continue to support growth within the county's Innovation Labs.
3. THE FUTURE VOICE OF BUSINESS	
BIS – 3.1	Establish a new Economic Growth Board to provide the independent business voice.
BIS – 3.2	Continue to support the business sector groups.
BIS – 3.3	Review the roles and functions of the existing business sector groups.
BIS – 3.4	Establish a Health and Social Care business sector group.
BIS – 3.5	Work with anchor organisations to support inclusive growth.

Funding and governance

Funding to deliver the strategy

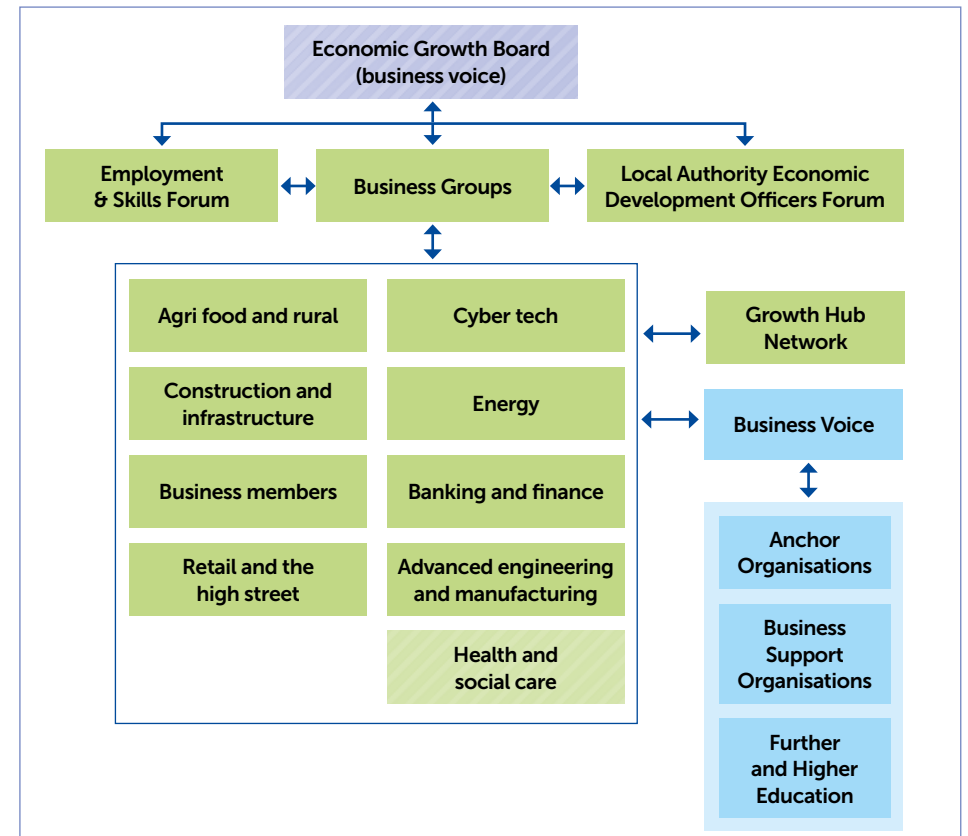
Funding to deliver this strategy will not come from a single source. Implicit in delivering actions to achieve the desired outcomes is the need to continually identify and coordinate funding and financing opportunities. Identified in a separate action plan are a series of steps to be taken by a wide range of stakeholders to deliver the outcomes. This sets out where existing resources are available and where funding must be sought.

The governance arrangements are summarised in the following diagrams.



Governance

Oversight of the strategy’s delivery plan will sit with the newly formed City Region Board, which reports into Leadership Gloucestershire. The City Region Board will be responsible for ensuring the actions outlined in the strategy are delivered within the timescales identified in the action plan. It will include elected members from each of Gloucestershire’s seven local authorities, supported by senior officers. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis with updates provided to the City Region Board.



Measuring success

The metrics identified intend to strengthen the link between the delivery of the strategy and the performance of the county. The complete set of metrics can be found in the full strategy. The indicators will be regularly reviewed, and metrics may be amended or replaced; new metrics may be added if better data sources become available. This will be regularly monitored and presented to the City Region Board and the Economic Growth Board.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	PROPOSED METRIC	INDICATOR
Sustainable Employment	Housing	No. of new dwellings and new dwellings as a percentage of total dwelling stock
		Ratio of median house prices to median workplace earnings
		Average monthly rents
	Digital connectivity	% gigabit broadband enabled dwellings
	Mobile connectivity	4G coverage from at least one operator or 5G coverage from at least one operator
	Accessibility to major employment sites	% of population who live over 45 minutes away from a key employment site using public transport
Inward Investment	Carbon emissions per capita	Carbon emissions by source (industrial, commercial, public sector, transport or domestic)
	Exports	Value of exports from Gloucestershire

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	PROPOSED METRIC	INDICATOR
Skills and Employment	Unemployment	Rates for 16-64-year-olds
	Employment rate	Rates for 16-64-year-olds
	Economic inactivity	Rates for 16-64-year-olds
	Job density	Ratio of jobs to people of working age
	Job postings	Numbers and trends and recruitment implications
	Destinations	Percentage of students who left 16 to 18 study and are in sustained education, employment or training
	Apprenticeships	Completions
Business Innovation and Support	Business births	Number and rate of business births
	Business deaths	Number and rate and ratio to business births
	Survival rates	1-5 years
	High growth businesses	Rate of high growth businesses
	Business floor space	Total floorspace
	Productivity	GVA per hour worked
	GVA	Total GVA



Economy Environment and Infrastructure

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Version 1 | April 2024



Agenda Item 10



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET
Subject	PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Juliet Layton - Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing - Assistant Director for Resident Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and approve a new Policy in respect of Public Health Funerals
Annexes	Annex A – Public Health Funeral Policy
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: I. Approve the Public Health Funeral Policy
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Communities • Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director, Director of Finance (Publica)



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report along with Annex A introduces a new Policy in respect of Public Health Funerals which Cotswold District Council hold a statutory responsibility to deliver.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A public Health Funeral can be defined as a funeral arranged by Local Authorities for those people who have died and have no known relatives to arrange or pay for their funeral; or have relatives who do not want to; or are unable to arrange their funeral. Local Authorities have responsibility to arrange such funerals under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The council does not currently have an adopted Public Health Funerals policy. This could possibly leave the council open to legal challenge from interested parties if it takes on a very basic funeral arrangement and the family wants something more tailored.
- 3.2 The council needs to ensure it has an adopted policy to provide both a basis for a procedural framework for staff and further provide a consistent and transparent approach to the public on how it deals with such cases.
- 3.3 The provisions of section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 state:
- “It shall be the duty of a local authority to cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or has been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority”.
- 3.4 The purpose of section 46 is to prevent the spread of disease through the proper disposal of bodies of deceased individuals where no-one else is willing or able to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements.
- 3.5 In many cases the lack of suitable arrangement is due to there being no known next of kin. These cases are generally referred to the council by the coroner’s office but on other occasions family members are traced who are unable or unwilling to take responsibility for arranging the funeral.



- 3.6** In some circumstances a successful application to the Social Fund will help meet the cost of paying for the funeral including arrangement fee costs.
- 3.7** Where the aforementioned cannot be achieved the council has an obligation to make and pay for the necessary arrangements. The council undertakes on average two to four public health funerals per year at a current cost of approximately £1,480 per funeral.
- 3.8** These costs, however, can be offset through the removal and sale of possessions from the deceased estate.
- 3.9** For such Public Health Funerals, the Council will only provide/fund the cost of an unattended funeral or cremation. These are when there is no family or friends present and these ceremonies are typically very short. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council will not fund any cost over and above this such as orders of service, flowers etc as set out in paragraph 9 of Annex A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** The council currently has a budget of £2,500 per year to support such burials.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1.** The legislation is detailed within the body of this report.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** The risks are detailed within the body of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1.** There is sometimes a stigma around public health funerals that these are paupers' funerals. This is an outdated opinion, and the reality is that anyone who passes away in the district will be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of wealth and will receive a dignified burial.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1.** None

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1.** The council has a statutory responsibility to process such funerals; therefore, there are no available alternative options.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None.

(END)



Public Health Funerals Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the council's public health funeral policy and how Cotswold District Council (the Council) will exercise its statutory duty under Section 46(1) of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (the Act) which states:

“It shall be the duty of a local authority to cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority”.

- 1.2 When someone dies it can be a very distressing time for those arranging a funeral, especially if there are concerns about how the funeral is to be paid for. It is normally a partner, executor or other family members who would be responsible for making funeral arrangements for a deceased person, and they would also be responsible for the costs.
- 1.3 The council cannot get involved where funeral arrangements have already been made, or if the funeral has already taken place. The council cannot provide any funding for funeral arrangements to families, whether the funeral has taken place or not.

2. Referrals

- 2.1 If no individual is willing or able to make the funeral arrangements for the deceased, the case will be referred to the council, who will then be responsible for making the arrangements under the Act.
- 2.2 Referrals to the council are only accepted in the following ways:
- A section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 notice from the coroner detailing time of death and place of death
 - Social Services or similar provider
 - Nursing or residential care homes
- 2.3 The council will deal with the organisation of a funeral, including registering the death, liaising with the funeral directors, and paying for the funeral.
- 2.4 The council has no duty in the following situations and therefore will not take responsibility for funeral arrangements:
- The death occurred in a National Health Service (NHS) premises
 - Funeral arrangements have already been made
 - The funeral has taken place
 - The death occurred outside of the district but where the person's main residence is in the district

3. Death in Hospital

- 3.1 If a person dies in hospital it is traditionally the responsibility of the hospital to make the funeral arrangements, but in further guidance produced in 2005 by the Department of Health Document, removes the requirement contained in the earlier documents for hospitals to become responsible for funeral arrangements. Instead it states:

“It will be particularly important for Trusts to consider having a formal policy that takes account of the interests and/or responsibilities of other partners. For example, the local authority in whose area the body lies may arrange for burial or cremation under Section 46(1) of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. However, practice will vary widely depending on local circumstances and Trusts may wish to liaise closely and develop protocols with local authorities and others to establish responsibilities and help ensure the most respectful burial or cremation takes places as quickly as possible.”

- 3.2 Although the 2005 document essentially relieves NHS Trusts of the responsibility for making funeral arrangements, many still chose to do so. It is commonly the case that the hospital will make the arrangements for those that die without any relatives, or where relatives cannot afford the costs but do not qualify for Social Fund payments.

4. Persons not able to make arrangements

- 4.1 If the deceased has a family, but they are unable or unwilling to pay for the funeral the nearest surviving relative will be asked to inform the coroner who may supply a section 46 form to the council. The council will not accept direct referrals from relatives.
- 4.2 The nearest surviving relative will be asked to complete a Next of Kin form relinquishing their responsibility to organise a funeral and agreeing to the recovery of any costs from the deceased's estate. Where there is no estate or surviving relatives, the council will arrange and cover the costs of the funeral.

5. Search of the Deceased's Home

- 5.1 The council will conduct an inspection of the property in which the deceased passed away and/or in the case of a nursing home death, the main residence of the deceased.
- 5.2 The search will focus on finding a will, evidence of family and friends, and any items that may be used to pay for the funeral costs. The council has a power of entry under Section 61 of the Act. Unless access has been supplied by the coroner or a keyholder, a warrant is required to force entry.
- 5.3 Any shared accommodation will require the consent of any other occupier.
- 5.4 If the relevant property is in another district/borough council officers will inform that authority and will still inspect that property.

- 5.5 Any items removed by council officers from the property will be logged and retained under secure conditions at the council office for a minimum of 6 months following the funeral.
- 5.6 The inspection, carried out by two officers, is to ascertain whether there is a will, any relatives, personal information to be able to register the death and assess the financial status of the deceased in order to fund the funeral.
- 5.7 No other persons such as friends, neighbours or relatives are able to access the property with the officers.
- 5.8 In cases where the deceased's will is found and the executor is traced, the executor would be expected to organise the funeral. If the executor wishes to revoke their duties, council officers will request that the executor make a formal renunciation of the will and declare that they wish to have no further involvement in the funeral arrangements.

