



Friday, 28 February 2025

Tel: 01285 623181

e-mail: [democratic@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk)

### CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Monday, 10 March 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Weaver'.

Rob Weaver  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

(Councillors Joe Harris, Mike Evemy, Claire Bloomer, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson)

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

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

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence. The quorum for Cabinet is 3 members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes** (Pages 7 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of Cabinet held 6 February 2025.

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. Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members (Pages 17 - 20)**

To note the decisions taken by the Leader and/or Individual Cabinet Members. Since Cabinet last met on 6 February 2025, the following non-key decisions have been taken by individual Cabinet Members under delegated authority:

1. Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Decision meeting 13 February 2025 – Progression of Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan to public consultation.  
Non-key decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning on 14 February 2025

Date decision effective: 24 February 2025

Decision notice attached as Appendix 1

2. Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience Decision meeting 25 February 2025 – De-accession of artefacts from Corinium Museum.  
Non-key decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience on 24 March 2025.

Date decision effective: 6 March 2025

Decision Notice attached as Appendix 2

Any decision made after the publication of the agenda will be reported at the next meeting of Cabinet.

8. **Decision taken under the Chief Executive's urgency powers** (Pages 21 - 46)

Purpose

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

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

Note the decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his urgency powers as set out in Annex A.

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

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

10. **Ubico Business Plan 2025/2026** (Pages 47 - 70)

Purpose

To consider the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26, which has been produced by Ubico in consultation with the Directors and Shareholders, and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Note the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26; and
2. Note that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will sign the written resolution to approve the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26 in due course.

11. **Publica Transition Plan Phase 2** (Pages 71 - 102)

Purpose

To consider the document Publica Transition: A Plan for Phase 2 of Council Services ("Phase 2 Transition Plan"), to note its contents and to approve the recommendations therein.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet resolves to Recommend to Full Council to:

1. Approve the implementation of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition on the basis of the Phase 2 Transition Plan;
2. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the decision to deal with any final detail matters arising from the Phase 2 Transition Plan;

3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance in liaison with the Leader to update the constitution by making any consequential changes required as a result of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition.
4. Carry out a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year so that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.

12. **Green Economic Growth Strategy outcome of consultation** (Pages 103 - 134)

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the results of the consultation on the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy and to propose adoption of the strategy following minor amendments.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Note the results of the consultation on the Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29.
2. Agree to adopt the strategy subject to the changes set out in Section 4 of the report.
3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment, to make final amendments to the strategy before publication.

13. **Service Performance Plan 2024/25 Quarter 3** (Pages 135 - 208)

Purpose

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

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q3.

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Cabinet  
06/February2025



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 6 February 2025**

### Members present:

Joe Harris

Mike Every

Claire Bloomer

Paul Hodgkinson

Juliet Layton

### Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)

Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer

Paul James, Economic Development Lead

Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager

### **56 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

### **57 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

### **58 Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting 9 January 2025 were considered.

There were no amendments.

A proposal to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held 9 January 2025 was proposed by Councillor Harris and seconded by Councillor Every.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 9 January 2025 as a correct record.

<b>RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2025. (Resolution)</b>		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Juliet Layton	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## 59 Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Leader.

## 60 Public Questions

There was one Public Question :

Andy Farmer introduced himself as a recent candidate in the Chesterton by-election. He explained that his campaign included gathering residents' views on council spending. 87 residents had provided input, with a resulting wish-list of some 47 items. He noted the potential for an underspend from various grant funding streams at the end of the financial year and suggested that early planning could help the council spend this money effectively on residents.

Mr Farmer had already had discussions with Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, and was due to meet the Economic Development lead to discuss further.

- In response to a question about the process for submitting non-grant-related spending requests, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation confirmed that requests should be addressed to himself and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.
- Mr Farmer stated that parking charges were one of the main concerns raised by residents. The removal of the "free after three" parking initiative was questioned.
- In response the Cabinet Member for Health, Culture, and Visitor Experience confirmed that the initiative had been discontinued due to financial constraints and shifting post-COVID trends. He also stated that some parking charges would be frozen and mentioned the introduction of 20-minute free parking bays. It was also noted that despite previous tariff increases car park ticket sales had increased in 2024. He also confirmed that recent parking consultations would form the basis of data analysis to guide future decisions.
- Mr Farmer suggested that initiatives such as "free after four" might be a way of offering support to lower-income residents struggling with parking costs. The Cabinet Member for Health, Culture, and Visitor Experience highlighted that

Trinity Road car park remained free on weekends, providing an option for those facing financial difficulties.

#### **61 Member Questions**

There were no member questions.

#### **62 Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance**

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 February 2025.

#### **63 Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members**

No individual Cabinet Member decisions have been taken since the previous meeting of Cabinet, held on 9 January 2025.

#### **64 UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update February 2025**

The purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on the delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund projects to date and seek approval for the approach to the delivery of UKSPF projects in 2025/26 along with the necessary delegations.

In Councillor Wilkinson's absence Councillor Harris, Leader of the Council, introduced the item.

The report highlighted the successful attribution of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) & Rural England Prosperity Fund grants which had funded multiple projects over recent years, delivering tangible benefits to the district.

It was highlighted that the Council remained committed to strong communities, sustainable economic growth, and climate action.

The grants had funded strategic investment supporting communities, local businesses, and skills development.

Recent key achievements were mentioned including:

- Cirencester Growth Hub: Became the county's top-performing hub, supporting businesses despite the loss of EU funding.
- Grace Network Project: Repurposed the historic House of Fraser building, preserving heritage and boosting the local economy.
- Cost of Living Support: Investments helped struggling residents, particularly with food support initiatives.

- Village Hall Improvements: Funded sustainability measures, including solar panels and insulation, aligning with climate goals.
- Gloucestershire Employment & Skills Hub: Assisted economically inactive residents in returning to work, training, or volunteering.

Future plans (2025-26) were discussed with the £327,000 additional funding to be invested in business skills, community support, and climate-aligned projects.

It was confirmed that there would be ongoing funding for the Growth Hub and employment programmes, alongside new opportunities for engagement. Expressions of interest had already been received for efficient and effective projects delivering real benefits to residents.

Special thanks were extended to officers, stakeholders, and community partners, with special recognition for Councillors Tony Dale and Tristan Wilkinson, and the Economic Development Lead.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Harris, Leader, and seconded by Councillor Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting Record 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

<b>RESOLVED: that Cabinet</b>		
<b>1. NOTED the progress of the delivery of UKSPF and REPF projects,</b>		
<b>2. NOTED the 2025/2026 UKSPF funding award of £327,416,</b>		
<b>3. AGREED to allocate up to £140,000 for 2025/26 to Cirencester Growth Hub and up to £50,000 to a local employment and skills project,</b>		
<b>4. DELEGATED authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment, to allocate the remaining funding, having regard to the recommendations of the UKSPF Assessment Panel.</b>		
<b>(Resolution)</b>		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Every, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Juliet Layton	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **65** Review of Parking Charges and Season Tickets

The purpose of the report was to detail proposed changes to the day tariffs and season ticket fees in the district car parks to take effect from 1st April 2025.

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

- It was confirmed that charges for the first hour would be frozen, recognising that the short stay tariff was used by residents for errands, whilst other, longer stay tariffs would be increased slightly to account for inflation.
- The impact on businesses was discussed and it was confirmed that Cirencester businesses remained resilient, and that parking charges seem to have minimal effect on footfall.
- It was noted that the revenue from parking fees helped to fund essential council services, including cost-of-living support and planning services.
- It was agreed that small increases were preferable to financial instability for the Council.
- Extra parking spaces designated as mother and child spaces were welcomed as was the online information available about access to parking permits.
- It was noted that the proposed charges for Rissington Road Car Park would include a 10p increase in the tourism levy previously agreed in November 2024

Thanks were extended to the Parking Manager, her team, and to the parking enforcement officers for their work.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture, and Visitor Experience, seconded by Councillor Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting Record 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

<b>RESOLVED that Cabinet</b>		
<b>1. APPROVED the freezing of car-park charges for short stays of 1/2hour or 1 hour at all the Council's Car Parks;</b>		
<b>2. APPROVED the car-park charges for stays of 2 hours or more being increased by 2.7% (rounded to 10p), to reflect CPI inflation between October 2023 and October 2024;</b>		
<b>3. NOTED the proposed charges for Rissington Road car-park include the tourism levy increases from 50p to 60p agreed November 2024;</b>		
<b>4. APPROVED increasing the fee for season ticket holders as per annex D; 5. approve the updating of the Parking Order to reflect agreed changes (Resolution)</b>		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Juliet Layton	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **66 2025/2026 Fees and Charges**

The purpose of the report was to present a revised schedule of fees and charges for 2025/26. The report also described the rationale for the revised charges compared to current charges for 2024/25. Revised charges were presented at Annex A alongside current charges for 2024/25.

The report was presented by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Every.

It was noted that this report was an annual review of fees and charges to account for inflation and ensure cost recovery for services.

- Most charges were increased by approximately 2%, appropriately rounded

The following changes were discussed

- Garden Waste: Subscription fee increased by £5 to £69 to cover rising service costs.
- Planning Fees: Statutory fees are determined by central government, it was noted that Discretionary fees remained unchanged, but under review, due to a forthcoming review with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).
- High Hedge Complaints: A significant fee increase was proposed due to historical under-recovery.
- Licensing Fees were increased to fund additional staffing support.
- Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been taken into account with the streamlining of public conveniences and the introduction of charges at previously free locations; no further increases were planned until the impact of these changes had been assessed.
- Support for low-income residents was welcomed with 50% discounts available on garden waste and bulky waste collection for those on benefits.
- The bulky waste service was recognised as a valuable and well-run service, with the potential for better promotion.
- It was noted that the recommendation was for revised charges to take effect from April 1, 2025.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation and seconded by Councillor Claire Bloomer, Cabinet Member for Communities, put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting Record: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**RESOLVED: that Cabinet**

- 1. ENDORSED the rationale for revising fees and charges and;**
- 2. APPROVED the implementation of revised fees and charges for 2025/26 as detailed in the report , from 1 April 2025. (Resolution)**

For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Juliet Layton	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **67 Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The purpose of the report was to present the Revenue Budget for 2025/26, the Capital Programme and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Evemy introduced the report and emphasised that the Budget 2025/26, the Capital Programme and the Medium -Term Financial Strategy were crucial documents for consideration. Following the decision of Cabinet the final determination of the Council's budget and the setting of Council Tax would happen on Monday 24 February at Full Council.

- A draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been presented before Christmas after a provisional government funding settlement had been announced.
- It was noted that a reduced budget consultation had taken place in January 2025 due to staffing changes and a by-election, this had led to only 46 responses instead of the usual 400 plus.
- The final government settlement had been received in the first week of February 2025 and was the worst funding settlement in nearly six years, with no increase in core government support or provision for inflation. The settlement was cash-neutral after accounting for the maximum allowable Council Tax increases.
- The Rural Services Delivery Grant, £800,000 funding was removed but later replaced through an alternative government mechanism.
- The Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Leader had presented the financial position and answered questions at the recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- It was noted that the increase to employer National Insurance contributions would cost the Council £400,000 annually, with government funding covering only £133,000, leaving a significant shortfall.

- A £4 million funding gap was initially projected before Christmas, but revised assumptions and plans including service transformation, efficiency improvements, and revenue reserve utilization had reduced that figure.
- A £2 million loss of government funding was expected from 2026/27 onward.
- There had been recent positive news around Pooled Funds suggesting the Council would not need to set aside reserves for potential investment losses.
- Significant future costs were included in the Capital Program, including £5m for waste vehicle replacements in 2026/27, which would require potential borrowing of £2.87m.
- A projected surplus of £662,000 for the next year would align with the Council's motion from November 2023 to set aside surpluses in preparation for future financial challenges.
- However it was noted that future funding would remain unclear due to continued consultation on proposed changes to local authority funding, and uncertainty around potential mitigation measures.
- It was noted that the Council received £1.5 million this year from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Funding, this was to support waste and recycling services, shifting costs onto producers.
- Risks around EPR funding were seen as:
  - Uncertainty about whether the Council could retain the full amount.
  - Lack of clarity around future funding levels.
  - Uncertainty as to whether producers might alter packaging to reduce their costs, which could positively impact the environment but reduce Council funding.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that an updated version of the report with clarifications, but no major financial changes would be prepared in time for Full Council.

Financial Sustainability was emphasised and the requirement that the Council address a growing budget gap post-2026 to remain financially sustainable was noted. It was recognised that Cotswold District Council was in a better position than most District Councils but that the position was still a difficult one.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation and seconded by Councillor Harris, Leader, put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting Record: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.

**RESOLVED: that the Cabinet APPROVED for recommendation to Council:**

- 1. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy;**
- 2. The Budget Pressures and Savings for inclusion in the budget;**
- 3. The Council Tax Requirement of £7,065,418 for this Council ;**
- 4. The Council Tax level for Cotswold District Council purposes of £158.93 for a Band D property in 2025- 2026;**
- 5. The Capital Programme;**
- 6. The Annual Capital Strategy 2025- 2026 ;**
- 7. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2025-2026;**
- 8. The Strategy for the Flexible use of Capital Receipts;**
- 9. The Balances and Reserves forecast for 2025-2026 to 2028-2029; and**
- 10. NOTED the renewal of the CIVICA OpenRevenues 3-year software contract from 01 June 2025;**
- 11. DELEGATED to the Council's Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader to agree changes to the General Fund Summary arising from the Local Government Finance Settlement and the Business Rates Retention Scheme estimates prior to submission to Council. (Resolution)**

For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Every, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Juliet Layton	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.28 pm

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## Appendix 1

### SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

Note:

- Any decision that is still subject to call-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is marked with the expiry date of call-in at the standard close of business time of 5pm.
- Further information on the decision taken and the webcast link can be found within the hyperlink for each 'subject'.

Cabinet Member	Meeting date	Subject	Decision(s)
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Councillor Juliet Layton	13 February 2025	<a href="#">Cotswold District Council - Agenda for Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Decision Meeting on Thursday, 13th February, 2025, 12.00 pm</a>	<p>The Cabinet Member considered the recommendations within the report and resolved to AGREE that the submitted documents met the requirements of Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and RESOLVED that the Council should launch the statutory 'Regulation 16' consultation period for the standard six-week period.</p> <p>*Subject to Overview and Scrutiny call-in. Closing Date for Call-in 21 February 2025. Action embargoed until 24 February 2025.</p>

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**Cabinet – 10 March 2025**

**Appendix 2**

**SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS**

Note:

- Any decision that is still subject to call-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is marked with the expiry date of call-in at the standard close of business time of 5pm.
- Further information on the decision taken and the webcast link can be found within the hyperlink for each 'subject'.

Cabinet Member	Meeting date	Subject	Decision(s)
Councillor Paul Hodgkinson	25/02/2025	<a href="#">Cotswold District Council - Agenda for Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience Decision Meeting on Tuesday, 25th February, 2025, 2.00 pm</a>	<p>The Cabinet Member considered the recommendations within the report and RESOLVED to DISPOSE of the three items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LB528 Swathe-Turner</li><li>• LO X093 Eastbury Christening Gowns</li><li>• Sly Collection – comprising a number of hats</li></ul> <p>Through deaccession.</p> <p>*Subject to Overview and Scrutiny Call-in Closing Date for Call-in: 6 March 2025 (5:00 pm) Action Embargoed until: 7 March 2025 .</p>

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Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>URGENT OFFICER DECISION MEETING</b>
Subject	<b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris Leader of Cotswold District Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning policy, infrastructure and the Local Plan Email: <a href="mailto:joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk">joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver – Chief Executive Email: <a href="mailto:robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk">robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Matthew Britton – Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure Email: <a href="mailto:matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk">matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To approve a new Local Development Scheme
Annexes	Annex A: Cotswold District Local Development Scheme (March 2025)
Recommendation(s)	Approval of the Local Development Scheme
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li> <li>• Delivering Housing</li> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader of the Council, Director of Governance and Development, (Monitoring Officer), Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) Business Manager for Democratic Services, Opposition Group Leader, Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee



## **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** All local planning authorities are required by law to prepare a Local Development Scheme. The Local Development Scheme explains what planning policy documents the council already has in place and the planning policy documents it will prepare in the future. It must also include the timetable for producing these documents.
- 1.2** National policy expects councils to review and update their Local Development Scheme at least annually, although it may need updating more frequently if there are any significant changes in the timescales or the plans being prepared.
- 1.3** The council last updated its Local Development Scheme in January 2024. Since then, the Government has implemented major changes to national planning policies<sup>1</sup>. These have affected the timetable for delivering the Local Plan Update.
- 1.4** On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024, Joanna Averley (Chief Planner, MHCLG), wrote to all local planning authorities<sup>2</sup> to convey that the Deputy Prime Minister had asked that all local planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme within 12 weeks of the publication of the revised NPPF, i.e. by no later than 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025. It was requested that the updated Local Development Scheme includes clear, realistic, and specific dates for consultation and submission of the local plan.
- 1.5** Consideration has been given to the revised NPPF, how the changes affect the Local Plan project plan, and any additional work that is now required and available resources to deliver the additional workload. The Local Development Scheme has been updated accordingly.
- 1.6** The Council is producing a:
  - Partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) (the Partial Local Plan Update); and
  - A Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026 to 2046).
- 1.7** The Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan cover different parts of the Local Plan. The aspiration is to combine the two Local Plan projects into a single Local Plan document at a late date. However, given

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<sup>1</sup> [Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation](#) (MHCLG, 12 December 2024)

<sup>2</sup> [Planning Newsletter from Joanna Averley, Chief Planner \(MHCLG, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024\)](#)



changing national planning policies, the Council is progressing the two Local Plan projects separately at present.