6. Rented Accommodation

- 6.1 Landlords should be advised not to enter or remove any items from the deceased's accommodation until after the house search has taken place.
- 6.2 The council is not responsible for clearing or cleaning the property and cannot deal with services or property matters. However, public health matters such as pest infestations and statutory nuisance can be addressed if appropriate.
- 6.3 Following the completion of the search, the property will be secured, and the keys returned to the landlord.

7 Owner Occupier

- 7.1 If the property was owned by the deceased, the case will be referred to the Treasury Solicitor after the funeral and their instructions regarding the property will be followed, unless there is a living relative, an executor or a will.

8. Registering a Death

- 8.1 Subject to guidance from the coroner; the council will register the death with the Registrar and confirm that they will dispose of the body in an appropriate matter, including naming the funeral director.
- 8.2 Only one death certificate will be purchased to allow the council to make funeral arrangements.
- 8.3 Where an inquest is being held, the coroner can release the body and issue an interim death certificate to the council or the designated funeral director. The council will not register the death.

8.4 Where the death occurs in a nursing or residential home, the coroner is not normally involved. The manager of the home can register the death but is often unable or unwilling to do so if there are no funds. The home will forward all details of the death including the doctor's medical certificate, financial status and Social Service contacts as required. On receipt of the relevant material an officer will register the death.

9. The Funeral Service

9.1 A cremation service will normally be held at a local Crematorium, unless it is established that the deceased would have chosen burial for religious, cultural or personal reasons, or if a check of the burial records reveals that the deceased owned a grave in a local Cemetery and there is room for them to be buried in it. If a burial is required and the deceased did not own a grave, burial will take place in an unmarked public grave in a cemetery.

9.2 The funeral director will provide everything necessary for a simple, dignified service, including a coffin, transport of the deceased to the Crematorium or Cemetery in a hearse, and sufficient bearers to transfer the coffin to the chapel.

9.3 The service will not normally include a minister of religion or a representative of the faith of the deceased to lead the burial or cremation unless this is specified in a will.

9.4 The council will not pay for flowers, orders of service or any other expenses.

9.5 If known, the council will inform family and friends of details of the funeral and invite them to attend.

9.6 Family and friends may attend the funeral service but will have no choice as to where and when it is held. As long as there is no additional cost to the authority, family and friends can also choose a eulogy and music. The council will agree one nominated contact to liaise with the funeral director.

9.7 If a cremation is chosen, the council will give the ashes of the deceased to the family or friends if requested, at no cost to the family and friends. Where family or friends wish to collect the ashes from the crematorium, the authority officer acting as the Applicant for the Cremation should nominate them to do so on the Application for Cremation, if known. After this date, the next of kin should request the ashes from the council within 6 months of the funeral. If after 6 months the ashes remain with the council, officers will arrange for the ashes to be scattered within a garden of remembrance.

10. Estate Administration

10.1 The council is entitled to recover the cost of making funeral arrangements under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. The council is not, however, empowered to administer the estate. Where there is a surplus of over £500 once all costs incurred in making the funeral arrangements have been reimbursed, the council will refer the case to the Treasury Solicitor, under Bona Vacantia.

- 10.2 Where there are known family, the case cannot be referred to the Treasury Solicitor. Under such circumstances, the council will hold all monies until a legally entitled person demonstrates their suitability to administer the estate through the holding of letters of administration from the courts.
- 10.3 Under no circumstances will money or property from the estate be given to any family member without proper lawful authority.

Glossary of Terms

Bona Vacantia

“Bona Vacantia” means vacant goods and is the legal name for ownerless property that passes to the Crown. They administer the estates of persons who die intestate without known next of kin and collect the assets of dissolved companies and failed trusts.

Intestate

Where no will has been made

Treasury Solicitor

The Treasury Solicitor’s Department is the largest provider of legal services across Government, working with over 180 Government departments and agencies. It also collects bona vacantia on behalf of the Crown

Executor

The person appointed to administer the estate of a person who has died leaving a will which nominate that person.

Agenda Item 11



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	STORAGE OF NON-MOTOR VEHICLES AND STRUCTURES ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY POLICY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Juliet Layton – Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services. Email: Juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing – Assistant Director for Resident Services Email: jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk
Report Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and approve a new Policy in respect of the enforcement of Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway
Annexes	Annex A – Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Approve the Policy set out in Annex A
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Interim Assistant Director, Interim Managing Director (Publica)



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval to implement a new Policy in respect of the enforcement of the Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures left on the Public Highway.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The storage on non-moving structures for unlimited period of time, on the public highway prevents its use by other motor vehicle users and causes inconvenience and frustration to Cotswold residents.
- 2.2 Opportunities for roadside parking are reduced for residents, which are subject to road fund licence, insurance and MOT costs. Non-motor vehicles such as caravans and trailers are not subject to these legal requirements, and therefore it is unreasonable for them to have the same rights to use the public highway as motor vehicles. Such storage is therefore deemed to be an unreasonable use of the public highway.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The Council currently assesses abandoned non-motor vehicles and structures under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, and carries out removal when necessary; however, when an owner has come forward to claim their property, that legislation no longer applies. This Policy therefore seeks to address the issue of non-motor vehicles and structures stored indefinitely on the public highways, and which have identified owners and not falling into the category of being abandoned.
- 3.2 The Policy will apply to boundaries within the Cotswold District, including the adopted highway and any land owned by the Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications. All work will be carried out within established resource. There is no cost to the Council for the removal of such non-motor vehicles. The Council has a third-party contractor who retrieves its costs through scrap metal rewards.
- 4.2 If a vehicle is removed by the Police under Operation GiG (Get it Gone) they will retrieve any costs from the registered owner, if known.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in respect of this Policy.



6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 There are none associated with this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none associated with this report.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

9.1 None.

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COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy

Version Control: VI May 2024

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I. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy focuses on the issues surrounding the use of the public highway as a storage facility for non-motor vehicles and structures (NMVS) such as caravans and trailers for example.
- 1.2 The storage of NMVS for unlimited periods of time on the public highway prevents its use by others motor vehicles and causes inconvenience and frustration to Cotswold residents.
- 1.3 Opportunities for parking are reduced for residents' vehicles, which are subject to road fund licence, insurance, and MOT costs. NMVS such as caravans and trailers are not subject to these legal requirements, and therefore it is unreasonable for them to have the same rights to use the public highway as motor vehicles. Therefore, storage of non-motor vehicles is deemed by the Council to be an unreasonable use of the public highway.
- 1.4 The Council currently assesses abandoned non-motor vehicles and structures under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and carries out removals when necessary. However, once an owner has come forward to claim his or her property that legislation is no longer applicable. This policy seeks to address the issue of NMVS stored indefinitely on the public highway, and which have identified owners, therefore not falling into the category of being abandoned.
- 1.5 NMVS can attract unwanted attention and vandalism. This in turn affects the streets aesthetically and the perception of Cotswolds as a result. Rubbish can build up around non-motor vehicles and structures as road sweepers are unable to reach the road surface to cleanse. In extreme cases, the storage of these structures in the residential streets could attract disease and vermin. Residents who report non-motorised vehicles and structures in place for long periods of time often express feelings of intimidation, particularly when groups congregate around caravans, trailers, etc. at night.

2. Definitions

The Council – means Cotswold District Council.

Policy – means the Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles on the Public Highway (Caravans, Trailers, Boats etc. Policy and Procedures) of May 2024.

Motor vehicle - defined in section 185(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and section 136(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as a *mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on roads*.

Non-motor vehicles and structures (NMVS) – means caravans, trailers, boats, horseboxes and any other vehicles and structures that are not defined under the Road Traffic Act 1988 as a motor vehicle. A vehicle or structure that cannot move by independent means.

Public Highway and Road - has the same meaning as Section 192(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988: any highway and any other road to which the public has access and includes bridges over which a road passes.

Caravan - as defined in section 66(7) of the LGFA 1988 by reference to Part I of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. That Act, as amended, by S.13 of The Caravan Sites Act 1968:

Caravan means any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but does not include: -

- 1) any railway rolling stock which is for the time being on rails forming part of a railway system, or
- 2) any tent, or
- 3) a structure designed or adapted for human habitation which:
 - a) is composed of not more than two sections separately constructed and designed to be assembled on a site by means of bolts, clamps, or other devices: and
 - b) when assembled, is physically capable of being moved by road from one place to another (whether by being towed or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), if its dimensions when assembled exceed any of the prescribed limits.

Trailer - means every vehicle without motive power designed to be drawn by another vehicle. Trailer includes, but is not limited to, the following types of trailers:

- Balance trailers.
- Bus trailers.
- Commercial bus trailers.
- Farm trailers.
- Pole trailers.
- Semitrailers.
- Travel trailers.
- Truck trailers.
- Self-supporting trailers.
- Special use trailers.

Notice – an official notice attached to a NMVS requiring its removal within 28 days and containing necessary information for the owner.

Owner – relates to the owner of a NMVS.

3. Scope of the Policy

- 3.1 The Policy is designed to deal with non-motor vehicles and structures being stored on the public highway. It applies to the boundaries within the Cotswold District including the adopted public highway and any land owned by the Council.
- 3.2 The Policy recommends that Section of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 be used to facilitate the issue of a Notice of Removal and take subsequent enforcement action.
- 3.3 The Policy shall be enforced from the date of its adoption and shall remain in force until formally revoked or superseded.

4. Legislation – Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978

4.1 Section 2: Penalty for unauthorised dumping

(1) Any person who, without lawful authority,

(a) abandons on any land in the open air, or on any other land forming part of a highway, a motor vehicle or anything which formed part of a motor vehicle and was removed from it in the course of dismantling the vehicle on the land; or

(b) abandons on any such land anything other than a motor vehicle, being a thing which he has brought to the land for the purpose of abandoning it there,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of an amount not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (£2500) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or both.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above, a person who leaves anything on any land in such circumstances or for such a period that he may reasonably be assumed to have abandoned it or to have brought it to the land for the purpose of abandoning it there shall be deemed to have abandoned it there or, as the case may be, to have brought it to the land for that purpose unless the contrary is shown.

Case Law

In *R v Welwyn Hatfield DC Ex p. Brinkley (1982) 80 L.G.R 727*, it was held on the true construction of this section that a caravan was capable of being a structure and of causing an obstruction. The setting up of a structure depended on the degree of permanence involved.

- 4.2 **Fixed Penalty Notices** As an alternative to prosecution, offences under section 2 (1) (a) may also be dealt with by fine of £200. For NMVS, such offences would be classed as Fly-tips and the Council has the authority to issue FPNs of up to £1,000 for such offences.

4.3 Section 6: Removal and disposal etc. of other refuse.

(1) Where it appears to a local authority that anything in their area, other than a motor vehicle, is abandoned without lawful authority on any land in the open air or on any other land forming part of a highway, the authority may if they think fit, subject to subsection (2) below, remove the thing.

(2) A local authority shall not be entitled to exercise their powers under subsection (1) above as respects a thing situated on land appearing to the authority to be occupied by any person unless the authority has given him notice that they propose to remove the thing and he has failed to object to the proposal within the prescribed period.

(3) Section 76 of the Public Health Act 1936 (which relates to the deposit and disposal of refuse) shall, with the exception of subsection (3)(a) of that section, apply to any thing removed in pursuance of subsection (1) above as it applies to other refuse.

(4) Subject to subsection (5) below, a local authority by whom anything is removed in pursuance of subsection (1) above shall be entitled to recover the cost of removing and disposing of it from—

(a) any person by whom it was put in the place from which it was so removed, or

(b) any person convicted of an offence under section 2(1) above in consequence of the putting of the thing in that place.

5. Conditions of the Policy

5.1 Under Section 6 of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, the Council has authority to give notice to a NMVS in contravention of the Policy, requiring removal of the NMVS.

5.2 The Council has authority under Section 6 of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 to remove the NMVS on expiration of the Notice when the owner or responsible person fails to comply with the requirements of the notice.

5.3 In respect of the above, the policy holds the following conditions:

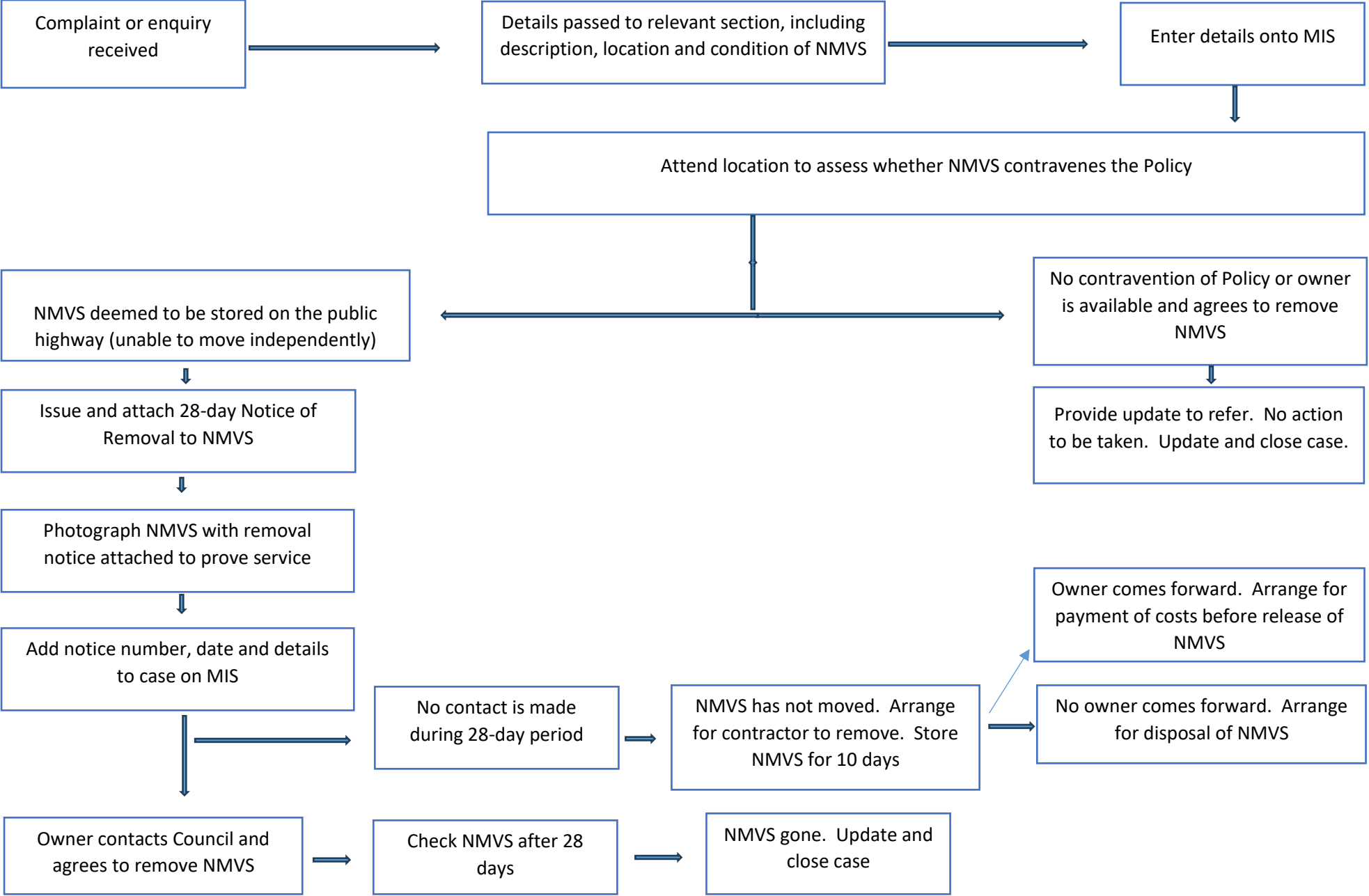
- i. Persons must provide evidence of ownership before a NMVS will be returned. This can be in the form of:
 - Caravan Registration & Identification Scheme (CRiS) document
 - Insurance document
 - Purchase invoice or receipt
 - Any other official form of ownership that links the NMVS to the person claiming to be the owner.

5.4 After 10 days' storage of a removed NMVS and either (a) no contact from the owner and/or (b) failure to reimburse the Council for removal and storage costs, the Council has no further obligation to store the NVMS. The NVMS may then be destroyed.

5.5 A NMVS can be required to be removed from the public highway notwithstanding that it is attached to a motorised vehicle.

6 Disclaimer

6.1 Provided the policy and procedures have been followed correctly, the Council shall not be responsible for compensating any person or persons following the destruction of a NMVS and its contents.



Example of Non-Motor vehicle or structure (NVMS) which can be removed from the highway



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Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Mandy Fathers	
Date of assessment: 13.05.2024	Telephone: 01285 623571 Email: mandy.fathers@cotswold.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Storage on Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

To implement a new policy in respect of the removal of non-motor vehicles

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

Section(s) 143, 320 and 321 of the Highways Act 1980
--

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Local Authority policies
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

N/A

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

N/A

If NO please outline any planned activities

N/A

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	✓
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of different age groups, but it is not specific to age	
Age – Old People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all ages	
Disability			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability	
Sex – Male			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Sex – Female			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race	
Religion or Belief			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion	

Sexual Orientation			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation	
Gender Reassignment			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or on maternity, but it is not specific to this group	
Geographical impacts on one area			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of the Cotswold district	
Other Groups			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all other groups that are not mentioned	
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of the Cotswold district	

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Implement Policy	Philip Measures	Kevin Lee	Following council call-in procedures

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

n/a

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where a negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Mandy Fathers	Date:	13.05.24
Line Manager:	<i>Signature redacted</i>	Date:	30.5.24
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	Cheryl Sloan	Date:	30/05/24

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Agenda Item 12



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY 2024 - 2029
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Evemy – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing – Assistant Director for Resident Services Email: jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk
Report Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To present an updated Long Term Empty Property Strategy to support the management of long-term empty properties within Cotswold district
Annexes	Annex A – Long Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 – 2029 Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: I. Approve the implementation of the Long-Term Empty Property Strategy for 2024 - 2025
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Interim Assistant Director, Interim Managing Director (Publica)



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This strategy states the objectives Cotswold District Council has set itself to bring as many long-term empty properties back into occupation as is practicable.
- 1.2 The Council's intentions are to work with the owners of such properties to initially understand their reasons for keeping them vacant, but then to support them, where possible, in bringing the properties back into use, to allow this unused resource to better serve the communities, mitigate the negative impact they have, and provide an increased opportunity to meet the Councils housing needs.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (the Act) requires local authorities to consider housing conditions within their district, with a view to determining what action to take under their duties and powers to deal with housing conditions, including empty properties.
- 2.2 The definition of an empty property under the Act is "a dwelling that has remained vacant for more than six months," although there are exemptions detailed with section 134(6) of the Act.
- 2.3 There is no legal requirement for a local authority to have a Long-Term Empty Property strategy, but it is good practise to have one and helps to give clarity, direction and focus to the issue of dealing with empty homes.
- 2.4 The adopted Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2031 describes housing provision as critically important and sets out ambition to provide 9,671 homes throughout the plan period. The plan describes the importance of protecting the existing stock in meeting the housing needs of our residents.
- 2.5 Long-term empty homes are known to have a negative influence on a community, both in relation to the removal of a potential housing opportunity, but also, in that they tend to attract an element of anti-social behaviour. In some cases, the empty home is neglected further such that they become a local nuisance, sometimes becoming an eyesore, or needing the intervention of the council to mitigate a nuisance, all of which contributed to the negative impact they have on the local community. It is the latter group that tends to lead to the greatest number of complaints to the council, usually in relation to complaints about over-grown gardens the presence of household waste or pests, or that they have become insecure and a venue for attracting crime.
- 2.6 Whilst there are enforcement powers available and used by the council to deal with certain matters associated with long-term empty homes, the most effective way of bringing them into reoccupation does tend to be through working with owners, and trying to first understand why the home is vacant, and then trying to reduce the barriers so that the home can be reoccupied.



3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 At the end of March 2024 Cotswold District had 864 properties classed as long-term empty. This figure represents just over 1% of its total council tax dwelling base, which is currently set at 45,782.
- 3.2 The purpose of this strategy is to set out the four key objectives that the council aim to deliver on for the Long-Term Empty Property Strategy as detailed within Annex A of this report:
- 1) To gather relevant, accurate and current information about empty homes in the district.
 - 2) To provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owner
 - 3) To raise awareness of empty homes in the district and promote the strategy.
 - 4) To reduce the number of empty homes and return empty homes back into use, through all available and appropriate means.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This strategy outlines the intentions of the Council to work to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in the district, and although it refers to legal obligations under specific legislation, it does not directly identify or impose any additional financial obligations on the Council.
- 4.2 The Council has a share of 0.81 FTE of an officer to facilitate the work required to fulfil the objectives of this strategy.
- 4.3 Due to the recognised negative impact some long-term empty homes have on their communities, regulatory services of the Council may be required to intervene to mitigate the worst of these effects. This intervention costs the Council so any reduction in the number of long-term empty homes is likely to reduce this demand, thus reducing the costs to those regulatory services. This would be an indirect benefit of implementing this strategy, although one which would be difficult to financially quantify.
- 4.4 The Council may see a reduction in Council Tax income as long-term empty properties which are currently charged a Council Tax premium, and upon reoccupation this would be lost, but as a number of long-term empty homes also carry a charge owed to the Council for various reasons, this charge is likely to be either repaid, or written off as part of the sale, if it is deemed non-recoverable.



5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Whilst there is no statutory provision requiring the Council to have or adopt a Long-Term Empty Strategy, the Government has set out the principles encouraging Councils to identify and then reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their district.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** This strategy seeks to define how the Council will meet the challenges posed locally by long-term empty homes, especially with respect to trying to bring as many as practicable back into occupancy. Although this has been highlighted as a desirable obligation the Council should strive for, producing and adopting a strategy is not a legal requirement.
- 6.2** Whether long-term empty homes cause a local nuisance or not is not influenced by this strategy, and similarly, when such a home does pose a potential breach of a statute, for example, provide harbourage to rats, or allows for the accumulation of household waste even if dumped by someone else, these breaches remain actionable by the regulatory service authorised to act.
- 6.3** Long-term empty homes, even where there is no statutory detriment to the area are known to have a negative impact on a neighbourhood. Whilst this is unlikely to pose a direct impact on the Council, it can be a source of dissatisfaction and complaint by local residents, and risk lowering the acceptable standards otherwise present in the community.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** An equalities impact assessment has been completed that shows no negative impact on those who shared a protected characteristic and those who do not.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Creating homes from empty properties saves substantial amounts of material compared to building new homes, minimises the amount of land used for development and avoids wasting embedded carbon; helping to combat climate change.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS



- 9.1** The Council could decide not to approve the updated Long-Term Empty Property Strategy; however, this would not be recommended as it could fail to demonstrate a commitment to managing and reducing empty homes within the district.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** None

(END)

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LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY 2024 - 2029

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This strategy describes the council's intentions to reduce the number of empty homes in the district and bring them back into use.
- 1.2 Returning empty homes back into use not only helps to meet housing needs but can also reduce problems associated with vacant properties. Empty homes can adversely affect the lives of people in the vicinity, can be a magnet for anti-social behaviour and an unnecessary drain on public services.
- 1.3 The council is committed to taking action to reduce the number of empty homes in the area by taking a proactive approach in supporting owners to help return their empty properties back into use or to redevelop them. A coordinated and sustainable approach can deliver an increase in housing supply, improve housing standards, and reduce the number of empty homes.