- 1.8** The Council is also producing several Supplementary Planning Documents and will need to update its Community Infrastructure Levy, which are discussed later.

*Partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031)*

- 1.9** The Partial Local Plan Update was previously scheduled to have a consultation on the pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 19) in winter 2025; submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 22) in spring 2025; examination in public between spring 2025 and spring 2026; and adoption by the Council in summer 2026.

- 1.10** Subject to government grant funding agreements, the following timescales are proposed:

- Consultation: Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 19) – Q4 (autumn) 2025
- Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 22) – Q3 (summer) 2026
- Examination – Q3 (summer) 2026 to Q3 (summer) 2027
- Adoption – Q1 (winter) 2027

*Local Plan Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026 to 2046)*

- 1.11** The Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan was also previously scheduled to have a consultation on the pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 19) in winter 2025; submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 22) in spring 2025; examination in public between spring 2025 and spring 2026; and adoption by the Council in summer 2026.

- 1.12** In order to submit the Local Plan for examination before a government-imposed deadline of June 2025<sup>3</sup>, this timetable did not include an informal consultation stage on the draft Local Plan (Reg.18). However, not including this stage of consultation was identified as a risk.

- 1.13** Subject to government grant funding agreements, the following timescales are proposed:

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<sup>3</sup> The former June 2025 deadline was for the Local Plan to be examined under the existing Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 system. This has now been extended to December 2026.



- Consultation: Second Issues and Options (Reg. 18) – Q4 (autumn) 2026
- Consultation: Preferred Options: Draft Local Plan (Reg. 18) – Q3 (summer) 2027
- Consultation: Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 19) – Q2 (spring) 2028
- Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 22) – Q3 (summer) 2028
- Examination – Q3 (summer) 2028 to Q3 (summer) 2029
- Adoption – Q4 (autumn) 2029

**1.14** This timetable includes a second 'Issues and Options' consultation to take account of revised national policies. It also includes a consultation stage on the Preferred Options: Draft Local Plan (Reg. 18).

**1.15** Cotswold is among many local planning authorities in a similar situation where the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has led to delays. In recognition of this, the government has set up the Local Plans Delivery Fund 2024/25. This aims to ensure that local authorities are well-equipped and supported to implement the changes of the revised NPPF and to accommodate increased local housing need figures resulting from the changes to NPPF<sup>4</sup>.

#### *Community Infrastructure Levy*

**1.16** The Community Infrastructure Levy will be updated alongside the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. This will include the following stages:

- Draft charging schedule consultation – Q2 (spring) 2027
- Submission – Q3 (summer) 2027
- Examination – Q4 (autumn) 2027 to Q4 (autumn) 2028
- Adoption – Q1 (winter) 2029

#### *Supplementary Planning Documents*

**1.17** The Council will also produce three Supplementary Planning Documents. These will expand upon the Local Plan policies by providing further detail and guidance about how policies should be used. These are:

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<sup>4</sup> [Funding to support local authorities with the costs of local plan delivery and Green Belt reviews \(MHCLG, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024\)](#)



- Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan – this document help to ensure development in Cirencester Town Centre is undertaken in a holistic manner, balancing the need to manage traffic and improve the appearance of the public realm with other competing, environmental, social and economic objectives. The timeframe for producing this document is:
  - Second public consultation – Q3 (summer) 2025
  - Adoption – Q4 (autumn) 2025
- Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document – this document will provide guidance on the Council's approach towards the use of and inter-relationship between planning obligations, planning conditions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The timeframe for producing this document is:
  - Informal consultation – Q4 (autumn) 2025
  - Further consultation – Q3 (summer) 2026
  - Adoption – Q4 (autumn) 2026
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document – this document will assist the Council in meeting its objective of delivering affordable housing to meet the identified housing needs by providing guidance on the Local Plan's affordable housing policies. The timeframe for producing this document is:
  - Draft affordable housing consultation – Q4 (autumn) 2025
  - Adoption – Q1 (winter) 2026

**1.18** Consideration will be given to producing further Supplementary Planning Documents in future. The may, for example, include managing climate change (i.e. buildings, flooding, energy generation) and local nature recovery.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**2.1** The MHCLG's request to update Local Development Schemes is informal, so there are no specific consequences for not updating the Local Development Scheme at this stage. However, in the spirit of cooperation, this is not recommended.



### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1** As part of the 2024/2025 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy £0.500m was transferred to the Local Plan reserve to support the ongoing preparation of the Council's Local Plan. A further £0.250m was transferred as part of the 2025/2026 Budget approved by Council on the 24 February 2025 providing a total reserve £1.157m. With changes to the revised NPPF, this balance may not be sufficient across the medium term. Officers will review spending plans in detail to ensure the Council receives value for money from the planned activity on the Partial Local Plan Update.
- 3.2** The report to Full Council on the 'Cotswold District Local Plan Update', considered on 24 January 2024 resulted in Full Council voting to continue with the partial update of the Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) and commence a Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026-46) separately, noting that the Council retained an option to merge the two Local Plan projects further down the line, which may have cost savings. This continues to be the case in the current Local Development Scheme.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** The preparation of a Local Development Scheme is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This must specify (among other matters) the development plan documents (i.e. local plans) which, when prepared, will comprise part of the development plan for the area. Local planning authorities are encouraged to include details of other documents which form (or will form) part of the development plan for the area, such as Neighbourhood Plans. The Local Development Scheme must be made available publicly and kept up-to-date. It is important that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress. Local planning authorities should publish their Local Development Scheme on their website.
- 4.2** The Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan will be submitted for examination after December 2026. This is after the December 2026 deadline for Local Plans to be examined under the existing Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 system. The Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan will instead be produced as a 'new style Local Plan' in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023).



## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1** The Local Development Scheme contains a full risk assessment in Section 9.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1** The emerging Local Plan is supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment that considers these legal duties and requirements. An updated Integrated Impact Assessment will be available to review and comment on during the public consultation.

## **7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** Delivering a Local Plan that is green to the core is a corporate priority in the Council's efforts to tackle the climate change and ecological emergencies and the consultation proposals may impact this.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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## Delegated Decision Notice (DDN)

This form is used to record any delegated decision which has been taken by officers under delegated authority.

Decision title	<b>Urgent Decision</b> – Approval of Cotswold District Council Local Development Scheme.
Decision date	28 February 2025
Decision maker	Chief Executive Officer
Source of delegation (resolution or Constitution – please reference)	<p>Part D8 of the Constitution authorises the Chief Executive to take any actions necessary in the interests of Council:</p> <p>The Council's Chief Executive has delegated authority to take any action they consider necessary in the interests of the Council in cases of urgency. They must only act after consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chair of the Council or the appropriate Committee and the relevant Ward Member(s), if any. Any action taken in this way shall be reported to the first available meeting of the Council, Cabinet or relevant Committee, as appropriate.</p>
Decision taken	To approve Cotswold District Council Local Development Scheme (March 2025).
Reasons for the decision	<p>The Local Development Plan was scheduled to be on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting in March. The Cabinet meeting date was moved to 10 March at the Leader's request.</p> <p>The UK Government required that all plans needed to be submitted by 6 March 2025. No extension to the deadline was available, the resulting timeline did not allow for the normal decision-making processes to be completed.</p> <p>Therefore, in consultation with lead members, (Leader, Leader of the Opposition and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) the Chief Executive used Urgency Powers to make an officer decision to submit the plan on behalf of the Council.</p>



Alternative options considered	The MHCLG's request to update Local Development Schemes is informal, so there are no specific consequences for not updating the Local Development Scheme at this stage. However, in the spirit of cooperation, this was not recommended. The decision was taken to align with UK Government submission guidelines.
Key or non-key?	NO
Subject to urgency rules?	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the making of the decision was urgent and could not be reasonably deferred, in accordance with Regulation 11 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>The Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee further agreed that the usual call-in arrangements be disapplied, in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part C1.3.17).</p>
Affected wards	All Wards
Details of consultation undertaken	The decision was taken after discussion with the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure; the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Chief Executive (S151), Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer), Business Manager for Democratic Services, Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Leader of the Opposition.
Lead officer	Rob Weaver, Chief Executive
List of documents considered	Cotswold Local Development Scheme (March 2025) and Urgent Officer Decision Report

# Local Development Scheme March 2025



COTSWOLD  
District Council

### Contact Details

Planning Policy and Infrastructure  
Cotswold District Council  
Trinity Road  
Cirencester  
GL7 1PX

Tel: 01285 623000  
Email: [local.plan@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@cotswold.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk)

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) – Partial Update .....	4
3. Cotswold District Local Plan (2026 - 2046) – Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan .....	5
4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) .....	5
5. Supplementary Planning Documents.....	6
6. Neighbourhood Planning.....	7
7. Statement of Community Involvement .....	7
8. Local Plan Monitoring Reports .....	8
9. Risk Assessment .....	8
Appendix 1 – Document Profiles .....	12

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This is the Cotswold District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS). It explains what planning policy documents the Council already has in place and what will be prepared during the three-year period March 2025 – April 2028. It also provides the timetable for producing these documents.
- 1.2 Cotswold District Council is producing a:
- Partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) (the Partial Local Plan Update); and
  - A Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026 to 2046).
- 1.3 The Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan cover different parts of the Local Plan. The aspiration is to combine the two Local Plan projects into a single Local Plan document at a late date. However, given changing national planning policies, the Council is progressing the two Local Plan projects separately at present.

## **2. Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) – Partial Update**

- 2.1 The Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) was adopted on 3 August 2018. The plan carries full weight in the determination of planning applications, providing an overall framework for growth in the period up to 2031.
- 2.2 National planning policy requires policies in local plans to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years<sup>1</sup>. Policies should then be updated as necessary.
- 2.3 Cotswold District Council undertook a review of the adopted Local Plan in 2020, which concluded that a partial update of the adopted Local Plan (Partial Local Plan Update) is required to take account of new corporate objectives and other material considerations, such as the revised National Planning Policy Framework. This includes various new and updated Local Plan policies, with the primary aim of making the adopted Local Plan 'green to the core'.
- 2.4 The Council also reviewed its adopted housing requirement in August 2023, which found that the requirement did not need to be updated.
- 2.5 The adopted Local Plan policies will continue to be reviewed in future to determine whether they require updating.

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<sup>1</sup> Reviews at least every five years are a legal requirement for all local plans (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

### **3. Cotswold District Local Plan (2026 - 2046) – Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan**

- 3.1 In January 2024, the Council commenced a Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan to proactively ensure the district continues to maintain a five year housing land supply<sup>2</sup> and pass the annual Housing Delivery Test<sup>3</sup> in future years. This includes a new Local Plan period that looks beyond 2031; new requirements for different types of development and supporting infrastructure; and a new strategy for how and where development will be located, including new development site allocations.

### **4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 4.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that can be applied to new developments to help pay for supporting infrastructure. Most new development which creates net additional floor space of 100 square metres or more, or creates a new dwelling, is currently potentially liable for the levy.
- 4.2 The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website.
- 4.3 The Council adopted its CIL charging schedule in June 2019.
- 4.4 The Community Infrastructure Levy will be updated alongside the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. The effect of the Council's partially updated Local Plan may also require the Council to update its existing CIL charging schedule because of new and or updated policies and viability evidence. A supplementary update will be added to the Local Development Scheme by the end of 2025.
- 4.5 The government's national planning practice policy guidance sets out how a charging schedule should be prepared. It explains a charging schedule is prepared and adopted as follows:
- a) the charging authority prepares its evidence base in order to prepare its draft levy rates, and collaborates with neighbouring / overlapping authorities (and other stakeholders);
  - b) the charging authority prepares and publishes a draft charging schedule for consultation;
  - c) representations are sought on the published draft;
  - d) the charging authority must take into account any representations made to it before submitting a draft charging schedule for examination;
  - e) an independent person (the "examiner") examines the charging schedule in public;

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<sup>2</sup> As required by National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) paragraph 72

<sup>3</sup> As required by National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) paragraph 79

- f) the examiner's recommendations are published;
- g) the charging authority has regard to the examiner's recommendations and reasons for them;
- h) the charging authority approves the charging schedule.

4.6 The 2019 Regulations removed the requirement to consult on a preliminary draft charging schedule. However, charging authorities can consult more than once where they consider it to be appropriate.

## 5. Supplementary Planning Documents

5.1 Supplementary Planning Documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Their main purpose is to elaborate on specific Local Plan policies and explain in more detail how those policies will operate.

5.2 Over the next three years the following Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared.

- a) Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan;
- b) Developer Contributions; and
- c) Affordable Housing.

5.3 The Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document will add detail to the Cirencester town centre strategy contained within the adopted Local Plan (which itself will be updated by the Partial Local Plan Update). This will help landowners and developers to bring sites forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

5.4 The Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document will provide additional clarity on the use of Section 106 Agreements<sup>4</sup> and CIL. The project will align with the Gloucestershire Local Developer Guide, which is also under preparation.

5.5 An Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document will help applicants and case officers interpret how the Local Plan's affordable housing policies are applied, as well as sign posting users to where the latest evidence is located.

5.6 Further information on the anticipated purpose, scope and timing of these documents is provided in Appendix 1.

5.7 Consideration will be given to producing further Supplementary Planning Documents, for example, on managing climate change (i.e. buildings, flooding, energy generation) and also on local nature recovery.

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<sup>4</sup> A S106 Agreement is a legally binding agreement or "planning obligation" between a local planning authority and a property owner. The purpose of a S106 agreement is to mitigate the impact of the development on the local community and infrastructure.

## **6. Neighbourhood Planning**

- 6.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.
- 6.2 There are currently eight adopted (made) Neighbourhood Plans in Cotswold District:
- a) Down Ampney (adopted February 2024)
  - b) Fairford (adopted May 2023)
  - c) Kemble and Ewen (adopted May 2021)
  - d) Lechlade on Thames (adopted October 2016)
  - e) Northleach with Eastington (adopted March 2019)
  - f) Preston (adopted May 2021)
  - g) Somerford Keynes and Shorncote (adopted May 2021)
  - h) South Cerney (adopted December 2021)
  - i) Stow-on-the-Wold and Swells (September 2024)
  - j) Tetbury and Tetbury Upton (adopted December 2017)
- 6.3 There are 12 other Neighbourhood Plans currently in progress:
- a) Ampney Crucis
  - b) Andoversford
  - c) Blockley
  - d) Chedworth
  - e) Chipping Campden
  - f) Cirencester
  - g) Ebrington
  - h) Moreton-in-Marsh
  - i) Siddington
  - j) Upper Rissington
- 6.4 Because the progress and timing of neighbourhood plans are beyond the control of the District Council, the LDS does not include any information on their anticipated timetables. Further information can, however, be obtained from the District Council's website<sup>5</sup>.

## **7. Statement of Community Involvement**

- 7.1 A Statement of Community Involvement explains how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and other related

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

documents. It also provides information about how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in relation to the determination of planning applications.

- 7.2 Local planning authorities are required to review their Statements of Community Involvement every five years. The Council's current Statement of Community Involvement was refreshed in December 2023 and will therefore need to be updated no later than January 2028 or sooner if required.

## 8. Local Plan Monitoring Reports

- 8.1 In accordance with national planning regulations the Council is required to produce a monitoring report addressing various matters including plan progress and implementation, neighbourhood planning, CIL (where applicable) and the duty to co-operate.
- 8.2 The Council prepares various monitoring reports, these include:
- a) Authority Monitoring Report;
  - b) Housing Land Supply Report (this calculates the Council's 5 year housing land supply);
  - c) Residential Land Monitoring Statistics;
  - d) Economic Land Monitoring Statistics;
  - e) Brownfield Land Register; and
  - f) Infrastructure Funding Statement.
- 8.3 Where possible, the Council updates and publishes the above reports annually. All documents are saved on the Council's Local Plan evidence webpage<sup>6</sup> apart from the Infrastructure Funding Statement which can be found on the Council's CIL webpage<sup>7</sup>.

## 9. Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There are several risks that could affect the timetables set out in Appendix 1 of this LDS. These are indicated in the table below, along with contingencies where possible.

Potential Risk	Impact / Contingency
Staff resources	It is envisaged that the staffing requirements for the preparation of the Local Plan will be met primarily from the Planning Policy and Infrastructure team with input, as required, from other teams within the Council. Subject to availability, Development Management staff and the Climate Action Manager will be required to assist with

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-infrastructure-levy/>

Potential Risk	Impact / Contingency
	<p>updating specific policies in the extant Local Plan.</p> <p>Short-term contracts and overtime will be considered where appropriate. Every effort will be made to rationalise workloads wherever possible and to make use of staff in other sections where their skills are appropriate to the task, notably Development Management and Housing Strategy. Specific studies will be undertaken by external specialist consultants where necessary.</p>
Availability of PINS for Examination	<p>The timetable for the preparation and adoption of Local Plans depends on the capacity of the Planning Inspectorate to undertake Examinations at the appropriate time. There will be lots of councils wanting to submit their local plans by December 2026. This could create a bottle neck in the system and may affect the timetable for adopting the Local Plan, which may require the council to switch to a New Style Plan. Officers will keep the Planning Inspectorate informed of the council's plan-making timetable. Every effort will be made to seek early confirmation that the proposed timings are acceptable.</p>
Changing national policy, guidance and evidence	<p>Changes to national planning policy and guidance and updated evidence can generate new issues or produce additional, unforeseen requirements. These can impact on deadlines or even affect the premise of the entire project. The Council will keep abreast of latest national guidance and best practice; revise the Local Plan timetable if necessary; and ensure adequate budgetary provision for consultancy support if required.</p>
Devolution White Paper	<p>Government intends to reform local government, creating more unitary authorities. This has potential to impact the Local Plan timetables (e.g. availability of funding). The Council will keep abreast of any changes; revise the Local Plan timetable if necessary; and ensure adequate budgetary provision for consultancy support if required.</p>
Failure of the Local Plan to meet tests of soundness and legal compliance	<p>Officers will attend relevant training or seminars on best practice, and maintain a dialogue with the Planning Inspectorate and neighbouring authorities. Consultants appointed to undertake specific studies will be required to ensure their work meets the tests of soundness. All evidence will be robust and officers will make use of the</p>

Potential Risk	Impact / Contingency
	soundness and legal self-assessment toolkit. The Local Plan process will follow the regulations and outlined procedures.
Funding for evidence	Inadequate funding to support evidence gathering could significantly delay the delivery of the Local Plan update. The risk has been mitigated by the establishment of the Programme Board and reporting structures to ensure requirements are identified early and worked into the budget plan. The Council has also bid for various government grants to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan.
Cooperation of other external bodies	The new planning system involves complex arrangements for cooperation, consultation, engagement and evidence gathering. Failure on the part of the other bodies to respond in time or to provide adequate responses which require subsequent clarification could cause significant delay to work programmes. Officers will maintain an ongoing dialogue with partners to ensure the duty to cooperate is met. Any particular delays will be reviewed in the timetable. For joint working on evidence, clear working arrangements with other bodies will be required with strong programme management.
New data becoming available	Evidence will need to be as up to date as reasonably as possible. This could impact progress if the timing of data is delayed. Evidence will need to be amended accordingly, taking a proportionate approach. Only major shifts in official government projections should justify changes to the strategy, though some tweaks to policy direction may be necessary.
Large numbers of representations received	Representations that are not submitted through the online system (e.g. by email or letter) have to be manually entered, which is a time consuming task. It may be necessary to bring in other staff, or temporary assistance. This will require sufficient workstations with internet access to facilitate the exercise. The Council has sought to mitigate this risk by investing in a new digital engagement platform, which incorporates artificial intelligence auto summarisation technology.
Neighbourhood Plans	The Council has a legal duty to support the delivery of

Potential Risk	Impact / Contingency
and other corporate projects	<p>Neighbourhood Plans and this will continue to have an impact on resourcing. Early and continued engagement with town and parish councils will be vital, especially when establishing anticipated project timetables. The Council has also prepared a guide to confirm the level of support town and parish councils can expect from the Council.</p> <p>It may be necessary to bring in other staff, or temporary assistance, at certain times. A good example would be securing support to deliver a Habitats Appropriate Assessment.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Document Profiles

<b>Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Partial Update)</b>	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan sets out the overall framework for future development growth in Cotswold District to 2031. A partial update will update components of the adopted local plan to take account of the Council's corporate plan, emergency declarations and other material considerations (for example the National Planning Policy Framework).
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	<p>Consultation: Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 19) – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2025</b></p> <p>Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 22) – <b>Q3 (summer) 2026</b></p> <p>Examination – <b>Q3 (summer) 2026 to Q3 (summer) 2027</b></p> <p>Adoption – <b>Q1 (winter) 2027</b></p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team under the direction of the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon to produce some supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

<b>Cotswold District Local Plan 2026 – 2046 (Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan)</b>	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan sets out the overall framework for future development growth in Cotswold District to 2046. The plan takes account of the Council's corporate plan, emergency

<b>Cotswold District Local Plan 2026 – 2046 (Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan)</b>	
	declarations and other material considerations (for example the National Planning Policy Framework).
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	<p>Consultation: Issues and Options (Reg. 18) – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2026</b></p> <p>Preferred Options: Draft Local Plan (Reg. 18) – <b>Q3 (summer) 2027</b></p> <p>Consultation: Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 19) – <b>Q2 (spring) 2028</b></p> <p>Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg. 22) – <b>Q3 (summer) 2028</b></p> <p>Examination – <b>Q3 (summer) 2028 to Q3 (summer) 2029</b></p> <p>Adoption – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2029</b></p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team under the direction of the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon to produce some supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

<b>Cotswold District Community Infrastructure Levy</b>	
Status	Community Infrastructure Levy
Overview	The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that can be applied to new developments to help pay for supporting infrastructure. Most new development which creates net additional floor space of 100 square metres or more, or creates a new dwelling, is currently potentially liable for the levy. The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published

<b>Cotswold District Community Infrastructure Levy</b>	
	the schedule on its website.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	Consultation: Draft charging schedule – <b>Q2 (spring) 2028</b> Submission for Examination – <b>Q3 (summer) 2028</b> Examination – <b>Q3 (summer) 2028 to Q3 (summer) 2029</b> Adoption – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2029</b>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team under the direction of the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure and the Infrastructure Delivery Lead.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon to produce some supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

<b>Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document</b>	
Status	Supplementary Planning Document
Overview	Intended to supplement the adopted Local Plan, and endure beyond 2031, by providing detail on the Cirencester Town and Cirencester Central Area policies. It will help to ensure development in Cirencester Town Centre is undertaken in a holistic manner, balancing the need to manage traffic and improve the appearance of the public realm with other competing, environmental, social and economic objectives.
Geographical coverage	Cirencester Central Area (town centre area)
Timetable	Second public consultation – <b>Q3 (summer) 2025</b> Adoption – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2025</b>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance, the

### Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

	Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) and the emerging Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026-46).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team under the direction of the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

Status	Supplementary Planning Document
Overview	Intended to provide further guidance on the Council's approach towards the use of and inter-relationship between planning obligations, planning conditions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A trigger for this project will be the completion of a countywide Developer Contributions Guidance Document.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	Informal consultation – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2025</b> Further consultation – <b>Q3 (summer) 2026</b> Adoption – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2026</b>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework National Planning Practice Guidance, the Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) and the emerging Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026-46).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure team under the direction of the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy

### Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

	and Infrastructure team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Status	Supplementary Planning Document
Overview	Intended to supplement the Partial Local Plan Update. The SPD will assist the Council in meeting its objective of delivering affordable housing to meet the identified housing needs. The SPD will provide supplementary guidance on the Local Plan's affordable housing policies.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	Draft affordable housing consultation – <b>Q4 (autumn) 2025</b> Adoption – <b>Q1 (winter) 2026</b>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance, the Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) and the emerging Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026-46).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Strategic Housing team under the direction of the Strategic Housing Manager, in consultation with the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure and Head of Planning Services.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Strategic Housing Team and other services as appropriate. External resources may be drawn upon to produce supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET - 10 MARCH 2025</b>
Subject	<b>UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment Email: <a href="mailto:tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Bill Oddy, Assistant Director Email: <a href="mailto:bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk">bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk</a>
Report author	Simon Anthony, Business Manager – Environmental Services Email: <a href="mailto:simon.anthony@publicagroup.uk">simon.anthony@publicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26, which has been produced by Ubico in consultation with the Directors and Shareholders, and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.
Annexes	Annex A – Ubico Business Plan 2025-26
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26; and</li> <li>2. Note that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will sign the written resolution to approve the draft Ubico Business Plan 2025-26 in due course.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Good Services</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The following people have been consulted on this report and the detail contained within:



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Tristan Wilkinson,</li><li>• Senior Council Officers</li><li>• Senior Ubico Officers</li></ul>
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Ubico is a Teckal company wholly owned by local authorities including Cotswold District Council (CDC). The company delivers environmental services on behalf of its shareholders, including CDC, and is required to submit an annual business plan for approval by its shareholders.
- 1.2** The Leader of the Council, as the Shareholder Representative, has authority to approve the Business Plan.
- 1.3** The draft Business Plan in ANNEX A will remain as a draft version until 28 February as other Shareholders and Board may make comments. Any changes are likely to be minor amendments.
- 1.4** Whilst the Leader of the Council has authority, as shareholder representative, to approve the business plan, it is being brought to Cabinet for members to note and consider.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Cotswold District Council (CDC) is a shareholder of Ubico limited, a teckal company designed to deliver environmental services, offering better value for money than commercial contracts.
- 2.2** The teckal model enables councils to commission services without the costs associated with an EU procurement process. Ubico delivers environmental services on behalf of the council at a price which reflects the actual cost of service provision, but in doing so holds no assets, and so the depots it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services and the waste and recycling containers which are provided to residents, are all owned or leased by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 2.3** As part of the establishment of Ubico, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council (Shareholder) approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained an element of control over their company.
- 2.4** The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine, this is Leader of the Council.
- 2.5** The Managing Director of Ubico gave a presentation on the Draft Business Plan 2025-26 at an all-Member briefing session on 4 February 2025. The points relating to the draft Business Plan raised by members, alongside comments from other



Shareholder Councils as part of the consultation, are being considered as part of the development of the business plan.

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

**3.1** The draft Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified by the Ubico Shareholder Councils. The 5-year vision developed by the Ubico Board of Directors in 2021 identifies the following priorities:

- Leveraging Synergies and economies of scale
- Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
- Using technology to drive operational efficiency
- Understanding our communities needs
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services.

**3.2** Ubico's 2025-26 draft Business Plan and 5-year vision are built around four key pillars:

#### **People**

We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.

#### **Operations**

We will deliver high quality services, which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.

#### **Climate**

We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.

#### **Business Development**

We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.



In support of the council's service related and financial priorities, Ubico is continuing to work in partnership with Publica and the Council as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) which is bringing forward opportunities to deliver better services to residents, reduce the effect services have on the climate and environment, and capture efficiency and financial savings for all partners. This will therefore further support the Business Plan. During the last year ESIP has delivered the following:

- A Waste collection round reorganisation project that was delivered on time and on budget and is forecast to achieve full year savings of £500,000 for CDC.
- Implemented a Customer Journey project to review customer interactions with the waste service to make reporting of missed bins easier and communication between the service and customers more responsive.
- Zero Based Budgeting Exercise
- Implementation of the green waste service, delivering 24,203 licences to residents, and undertaking 605,075 bin lifts

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** The Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, has delegated authority to approve the Ubico business plan (which forms part of the 5-year vision), and there is no need, other than to support transparency for a report to be considered and noted by Cabinet.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** It is recommended that The Ubico Business Plan 2025-26 is accepted to meet the company's members agreement, which is to approve the Business Plan.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** There are no additional financial implications associated with the Ubico Business Plan as the Council 2025-26 approved budget includes the agreed Ubico contract of £8.863m. Ubico has committed to supporting the council deliver savings through the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) including £0.3m of savings



from a review of Street Services to support its medium-term financial strategy (MTFS).

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with the Shareholder Agreement for Ubico.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** There are no specific risks in adopting the Ubico Business Plan. The council is a shareholder of the company in the middle of the existing environmental services contract.
- 8.2** If the council does not approve the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to support some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the council's MTFS or its corporate priorities.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** Not Applicable

## **10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1** Climate implications feature heavily in the Business Plan with climate being a strategic pillar and emissions benchmarking and carbon reduction goals clearly detailed throughout the plan. If the council does not approve this plan it could risk delivery of these targets and progress towards the Council's own net zero goal by 2030.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None

(END)



## **2025/26 Business Plan**

DRAFT

# Contents

<b>1. Business Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. Introduction.....	3
1.2. Quality and safety .....	3
1.3. Our services.....	4
1.4. Our shareholders .....	5
1.5. Governance and risk management .....	5
1.5.1. Governance .....	5
1.5.2. Risk management.....	6
1.6. Our values .....	6
1.7. 2024 Headline Performance .....	7
<b>2. Business Plan 2025/26 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. Our five-year vision (2021-2026).....	8
2.2. Strategic Pillars .....	8
2.3. Strategy planning.....	9
2.4. Project lifecycle.....	9
2.5. People Pillar.....	10
2.5.1. 2025/26 Activity .....	10
2.5.2. People – key risks and mitigations .....	11
2.6. Operational Excellence Pillar .....	12
2.6.1. 2025/26 Activity .....	12
2.6.2. Operational excellence – key risks and mitigations .....	13
2.6.3. Procurement Activity 2025/26 .....	14
2.7. Climate Pillar.....	15
2.7.1. 2025/26 Activity .....	15
2.7.2. Climate – key risks and mitigations .....	16
2.8. Business Development Pillar .....	17
2.8.1. 2025/26 Activity .....	17
2.8.2. Business development – key risks and mitigations .....	18

# **1. Business Overview**

## **1.1. Introduction**

Ubico is a successful and well-respected local authority owned company operating across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. We deliver high quality environmental services including waste and recycling collections, grounds maintenance, street cleansing and household recycling centre management. Our purpose is to keep places clean and green for every resident, visitor, town, village and community. Our close relationships with our council shareholders see us working in partnership to deliver the best services possible for our local communities. Now operating across the whole of Gloucestershire and in West Oxfordshire, our growth, size and position places us in a strong position to leverage opportunities for greater efficiencies across a wider base, leading to cost-savings for our councils and their residents and the opportunity to explore new and exciting areas for growth and innovation. We set out a new five-year vision for the company in 2021, and in 2025/26, the fifth and final year of this vision, we will build on the successes already achieved.

We are a significant local employer, particularly in Gloucestershire, where we were 64<sup>th</sup> in the top 100 employers in the county based on 2023 turnover, up from 72<sup>nd</sup> in 2022. We employ around 1000 staff, the backbone of our operations. We will continue to have a strong focus on our people this year and will continue to advance our work on climate initiatives, continuing to work closely with our partners to support them in delivering their ambitious climate targets. Subject to shareholder approval and funding being in place, a shared fleet ownership pilot scheme will be initiated, and evaluation will take place for a model for round sharing and reduction of travel between depots. Other partnership-wide opportunities will continue to be explored and presented to shareholders for their consideration, as will any potential external growth opportunities that could deliver greater value to all partners.

## **1.2. Quality and safety**

Ensuring high standards of health, safety and compliance is a key priority and underpins everything we do. This is demonstrated through our ongoing achievement of industry-recognised accreditations, including ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 for our Health and Safety Management and Environmental Management Systems respectively, which reflects our positive health and safety culture which we are committed to maintaining and improving. Our Safety, Health, Environment and Quality team drive our safety culture and practices, and

health and safety performance is monitored at all levels of the business and reviewed by our board of directors at every board meeting. Our internal compliance team supports the company in maintaining high standards through a thorough programme of scrutiny involving both scheduled and risk-based assessments, checking compliance in key areas such as ISO standards, fleet compliance, Environment Agency permitting requirements and the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. This is complemented by our annual internal audit plan which is drawn up in consultation with the chair of the Risk and Audit Committee and in partnership with our internal auditors.

### 1.3. Our services



## 1.4. Our shareholders



## 1.5. Governance and risk management

### 1.5.1. Governance

Good corporate governance and the continued professional development of the board of directors and the senior management team is fundamental to the effective operations of the company. In 2025/26 we will continue to ensure appropriate competency standards and qualifying criteria are applied to all directors and follow the spirit of the UK Corporate Governance Code. At all times, the company will remain open, transparent and accountable. The board and its members will operate as a cohesive team, with its priority at all times to further the aims, goals and values of the company, whilst always having risk and risk management at the forefront of discussions.

The board is supported by two sub-committees, a Risk and Audit Committee and a Governance and Nominations Committee. These committees support the board in key governance areas, for example, better understanding of business risk, and ensuring the processes to mitigate risk are effective and there is compliance.

### 1.5.2. Risk management

Risk management is a core principle of effective corporate governance and is also a key contributor to a sound internal control environment.

Our strategic risk management objectives include board and senior management setting a 'tone from the top' on the level of risk we are prepared to accept - our risk appetite. We maintain a strategic approach to risk management in order to make better informed decisions and use risk management to enable consistent appraisal of options and improved flexibility/agility in delivering change. Overall, we aim to develop a culture of balanced and informed risk taking throughout Ubico, including strategic, programme, partnership, project and operational risk.

### 1.6. Our values

Ubico was created to enable local authorities to enjoy greater efficiencies through economies of scale, and more control over the delivery of services. This approach is reflected in our company values, which are applied across all our services.