2. The National Context

- 2.1 The Government classes properties that have been empty for longer than 6 months as long-term empty. It is recommended that local authorities have an empty homes strategy for their area, with the aspiration to reduce the number of long-term empty homes.
- 2.2 Government policy to incentivise the reoccupation of long-term empty homes allows local authorities to vary the amount of council tax payable on some empty homes, with the option of imposing an 'empty homes premium.'
- 2.3 Despite this, long term empties are now at their highest level. The most recent Government statistics (November 2023) report 261,189 long term empty homes in England, representing a rise of 12,556 compared to 2022, up by 5% annually and 16% since before the pandemic in 2019.

3. The Local Context

- 3.1 The adopted Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2031 describes housing provision as critically important and sets out ambition to provide 9,671 homes throughout the plan period. The plan describes the importance of protecting the existing stock in meeting the housing needs of our residents.
- 3.2 Any empty property can be a problem, and therefore all owners of long-term empty properties will be contacted to encourage the return to use. Many long-term empty homes will be returned to use without continued council intervention. Therefore the focus of more significant work will generally be on those properties that have been empty for more than two years or have received specific complaints. These longer-term empty homes cause most concern as they are more likely to remain empty for longer without intervention and are also more likely to be an increasing source of blight and complaint.
- 3.3 The Council Tax database is used to determine the number of empty homes in Cotswold district. At the end of July 2024 there was registered 864 long-term empty properties which represents less than 1% of all domestic properties in the district, of which 446 were classed as being empty in excess of 2 years. 53% of these were within the towns of Stow on the

Wold and Cirencester; with 60% of those properties being purpose-built retirement homes..

4. Why Homes are Empty

4.1 For the purposes of this strategy the term 'empty property' is taken to be a dwelling which is unoccupied and without furniture.

4.2 There are two main types of empty residential properties:

- 1) Transactional empty properties; and,
- 2) Long-term empty properties

4.3 Homes that have been recorded as empty for more than 6 months are classified as long-term empty by the Council. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) classes problematic empty properties as those that are inactive in the housing market and have been empty for more than 6 months. Transactional empty properties are generally up to 6 months, usually due to a change in tenant or ownership and are part of the normal cycle of people moving to a new house; although they may be empty for longer should they be subject to major renovations works.

4.4 A property does not have to be used all the time to be classed as occupied. For example, if it is:

- A second home or holiday home
- A property which is part of a wider regeneration programme and could be in the process of being developed or marked for demolition
- A property which has pending planning permission, could be waiting refurbishments, or could be waiting for new occupant to move in
- A property where the owner is living elsewhere to provide or receive personal care.

4.5 There are many reasons for properties being left empty. Some are easily categorised, and other circumstances are more complex with owners having their own individual reasons for keeping their property empty. Some of the most common barriers that exist for owners of long-term empty properties are preventing them from returning their property back into use include:

- Issues with inheritance and/or delays with probate
- Lack of finance to carry out necessary repairs and/or refurbishment
- Perceived problems associated with letting of properties
- Owner unwilling to bring the property back into use
- Sentimental attachment to the property
- Lack of decision as to whether to sell or rent the property
- The owners are not local and are uncontactable, therefore effectively abandoning the property

- Part of a larger portfolio of properties, where one empty property does not affect their overall income.

5. Challenges Presented by Empty Homes.

- 5.1 Dealing with an empty home is not always straightforward. A property may be used as a second home, and so not occupied on a permanent basis, but is in use. It may be that non-residential space such as that often found above shops is being used for storage or other business-related matters and although not immediately obvious it is in use.
- 5.2 There may be properties awaiting planning permissions and work is unable to commence whilst this is being sought. A number of these may include specialist permissions if they are a Listed Building or located in a Conservation Area.
- 5.3 Ownership Issues: A property may be owned by a number of different people or companies. The property may be subject to legal proceedings such as probate, divorce settlements, proceeds of crime restrictions or other legal restrictions.
- 5.4 Land Registry Issues: Although it is now compulsory in England to register any property which changes ownership or has a mortgage taken out against it for the first time, properties which have not changed ownership since before this requirement may not be registered with the Land Registry and information regarding the property will not be available from this source.
- 5.5 Absentee Owner: It may not be immediately evident who the owner of a property is or where they are, as they may have moved away with little information available to trace them.
- 5.6 Intentionally Vacant: Some properties are deliberately kept empty by the owner for specific reasons such as for their children when they leave home or elderly relatives who are in care. Some are kept empty until the owner feels the housing market is suitable to sell the property at the price they want. Others feel unwilling to sell due to emotional/past family connections with the property. Some owners are reluctant to engage with the Council and believe that as the property is privately owned the Council does not have the right to require action to return it to use. They may be unaware, or have no concern for, the effect the property has on the local area and surrounding properties. These are properties which are likely to be left empty for many years and fall into disrepair.

6. Why Empty Homes Matter

- 6.1 The ambition of the adopted Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2031 to provide 9,671 homes over the plan period is challenging. High numbers of un-occupied homes are damaging when offset against this number. The plan also has a target of achieving 157 homes for the affordable sector annually. In addition to increasing the availability of housing in the district, tackling long term empty homes could also provide benefits for housing affordability.

- 6.1 Empty properties are a wasted resource, both for the community and the owner. The Council receives complaints about empty properties, including those that have been neglected or fallen into disrepair, from local people who rightly object to unsightly disused properties. For properties in this state, there are implications for the Council's Environmental Protection and Planning Enforcement Teams that have to use staff time and other resources to intervene to deal with pests, dilapidation, overgrown gardens, damage to neighbouring properties and other such issues.
- 6.2 For owners leaving a property empty can become costly and be a source of unnecessary anxiety.
- 6.3 There is an increased risk of vandalism and crime, and the property can be difficult to insure, which could result in high repair costs or even mean a complete loss of asset.
- 6.4 Even the general deterioration of an unoccupied property will result in costs, including those due to works necessary to maintain it even in its vacant state, as well as to enable the property to be brought back up to suitable living standards.
- 6.5 For the local community empty homes can have a direct impact on adjoining properties through issues such as damp and structural problems. Alongside this, unsightly empty homes can have a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood, affecting neighbouring house prices and pose an attraction for local crime, including vandalism, breaking into the property for various reasons, and can contribute to a lack of pride in the area.

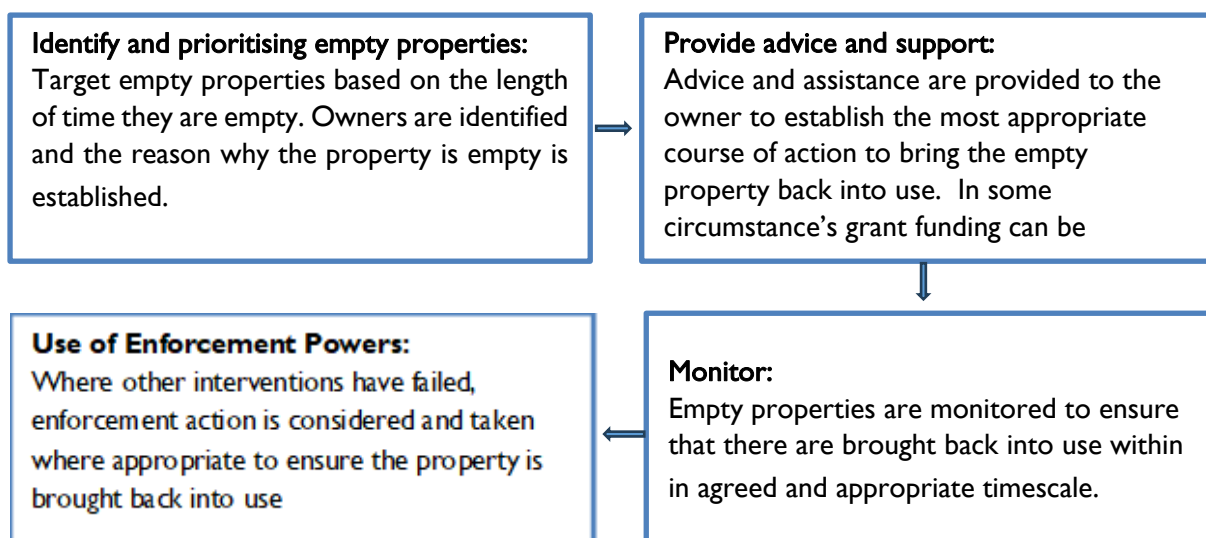
7 Opportunities from Empty Homes

- 7.1 By renting or selling the property to allow occupation not only are the above issues resolved, but whilst not necessarily problem-free, there is the added advantage of gaining regular rental income or the capital from the sale of the property, and a beneficial impact on local housing needs.
- 7.2 Returning empty homes into occupation can help eliminate many of these issues and ensure that house prices in the immediate vicinity are protected from preventable reductions. Improving an area can also encourage investment in the local economy and a return of any lost pride in the community created by empty homes.
- 7.3 Empty homes returned to residential use increase the availability of homes. Instead of being a source of concern these homes can be transformed from a wasted resource into a home for an individual or family in housing need. There are approximately 1444 households on the waiting list for social housing. The utilisation of empty homes could prevent some of these people from facing issues such as homelessness or overcrowding or provide a first home for a local person and/or family.

8. Our Approach to Empty Homes

- 8.1 The council will work to prevent properties becoming empty over the long term by responding to enquiries about such properties from the public, undertaking media campaigns in the local press and other social media platforms as well as promotions of its work on the council website.
- 8.2 Where properties do become empty, the council will try and locate owners and starting with an informal approach will work with them cooperatively in an attempt to bring properties back into use. Generally this will take the form of offering advice and guidance. Where this is not successful, the council will move onto enforcement against the owner to require the property be brought back into use.

The Council's approach to tackling empty properties is summarised as follows:



- 8.3 The council follows an investigation process in order to trace owners of empty properties with a view to encouraging them to bring properties back into use. However, in some circumstances it is not always possible to identify or make contact with owners, or owners are reluctant or unable to bring properties back into use.
- 8.4 Under these circumstances, or if there is an imminent risk to health and safety, the council will consider a number of enforcement options. The options available include, but are not limited to: -
- **Enforced Sale** – Allows the council to force the sale of a property to recover debts owed to the council that are registered as a charge on the property.
 - **Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)** – Enables the council to secure occupation and responsible management of some privately owned houses and flats that have been empty for two or more years.

- **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)** – Enables the council to purchase and sell an empty property for the purpose of providing housing accommodation or facilities connected to housing accommodation.

8.5 A summary of the various enforcement powers that are available to the council in respect of property aesthetics. Maintenance and addressing long-term empty concerns are described in Annex A.

9. Aims, Objectives and Approach to Tackling Empty Homes

9.1 The over-riding aim of this strategy is to bring empty homes back into use and tackle the issues posed by those that are long term vacant, are problematic or could help to meet some of the local housing need.

9.2 The starting point for any intervention will be to work with the property owner where possible. Each empty home is different and there are many reasons why they become empty. However, despite these, it is also important to recognise that an empty home is a potential blight on the community and wasted resource.

9.3 In order to achieve the aims this strategy focusses on four objectives:

- 1) To gather relevant, accurate and current information about empty homes in the district.
- 2) To provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owner
- 3) To raise awareness of empty homes in the district and promote the strategy.
- 4) To reduce the number of empty homes and return empty homes back into use, through all available and appropriate means.