## 1.7.2024 Headline performance

Pillar	Measure	2021 Goal	2021 Achievement	2022 Achievement	2023 Achievement	2024 Achievement	2026 Goal
People	Vacancy fill rate (advertisement to acceptance)	<1 month	84.08% fill rate Time to hire 2.4 months	85.02% fill rate Time to hire 1.9 months	Time to hire 2.3 months	Time to hire 61 days	<1 month
	Annual training budget utilisation	80% of annual training budget	80.08% (Apr to Dec)	100% (21/22)	108% (22/23)	108% (23/24)	100% of annual training budget
	Conformance to mandatory training to schedule	>90%	New starters >95%	New starters >95%	New starters >95%	New starters >95%	>95%
	Staff turnover	<14% attrition	9.62% (20/21)	13.4% (21/22)	15.09%	17.66%	<10% attrition
Operational Excellence	Service KPIs - Missed bins	<0.05 %	0.073% per 100,000 collections	0.0807% per 100,000 collections	0.071% per 100,000 properties	0.0725% per 100,000 property visits	<0.075 % per 100,000 properties
	Fleet compliance	Fleet Audit Scores >90%	92.37% average	92.76% average	93.2% average	93.05% average	Fleet Audit Scores >95%
	RIDDOR occurrence	<12 per year	6	11	9	7	<9 per year
	Deliver to set budget	Within 5% set budget	-6.4% (20/21)	-3.1% (21/22)	+1.5% (22/23)	0% (23/24)	Within 3% set budget
Climate	Reduced carbon emissions	Benchmark in 2021/22	Carbon reduction strategy in place Baseline work in progress (consultant engaged to advise on methodology)	Emissions from activities from fuel consumption: CO2e 6,237t	Emissions from activities from fuel consumption April to Dec 23: CO2e 4.161t	Scope 1 emissions from activities from fuel consumption for 23/24: CO2e 5,838t	Sophisticated measures in place across transport, buildings and key activities

## 2. Business Plan 2025/26

### 2.1. Our five-year vision (2021-2026)

*Recognised by our customers and employees as a quality provider of sustainable services for our local communities, delivering best value and reliability*

Through:

- Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
- Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
- Using technology to drive operational efficiency
- Understanding our communities' needs
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services

### 2.2. Strategic pillars

Four strategic pillars underpin delivery of our vision and our business plan:



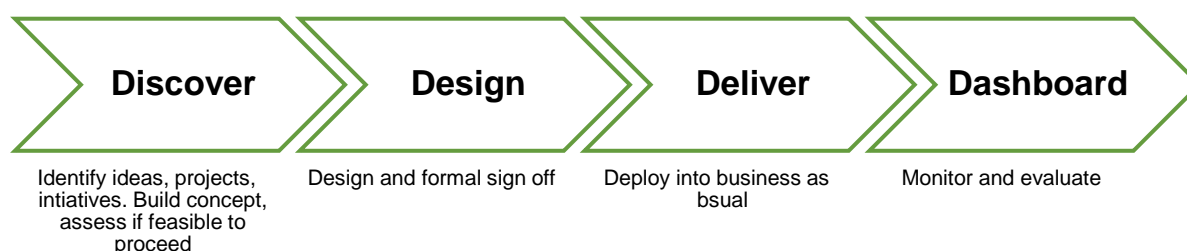
## 2.3. Strategy planning

Ubico's board routinely evaluate the validity of our five-year vision and plan, and the roadmap for its delivery, ensuring it reflects the needs and desires of our shareholders and maintains the company as a sound proposition, whilst driving value. The process for drawing up the annual business plan incorporates feedback from key stakeholders, including the company's senior management team and the board. Shareholder engagement presentations take place with each shareholder council ahead of presentation of the final written business plan, which incorporates feedback received.

Our current five-year strategy takes us to the end of the 2025/26 year. Liaison has already begun with our shareholders to understand key priorities for Ubico 2030 and this engagement will continue and will shape the agreed vision and strategy from 2026/27.

## 2.4. Project lifecycle

We have adopted a project lifecycle with four phases; Discover, Design, Deliver and Dashboard, and these can be seen alongside the activities outlined in this business plan. This aids in identifying the stage of each project or initiative and assists with long term planning and mapping, and resource management.



All projects and programmes are managed through a stage gateway system and strategic projects are managed by the PMO and sponsored by a member of the executive leadership team. The project scope, objectives, goals, budget, and necessary stage documents are closely managed by the senior leadership team, and progress against delivery of strategic projects is routinely monitored by the board.

## 2.5. People pillar

*We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.*

Attract and retain

Recognise

Upskill

Satisfaction

### 2.5.1. 2025/26 activity

In our people pillar we will continue our focus on attraction and retention, supporting and valuing our excellent staff. In order to continue to deliver safe, compliant and relevant services for its shareholders, Ubico must offer a package that is competitive and attractive in the marketplace, and in 2025/26 we will deliver changes to our terms and conditions package, within existing budgets, to ensure that we are both competitive to retain our staff, and attractive in the employment market when we need to recruit.

We have successfully broadened our recruitment routes for new employees in the past few years, and this year will explore further recruitment routes for specific roles where recruitment remains challenging. We will also improve our candidate application system, both in terms of user experience and data insight capability. We will continue to extend our skills assessment process following successful roll out across our supervisor roles and will design and procure a learning management system to facilitate and support this process.

Our Communications Strategy has a strong focus on our market presence and enhancing our reputation to support attraction and retention of staff. Our employee engagement programme, delivered now for the past two years, has proven invaluable in gaining feedback from colleagues across the company and this will continue on an annual basis. We will continue to enter relevant sector awards to celebrate and promote our successes, and we will make best use of our social media platforms and other communication channels to promote working for Ubico.

### 2.5.2. People – key risks and mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Agreement for changes to our terms and conditions, to remain attractive in the marketplace, is not achieved	Changes to be delivered within agreed budgets. Trade unions involved in the project from the outset.
Insufficient interest in Ubico vacancies, or high attrition rates	Increase reach of vacancies, routes to recruitment and improve job application process. Monitor market conditions, interest in our vacancies, vacancy fill rate and attrition rate.

## 2.6. Operational excellence pillar

*We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.*

Performance

Quality

### 2.6.1. 2025/26 activity

The activities identified in our operational excellence pillar support Ubico in providing high quality, safe and compliant services, harnessing continuous improvement and innovation wherever possible.

Over the first four years of this five-year strategy window, we have been working to implement measures to demonstrate our progress against our strategic goals, develop sound business intelligence to be able to react and adapt to change, and use insights from our data to help evaluate quality and performance that we can use to strengthen the management of the business and inform future business decisions and strategy. In 2025/26 we will develop a data management policy for Ubico to ensure a consistent and compliant approach to data collection and processing. We will continue our work developing longer term strategic cost projections for each partner, aiming to combine them to create a company long-term strategic financial plan to better support our strategic aims.

The introduction of 'in-cab' technology across our waste, recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services has been a key project in our digital transformation programme in recent years. Now in place across the company, our work this year will focus on benefits realisation and insight analysis and harmonising the operational approach to system use across the company, to drive efficiency. Another piece of work in our digital transformation programme has been in our workshops where we have been introducing technology which can provide an interface between workshop activity and back-office systems use for fleet management, providing improved efficiency and improved management information. In 2025/26 we will consider how to incorporate fleet unit costing into our back-office fleet management system which is due for re-procurement towards the end of the year. We will also implement a new three-year audit plan that reflects the work of

both the compliance function and internal audit and develop a value and quality strategy for Ubico 2030.

We will continue to support our in-house training team to deliver excellent, highly valued and effective training that meets the needs of our business, evaluating our use of internal and external instructors to ensure we are meeting our training requirements in the best possible way, and also developing a longer-term plan for the service.

We are committed to fostering positive impacts on society and the environment and will continue to ensure that social responsibility is embedded into our policies, plans and business practices to the benefit our staff, the wider community, and the environment. We will continue to leverage procurement opportunities to gain social, economic and environmental benefits for the communities we serve, sourcing local source goods and services wherever economical and practical. We will provide local employment opportunities with good employment standards and practices and will provide apprenticeship and training opportunities, and support community initiatives and events.

## **2.6.2. Operational excellence – key risks and mitigations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Budget pressures	Continue to seek early understanding of areas of cost pressure for partners and, with partners, consider mitigation plans where necessary. Continue to highlight potential areas of cost pressure as early as possible in both budget setting processes and monthly forecasting reports.
Benefits of digitisation projects are not recognised	Monitor, capture and share benefits realised through digitalisation, including financial benefits, future financial pressures mitigated following realisation of efficiencies, and other areas of added value.
Demonstrating value	Monitor, capture and share project benefits, including financial benefits, future financial pressures mitigated following realisation of efficiencies, and other areas of added value direct and indirect. Achieve agreed performance levels.
Capacity to deliver unplanned work	Project management office manages inflow and monitors resource availability. Partner expectations managed where unplanned work is requested, and additional resource requested if required.

### **2.6.3. Procurement activity 2025/26**

In 2025/26 we will complete procurement activity to allow contract award as follows:

Further to procurement activity undertaken in 24/25, contracts will be awarded for the supply of:

- Small plant and equipment – hire
- Small plant and equipment – purchase
- Mobile compactors service and maintenance (sennebogen equipment)
- Bins/bags and containers
- Interceptor waste
- Permanent recruitment

Award contract extensions or undertake new procurement activity and award a contract for the supply of:

- Provision of connected workforce solution
- PPE and uniform
- Static compactor service and maintenance
- Fleet tyres
- RVS maintenance – West Oxfordshire services
- Provision of agency staff service
- Management of haulage, sale/disposal of recycling products

Undertake new procurement activity and award a contract for the supply of:

- Fleet management system
- Absence management service
- Insurance services
- Software solution for waste management
- Liquid fuels

## 2.7. Climate pillar

*We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.*

Our environmental impact

Supporting partners with their impact

### 2.7.1. 2025/26 activity

Ubico's carbon strategy recognises two strands of activity:

- Ubico owned carbon reduction activities that are within the gift of the company to deliver.
- Shareholder sponsored activity which requires approval and funding from our shareholders.

We will continue to deliver our programme of activities to reduce our environmental impact across the business. A key project will centre around the impact from our use of resources within the buildings and depots that we occupy, starting with a pilot scheme at one of our depots. The scheme will concentrate on changing attitudes and behaviours to reduce our energy consumption, saving money and reducing our environmental impact.

Work will continue with our significant suppliers to gather data on their scope 1 and 2 emissions, allowing us to gather more detailed data for scope 3. In addition, we will evaluate our opportunities for sourcing more environmentally friendly products in our supply chain, within our existing budget constraints. Following on from early consideration of climate impact within the PMO and project initiation process, we will move to the dashboard phase and develop a KPI for projects which have a significant climate impact.

Building on the successful introduction of a number of alternative fuelled vehicles (AFV's) and electric vehicles (EV's) with our partners, we will continue to advocate for and support the introduction of alternative fuel options, coupled with any associated change of infrastructure. Vehicle manufacturers are now required to meet specific targets for zero emission vehicle sales for certain categories of vehicle, or face significant fines. This is reducing the availability of new fossil fuelled vehicles in categories such as vans and caged vehicles and compelling a move to zero emission alternatives, at least for a proportion of the vehicles purchased. As a result of our programme of investment in alternative fuel vehicles

in partnership with our shareholders, we have now reached our charging capacity for electric vehicles at all our sites. In 2025/26 we will continue to work with partners to understand future infrastructure requirements and ensure these are put in place ahead of vehicle deployment. Whilst there is not yet a mandated sales target for suppliers of zero emission heavy goods vehicles, if/when this is introduced, we must have the relevant charging infrastructure in place and will work with partners to ensure that this is considered in future infrastructure plans. We will also continue to maintain our close working relationship with our partners and shareholders, supporting projects that increase biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.

## 2.7.2. Climate – key risks and mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Resource to deliver climate specific activities	Appropriate teams within Ubico lead on different elements of our climate pillar delivery, and all teams support initiatives.
Emissions from fleet remain high due to ageing fleet or fuels chosen.	Alternative fuel vehicle options identified on fleet replacement programmes; replacement strategy agreed with partners.
Ubico's success in reducing its carbon emissions is intrinsically linked to partner decisions.	Climate opportunities which must be approached jointly are presented to partners for consideration. Ubico invited to attend key partner climate meetings.
Lack of control of utility suppliers and sites where these remain under council control.	Work closely with partners to seek utility use information that is specific to Ubico use. Work with partners to identify and deliver site projects that will improve our climate performance.
Insufficient 'refuelling' infrastructure is currently in place to enable full transition to alternative fuelled fleet.	Seek partner-wide support for an assessment and surveys of infrastructure requirements at all Ubico sites, to include liaising with the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO). When considering fleet replacements, ensure understanding of the limitations resulting from not having infrastructure to support battery electric vehicles. Appraise partners of changes to legislation which may mandate the use of electric vehicles, which would require improved/increased charging infrastructure.

## 2.8. Business development pillar

*We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.*

Assess and evaluate

Create value

Build

### 2.8.1. 2025/26 activity

Exploration and delivery of opportunities for partnership working across boundaries will continue, developing on the foundational work already undertaken in the previous four years. All future developments will take the Devolution White Paper published in December 2024, into consideration. The potential impacts of the Simpler Recycling regulations, also announced in late 2024, will be evaluated both with our partners and in relation to their impact on our own business-generated waste.

Several of the current partner contracts are due for renewal or extension in 2026 and 2027, offering an opportunity to review the current contract provisions and consider making any necessary adjustments, for example to reflect any new partnership working arrangements. Work will be undertaken in partnership with our shareholders to review the contract documentation ahead of upcoming renewal dates, with a view to all partners signing up to the same contract moving forward.

Following the successful mobilisation of waste, recycling and street cleaning services for the Forest of Dean and a significant project to ensure efficiency of collection routing in the Cotswolds, we will continue to support partner activities that safeguard future growth and improve operational efficiencies.

In addition, we will continue to consider any approaches relating to growth which could create value for the partnership, using our shareholder approved outline business case fund to forward business cases in a timely manner for shareholder consideration, and designing any growth projects which are approved.

## 2.8.2. Business development – key risks and mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Cross boundary or collaborative working proposals are not endorsed.	Proposals are not taken forward
A partner does not continue their contract at their 2026 or 2027 renewal date.	Work closely with partners to understand their position early and develop exit plans if a partner does not choose to renew. Consider impact of partner exit on other partners and work to mitigate the risks, operational and financial, wherever possible.
Expectation of delivery beyond that which can be achieved with available capacity.	Assess methods to estimate capacity and resourcing requirements to support strategic programmes.
Leadership capacity to manage an expanding portfolio.	Focus on core environmental services where we are skilled and experienced. Include additional, appropriate, leadership capacity in any business cases for growth.



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 10 MARCH 2025</b>
Subject	<b>PUBLICA REVIEW – PHASE 2 TRANSITION PLAN</b>
Wards affected	All wards.
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council <a href="mailto:Joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk">Joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Rob Weaver, Chief Executive <a href="mailto:Rob.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk">Rob.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Andrew Pollard, Interim Programme Director for the Publica Transition Programme <a href="mailto:Andrew.pollard@westoxon.gov.uk">Andrew.pollard@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the document Publica Transition: A Plan for Phase 2 of Council Services ("Phase 2 Transition Plan"), to note its contents and to approve the recommendations therein.
Annexes	Annex A – Phase 2 Transition Plan
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to Recommend to Full Council to:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the implementation of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition on the basis of the Phase 2 Transition Plan;</li> <li>2. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the decision to deal with any final detail matters arising from the Phase 2 Transition Plan;</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance in liaison with the Leader to update the constitution by making any consequential changes required as a result of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition.</li> </ol>



	4. Carry out a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year so that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li><li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li><li>• Delivering Housing</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li><li>• Supporting the Economy</li></ul>
Key Decision	Yes
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Governance, Leader, Deputy Leader, Executive Members, Interim Programme Director, Publica Interim Managing Director, Publica Assistant Directors.



## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** In January 2024, an Interim Programme Director was appointed to support the Council and other Councils who are shareholders in Publica in delivering the Publica Transition Programme ("Programme"). The Interim Programme Director established a small Programme Management Office ("PMO") to support the delivery of the Programme. A key element of the Programme is the development of a Detailed Transition Plan ("DTP"). This was prepared by the Interim Programme Director in Spring 2024, focussing on Phase 1 of the transition. It noted the overall objective of ensuring that the majority of services should move from Publica to be under greater control from the Councils in accordance with the recommendations of the Human Engine report, which the Council endorsed in November 2023.
- 1.2** The DTP was approved by the Council as well as the other District Council shareholders in Publica in July 2024. Phase 1 of the transition, comprising a core suite of Council services, was delivered on 1 November 2024 in accordance with the DTP. The majority of the Council's services have continued to be delivered by Publica. Accordingly, the DTP had envisaged a Phase 2 transition of services in/around Spring 2025. Initial planning work for Phase 2 began in Autumn 2024.
- 1.3** In developing the Phase 2 Transition Plan, the PMO considered carefully the Councils' objectives expressed through their corporate plan objectives, the design led principles outlined at high level by Local Partnerships in their report of February 2024, which preceded the DTP, and the aims of the Transition in relation to services and service delivery to:
- Deliver more defined local priorities;
  - Better reflect Member priorities and Corporate Plans;
  - Be more agile;
  - Be more sustainable;
  - Ensure better control over service;
  - Define services more to locality, with residents at the heart.
- 1.4** As part of planning for Phase 2 an initial workshop was held between District Council CEOs, Publica's Interim MD and the Interim Programme Director to seek to prioritise potential services for Phase 2. A more developed workshop was subsequently held with service leads at Publica to begin to map out current and potential future ways of



working. Publica service leads provided information to the Programme Management Office on their service streams and how they operate, with suggestions on what future service models could look like

- 1.5** It was noted that in the Government's English Devolution White Paper a path has been set down for a significant re-organisation of Local Government. There are, however, many services that continue to require focus at a locality and District Council level in the immediate term, prior to such a re-organisation taking effect, which Phase 2 of the Transition could help support and underpin. Nonetheless, consideration will be given to the impacts of the White Paper and potential unitarisation of councils and the impact this has on Publica, which will be the subject of additional reporting as more information becomes available.
- 1.6** Consistent with the requirement to sharpen locality-based service delivery in the immediate term and the need for the District Councils to deliver on their corporate plans it was agreed to bring forward a Transition Plan for Phase 2 as soon as practicably possible comprising these priority service areas:
- Property & Estates
  - Waste
  - Leisure
  - Project Management
- 1.7** It was agreed previously to consider any lessons learned from Phase 1 before embarking on a Phase 2 transition plan in detail. The Phase 2 Transition Plan identifies the key considerations.
- 1.8** For the Phase 2 Transition Plan, costings have modelled, beginning with ensuring an assured baseline onwards, together with a consideration of risk, opportunity and risk mitigation, with each element informing the overall project brief. Opportunities for sharing of certain services and roles were considered as part of the brief, however for these priority service areas it has been determined that a sovereign approach makes most sense at this stage. Taken together, this has enabled a Programme GANTT chart to be refined over time which provides the backbone to Phase 2 of the programme.