9.4 Table I below shows the key actions that will be taken to implement the objectives of this strategy.

Objective I: To gather relevant, accurate and current information about empty homes		
Actions	Timescales	Responsible officer/team
Maintain an empty property database containing information provided by council tax, environmental protection, and development management	Continuous	Revenues Team
Continue to carry out reviews of empty properties using council tax	Annually	Revenues Team

data and information from questionnaires sent to all owners of known empty properties about the occupancy status of the properties.		
Map location of reported empty homes	TBC	Revenues Team/GIS Team
Carry out risk assessments on known empty properties and identify for proactive enforcement	On a case-by case basis	Revenues Team/Environmental Protection Team/Legal Team

Objective 2: Provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owner

Actions	Timescales	Responsible officer/team
Produce an updated empty property guide/information leaflet for owners of empty homes	January 2025 and reviewed annually	Revenues Officer/Revenues Manager and Communications Team
Ensure early engagement with owners of empty homes and that engagement is continuous	Case-by-case	Revenues Officers

Objective 3: To raise awareness of empty homes in the district and promote the strategy

Actions	Timescales	Responsible officer/team
Review and update information on the council's website and provide relevant updates via the council's media channels.	As required	Revenues Manager/Communications Team

Run at least one awareness raising campaign to coincide, where possible, with the National Empty Homes week	Annually	Revenues Manager
Objective 4: To reduce the number of empty homes and return empty homes back into use, through all available and appropriate means		
Actions	Timescales	Responsible officer/team
Seek to identify funding to offer financial assistance	Continuous	Revenues Manager
Actively look for any Government initiatives that assist with finances for bringing properties back to use	Continuous	Revenues Manager
Work in partnership with internal departments to ensure delivery of aims	Continuous	Revenues Team, Environmental Health, Development Management, Legal, CFU, Building Control
Continue to review the use of enforcement options for empty homes on a case-by-case basis	As required	Revenues Team, Environmental Health, Development Management, Legal, CFU, Building Control

10. Performance Monitoring and Review

10.1. The purpose of this strategy is to explain the current situation with regard to empty homes both on a national and local basis and to set out the Council's future plans. It is essential that the effectiveness of actions delivered by the implementation of the strategy is closely monitored and reviewed. In order to develop a good system of performance management it is proposed to undertake the following actions: -

- Monitor the number of empty homes brought back into use
- Develop up to date knowledge of best practice through research and liaison

- Monitor and review delivery of actions within the Implementation Plan

Annex A – Enforcement Powers

Problem/Concern	Legislation	Statutory Powers
Dangerous or dilapidated buildings or structures	Building Act 1984 (s77 & s78)	To require the owner to make the property safe (section 77) or enable the Local Authority to take emergency action to make the building safe (Section 78)
	Building Act 1984 (s79)	To require the owner to repair ruinous or dilapidated buildings seriously detrimental to an area
	Housing Act 2004 (part 1)	Under the Housing health and Safety Rating system local authorities can evaluate the potential risks to health and safety arising from deficiencies within properties and take appropriate enforcement action
Unsecured properties (where it poses the risk that it may be entered or suffer vandalism, arson or similar)	Building Act 1984, s78 Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, s29	To allow Local Authority to fence off the property. To require the owner to take steps to secure a property or allow the Local Authority to board it up in an emergency.
Blocked or defective drainage or private sewers	Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 (s35)	To require the owner to address obstructed private sewers.
	Building Act 1984 (s59)	To require the owner to address blocked or defective drainage.
	Public health Act 1961 (s17)	To require the owner to address defective drainage or private sewers.
Vermin (where it is either present or there is a risk of attracting vermin that may detrimentally affect people's health)	Public Health Act 1961 (s34)	To require the owner to remove waste so that vermin is not attracted to the site, destroy any infestation and remove any accumulations prejudicial to health.
	Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 (s4)	
	Public Health Act 1936 (s83)	

	Environmental Protection Act 1990 (s80)	
	Building Act 1984 (s76)	
Unightly land and property affecting the amenity of an area	Public Health Act 1961 (s34)	To require the owner to remove waste from the property (see above)
	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s215)	To require the owner to address unsightly land or the external appearance of a property
	Building Act 1984 (s79)	To require the owner to address unsightly land or the external appearance of a property
Recovery of debts against a property	Law of Property Act 1925 (s101 & s103)	To apply for an order of sale of the property to recover council tax debts or debts secured as a legal charge after work in default carried out
Properties empty for over 2 years and causing nuisance in the community	Housing Act 2004 (s133 – 183)	To apply for an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) to enable the local authority to take over the management of eligible empty properties, to bring them back into use
Long-term empty properties where no traceable owners, or where all efforts to return the property to use have been exhausted	Housing Act 1985 (s17)	To seek to acquire a property under a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)
Anti-Social Behaviour	Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Community Protection Notices	To prevent an owner's persistent, continuing or unreasonable behaviour, having a negative impact on the local community's quality of life.

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Equality and Ruralty Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Mandy Fathers	
Date of assessment: 07.08.24	Telephone: 01285 623571 Email: mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Long-Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 - 2029

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

To present an updated Long Term Empty Property Strategy to support the management of long-term empty properties within the Cotswold district.

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

N/A

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
--------	---	-------------------------------

Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Local Authority policies
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Internal data

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

N/A

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

N/A

If NO please outline any planned activities

N/A

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
-----------------	----------

NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	✓
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of different age groups, but it is not specific to age	
Age – Old People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all ages	
Disability			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability	
Sex – Male			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Sex – Female			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race	
Religion or Belief			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion	
Sexual Orientation			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation	

Gender Reassignment			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or on maternity, but it is not specific to this group	
Geographical impacts on one area		✓		The strategy aims to increase the supply of housing in a sustainable way and tackle the negative impact of empty homes on communities	
Other Groups			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all other groups that are not mentioned	
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of the Cotswold District	

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Implement Strategy	Chris Kent/Joseph Williams	Daisy Ball	Following council call-in procedures

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

n/a

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where a negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Mandy Fathers	Date:	07.08.24
Line Manager:	<i>Signature redacted</i>	Date:	07.08.24
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	<i>Signature redacted</i>	Date:	07.08.2024

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Agenda Item 13



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE PROCESSES REVIEW
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety Email: lisa.spivey@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development Email: Angela.Claridge@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnership Officer Email: Joseph.Walker@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To evaluate the current procedures and practices involved in the determination of Assets of Community Value (ACV). This review aims to assess the efficacy and transparency of the process by which assets are nominated, reviewed, and ultimately listed or rejected as ACVs. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current process, this review seeks to provide actionable insights and recommendations to enhance decision-making, and ensure compliance with legal and policy frameworks, to better serve the interests of the community.
Annexes	Annex A – Asset of Community Value Review
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the recommendations in the annexed review 2. Agree to the proposal to formally notify ward members on validation of Asset of Community Value nominations
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Services • Supporting Communities • Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO



Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Internal Stakeholders with current experience of the Asset of Community Value function, as detailed in Annex A, Appendix 4



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces a review of the Council's Asset of Community Value (ACV) function and summarises the recommendations arising from that exercise.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The processing of Assets of Community Value nominations, also commonly referred to as a Community Right to Bid, is a duty on the Council arising from the Localism Act 2011. The ACV function gives communities the power to nominate local assets (land/property) for inclusion on a list, maintained by the Local Authority. In the event of a proposed disposal, such as a sale, the owners of listed assets are required to give notice to the Local Authority and are subject to a minimum six-week moratorium on sale. The appended review provides a more detailed summary, and links to comprehensive guidance on this function.
- 2.2 Historically, nominations were quite low in volume, but there have been more nominations in recent months, and some more contentious nominations, prompting a review of the function to assess its effectiveness and transparency.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The ACV function was initially managed by the Council's Property Services Team, up until February 2015, when it transferred to the Communities Team, with officers who subsequently transferred to Publica's Insight and Intelligence Team. Since 2021, it has sat in Legal Services.
- 3.2 While the ACV function is designed to deliver community outcomes, it is framed by strict legal requirements, set out in the Localism Act and the ACV regulations. Over the last decade, legal challenges across England to listed decisions and outcomes have created a body of mostly non-binding caselaw, which helps flesh out the statutory requirements.
- 3.3 A review by the Communities and Local Government Committee in 2015 presented a report recommending changes to improve the ACV regime, largely focussed on improving the community outcomes of the restrictions it brings to bear, but to date the ACV regime is largely unaltered since its introduction into law. By necessity, this review is focused on the limited operating room given to the Council, but does briefly note other approaches community groups can take.
- 3.4 This constraint notwithstanding, a review of the caseload, sector practice and interviews with internal stakeholders provides the material to identify some areas for improvement, which are set out in the recommendations below.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS



4.1 The following recommendations are made in the appended report:

- a) Increase awareness and access to information for elected members
- b) Notify Ward Member, upon verification of a nomination, giving them the opportunity to provide further evidence to corroborate the nomination.
- c) Retain officer decision, in consultation with the responsible Cabinet Member.
- d) Publish reports and decisions.
- e) Signpost to external support and resources, such as Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Campaign for Real Ale's advice to community nominations of pubs.
- f) Share land registry registration documents with community nominators.
- g) Dedicated capacity to ensure timeliness. NB A new post has recently been established to deal with this work.
- h) Utilise a Case load management system.

4.2 Recommendation b) has arisen from review of processes and stakeholder experience in the process. While the recommendation has been made independently of the work of the Constitution Working Group, it aligns with the findings of that group in terms of enhancing member involvement and awareness, and emerging recommendations regarding a ward member protocol. The recommendation in this report is to introduce a process to engage with ward members on ACV nominations immediately, but to recognise that this is likely to be made a constitutional requirement in short order. This will help ensure that ACVs are managed appropriately, in line with Council-wide arrangements, rather than subject to a bespoke process for a relatively low volume function.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 As noted above, the Council has limited discretion in respect of ACVs. This is a statutory function, that is expected to meet a number of requirements in its operation. So long as these requirements are met, the Council need not change its approach. However, the changes proposed in the recommendations should improve the effectiveness and transparency of the function.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The ACV function is constrained by legislation, but there are some changes to process which could improve effectiveness and transparency, and reduce some friction in the process.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The new post established to provide capacity to deal with this role will be a shared role within legal services, the cost of the role will be shared with West Oxfordshire District



Council and the Forest of Dean District Council. Cotswold District Council's estimated share of approximately £10,000 will be funded through the existing legal services budget. There are no further direct financial implications from the recommendations in the review. The scope has been limited to the internal processing of nominations. It should be noted that if there is an increase in nominations, this will of course increase the processing burden, but could also increase the Council's exposure to claims for compensation from asset owners, for which the Council is liable.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** A failure to determine a nomination within the statutory timescale could in theory be challenged by judicial review. In practice, officers have managed to mitigate that risk by communication with the nominators and asset owners. A solution which improved case management and re-allocated the work to a dedicated officer would further reduce that risk.
- 8.2** ACV regulation is written to give asset owners opportunity to appeal first to the Council, and subsequently to the First Tier Tribunal. While the review has looked at how to improve process, the intention has been to avoid impacting on the balanced judgement the Council must make.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1** This report focuses on the effective processing of nominations, within a hypothecated existing caseload. Thus the risks are largely limited to the Council's reputation, in terms of the experience of community nominators and asset owners. The intention of the recommendations is to improve this, and to improve members' involvement and confidence in the process. Importantly, one of the recommendations is to enhance the case management, to provide information to enable ongoing assessment and further review of process as required.
- 9.2** Enhanced transparency and member awareness may increase the number of nominations, creating extra workload. The officer role being recruited should provide some resilience to this, versus the status quo.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1** Given the limited scope of the report, it is not anticipated that it will have an equalities impact.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

11.1 Given the limited scope of this report, it is not anticipated that it will have a climate or ecological emergency implication.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None.

(END)

Assets of Community Value Review

Introduction

The ability of communities to nominate assets for inclusion on the Local Authorities Asset of Community Value register was brought into legal effect by the Localism Act 2011. Initially, it was promoted as the 'Community Right to Bid'.