- 1.9** Through the process, it became clear that Phase 2 needed to take effect on 1 July 2025 to allow sufficient time for workforce consultation on the assumption that the District Councils were in a position to give support to the plan for Phase 2 in March 2025.

## **2. TRANSITION PLAN**

- 2.1** The Phase 2 Transition Plan sets out the services proposed to transfer, the process, consideration of risks and opportunities, cost implications, practicalities and timelines. The plan follows best practice HR and communications and will follow a clear and prescribed process to ensure the right information is communicated at the right time to ensure employment law is correctly followed and Publica employees are treated fairly. It also focusses on supporting employees through the process and explaining what the future will look like post-transfer via the correct channels

## **3. COUNCIL PLAN**

- 3.1** The Council has adopted an ambitious Council Plan. There are five priorities, of equal importance, which will guide the work we do:
- Delivering Good Services
  - Responding to the Climate Emergency
  - Delivering Housing
  - Supporting Communities
  - Supporting the Economy
- 3.2** The Phase 2 Transition Plan and the broader Publica transition supports these objectives.

## **4. BUSINESS CASE**

- 4.1** The Publica Review provides an opportunity to restructure the Council and invest to deliver the vision and priorities set by the Council Plan.
- 4.2** The rationale for the additional costs of Phase 2 is:
- A more focused and defined approach to driving the delivery of the Council's priorities as set through the Council Plan.
  - Much better definition between Policy and high-level strategy on the one hand and delivery on the other. More defined control for the Council.



- Greater clarity over roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – and where direction is set from.
- Greater clarity and focus for those functions remaining with Publica – such as Revenues and Benefits, and ICT.
- Enabling performance and value for money be more clearly defined and measured by the Council.
- Simplification of processes and in determining whether and how resources can be deployed and redeployed as priorities shift.
- Greater responsiveness and agility, so as to be able to deliver Member priorities and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Greater focus on locality and local services.
- Employing people locally, using this in support of economic growth (e.g. apprenticeships), being more accessible and visible and foster the spirit of the Cotswold community.
- Opportunity to group services to accelerate efficiencies, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving and re-defining services.
- Being responsive and business like – adopting a commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents and key stakeholders, ensuring a cost recovery approach is used where appropriate to maximise service efficiencies, whilst balancing with community benefit.
- Better focus and ability to drive the sustainability agenda of the Council.

It is assumed within the Phase 2 Transition Plan that with the significant changes to Publica, there would also be a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year. This will ensure that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 February 2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Assumptions**

The financial implications of Phase 2 are framed in the context of the February 2025 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as approved by the Council at the meeting on 24 February 2025. Sections 6 of the MTFS (paragraphs 6.19 to 6.32) outlined the broad assumptions made regarding the additional costs arising from Phase 2. In summary, the MTFS recognised the requirement to balance the budget over the MTFS



period with service costs contained within the financial envelope set out in the MTFS by taking opportunities to make services as efficient and cost-effective as possible.

The 2025/26 Revenue Budget includes provision for additional costs of £0.225m for the part-year impact of Phase 2 (£0.300m in a full-year).

Also included in the 2025/26 revenue budget is provision for additional posts of £0.272m, as detailed in paragraph 6.27 and Table 7 of the Council report. Whilst the majority of these additional posts are part of Phase 2, the Enduring Annual Impact of £0.245m shown in Table 1 of Section 7 of the DTP does include an additional post "Strategic Housing Support" which does fall within the structure considered for Property, Housing and Assets.

The Enduring Annual Impact includes this role for completeness, but it should be noted that the "Strategic Housing Support" role is financed from the Council Tax Second Homes Premium.

## **5.2 Phase 2 Methodology**

The methodology followed in the financial modelling for Phase 2 is summarised below:

- Baseline data based on January 2024 payroll information uprated to reflect the 2024/25 Pay Award and latest available post holder information.
- 60 roles were identified as in scope for Phase 2 priority areas.

### **5.2.1** 10 posts are directly attributable to the Council and will transfer from Publica to Cotswold District Council. There are 30 fragmented roles.

- Cost increases attributable to the posts identified under Phase 2 arise due to:
- Service structures reflect the reduced ability to share roles – with the priority service areas being established by each Council on a 'sovereign' basis
- Post holders currently ineligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) becoming eligible for LGPS at the point of transfer. An increase in the employer pension contribution from 5% (Royal London Scheme) to 20.7% (LGPS).
- The assumption is that there is no subsequent opt-out from LGPS (i.e., 100% of staff eligible to join LGPS do not opt-out). For the purposes of the model, this is a prudent assumption with likely opt-out rates expected to be very low.



- A small number of posts are identified as at risk with an estimated cost range included in this report for redundancy, payment in-lieu of notice, and pension strain.

### **5.3 One-off costs (Transition Support, Provision for redundancy)**

As set out in [2025/26 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) report approved by Council on 24 February 2025, paragraph 6.21 states that £0.225m of the £0.500m set aside to support the transition programme is available to support Phase 2.

Paragraph 6.28 outlines the estimated £0.300m required to cover the Council's share of one-off costs such as redundancy and pension strain costs. These would be financed from one-off funding.

### **5.4 Actions/Mitigations**

There are limited opportunities for compensating cost reductions within the Publica Contract Sum under Phase 2. The Enduring Annual impact of Phase 1 (£0.481m) was net of cost reductions of £0.503m associated with changes made to the Publica management structure. These reductions were 'front-loaded' and there is no compensating cost reduction associated with Phase 2 at this stage.

As set out in the [Phase 1 DTP covering report](#) and in the [2025/26 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) report to Council, there is a requirement for service transformation to mitigate cost increases associated with Phases 1 and 2.

*"A continual review of service outcomes and their net cost with a cultural shift towards a more commercial approach to residents, businesses, and customers. Ensuring service delivery decisions consider the net cost of service delivery, utilising IT solutions to deliver ongoing service efficiencies."*

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The Councils established a Legal Workstream with a membership composed of the Monitoring Officers for all four partner councils to Publica, the Interim Head of Legal Services, Business Manager for Business Continuity, Governance and Risk and the Interim Programme Director. This has met regularly to identify legal issues yielded by the proposed transition.



**6.2** The legal implications of transferring services back to the Council fall into three principal areas:

- Contractual Obligations (internal and external)
- Governance
- Employment law

### **6.3 Internal Contractual Arrangements**

The contractual relationship between the Council and Publica Group Ltd is the subject of various legal agreements including a members' agreement dated 25 May 2017 between FoDDC (Forest of Dean District Council), CDC (Cotswold District Council) and WODC (West Oxfordshire District Council); an Admission Agreements in relation to the Gloucestershire County Council Local Government Pension Scheme dated 14 November 2017 and in relation to Oxfordshire County Council scheme dated 30 November 2017; a Services Agreement dated 31 October 2017, with a commencement date of 1 November 2017. The Services Agreement sets out the contract periods for general services, support services and for commissioning services, which come to an end on 31 October in 2024, 2026 and 2027 respectively.

For the time being the Council has agreed with Publica via a series of side letters that the contract will continue in respect of all these services until the Council has made a decision whether or not to transfer services back in-house, whereupon it will vary the contract or give notice.

### **6.4 External Contractual Arrangements**

Existing contracts with external parties would require novation if the current party were Publica instead of the Council. This was identified as a potential risk in early meetings of the legal workstream, but it has not materialised. The contracts register appears to show that contracts have been completed in the name of the Council.

### **6.5 Governance**

The Council will need to evaluate its existing non-executive scheme of delegation and satisfy itself that it either employs or has available to it (for example through shared services) the officers empowered to discharge delegated powers. The Council will also need to remove references to Publica in its Constitution where these are no longer applicable. It is proposed that the Monitoring Officer be given the power to make all consequential amendments to the Constitution that result from members' decision.



## **6.6 Best Value Consultation**

External legal advice has been sought and obtained on whether or not the Council is obliged to carry out a public consultation under Section 3 Local Government Act 1999 on its proposals. Based on that advice, the Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officers are satisfied that no duty to consult arises.

## **6.7 Employment Law**

The proposal has at its core a change in the employment relations of all employees it impacts. Whilst this has principally been within the remit of the HR Workstream, The Legal Workstream has interrogated aspects of applicable employment law. There has been extensive discussion with external lawyers over the extent to which the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ("TUPE") applies to the insourcing of services. In the case of this Phase 2, the impacts of TUPE are more limited than was the case with Phase 1. Where TUPE does apply, the employment of any employees assigned to an organised grouping will transfer automatically to the Council unless they object to the transfer. They would be employed on the same terms and conditions, save for gaining an entitlement to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Where a role is fragmented (roles delivering across more than one council) and will no longer remain shared post transfer, TUPE will not apply. In these instances, formal consultation will be undertaken employees in line with the Publica Redundancy Policy and Procedure following ACAS best practice. Consideration will be given to alternative measures to minimise or avoid redundancies including, but limited to, suitable alternative suitable employment within Publica, or through employment opportunities with the Shareholder Councils.

- 6.8** In addition to the responsibilities entrusted to him by elected members, the Chief Executive is statutorily responsible for the numbers, grades, roles and appointment of all staff other than the statutory officers.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** The Workstreams, the Officer Transition Board and the Council's Programme Board regularly review the Programme Risk Register and the Programme is reviewed periodically through Publica's own risk management framework. This approach of risk management will continue through the Programme.



## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**8.1** Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief

When considering this recommendation, no barriers or impact on any of the above groups has been identified.

## **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES**

**9.1** This recommendation has no climate change implications

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1** Annex A – Phase 2 Transition Plan

(END)

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## **Publica Transition: A Plan for Phase 2 of Council Services**

## **Contents**

- 1.0 Background**
- 2.0 Phase 2 development**
- 3.0 Learnings from Phase 1 and goals for Phase 2**
- 4.0 Phase 2 service considerations**
- 5.0 Publica**
- 6.0 Programme Risks and Opportunities**
- 7.0 Financial modelling assumptions and outputs**
- 8.0 Transition and Post-Transition**
- 9.0 Recommendation**

## **APPENDIX - Financial Annexures**

## 1.0 Background

In July 2024, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council (together, 'the District Councils') resolved to proceed with the Detailed Transition Plan ("DTP") in relation to Phase 1 of Publica services.

Phase 1 comprised services that are at the core of the activities of virtually every council in the Country and would ordinarily be expected to be part of any council's core direct service delivery. Following the resolution to proceed, the Phase 1 services that transitioned to each of the District Councils on 1 November 2024, comprising some 276 roles were:

- Democratic Services and Elections
- Forward Planning
- Development Management (but not 'planning validation and planning support')
- Ecology
- Conservation, Heritage & Design
- Building Control
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Communities and wellbeing
- Climate change
- Strategic Finance (to include all finance roles apart from transactional finance (AP / AR), procurement, insurance and Treasury Management)
- Communications
- Strategic Housing
- Corporate Planning, policy and partnerships
- Executive Assistants and Support.

At the same time, Publica's senior leadership was changed to reflect the reduced organisation headcount and service delivery, with three Assistant Director roles going forward, compared to seven that had existed at the inception of the Publica Transition Programme. Two Publica Assistant Directors took up Director level posts as part of the Phase 1 transition at two of the District Councils.

This Plan for Phase 2 of Council services repatriation ('Phase 2 Transition Plan'), which should be read in conjunction with the DTP, develops the Publica Transition into its second phase, with a defined suite of services intended to move across to the District Councils in Spring 2025. Like the DTP, this Plan does not affect Cheltenham Borough Council, the fourth council shareholder of Publica.

Whilst Phase 1 of the Publica Transition was comprehensive, covering at least 15 areas of service, there remains an imperative to deliver a Phase 2 and potentially, in due

course, subsequent phases as requirements evolve. As referenced in the DTP, the Human Engine report and the later Local Partnerships' report had envisaged a Phase 2 to the Publica Transition. The rationale for so doing remains as outlined in the DTP, namely:

- A more focused and defined approach to driving each council's priorities through their corporate plan strategies. This is particularly key for Phase 2.
- Greater clarity and focus for those functions remaining with Publica. Publica is increasingly concentrating on the delivery of support services, and this is across the piece, including for Cheltenham Borough Council and UBICO.
- Greater clarity over roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – and where direction is set from.
- Enabling performance and value for money to be more clearly defined and measured by the Councils.
- Simplification of processes and in determining whether and how resources can be deployed and redeployed as priorities shift.
- Greater responsiveness and agility, to be able to deliver Council priorities.
- Greater focus on locality and local services.
- Employing people locally, using this in support of economic growth (e.g. apprenticeships), being more accessible and visible and foster the spirit of communities.
- Clearer definition between Policy and high-level strategy on the one hand and delivery on the other. More defined control.
- Opportunity to group services to accelerate efficiencies, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving and re-defining services.
- Being responsive and business like – adopting a more commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents and key stakeholders, ensuring a cost recovery approach is implemented whenever possible to maximise service efficiencies.
- Better focus and ability to drive the sustainability agendas of all Councils.

The Executive sponsors for Phase 2 of the transition are: Rob Weaver, Chief Executive, Cotswold District Council; Nigel Brinn, Chief Executive, Forest of Dean District Council; Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council. In addition, Frank Wilson, the Managing Director of Publica has provided considerable support and assistance in delivering this phase of the transition.

A Link to the DTP is here: [Detailed Transition Plan](#)

## **2.0 Phase 2 development**

The broad parameters of what might constitute a Phase 2 and its relevant services were initially published in the Human Engine and Local Partnerships reports and then explored further as part of the DTP. The DTP recognised that this phase would require careful engagement with key leaders in Publica. This is because unlike the Phase 1 services, which for the most part were a 'lift and shift' with most employees already delivering services for a single council within a shared management structure, Phase 2 services are largely delivered by Publica employees working across the District Councils.

The need for careful consideration and engagement, together with appropriate reflection of Phase 1 were also part of the key messages delivered through the recent Forest of Dean District Council and Cotswold District Council peer reviews.

At an initial meeting of the Chief Executives of the District Councils in September 2024, it was agreed to prioritise the services being considered for Phase 2 aligned to Council priorities. This proved to be prescient in view of English Devolution White Paper ('White Paper') announced by the Government in December 2024.

At the September 2024 meeting, it was agreed to focus on the following more strategic areas as a focus for Phase 2:

- Property & Estates
- Waste & Recycling
- Leisure contract management
- Performance and Business Intelligence
- Project Management
- Environmental and Regulatory Services (ERS) (incl. Licensing & Private sector housing grants)
- Also, Linkline / Careline, which is already effectively hosted at Forest of Dean District Council.

These priority service areas comprise circa 120 roles, with Property & Estates being by some margin the service area considered top priority for each of the District Councils from a strategic service delivery perspective.

It was agreed to work carefully through each of these priority service areas with the Publica service leads, service-by-service, council-by-council through a process of due diligence and to consider carefully the impacts of each of:

- a sovereign service,
- shared service arrangements, or
- retain in Publica.

In addition, the plan was to consider the likely costs and impacts informed by the leaders of each service, and service dependencies and interdependencies (if any) at a service-by-service level. This work would then inform timelines and how Phase 2 could be brought forward practically.

Consideration was also given to the wider suite of Phase 2 services mentioned in the DTP; however, these were not prioritised as they were not considered priorities for the District Councils.

A workshop was held at an early stage with each of the Publica service leads for the wider Phase 2 service areas, who subsequently provided analysis of their areas on an 'as is' and 'to be' basis for consideration by the District Councils. This iterative process has needed individual and collective District Council focus as Phase 2 lends itself much more to each council designing service needs that are specific to each district and their local priorities.

With the White Paper having come forward in December 2024, the expectation of a significant re-organisation of Local Government has been brought into sharper focus. At this stage, the working assumption is that new unitary authorities should be seen as the successor to both District Councils and County Councils in their area. This may well be the best way of considering how there can be fresh and improved ways of working over the longer term, likely to be from 2027 or 2028 and onwards. It also emphasizes that key priorities remain for District Councils across the Country that will need to be delivered against for their localities prior to the implementation of local government re-organisation. Phase 2 should therefore be designed to support this.

Accordingly, Phase 2 has, through an iterative approach, and through careful analysis of how service areas are organised now and how they could suitably be organised in future now evolved into these key focused areas:

- Property & Estates
- Waste & Recycling

- Leisure contract management
- Project Management
- Linkline/Careline

In view of the ambitions of the White Paper, the District Councils have expressed an ambition to get on with these priority areas of Phase 2 without delay to be able to best ensure the key deliverables for their localities as soon as possible, aligned to their Corporate Plan objectives. Phase 2 support to the District Councils has, as before, been provided by the Programme Management Office (PMO) and by the HR Business Partners (one has been seconded to each District Council since Summer 2024).

### **3.0 Learnings from Phase 1 and goals for Phase 2**

Before considering Phase 2 in detail, the District Councils had reflected on Phase 1 and whether any learnings could be brought forward for Phase 2. Phase 1 took effect on 1 November 2024, with the District Councils operating their new teams and management structures from that date. Whilst it is not possible to properly impact assess over a timeframe of only two or three months, particularly for a set of changes as significant as Phase 1, or how well KPIs are being delivered with the new ways of working, it has nonetheless been important to reflect key themes from what is known and understood so far. This has been drawn from Officer Transition Board reflections, more widely from the officer group, from discussions with employees who transferred with Phase 1 and from sample interviews carried out by Local Partnerships for their report.

Key themes are broadly in the following areas:

- Generally, Phase 1 seen to have gone well. Delivery was timely and well within budget. By the same token, PMO resources were lean with mostly internal (Publica) resource used by the PMO to keep costs down. However, there has perhaps been too much reliance on a few key personnel, and this may not always have allowed for wide engagement at every stage of the process. For this reason, Local Partnerships have suggested a variation of the governance framework, see below. It is worth mentioning that lessons from the Cheltenham Borough Homes were useful and were applied in Phase 1.
- Communications were undoubtedly a challenge from the outset with a stated objective having been announced at a very early stage supported only by a high-level study, no detailed business case, due diligence or stakeholder engagement. Language and consistency of messaging was a factor, whether the primary purpose was to drive savings or control, there was not always clarity between these things. Also, there was not the consistency of communications across the board or the frequency that had been anticipated. At times this

generated concerns around the future of Publica. In addition, the late addition to Phase 1 of the Communications team itself, was not well received widely and proved challenging. That said, communications in each Council have settled down well and each Council can more easily shape their communications in a way that is more defined to them and their locality.

- Systems and Processes generally worked very well. Whilst there have, even recently, been some specific issues with Business World, day to day transactions and payroll (which included processing the Local Government pay award) functioned perfectly at and post-transfer.
- TUPE transfer followed a clear and correct process and worked well. Nonetheless there were pressures and pinch points in terms of HR capacity at times.

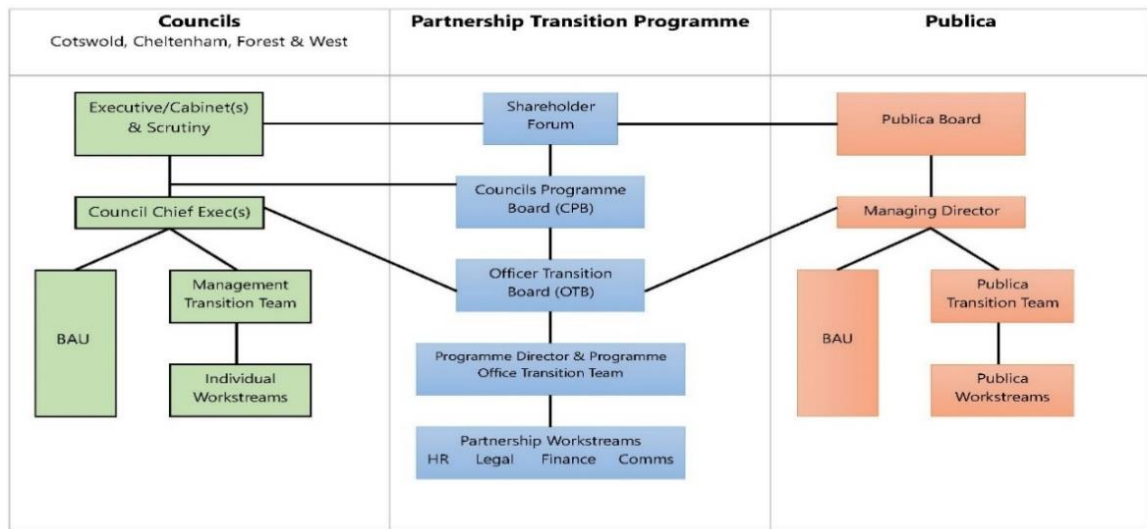
In addition, the District Councils have each engaged at a Member and Officer level on Phase 1 reflections. As part of its People and Culture Strategy Cotswold District Council has undertaken an employee survey seeking views of those that have transitioned in terms of what went well, what could have been done better etc. that will form part of the Phase 1 reflections.

Careful thought has been given to these Phase 1 reflections. Because Phase 2 is different to Phase 1 in how services are being delivered, a slightly different approach is in any case appropriate. This has begun, with considerable engagement with the service leads at Publica at an early stage. It is necessary given that unlike Phase 1, this will not for the most part entail a 'lift and shift' of service delivery.

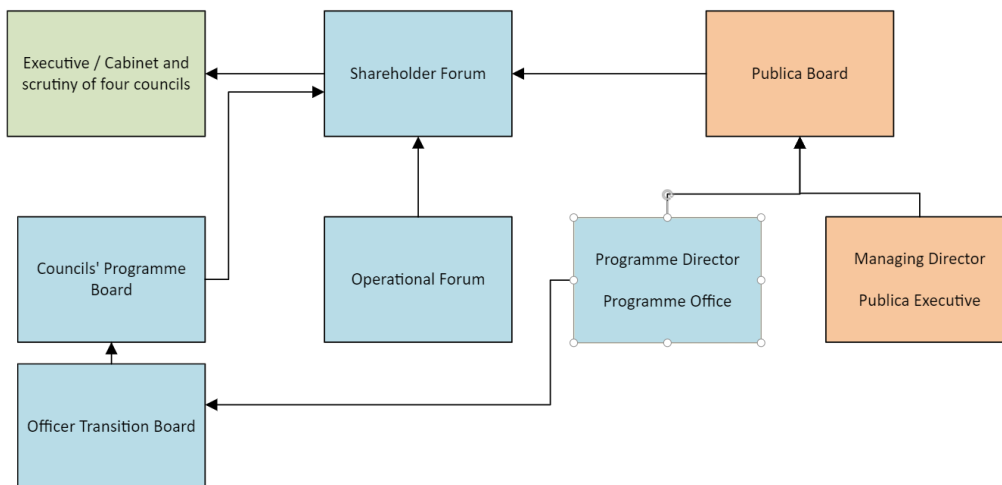
Again, in a similar way to that adopted for Phase 1, the Councils had commissioned Local Partnerships to provide their view and analysis on the processes, project management and governance of Publica, in relation to phase 2.

In terms of project and programme governance, a clear approach to governance was adopted for Phase 1 that in diagrammatic form is represented as follows:

### Transition Programme Governance Framework



For Phase 2, Local Partnerships suggested that the governance and oversight process be amended in the future to the following:



There has been a need to progress Phase 2 at pace and as a result the Officer Transition Board has been meeting at least weekly. The impact of this has been to bring Publica executives much closer to the coalface of the transition, which has been beneficial.

'Design led principles' that were a key consideration in Phase 1 to ensure that services can maximise delivery of the Councils' corporate plans and Administrations' Values remain an important consideration for Phase 2.

These include:

- *Councils shaping the delivery of services* - being more mindful of efficient working methodologies and in relation to the Council's corporate plan objectives, which are key.
- *Councils considering their repatriation approach* - where Publica employees work across multiple councils, considering factors such as historic pension strain, relationship led roles with specific councils, otherwise whether roles are shared, in other words whether the majority of work is undertaken principally for a particular council or not. Also, an approach to the potential future sharing of services by Councils, if appropriate.
- *Consideration of cost* – recognising that there is a cost to bringing services back in-house and it may be difficult to quantify any savings such as on management costs in the short term.
- *Councils employing people locally, being accessible and visible*, with the ambition of making services more local with greater accountability and transparency, building in apprenticeship and graduate programmes to ensure succession planning and improve Equity, Diversity & Inclusion metrics.
- *Grouping services together to accelerate efficiencies*, by identifying synergies between certain families of services before moving services. A good example would be that under the broad header of Sustainability, could sit climate change, environment, flood etc. Grouping services in this way would support efficiencies assuming that employees were employed under a broader brief than is currently the case.
- *Addressing anomalies and driving efficiencies by way of straight through processing where possible*. This could include potentially use technology in future to help triage in the first instance.

Not all of these will be relevant to each and every service or council.

## **4.0 Phase 2 Service Considerations**

As discussed above, Phase 2 is different from Phase 1 in that it comprises largely roles that are 'fragmented' in nature (roles delivering across more than one council). By the same token, TUPE (the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employees legislation) is well understood. Additionally, legal advice had been obtained on TUPE and process from Trowers & Hamlins previously and this has been and is being followed. The

approach adopted in the planning for Phase 2 has been to seek to TUPE transfer as many roles as reasonably possible as this is the most sensible and practicable way forward.

The essence of the independent legal advice that had been received ahead of Phase 1 was that if the client to the services 'before' and 'after' the insourcing is not the same, then TUPE does not apply. This means that for much of Phase 2, TUPE could not apply. In those instances, roles would be new and would need to be applied for, initially through a process of internal advertisement, otherwise, if needs be, through wider external advertisement.

Consideration was given to changing the service contractual documentation and/or the ways in which Publica provides its services in advance of Phase 2. The purpose of this would be to re-organise services aligned to a TUPE transfer meaning that the re-organised roles and people could be lifted and shifted as was the case with much of Phase 1. However, the time this would take to implement means that this would not be practicable in the circumstances. Additionally, it is not an approach that is easily capable of gaining assurance over.

In terms of timings, assuming a decision to implement this Phase 2 Transition Plan by the end of March 2025 and in view of the goal of ensuring as many roles as possible for the services in scope can TUPE transfer, it is prudent to assume a 'lead in' period ahead of Phase 2 'Go Live' of two to three months. Payroll falls on the 1st of a month. Practically this therefore means implementation of this phase of the transition would be effective no sooner than 1st July 2025.

Every aspect of the foregoing has been considered in developing structure charts, service and costing models for the areas in scope for Phase 2. In terms of the services under consideration:

### **Property and Estates**

Property and Estates is a key service area for all Councils. There is a significant degree of 'fragmentation' across the team that delivers these services. Whilst this service area is considered the highest priority area for each of the District Councils, each has a slightly different focus for the service, dependent on their needs. The approach modelled seeks to reflect what Councils may require in future, informed by experience of the current service model.

It was acknowledged that there is current criticism that property is not performing well, however this is primarily due to lack of resources built into the current model (see below) and this is something to address with Phase 2 of the transition. There is also a significant degree of 'fragmentation' across the piece.

Each council also has defined requirements going forward. For example, West Oxfordshire DC has a particular requirement to focus on its significant property investment holdings and the income and capital value associated with these, Cotswold DC has a particular need to focus on housing and hopes to see significant new housing coming on stream. Forest of Dean has a particular wish to focus on improvements in facilities management and facilities services in view of a fairly heavy footprint in corporate buildings for the size of the authority. In addition, each authority has a number of key development schemes that are likely to be brought forward over the coming years.

In terms of structures, Forest of Dean is the smallest and has a bias towards Facilities Management, West Oxfordshire is the largest with a bias towards investment assets, Cotswold is perceived to be somewhere between the two. Forest of Dean's service also includes the roles associated with its cemeteries which is unique to its service model.

Each service is assumed to be led by a senior qualified professional relevant to the needs of each council in this area

### **Waste and recycling**

Waste and recycling for all authorities is likely to receive increasing prominence in future with the links these services have to climate change, recycling and re-use.

It is recognised that there is a particular focus on waste at West Oxfordshire DC and a need to invest more resource into this, certainly in the immediate term. Accordingly, a senior lead for this service area is assumed together with a support structure. At Forest of Dean DC, a lighter touch integrated approach is assumed with contract management / monitoring and support integrated with environment and climate change, providing an overall brief that provides a reasonable degree of strategic capacity as well. At Cotswold DC, the focus will be on ensuring value for money and that innovation is implemented in terms of service delivery.

### **Leisure**

It is recognised that this service has been thinly stretched over recent years and has close interdependencies with the assets/properties as well as climate teams. One officer has been covering Contract Monitoring activities for all the leisure facilities across all three council areas, implying approximately one third FTE being used for this activity per authority. The result has been limited 'on the ground presence' which has led to difficulties and increased complaints about leisure services.

Traditionally councils would also have had input in leisure programming and links to health and wellbeing activities by working closely with the leisure providers and

relevant internal teams. This is not reflected in the current service model but is reflected in the 'to be' structures, with a Health and Wellbeing Officer added into each Authority's structure.

It is noted that West Oxfordshire has the largest leisure stock, an emerging leisure strategy and a leisure contract which is due to expire in 2027. In 2024, an additional 0.6 FTE role (Contract Monitoring Officer) had been created to relieve pressures and to improve on-the-ground contract monitoring and partnership working with leisure providers in the district. This Council has therefore already created a new role of Leisure Strategy Manager. Given the large number of facilities and the ambitions of the Council, a senior role to cover leisure operations and contract monitoring is needed.

### **Projects and Project Management**

When the Projects specialism was analysed council by council, it became immediately apparent that a great many of the projects were in property or related areas. By their nature, these would need to rely on specialist resource in addition to the more generalist project management resource available in this area. However, such resource has not always been readily available to the extent required. A key consideration has been whether to continue the Projects specialism or whether to augment directly the Property service. Each Council has formed a view of this based on locality needs and the position has been modelled accordingly.

### **Linkline**

Linkline is a service which is delivered by Forest of Dean District Council for residents of Forest of Dean and Cotswold District. This is a very small team who are solely allocated to one council.

## **5.0 Publica**

With Phase 1, savings through streamlining the Publica senior leadership structure were taken up front. For Phase 2, the opportunity for savings through the re-structuring of Publica is much smaller. This could, however, include:

Changes in the Leadership Structure – potentially streamline the current structure reflective of the smaller/reducing size of the organisation. It was already in plan for one of the Assistant Director roles to be taken out of the structure. This would leave two Assistant Director roles and the Managing Director, together with a wider leadership team comprised of more specialist but still senior functions including roles such as the Chief Technology Officer and others at a similar level. Potentially, with

Phase 2, a senior role could be released. However, at this stage, it makes sense not to make any assumptions over this in the Phase 2 modelling, but to impact assess the position post-Phase 2 once there is better understanding over the implications of future Local Government Re-organisation.

Changes in the Board structure – potentially streamline the current structure reflective of the smaller/reducing size of the organisation. There is currently a Board comprised of eight: the Chair, 4 Non-Executives, the MD of Publica plus two Executive Directors. Local Partnerships in their report have suggested that a smaller board of perhaps four may be appropriate post-Phase 2 (Chair, NED, Executive Director, Council Officer). At this stage, it makes sense not to make any assumptions over this in the Phase 2 modelling, but to impact assess the position post-Phase 2 once there is a better understanding over the implications of future Local Government Re-organisation. Any changes to the Board may require a shareholders' resolution.

Changes in the corporate structure - It would be sensible to close the dormant company entities as these have never been used. At the same time, it should be possible to streamline external audit and audit fees aligned to the streamlined business.

It is assumed that with the significant changes to Publica, there would also be a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year.

## **6.0 Programme Risks and Opportunities**

A Programme Risk and Opportunity Register has been developed aligned to each Council's Risk Management Policy with input through the Workstreams and Retained Officers and is available for viewing via the PMO.

Key risks that require continued focus throughout the transition and are elevated on the Risk Register centre around:

- Processes linked to the transition, and the need to follow the law and due process.
- People, the need to continue to motivate, attract and retain.
- Communications, the need to ensure effective and timely communications for each.
- Potential restructuring of Local Government resultant from the White Paper.

## 7.0 Financial modelling assumptions and outputs

A detailed financial model for Phase 2 has been developed, tested and reviewed by the District Councils, Publica's MD and the PMO.

As with Phase 1, a Baseline Model ("*BM*") has been developed from Publica's payroll data and reconciled against the agreed Publica Contract Sum ("*PCS*"). A subsequent Council Model ("*CM*") was developed building on the agreed output from the BM with additional posts included to support Phase 2 services in each Council. The output from the CM is therefore considered within this section of the Transition Plan.

The Phase 2 services present a far greater proportion of fragmented roles in comparison to Phase 1<sup>1</sup>. The services transitioned in Phase 1 were more 'Direct' in their nature, allowing TUPE regulations to apply to the majority of roles within the scope of Phase 1.

Consideration of the Phase 2 shared services and associated staff roles have required a different approach to the financial modelling completed in Phase 1; the 'lift and shift' approach and application of TUPE is/was not a viable option for significant roles within the Phase 2 services, therefore the financial modelling for Phase 2 has been tailored accordingly.

The Phase 2 baseline is calculated using the current Publica contract allocation across Clients. This was considered the most equitable<sup>2</sup> method for establishing a baseline position against which to compare Phase 2 options. The baseline was subject to check and challenge/peer review by s151 officers through the Finance Workstream. S151 officers were content that the baseline was based on accurate and reliable financial data, included reasonable financial assumptions to support financial forecasting, and had been prepared following best practice financial modelling principles (ICAEW Financial Modelling Code).

The OTB has considered the Phase 2 costings for each scenario modelled. All scenario modelling was completed in conjunction with structure charts designed and agreed by key stakeholders in each instance. These included:

- i. **PMO** suggested delivery model: Sovereign model for each Council proposed by benchmark operating models against similar District Councils.

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<sup>1</sup> 7% of Phase 1 roles were fragmented, compared to 50% for the priority services in Phase 2

<sup>2</sup> The alternative was to apply a subjective 'percentage/effort' assessment to each role under consideration for Phase 2.

- ii. **'Publica'** delivery model: Sovereign model for each Council informed by current service delivery leads and Publica Executives.
- iii. **OTB/Council Executives** model. A refinement of the prior scenarios. Informed by CEOs and respective Council Leadership teams.