Fuller information about the Asset of Community Value ('ACV') regime is appended to this review document. The Non-Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities attached at Annex 1 provides a useful technical explanation of the formal process, and the House of Commons summary at Annex 2 provides a recent overview and wider context. However, a brief summary is provided below, to introduce the different stages to provide context for the review and recommendations.

Process summary

The ACV regime gives communities the power to nominate local assets (land/property) for inclusion on a list, maintained by the Local Authority (district or unitary). Community nominations can be submitted by various constituted groups, explored by regulation and guidance, including local charities and parish councils, or by a non-constituted group of local people, where 21 or more local electors sign up to support a nomination. Local Authorities are not empowered to nominate assets themselves.

Local Authorities are expected to verify nominations and reach a determination on whether the nomination meets the statutory tests within an 8-week period. Within this period they are required to notify the asset owner, occupier of other parties with an ownership interest.

Assets can be nominated on the basis of either current use, or use in the recent past:

- a) an actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and;
- b) it is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. (Section 88(1) Localism Act 2011)

Section 88(2) of the Act extends this definition to land which has furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community in the recent past, and which it is realistic to consider will do so again during the next five years.

The determination should be based principally on the content of the community nomination. There is an onus on Local Authority to explore the case made, but it is also entitled to use other information it is privy to, for example content of a planning application, representations from assets owners.

The Asset owner is entitled to request a review of the Local Authority's initial determination. There is no right of review for the nominator, but the same nominator or another party can renominate. Beyond these stages, legal review may be sought through the First Tier Tribunal.

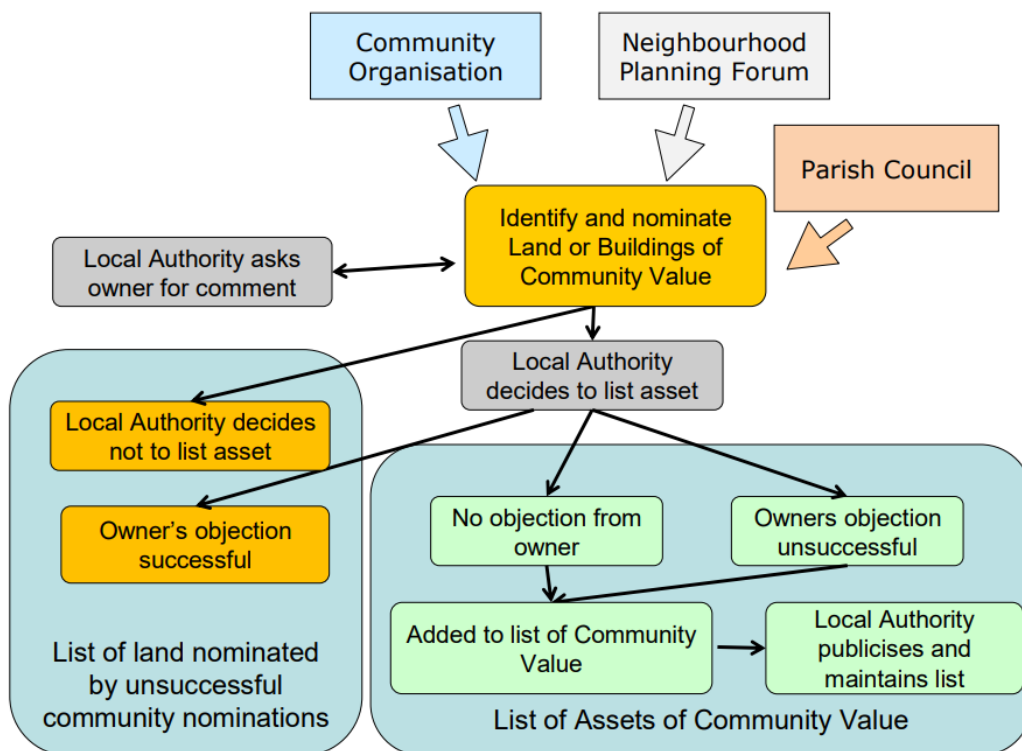


Diagram 1: Listed process, taken from the DCLG Non-Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The effect of listing is to create a restriction on the legal title, which prevents the asset being sold immediately on the open market. Instead, the owner must inform the Local Authority, which commences a six-week moratorium, during which period a qualifying community group is able to express an interest in purchasing the asset. It is this part of the procedure that explains the alternative title for this power of ‘Community Right to Bid’.

Should such an interest be put forward, a full moratorium for the remainder of six months from the initial notice date is implemented, during which period the owner is only able to sell to a qualifying community group. It is crucial to note that the power only goes as far as to create this moratorium period – it does not oblige the asset owner to sell, nor to accept a community bid.

Should no qualifying group submit an interest in acquiring the asset during the interim moratorium, or the asset owner does not sell during the full six-month period, the owner is able to sell on the open market to any interested party thereafter, during the remainder of an 18-month period from the notification to Council. Once this period expires, they would have to re notify the Council, to re-run the moratorium period.

It should be noted that there are a number of exemptions to the above process, not limited to unusual circumstances. The sale of business premises as a going concern is likely to be one of the most common, particularly for public houses, but there are also exemptions around financial and personal circumstances, which may occur relatively frequently, given that nominated assets are often put forward where the continuity of service is threatened by other circumstances.

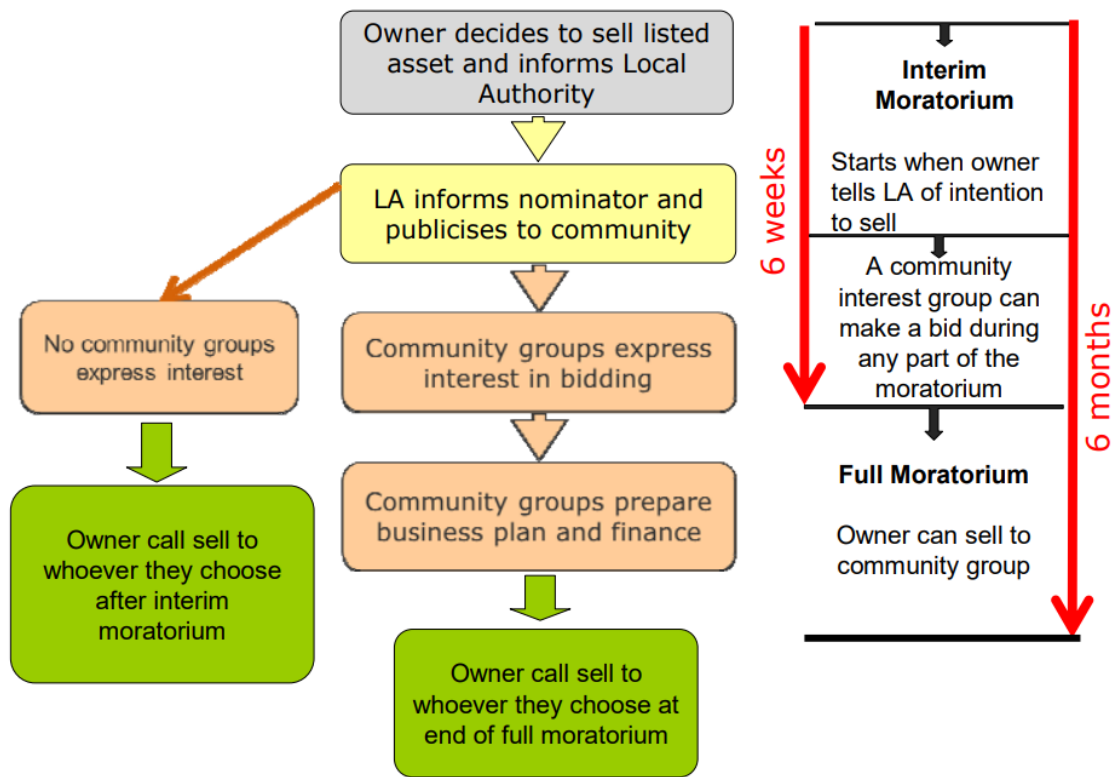


Diagram 2: Moratorium Arrangements, taken from DCLG Non-Statutory Advice for Local Authorities

Community groups, if they have the resources, are of course able to seek to acquire community assets on the open market. Without the ACV regime, there is no defined ‘window of time’ for this, but there are plenty of examples of this happening – indeed a good number of case studies of community asset transfer fall into this category – from trailblazer community owned pubs to community halls. There is a risk that the implementation of a legal restriction disincentives friendly negotiation – a common refrain from asset owners is that the community have not opened discussion prior to nomination. The desired outcome of a community purchasing an asset may be more straightforwardly achieved through direct negotiation with the owner to purchase the asset without resort to ACV nomination.

There are various sources of funding that communities may be able to draw upon to seek to purchase community assets. Depending on the nature and future operation of the asset, there may be external grants, from the National Lottery, more local trusts and foundations and potentially the Council. For community assets that may be trading entities, community share offers are common. Currently there is a national grant offer under the Community Asset Transfer grant.

Communities may also seek to protect community assets through protecting the specific land use. Many neighbourhood plans include community facility policies which seek to provide additional certainty of protection to the Local Plan policy protecting such assets (Policy INF2).

Research

There is no comprehensive caseload management system to provide a ready overview of the approach across the three Councils served by the shared Legal Service, to understand caseload, or service delivery metrics. Each Council is required to publish a list of Assets of Community Value and of Unsuccessful Nominations. However, in absence of single source of data on historical listings, current listed and failed nominations there is limited local data to see the full picture over time. Annex 2a provides a picture of current listings across the three partner Councils currently using the same shared Legal service, with unsuccessful nominations at Annex 2b. Given the relatively low count of nominated assets within Cotswold District, using the wider evidence base across three Councils may offer some learning.

This data has been supplemented with qualitative data from a series of Internal Stakeholder Interviews, attached at Annex 4.

While there has been no review by central government, there is a body of experience from Local Authority practice and from legal challenges through the First Tier Tribunal and beyond. This has provided direction to the Council's procedures and decision-making and has also informed the recommendations of this review – see for example Annex 5.

Listings

Area	Total	Pubs	%	Open Spaces	%2	Other	%3
CDC only	13	5	38.5%	6	46.2%	2	15.4%
CDC, WODC, FODDC	37	15	40.5%	12	32.4%	10	27.0%

The proportion of public houses listed across Cotswold and across the three councils is reasonably consistent, and a high proportion of the whole. A time series view of the data would indicate similar. There is more variation in terms of nominated open spaces – with relatively few open spaces nominated in Forest of Dean, and variation around 'other'. A degree of variation across these different areas is hardly surprising – given the different localities, and the use of a 'catch-all' third category - the key learning point is the number of pubs and open spaces.

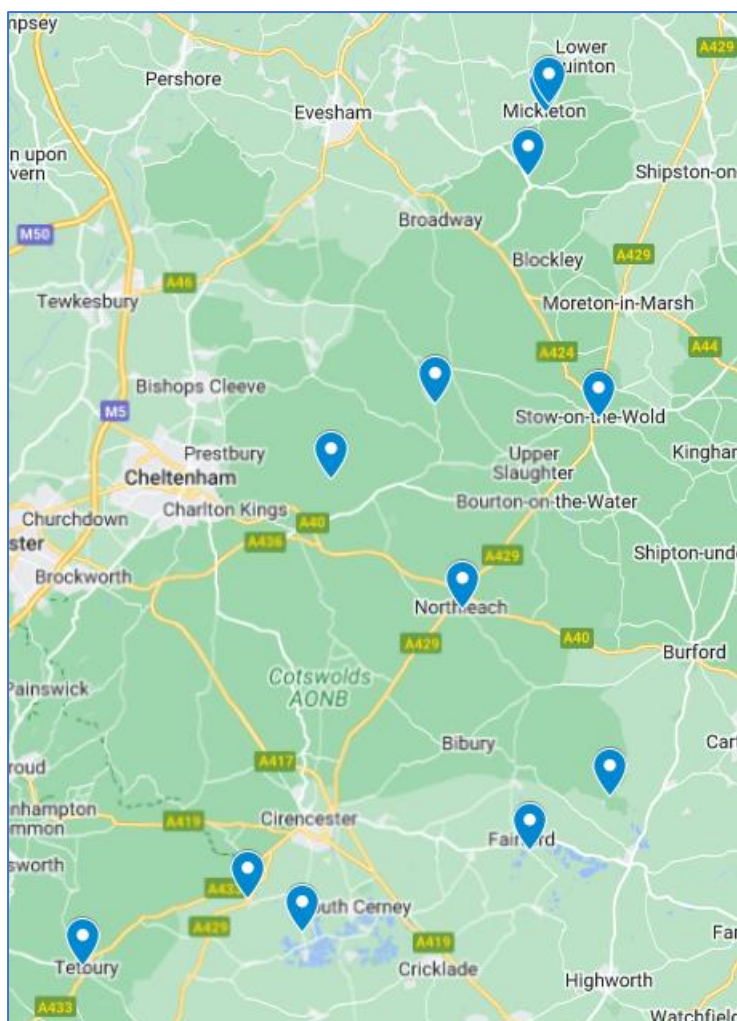


Diagram 3: Location of current listings

The map above plots the approximate locations of listed assets. Given the relatively low absolute number, the distribution is inevitably sparse. It does not suggest any particular concentration of activity.

Unsuccessful nominations

Area	Total	Pubs	%	Open Spaces	%2	Other	%3
CDC only	5	3	60.0%	0	0.0%	2	40.0%
CDC, WODC, FODDC	18	8	44.4%	1	5.6%	9	50.0%

Given the lower count for unsuccessful nominations, this data is less useful. Moreover, it does include repeat nominations data. Read with the listings data, there has been a wider range of asset types nominated in the other two Council areas, increasing the diversity of assets listed, but also the number that have been unsuccessful.

Process and practice

Each nomination will be for a specific asset, by a specific nominator. Often, it will be the sole nomination a given party makes, and perhaps the only asset that will be owned by a specific asset owner. This makes it incredibly difficult to compare cases – each nomination will be considered on its own merits, subject to the quality of the submission made by the community nominator, and any counter argument from the property owner. The function and stated community value of some assets will be clearer; the owner's circumstances and plans will vary. Parties other than the Council are unlikely to have had broader experience of the ACV regime to benchmark their experience. However, given the preponderance of nominations of pubs and open spaces, the Council should seek to ensure some consistency within these uses.

The current approach is to endeavour to provide equity of experience through following the formal process, and standardised approaches where there is a degree of discretion: for example, using a nomination form to try to elicit the same full picture from nominators. That said, given the complexity of circumstances, a one size fits all process would risk being dogmatic, at cost to quality of decision making. Feedback from Internal Stakeholders indicates that due to limited capacity it has been challenging to run a consistent process within a consistent timeframe.

At Cotswold to date there has only been one decision taken forward for internal review, no decisions that have gone forward to the First Tier Tribunal. Noting that only the Asset Owner has the legal recourse to Internal Review, there have been few repeat nominations. While this review has been prompted by concerns over one particular nomination, this would suggest that decisions are generally viewed, even by interested parties, to be robust.

When it comes to decision making, there are variations in practice across English Local Authorities. Some load the system a little differently, giving less opportunity to the Asset owner in the first instance, given their right to internal review. While this approach could be viewed positively by Community nominators, it has significant drawbacks. First, one of equity: Asset owners may be large corporate entities – for example so called 'pubcos' running a portfolio of public houses, but could equally be owner-operators of independent local businesses or indeed local charities or community organisations themselves without easy access to expert advice. Given that profile, it is right that the Council deals with an even hand, and protects its reputation as a fair decision maker. Recent case law finds that 'Under regulation 6(c), the nominator is required to provide its: "...reasons for thinking that the responsible authority should conclude that the land is of community value". [...] that does place an onus on the local authority to explore those reasons and to decide whether it has been provided with sufficient evidence of the community value to meet the requirements ...'(Waqas Shahid Ali, Samina Shahid Ali v Rother District Council).

Moreover, such an approach risks exhausting the first route of appeal quickly, increasing the risk of formal legal process – and costs - through the First Tier Tribunal.

There is also a wide range of different services which host this function across local authorities – Governance, Planning Policy, Communities, Legal Services, Property.

Member involvement.

While determination of ACV nominations is a Council responsibility, the regulations are largely silent on the role of elected members. While this may be a reflection on the level of prescription in process and decision making, it does not read that well across into other local authority functions, eg Planning, where the role of members is defined.

There is plenty of information on-line, for example through the MyCommunity website, CAMRA and of course the Council's own website which explains the process, (<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/support-for-communities/community-right-to-bid/>). Elected members, through their links with parish councils and local groups, will often signpost to the ACV power, or be approached by groups seeking advice of support on how to nominate. It would therefore be helpful to clearly delineate the ward councillor's role in this process – an objective borne out by conversation with internal stakeholders.

On at least two occasions – one at WODC and one at CDC – a nominated asset was owned by an elected Councillor. It is also likely that ward councillors, either personally or through their ward role will be acquainted with people involved with the nomination or the asset owner. This suggests two things: first, that such interests should be declared, especially in so far as they might have any bearing on decisions, and second, that ward councillors should be notified, to ensure that any such interests can be identified and recorded.

Noting that the Council is able to use its corporate intelligence in determining nominations, the ward member may well be aware of the broader context of nominations, for example planning applications, emerging neighbourhood plans, other community projects. Notifying the ward councillor presents an opportunity to draw on Council knowledge or activity unknown to the processing officer/officers.

Across Local Authorities, there is some divergence of practice in decision making. The regulations are not explicit about the process for the decision itself but require that the internal review is heard by an officer. This leads to a strong line of argument that the decision-maker in the first instance should also be an officer, rather than have member decisions that may be overturned on officer review. The requirement that the review is determined by an officer is arguably reflective of a view by the legislators that this should be a strict technical decision – a matter of judgement on a statutory test, and not a decision to reflect the policy of the Council. This is borne out by First Tier Tribunal Hearings.

An additional consideration is one of timely decision making. If the decision were taken by a Cabinet member or Cabinet, the decision would need to be appropriately published in advance and notified to Overview and Scrutiny, and often would need to be held back to the next agreed meeting, making it challenging to reach decision within the 8-week determination period. Practice at Cotswold is that the initial officer decision is in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, providing an opportunity for input whilst recognising the direction provided by the legislation.

Recommendations

- a) Increase awareness and access to information for members: ACVs could be picked up through member inductions and the regular member briefing, backed up by information on the member's portal. Members' involvement will be intermittent, so it is important to provide an overview and ready-to-access information.
- b) Notify Ward Member, upon verification of a nomination, giving them the opportunity to provide further evidence to corroborate the nomination. See for example, Annex 6 - Historical decision criteria from WODC, dating back to 2020. The legislation and guidance is silent, but it is established that local authorities are entitled to make a determination based on their corporate knowledge, rather than being wholly reliant on the case presented/rebuffed by the nominator and asset owner. Ward members' local knowledge should round out the picture presented by the interested parties, and alert them to the possibility of contact from the nominator or asset owner.
- c) Retain officer decision, in consultation with the responsible Cabinet Member. As noted in the body of the review above, the process is geared towards an officer decision. Cabinet member consultation ensures a degree of political oversight, and a sounding board for decisions which, whilst confined to specific legal tests, will often require the exercise of judgement.
- d) Publish reports and decisions. Determinations are reached through a robust and systematic process, akin to other Council determinations which are published so proactive publication should have little or no impact on workload. Decisions are shared with interested parties already, but can be - and have been - requested through FOI. Although not required, this is recommended as good practice which will enhance transparency and trust.
- e) As covered above, CDC is required to administer this process without preference to either the owner or nominator. However, through its corporate priorities, CDC supports the retention of assets and services that underpin the wellbeing of residents. Trying to deliver on these two aspects through one service may leave CDC exposed to further review and legal challenge. The processing officer, with a duty to be equitable to the nominator and asset owner, is not well placed to provide more direction to the nominator to enhance their case. A recommendation therefore is to clearly differentiate the roles of CDC as impartial administrator of process and as animator of community action with an interest in the retention of important local services. The webpages could also direct to external support, such as the community capacity building provided by GRCC, and organisations such as CAMRA and Plunkett.

As an exception rather than a rule, some LAs have developed local guidance or policy to ensure consistency of judgement (see Annex 7, Wokingham Guidance). Given the deliberate omission of hard detail in the regulation (e.g. no definition of 'recent past') there is legal risk in trying to create local rules— but additional direction may be helpful. A compromise may be to signpost to external resources, such as CAMRA's advice to community nominations of pubs (annex CAMRA): such a resource provides direction and advice, while mitigating the risk of the authority giving challengeable advice.

- f) Verification. While the legislation does not clearly create a window for nominations to be verified, this is a common-sense necessity: processes cannot be triggered with inadequate information. However, the due diligence approach currently being used may be causing undue delay and work for community nominators. Nominators are asked to provide a copy of the land registry documentation, and confirm the land ownership, yet the Council as part of its process will be downloading the same documentation, to ensure the latest version is used. This may well be unnecessary duplication, but removing this requirement treads the line between processing and supporting nominations.
- g) Capacity. The statute gives the Local Authority an 8-week period to determine a nomination. The process should therefore be designed and, crucially, resourced to complete within that period. Any delays tend to create follow-up enquiries, and increase the risk of challenge to Council decisions, thereby increasing the workload. Similarly, efforts to catch up on earlier delays may mean that decision-makers have less notice of decisions. A new post has been established to deal with this work. This post should provide the capacity to deal with this work consistently and in a timely fashion.
- h) Case load management system. Up until recently, there has not been systematic caseload management across the Councils. Each Council is required to publish listed assets and unsuccessful nominations, but it appears there has not been a 'behind the scenes' case management system. A consequence of this is that currently expired listings remain on the webpage. A case management system would help to address this, and moreover could collect data to enable an overview of other issues, such as the processing time for individual nominations. Without access to such data, senior managers and elected members have limited information to understand the overall operation of the regime and are limited to reviewing case by case. As the challenge in this work area is complexity rather than volume, this could probably be managed simply through Excel, rather than requiring a specific caseload tool – depending on the resources that might be already in place in any receiving service. A key task for the new post will be to develop an effective system to manage existing listings and nominations.