The preferred solution recommended for progression through scrutiny and due diligence is the OTB/Council Executives model as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Impact of Phase 2**

Phase 2 Indicative Cost Impact	CDC (£)	FODDC (£)	WODC (£)	Total (£)
Phase 2 Baseline (see Table 2a)	695,933	504,600	766,351	<b>1,966,884</b>
OTB/Council Solution (see Table 2b)	941,053	755,441	1,002,851	<b>2,699,345</b>
<b>Phase 2 Enduring Annual impact</b>	<b>245,120</b>	<b>250,841</b>	<b>236,500</b>	<b>732,461</b>
<b>% Increase/Decrease vs Baseline</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>

The estimated 'Enduring Annual Impact' of repatriating the core priority Phase 2 services is shown in Table 1.

The forecast annual increase by Council is (noting Phase 2 implementation is anticipated as 1<sup>st</sup> July, a partial year):

- CDC £245k
- FODDC £251k
- WODC £237k
- **Total Phase 2 £732k**

in order to propose a reasonable and robust cost estimate in these areas for OTB consideration. \*\*Link to Risk Register?\*

[Annex A](#) in the Appendix details additional service level information for the Phase 2 services.

## 8.0 Transition and post-Transition

Subject to the three District Councils deciding to proceed by the end of March 2025, transition timings are assumed to be as follows:

Phase 2 – 'Go Live' 1 July 2025.

A GANTT chart detailing the transition steps was developed by and is being managed and kept up to date by the PMO, focused principally on the steps required for Phase 2. This is available for viewing via the PMO. As soon as the three District Councils have made a decision to proceed with Phase 2, the Programme will move into an

implementation phase to deal with the practicalities up to 'go live'. For those roles that are subject to TUPE, consultation will commence in April 2025 aligned to the 1 July target transfer date. For other roles, internal advertisements, initially, will commence as soon as possible from April 2025 onwards, followed by external advertisements if needed.

A communications plan has been developed by each Council's in-house Communications team and a programme of communications leading to 'go live' will be delivered.

In addition to a process of pre-transition due diligence a transition of this kind is likely to need post-transition support and investment to be successful, as was the case with Phase 1. With any significant change, organisational culture needs to be built and developed, which takes time. Change needs careful planning and good management. It also needs a full programme of ongoing support in each Council, training, Culture Change, through a Culture Development Plan, to include consideration of:

- Values
- Organisation culture and ways of working
- Key Performance metrics

It may be sensible to introduce consultative committees to drive improvement from the grassroots of each organisation, including in areas such as Health and Safety, particularly.

Looking forward, the new organisations will want to:

- Continuously consider organisational alignment to their evolving corporate plans
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in service delivery.
- Ensure an optimal organisation structure and/or approach to service delivery.
- Ensure regular communication and engagement on objectives, opportunities and improvements.
- Implement business plans, audit, review, and improvement through further engagement.
- Consider opportunities for further transition and change. This could include further insourcing or shared service arrangements.

In addition, Councils will want to ensure that Publica, as its key support services delivery partner evolves and changes as they wish to evolve and change.

In addition, the Councils and Publica will now need to consider the implications of a likely Local Government Re-organisation on services going forward.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

For the District Councils to proceed with Phase 2 of the Publica Transition programme as set out in this Plan.

## APPENDIX – Financial Annexures

### ANNEX A. Indicative Cost Impact and Service Level Information

Table 1

Phase 2 Indicative Cost Impact	CDC (£)	FODDC (£)	WODC (£)	Total (£)
Phase 2 Baseline (see Table 2a)	695,933	504,600	766,351	<b>1,966,884</b>
OTB/Council Solution (see Table 2b)	941,053	755,441	1,002,851	<b>2,699,345</b>
<b>Phase 2 Enduring Annual impact</b>	<b>245,120</b>	<b>250,841</b>	<b>236,500</b>	<b>732,461</b>
<b>% Increase/Decrease vs Baseline</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>

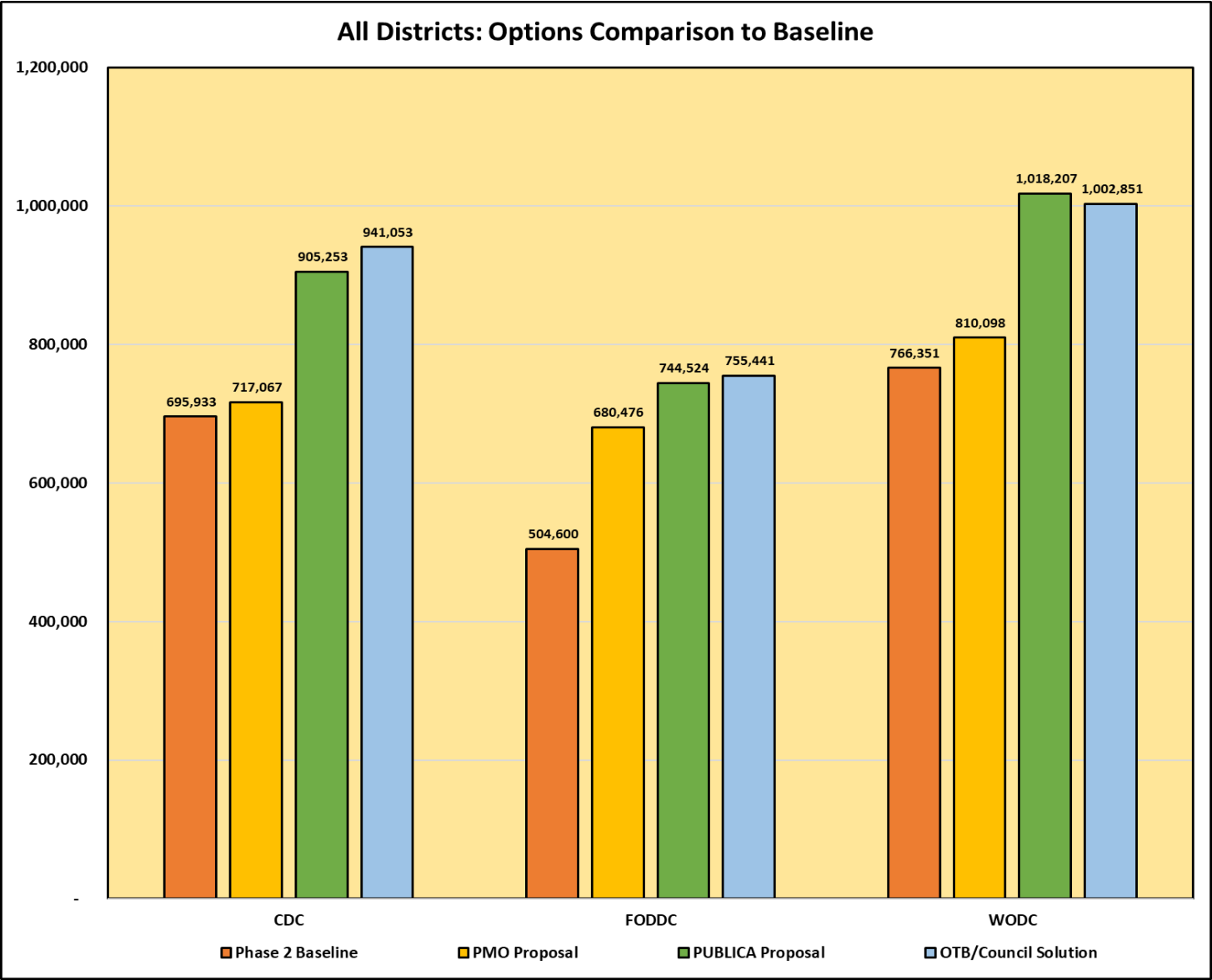
Table 2a – Phase 2 baseline by service

Phase 2 Baseline - Service Detail	CDC (£)	FODDC (£)	WODC (£)	Total (£)
Project Management	159,995	99,597	176,184	<b>435,776</b>
Careline/Linkline	-	71,384	-	<b>71,384</b>
Leisure Management	70,786	44,064	77,948	<b>192,798</b>
Property & Estates	359,309	223,669	395,666	<b>978,644</b>
Waste & Recycling	105,843	65,887	116,553	<b>288,283</b>
<b>Phase 2 Baseline Cost</b>	<b>695,933</b>	<b>504,600</b>	<b>766,351</b>	<b>1,966,884</b>

Table 2b – Phase 2 costing by service

Phase 2 OTB/Council Solution - Service Detail	CDC (£)	FODDC (£)	WODC (£)	Total (£)
Project Management	188,488	59,164	134,092	<b>384,745</b>
Careline/Linkline	-	142,862	-	<b>142,862</b>
Leisure Management	104,735	45,980	113,798	<b>264,513</b>
Property & Estates	479,573	360,447	582,253	<b>1,422,273</b>
Waste & Recycling	168,256	146,988	172,708	<b>487,952</b>
<b>Phase 2 Baseline Cost</b>	<b>941,053</b>	<b>755,441</b>	<b>1,002,851</b>	<b>2,699,345</b>

ANNEX B. Option Consideration. Impact by District





**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 10 MARCH 2025</b>
Subject	<b>ADOPTION OF REFRESHED GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2025-29</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tristan Wilkinson Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment Email: <a href="mailto:tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities Email: <a href="mailto:Joseph.Walker@Cotswold.gov.uk">Joseph.Walker@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To update Cabinet on the results of the consultation on the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy and to propose adoption of the strategy following minor amendments.
Annexes	Annex A – Green Economic Growth Strategy consultation draft. Annex B – List of proposed amendments.
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the results of the consultation on the Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29.</li> <li>2. Agree to adopt the strategy subject to the changes set out in Section 4 of the report.</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment, to make final amendments to the strategy before publication.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>



Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Consultation has taken place through the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, through an event for stakeholders held at Cirencester Growth Hub and through an open survey publicised on social media and via a press release.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Cabinet approved a draft of a refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation in October 2024. Since then, consultation has taken place in a variety of ways as set out in section 3 of the report. The response to the consultation was limited, perhaps unsurprisingly given the non-contentious nature of it, but a number of constructive comments have been received as set out in section 4. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to adopt the strategy, subject to these minor changes, and delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment to make final amendments to the strategy before it is published.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** At its meeting in October 2024, Cabinet approved the draft of a refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation. The document is, in many ways, a continuation of the Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy adopted in December 2020 for a four-year period but updated to take account of the current economic and political context.
- 2.2** The strategy acknowledged that a great deal has changed in the context of economic policy since 2020 with the 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. The refreshed strategy maintains the objective of low environmental impact, high value jobs being created to provide career opportunities for young people.
- 2.3** The identification of key growth sectors in agricultural sustainability, cyber/digital and net zero high growth industries is largely a continuation of the 2020 strategy, albeit with some nuanced changes. The strategy also recognises the continued importance of town centres, transport and infrastructure, the visitor economy and business support, with a higher profile for workforce-related issues given the challenges that have been faced since the Covid pandemic.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** Consultation on the strategy has taken place in a number of different ways. The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which is made up of key stakeholders in the



local economy, has been involved throughout its evolution. The refreshed strategy was developed to take account of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which was adopted by the County Council in May 2024 and on which considerable consultation was undertaken. An event was held jointly with Gloucestershire County Council, who were undertaking early-stage consultation on a Local Growth Plan for the county, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Cirencester Growth Hub and attended by around 20 key stakeholders.

- 3.2** A short survey was developed and added to the Council's website and promoted via social media and a press release. There was limited response, with only six surveys completed, which is perhaps not surprising given that the strategy is largely a continuation of the 2020-2024 strategy and consultation took place in other ways, both on the refreshed document and the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

#### **4. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND PROPOSED CHANGES**

- 4.1** As mentioned above, the response to the online survey was limited, but of those who responded, 50% agreed with the vision in the strategy (with 17% disagreeing and 33% being unsure), 67% agreed with SWOT analysis in the document (with the remaining 33% being unsure) and 66% agreed with the proposed actions (with 17% disagreeing and 17% unsure).
- 4.2** Of the individual comments made, several wanted the strategy to express support for the Together Gloucestershire project, which aims to keep spend from large organisations within the county. The Council has been supporting this project, which was initiated by the Cirencester and Cheltenham Chambers of Commerce, since its inception, so it is proposed that this is added to the list of actions. Respondents recognised that the matters under the Council's direct control were limited and relied upon influencing external partners. The importance of culture was recognised, as was the need for more housing to reverse the decline of the working-age population. One respondent suggested the creation of Municipal Bonds to give local people a stake in their area. In 2022, the Council successfully launched the Cotswold Climate Investment to finance green initiatives. Undertaking this on a wider basis would be a major undertaking and is not recommended at this stage, but the Council will continue to keep under review how local people can feel a greater sense of ownership of the local economy.



- 4.3** At the Cabinet meeting in October when the draft strategy was approved for consultation, Cabinet Members made a number of comments. These were largely supportive of the strategy, but also asked for the need for more young people to be encouraged to enter trades to be considered. This has become particularly relevant recently with the Government's ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes. It is proposed that the Council works with local colleges and training providers on this issue. It is proposed that this is added to the actions in the strategy document
- 4.4** In addition to the above responses, an email representation was received from a resident prior to the consultation commencing asking for the strategy to acknowledge the role that housing growth plays in the local economy and requesting a link is made between the Green Economic Growth Strategy and the review of the Council's Local Plan. It is recommended that the text of the strategy is amended to reflect this, but it is not necessary to duplicate the detail that will be set out in the Local Plan review.
- 4.5** The Local Growth Plan event identified a number of priorities, including transport and connectivity, the visitor economy, planning and housing, business growth, education and skills and making use of natural assets. We judge these to be consistent with the strategy as written and do not propose making any amendments as a result.
- 4.6** Finally, whilst the document is entitled a 'Green Economic *Growth* Strategy' it is acknowledged, for businesses in some sectors in particular, that survival rather than growth is a more realistic ambition in the short-term and there needs to be a focus on business resilience. It is suggested that the text is changed in the 'What has changed?' section on P2 of the strategy is amended to reflect this.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1** 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.
- 5.2** 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.



## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1** The response to the consultation on the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy has been largely supportive of the strategy's objectives and the measures proposed to deliver them. There are a number of minor amendments to make to the strategy document as a result of representations received and it is recommended that authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment to make the final changes before the strategy is published.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1** 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. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

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

## **11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1** 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. 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.



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**12.1** None.

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# Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2029

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

# 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.

**Tristan Wilkinson**  
Cabinet Member for the  
Economy & Environment



# 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, both in terms of consumer behaviour and working patterns.
- 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.



Cllr Tony Dale visiting Cotswold Steel Stockholders near Tetbury

# 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 80 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 accommodation 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.

Paddleboarders at the Cotswold Lakes





**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. It is investing in its campus facilities with new £5.8 teaching labs due to open in March 2025. In a highly competitive HE sector the RAU’s potential for significant growth in UK and international student numbers is somewhat constrained by the shortage and cost of housing for students in the surrounding area.

The RAU’s strategy is not only to recruit students to study at its Cirencester campus but to also grow in different ways. It has created international links with China, Sharjah 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.”

Situated in the grounds of the Royal Agricultural University, The Allston Centre is the home of Farm491, the RAU’s technology and innovation space focused on the future of farming and food systems, and The Growth Hub Cirencester, part of the wider Growth Hub Gloucestershire network and a business hub focused on launching, growing and scale businesses in the Cotswolds.

Farm491 supports AgriTech, AgriFood and farming entrepreneurs in the UK and internationally in converting their ideas or

technological solutions into viable and successful businesses, while The Growth Hub Cirencester provides fully funded business support, including green consultancy, and free knowledge exchange events and workshops to pre-startups, startups, sole traders and small to medium size businesses in the Cotswold District, as well as offer co-working, meeting room and office hire.

**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.



The offices of St James's Place plc – the district's largest employer

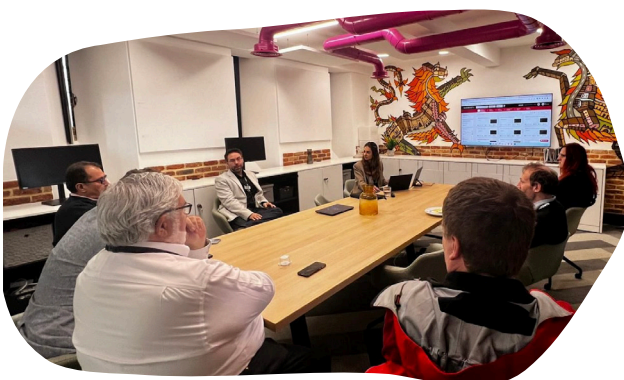
## Key Sectors



**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.

The Cotswold Homes and Interiors Festival, held at Cirencester's Corn Hall

**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.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, visits the Grace Network at the former House of Fraser in Cirencester



# 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 ([www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ltp](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ltp)) 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 ([www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/lcwip](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/lcwip)). 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.



The new A417 Missing Link under construction



Autosleepers in Willersey, where motorhomes are manufactured

## 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 Council's 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](http://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](http://www.cotswolds.com/lvep)



## Business Support



Cllr Tony Dale visits Cirencester Growth Hub

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 .



## Inward Investment

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



## Business Support

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




## Retaining talent

- Work with Cirencester College and other partners to identify opportunities for work placements as part of T-Level courses. 
- Work with partners to increase opportunities for apprenticeships in the district, encouraging smaller businesses to see the benefits of running apprenticeship schemes. 


## 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. 
- Support town centres throughout the district to evolve in the face of changing consumer behaviour and set up place-based partnerships where needed. 

## Infrastructure

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

## 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. 



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1PX  
Tel: 01285 623000 [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk)



## **Annex B**

### **Proposed amendments to Cotswold District Council Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29**

P1 5<sup>th</sup> bullet point – add “It is acknowledged, for businesses in some sectors in particular, that survival rather than growth is a more realistic ambition in the short-term and there needs to be a focus on business resilience.”