Appendices and links

[Appendix 1 Community Right to Bid Non-Statutory guidance for Local Authorities](#)

[Appendix 2 House of Commons Library](#)

Appendix 3 Listing Data:

- a) [Listings](#)
- b) [Unsuccessful nominations](#)

[Appendix 4 Interviews with Internal Stakeholders](#)

[Appendix 5 Assets of Community Value Guide – review of Caselaw and practice, Christopher Cant](#)

[Appendix 6 -Historical decision criteria from WODC, to illustrate how Ward Member contributions might be used](#)

[Appendix 7 Wokingham Guidance](#)

Recent caselaw re public house listing

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/property/313-property-features/55650-defending-decisions-on-assets-of-community-value>

<https://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/format.cgi?doc=/uk/cases/UKFTT/GRC/2022/495.html&query=Waqas+Shahid+Ali.+Sami+na+Shahid+Ali+v+Rother+District+Council>

Agenda Item 14



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	UPDATED MENOPAUSE POLICY & PROCEDURE
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Cllr Claire Bloomer, Cabinet Member for Cost of Living and Inclusion Email: claire.bloomer@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge – Director of Governance & Development Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Angela Claridge – Director of Governance & Development Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek members' approval to adopt the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure as shown in Appendix A.
Annexes	Annex A - Current Menopause Policy & Procedure with proposed amendments in red type.
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure for implementation. 2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with Cabinet Member for the Cost of Living and Inclusion to make subsequent amendments that may be necessary in line with legal changes and best practice.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cabinet Member for Cost of Living & Inclusion, Publica's HR Team and Local Management Team.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 12 September 2023, agreed a suite of updated employment policies and procedures, including the Menopause Policy & Procedure. A review has been undertaken of this policy with recommended updates to reflect best practice and coincide with Menopause Awareness Month.
- 1.2 World Menopause Day is held each year on 18 October to raise awareness, break the stigma and highlight the support available for improving health and wellbeing for those experiencing menopause.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cotswold District Council wants to support workforce wellbeing at every stage in life. With a predominantly female workforce, many of today's employees will be working through the perimenopause and menopause and managing the symptoms at work.
- 2.2 Many people feel uncomfortable talking about the perimenopause and menopause – which means that some suffer in silence while experiencing a wide range of symptoms that can affect their physical as well as mental health. It's time to start viewing this as a workplace issue that we all have a role in supporting.
- 2.3 The purposes of this Policy & Procedure and accompanying support, are to encourage and support colleagues to talk more about the perimenopause and menopause – for women experiencing symptoms to feel they can ask for the help needed, for managers to have the knowledge and confidence to know what to do if required to support a colleague through this time, and to give all colleagues, whatever gender, information of where to go for further help in the event that you or those you live or work with are experiencing the transition.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 Adopting a stand-alone Menopause Policy & Procedure last year confirmed the organisation's commitment to seeing the menopause as a workplace issue. A review of that Policy & Procedure recommends the following changes:

Heading	Changes and Key points
I. New heading added "What is Menopause"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details added on different stages of menopause – Perimenopause, Menopause and Postmenopause• Added that Symptoms can last up to 12 years• Added the importance of avoiding assumptions about genders experiencing menopause.• Added that menopause is a unique experience for each individual experiencing symptoms



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listed types of medical interventions which may bring on Menopause. Reference made to protected characteristics under Equality Act 2010 and to avoid discrimination and unfavourable treatment as detailed the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure.
2. Changes to “Symptoms of Menopause”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slightly reworded symptoms and listed them under categories of “Physical” and “Psychological. Added that employees affected are encouraged to speak openly for tailored support.
3. Changes to “Our Commitment to You”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added commitment to health, safety and welfare all employees and referenced the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Specified the detail measures designed to support staff affected by the symptom, giving examples of provision of training, introduction of role of Menopause Champion and providing additional resources such as sanitary products, menopause awareness posters, and the provision of a break room. Extending the scope and training of the Wellbeing Advocate role to include menopause support, complementing the work of the Menopause Champion.
4. Changes to “Requesting Support”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added new sections detailing the introduction of the Menopause Champion Role; The role, responsibilities, benefits and how to contact the Menopause Champion
5. Changes to “Working Flexibly on a Temporary Basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight rewording and reference added to Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.
6. Changes to “Working Environment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added requirement for a manager to complete a workplace Health and Safety Risk Assessment to consider specific needs and impact of working environment on symptoms.
7. Changes to “Quiet Place to Work”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added information regarding the provision of a quiet comfortable space where employees can recuperate when they struggle with the effects of menopausal symptoms
8. Changes to “Sanitary Products”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed proposed provision of emergency sanitary products in all toilet and restroom facilities
9. Changes to “Sickness”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor spelling amendments Added why employee are requested to be open about their reasons for absence



<p>10. Occupational Health renamed to “Changes to GP, Employee Wellbeing Programme (EAP) and Occupational Health”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added the need for employee to speak to GP/Medical Practitioner if they have concerns • Provided Employee Wellbeing Programme (EAP) as a confidential source for information and support
<p>11. “External Sources of Help”</p>	<p>No change</p>

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Cabinet could choose not to adopt the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure, retaining the existing Policy & Procedure.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 A positive statement about the menopause can contribute to morale, motivation, retention and productivity. Therefore, it’s recommended that the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure is adopted.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Employers have a duty of care to the people they employ. It is important to be aware of responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Equality Act 2010. Staff experiencing difficulties with the menopause may need adjustments to their working environment; equally, unsafe and unhealthy working environments may exacerbate problems.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 It’s good practice for an organisation to have a Menopause Policy & Procedure – ensuring that ensure that women are not disadvantaged, and that experienced talent is not lost from the workforce. But policies are only useful if they are implemented and regularly reviewed.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT



9.1 While this document uses the term 'women' to talk about people who may experience perimenopause and menopause transition, this can impact trans or non-binary colleagues who don't identify as women in the same manner. The updated Policy & Procedure supports all colleagues experiencing perimenopause and menopause transition.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No implications identified.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

(END)

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Menopause Policy and Procedure

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Scope

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

In this policy, where we refer to the menopause, we also **include** the perimenopause **and postmenopausal stages**

What is Menopause

The menopause is a natural event during which **oestrogen levels decrease and** a person stops having periods. **Menopausal stages are;**

- **Perimenopause** - the transition phase leading up to menopause during which someone experiences menopausal symptoms, but their periods have not stopped),
- **Menopause** – define as 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period
- **Postmenopause** - the years following menopause, which can last for the rest of the individuals' life. While some symptoms may ease shortly after menopause, others can continue for several years.

Menopause usually occurs naturally between the ages of 45 and 55, typically lasting between four and eight years, although menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40 depending on various factors, and can last up to 12 years.

While the majority of people experiencing menopause will be women, it's important to recognize they are not the only ones who can have menopausal symptoms, and employees and line managers should avoid making assumptions.

It is also important to recognise that menopause is a unique experience for each individual with a range of interconnected physical and psychological symptoms which manifest differently at various stages of menopause.

Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. A person may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Menopause may also be brought on by medical interventions, surgery or treatments, such as;

- Removal of ovaries or womb - A procedure called oophorectomy can cause immediate menopause because it stops the production of hormones by the ovaries
- Cancer treatments and endometriosis treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy in the pelvic area, which can affect ovarian function.
- Primary Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) - A condition where the ovaries stop functioning properly before the age of 40.
- Family history can play a role in determining the age at which menopause occurs.
- Certain autoimmune diseases or other health conditions can impact ovarian function and lead to early menopause.

Although menopause is not a specific protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, if an employee is disadvantaged and treated less favourably as a result of menopausal symptoms, this could be seen as discrimination relating to protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. This policy should therefore also be followed in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure.

Symptoms of Menopause

Symptoms can vary greatly and can be both physical and psychological with one causing the other. For around a quarter of women, and trans and non-binary people, they are severely debilitating.

Symptoms include:

Physical:

- Hot flushes
- Sleep disturbances including night sweats
- Dizziness and fatigue
- Headaches
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Heavy bleeding and irregular periods

Psychological

- Depression and anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Memory loss of brain fog
- Loss of concentration
- Mood disturbance

Each person will be affected in different ways and to different degrees over different periods of time. Menopausal symptoms can often indirectly affect their partners, families and colleagues as well.

Psychological symptoms, which cannot be seen, impact the individual's work life and support must therefore be provided to avoid any negative impact on the employee, their colleagues and the Council.

Employees experiencing symptoms at any stage of menopause are encouraged to speak openly with their line manager, the Menopause Champion, or HR for tailored support and reasonable adjustments.

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to the health, safety and welfare of all employees at work, where reasonably possible in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

This policy details measures designed to support staff affected by the symptoms of menopause, and create an inclusive work environment. We promote open conversations within the Council, teams and with line managers, to remove stigma and increase knowledge and understanding.

Such measures include;

- Providing training for all line managers and Directors so they are able to support individuals experiencing adverse menopausal symptoms.
- Introducing a Menopause Champion role to provide dedicated, unbiased and confidential support to employees affected by menopause and associated symptoms.
- Extending the scope and training of the Wellbeing Advocate role to include menopause support, complementing the work of the Menopause Champion.
- Provide additional support and resources such provision of emergency sanitary products, menopause awareness posters, and the provision of a break room for emotional wellbeing.

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

Requesting Support

The Menopause Champion Role:

If you are finding it difficult to cope at work because of menopausal symptoms, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager or a Director. At Cotswold District Council however, we understand the importance of having dedicated support for those experiencing menopause and have introduced a Menopause Champion role.

The Menopause Champion is available to provide additional support and guidance, promote awareness, and help foster a more inclusive environment.

Employees are encouraged to reach out to the Menopause Champion for confidential support, advice, or to discuss their needs in relation to menopause.

By adding this role, we aim to ensure that every employee feels supported, and has access to the resources and assistance they need. We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

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

Responsibilities of the Menopause Champion

- A Menopause Champion is a designated individual within the organisation who serves as a point of contact for employees experiencing menopausal symptoms. This person provides support, guidance, and information on available resources and helps foster an inclusive and understanding workplace environment. The Menopause Champion will offer confidential, non-judgmental support and guidance to employees who need to discuss their symptoms or seek advice.
- They will promote awareness about menopause within the organisation and advocate for necessary adjustments and accommodations.
- Provide information on internal and external resources, including health services, support groups, and educational materials.
- Act as a liaison between employees and management to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the menopause policy and suggest improvements.

Benefits of Having a Menopause Champion

- Encouraging open communication by helping to normalise conversations about menopause, thereby reducing stigma and promoting an open culture.
- Providing an enhanced support system, by being an additional layer of support beyond the line manager, Director and HR. Giving employees more options to seek help.
- Facilitating informed decision-making through insights gathered on the needs of those experiencing menopause, ensuring the organisation remains responsive and adaptive.

Training and Resources for the Menopause Champion

- The Menopause Champions receive specialised training to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to support colleagues effectively.
- Access is provided to up-to-date resources and information about menopause, to ensure they can provide current and comprehensive support.

How to Contact the Menopause Champion

The Menopause Champion is Carmel Togher, her contact details are carmel.togher@publicagroup.uk, telephone 01285 623482. For staff who need advice or someone to talk to initially, they can be assured of privacy and discretion.

Working Flexibly on a Temporary Basis

Employees who require a permanent change to working arrangements, can make a **flexible working** request through their manager. (see **Flexible Working Policy and Procedure**)

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

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

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

Working Environment

If you feel that your working environment is exacerbating your menopausal symptoms, you should raise this with your line manager or director. **If not already in place, the manager should carry out a workplace Health and Safety Risk Assessment, which should consider the specific needs of people undergoing a menopause transition, to ensure the working environment does not aggravate symptoms.**

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

Quiet Place to Work

Recognising that menopausal symptoms can vary greatly and affect individuals differently, we are committed to providing a quiet, comfortable space where employees can take a break, manage their symptoms, or simply have a moment of privacy. This room will be equipped with comfortable seating, a calm environment, and amenities such as tissues, water, and other supplies to support well-being.

If you need time out to relax, a short break to manage any symptoms or take medication, or a quiet space to work, speak to your line manager **about making use of this facility.**

Sanitary Products

We will ensure all **employees have access to emergency sanitary products for those who may require them due to menopausal symptoms or any other reason in all toilet, shower and other restroom facilities across our premises, with regular checks to ensure that sanitary products are stocked and available in all.**

Employees are encouraged to notify the Facilities Management team if supplies are low or need replenishment.

Sickness

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

Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in our **Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.**

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

GP, Employee Wellbeing Programme (EAP) and Occupational Health

If you find you are experiencing symptoms that may relate to stages of menopause, it is recommended that you contact your general medical practitioner for advice in the first instance, as there may be a range of medical interventions they can advise you on.

In addition, you can also contact the CDC Employee Wellbeing Programme (EAP) provider for confidential and impartial information on managing menopausal symptoms or how to cope if anyone in your family is displaying similar symptoms.

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

External Sources of Help

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

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

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