P13 Section on Apprenticeships – add “including traditional trades, which are vital to facilitate delivery of new housing” at end of first sentence.

P18 Section on Business Support – add at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, “The Council continues to support the Together Gloucestershire project, initiated by Cirencester and Cheltenham Chambers of Commerce, which aims to retain as much spend as possible within the county.”

P14/15 New section with heading “Housing and employment growth”. Wording “Whilst decisions on allocating new sites for housing and employment growth are properly dealt with through the Council’s Local Plan process, it is acknowledged that the provision of new housing, including social housing, is vital to ensure mobility of labour. It is also important that new employment opportunities are delivered alongside housing growth. The economic development team will work alongside planning and housing colleagues to facilitate this.”

P19 Actions – Business Support – add new bullet saying “Continue to support the Together Gloucestershire project to retain spend within the county”. (Steering icon)

Retaining talent – 2nd bullet point – Add “,including those in traditional trades,” after “in the district”.

Infrastructure – Add new bullet – “Continue to work to deliver new housing, including social housing, to enable mobility of labour. Work to ensure sufficient employment sites are provided alongside housing growth.” (Steering icon)



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 10 MARCH 2025</b>
Subject	<b>COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2024-25 QUARTER THREE (SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2024)</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk">joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: <a href="mailto:robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk">robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Email: <a href="mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk">democratic@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to:  1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q3 (September-December 2024).
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Good Services</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li> <li>• Delivering Housing</li> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold District Council retained senior managers, Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.



## **1. BACKGROUND**

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

## **2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT**

- 2.1** The Council adopted Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28 ('the Plan') in January 2024. The Plan sets out the Council's Aim, and key priorities, and sets out the key measures of success.
- 2.2** Progress on key actions identified in the Corporate Plan for Q3 (September-December 2024) include:

### Delivering good services

- Employees in Phase 1 of the transition successfully transferred to Council employment on 1st November. A detailed transition plan for Phase 2 will be presented to members in March, with identified TUPE employees scheduled to be transferred to Council employment in July. Other staff in fragmented roles will be able to apply for roles in the new structures as part of this 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of Transition.

### Responding to the climate emergency

- Initial exploration for the creation of an electric vehicle (EV) Taxi policy began with meetings involving other local authorities that have already implemented incentives to encourage taxi operators to switch to EVs. These discussions covered the types of incentives offered, necessary regulatory changes, challenges faced during implementation, and the overall impact on both taxi operators and the environment.



- The Ecology team have focused on implementing the new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation. Decisions have been issued for some cases with non-significant on-site BNG, and the first biodiversity gain condition compliance application has been received. Drafting of Section 106 agreements is underway. An additional Biodiversity Officer has been appointed to increase capacity for BNG, Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), the ecological emergency, and mandatory biodiversity action planning and monitoring for all Council services, as well as work on the Local Plan review.
- The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service which went live on 22nd January. This service offers energy efficiency plans, project specifications, vetted installers, and installation management to support residents.

#### Delivering Housing

- The Strategic Housing Manager is developing strategies and options for a more interventionist approach to housing delivery. This includes fostering collaborations with landowners, developers, and Registered Providers to enhance housing availability and effectiveness. Additionally, a pipeline of potential Rural Exception Sites is being developed.
- Work is ongoing to support all refugees, whether they are on a resettlement scheme or dispersed asylum. In addition to ensuring families and individuals are adequately housed, ongoing wraparound support is being provided to assist with resettlement and community cohesion.
- A planning application for the zero-carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney has been submitted. The timing of sewerage upgrades and their link to the occupation of homes need to be resolved with Thames Water, which could impact the start on site. Engagement with the Parish Council is being arranged, and the Heads of Terms for the CDC land transfer are being finalised.

#### Supporting communities

- The locations for the last of the district's community cycle racks have been finalised. Installations are scheduled for February, with 3 stands at Neighbridge, 4 at Cotswold Airport, and 4 at the Bakers Arms in Somerford Keynes.
- The Autumn Round for Crowdfund Cotswold ran slightly later than in previous years due to the timing of the Cabinet decision to continue the programme in July. As a result, the autumn round projects were still fundraising at the end of



quarter three. Following initial interest from a few more projects, four projects were taken forward and offered a pledge of support.

- The second round of Unsung Hero Awards took place in November, with the winner and runners-up attending Full Council. A third round is scheduled for January.
- In December, the Cotswold Youth Network held a meeting with a special focus on youth voice.
- The first campaign, using the online toolkit LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) ran in December and focused on identifying benefits customers likely to qualify for Pension Credit and, consequently, Winter Fuel Allowance.

#### Supporting the economy

- Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital, and sustainable aviation, to promote employment opportunities. Discussions with key stakeholders about promoting apprenticeship opportunities are ongoing, and a campaign is planned once the new government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
- In October, Cabinet approved a draft of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation. The consultation period closed on 24th January 2025.
- 14 projects have been allocated funding by the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant scheme for village halls. A number have been completed and others are at various stages of delivery.
- The outline planning application for the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village is currently progressing through the process. Officers and representatives from the RAU and its advisers have met to resolve outstanding issues, including comments from consultees.

- 2.3** Off target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at the end of Q3 are detailed below. Whilst this report is a retrospective account of progress in Q3, where possible, the current status is also included for assurance.

#### Delivering good services

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

**Q3 update:** In progress but some delays due to availability of Ubico staff to install signs. Regular progress updates being sought to try and ensure all listed signs are installed by end of Q4.



### Responding to the climate emergency

#### **Subject to proposed legislative changes, complete full review of the Local Plan**

**Q3 update:** The Council is currently partially updating its adopted Local Plan to make it green to the core. A consultation was held on the draft Local Plan policies between 1 February 2024 and 7 April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered and further supporting evidence is being produced before a final version of the Local Plan will be consulted on early in 2025. The Local Plan update subsequently be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for an Independent Examination in Public led by a government appointed Inspector.

#### **Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds**

**Q3 update:** The Cotswold Design Code is now half way through being updated. Draft Design Codes have been shared with the council for comment. The national planning policy consultation meant work had to be temporarily paused. Consideration is now being given to the new national planning policies and the implications these have on the Design Code.

#### **Work with Cirencester Town Council on the coordination of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan policies**

**Q3 update:** A consultation was held on the draft masterplan between 1 Feb 2024 and 7 Apr 2024. Following the consultation, it was decided that a master plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is required. Work is currently ongoing to draft the SPD ahead of a final consultation, which is aimed to commence in March 2025, ahead of adopting the SPD by September 2025. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the SPD. CDC continues to work closely with Cirencester TC to align the SPD with their emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.

#### **Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy**

**Q3 update:** The finalisation of the Housing Strategy has been passed to the Strategic Housing Manager. It is being updated in light of the emerging options review, the Govt National Planning Policy Framework consultation outcome and will be coordinated with other related strategies/policies (e.g Homelessness/Empty Properties etc).

### Supporting communities



**Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road**

**Q3 update:** Concerns about the condition of an adjacent brick bridge and uncertainty regarding Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) approach to addressing these issues have delayed progress, as pedestrian access to the crossing point depends on access beneath the bridge. GCC has confirmed that the crossing will not proceed independently of the bridge repairs. In the meantime, Cotswold District Council has funded design work for the crossing scheme, which is now underway.

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

**3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive. Highlights include progress in Planning Determination Times, inspections of high-risk food premises, and strong numbers of visits to the leisure centres. Customer satisfaction and land charge searches responded to within 10 days continue to be strong. However, processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances and the delivery of affordable homes are showing a negative trend.

**3.1** Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (Tracking Well Toward Achieving the Year-End Target. 85% collected up to Q3)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.33% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (98% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (100% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (96% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (21% against a target of 30%)



- Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (96% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 90%)
- Number of gym memberships (4,223 against a target of 3,900)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (143,584 visits against a target of 121,000)

**3.2** Service Performance near target:

- Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected (77.03% against a target of 78%)
- Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (89.08% against a target of 90%)

**3.3** Service Performance below target:

**Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (21 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (7 days against a target of 4 days).**

Previous Quarter: In Q2, processing times for both Council Tax Support New Claims and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances did not meet the targets, with processing taking 20.1 and 6 days, respectively.

Q3: Although the Council is currently above target for processing times, there has been an improvement compared to the same period last year, with processing times decreasing by approximately 1 day for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances. Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events remain well within the target of 5 days.

The rise in processing times during Q3 can be attributed to higher-than-usual levels of sickness within the team and the shutdown of the Council Offices over Christmas. Additionally, the service is awaiting updates from the Universal Credit (UC) section of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding file type changes for the data they provide. These updates are expected to enable more effective data capture and enhance the automation of related processes, thus bringing down processing times.



**Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) (50 delivered against a target of 75).**

Previous Quarter: During Q2, six properties were delivered within Cotswold, bringing the total to fifty for April – September 2024. It should be noted that Q1 delivered 44 properties rather than the 29 previously reported, as delays in completion reports from Registered Providers (RPs) meant these were not initially accounted for.

Q3: No affordable homes were delivered during Q3 due to delays encountered on the planned delivery sites. These delays, attributed to weather conditions and project re-phasing, have pushed the completion of some affordable homes to Q4 and early 2025/26. Of the original 13 affordable homes expected in Q3 at Evenlode Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, and Down Ampney, two at Evenlode Road are now projected for completion in Q4. The remaining 11 at Down Ampney have been re-phased, with six expected in Q4. The remaining five, along with a further 11 originally scheduled for Q4, are now expected to be delivered between April and December 2025.

Consequently, the total number of affordable homes projected for 2024/25 has been revised from 74 to 58.

Housing completions tend to fluctuate throughout the year, as developments typically take 12 months or longer to complete, with some projects spanning several years in phases. The initial over delivery of affordable housing at the start of the current strategy has contributed to reduced delivery levels in recent years.

**Missed bins per 100,000 Collections (94 against a target of 80).**

Previous Quarter: During Q2, the Council saw a notable rise in the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections, recording 302 misses against a target of 80

Q3: The number of missed bins has exceeded its target in Q3, despite a notable reduction in comparison to Q2. While flooding issues in the district caused minor delays for crews earlier in the quarter, November marked a significant achievement with the lowest number of missed collections since the reorganisation of collection rounds. This highlights the success of the improvement initiatives introduced last quarter, such as daily meetings to enhance communication and management oversight. However, December saw a rise in missed bin collections, largely driven by the adjusted schedule during the Christmas period.

Current Status: The number of missed bins reported this quarter remains below the threshold and is projected to stay within target by the end of Q4.



**3.4** A full performance report is attached at Annex C.

**3.5** As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where benchmarking data is not currently available or outdated, this is noted, and further investigations will be undertaken to look at options.

#### **4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4.1** This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2025. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to Cabinet.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** There are no direct financial implications from this report.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**7.1** Contained in this report.

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**8.1** None

#### **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** Contained in this report.

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1** None

(END)

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

Objectives	Priorities	Actions	Commencement	Target Date	Cabinet Member, Lead officer(s)	RAG Rating	Comment for Q3
Delivering good services	Ensure our workforce can deliver for the council and our community	Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability	Nov-23	Projected timeframe of two years, until 2025	Clr Joe Harris	On Target	Employees in Phase 1 of the transition successfully transferred to Council employment on 1st November. A report setting out the detailed transition plan for Phase 2 is scheduled to brief members in March with an implementation date of July 2025.
					Robert Weaver		
		Lease spare office space at Trinity Road	Dec-23	Jul-24	Clr Mike Evemy	Complete	Completed
					Claire Locke Suzanne Barton		
	Ensure effective oversight of our services, to ensure value for money and good standards	Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal	Dec-23	Jun-24	Clr Mike Evemy		
					David Stanley		
	Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets	Continue to ensure that the Council's MTFS five year strategy reflects economic conditions and the government's funding settlement	Feb-24	Reviewed annually	Clr Mike Evemy	On Target	To be reviewed in February 2025.
		Implement the Council's new asset management strategy and asset plans	Apr-24	Review April 2025	David Stanley		
Responding to the climate emergency	Reduce CO2 from Transport: We will actively encourage and support the transition to EVs and increased use of	Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy	Jan-24	Jul-24	Clr Mike McKeown	On Target	Strategic delivery for 2024/25 has been on obtaining ORCS funding and the installation of charging points across four car parks with this funding. Installations have started and should be complete by March 2025. This time critical delivery has been the priority so a wider charging strategy has not yet been developed. This can be carried forward to 2025/26 but will now sit with the CDC Climate service. This target has effectively been achieved although the scope changed due to external funding opportunities.
					Claire Locke		
					Clr Joe Harris	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	In progress but some delays due to availability of Ubico staff to install signs. Regular progress updates being sought to try and ensure all listed signs are installed by end of Q4.
					Claire Locke		

public and sustainable transport such as cycling and walking.	Work with partners to implement the Sustainable Transport Strategy	Adoption as part of the Local Plan - projected June 2025	Apr-28	Cllr Joe Harris	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
				Jon Dearing Matthew Britton		
		Taxi Transition - explore the opportunity for the creation of an EV Taxi policy	Apr-24	Jun-25	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target
				Jon Dearing Mandy Fathers		
Cut Council Carbon Footprint, implementing sustainable practices in all council operations, emphasising energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, across our buildings, fleet and suppliers.	Create a Climate Board, agree governance arrangements and key outcomes.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target	Initial meetings with departments held to inform terms of reference development
				Olivia McGregor		
Increase renewable energy generation within the district, ensuring local benefit	Support and promote community owned renewables initiatives	Dec-23	Review June 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target	Retrofit engagement officer in post
				Olivia McGregor		
	Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on Council owned assets.	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown	Complete	Two viable assets were identified for phase 1 of this project; Trinity Road Council offices and New Brewery Arts. The Trinity Road installation is now complete. The NBA business case was approved by CDC and an offer made to NBA. The Council is awaiting a decision from the trustees. This action is complete.
				Claire Locke		
Champion initiatives to address the ecological emergency and nature recovery, focusing on reducing CO2 and conserving and enhancing the district's biodiversity and natural beauty.	Implement the new requirements around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Jan-24	Review July 2024	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	Ecology team work has continued to focus on the implementation of the new BNG legislation. Decisions have now been issued for some cases with non-significant on-site BNG; first biodiversity gain condition compliance application received. Drafting of s106 agreements underway. Additional Biodiversity Officer appointed to increase capacity to address BNG, HRA, the ecological emergency, in particular mandatory biodiversity action planning and monitoring for all Council services and work on the Local Plan review.
				Adrian Harding		
Reduce CO2 from Buildings: Foster community-led climate action, supporting residents and businesses adopting renewable heating and improving energy efficiency.	Continue to promote and deliver Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen	Jan-23	Review July 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target	Cotswold Home Solar continues to be promoted and delivered. As a result of the scheme 17 homes have already installed solar panels and 20 have paid a deposit. As a result, residents are on track to save nearly £450,000 across the district by installing energy efficient measures in their homes.
	Consider the business case on optimising the delivery of high quality retrofit advice and support	Jul-24	Jul-25	Cllr Mike McKeown Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service which will be live on 22nd January. This service offers energy efficiency plans, project specifications, vetted installers, and installation management. Additionally, a Retrofit Engagement Officer will engage communities and provide advice until September 2025. Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) will deliver free energy efficiency advice for low-income households through the Warm and Well Scheme.

	Ensure our planning policies deliver our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure	Subject to proposed legislative changes, complete full review of the Local Plan	Jan-24	Jun-25	Cllr Joe Harris	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	CDC is currently partially updating its adopted Local Plan to make it green to the core. A consultation was held on the draft Local Plan policies between 1 February 2024 and 7 April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered and further supporting evidence is being produced before a final version of the Local Plan will be consulted on early in 2025. The Local Plan update subsequently be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for an Independent Examination in Public led by a government appointed Inspector.
					Adrian Harding Matt Britton		
		Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds	Sep-23	May-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Cotswold Design Code is now half way through being updated. Draft Design Codes have been shared with the council for comment. The national planning policy consultation meant work had to be temporarily paused. Consideration is now being given to the new national planning policies and the implications these have on the Design Code.
					Adrian Harding Matthew Britton		
		Work with Cirencester Town Council on the coordination of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan policies	Jan-24	Sep-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	A consultation was held on the draft masterplan between 1 Feb 2024 and 7 Apr 2024. Following the consultation, it was decided that a master plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is required. Work is currently ongoing to draft the SPD ahead of a final consultation, which is aimed to commence in March 2025, ahead of adopting the SPD by September 2025. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the SPD. CDC continues to work closely with Cirencester TC to align the SPD with their emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.
					Adrian Harding Matthew Britton		
Delivering Housing	Working with our partners to explore innovative routes to deliver more affordable homes	Explore innovative approaches to housing delivery	Feb-24	Aug-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	CDC Strategic Housing Manager developing Strategies and options for a more interventionist Housing Delivery approach including collaborations with landowners, developers and Registered Providers. A pipeline of potential Rural Exception Sites is being developed.
					Robert Weaver Alan Hope		
		Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney	Dec-23	Apr-28	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	Planning Application in process (Martin Perks is Case Officer). Sewerage upgrade timing and link to Occupation of Homes to be resolved with Thames Water and could impact on start on site. Engagement with Parish Council being arranged. Heads Of Terms for CDC land transfer being finalised.
					Robert Weaver Claire Locke		
		Support refugees to retain adequate housing	Jul-23	Review March 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	Work is ongoing to support all refugees whether on a resettlement scheme or dispersed asylum. In addition to working to ensure the families and individuals are adequately housed there is ongoing wraparound support being provided to assist with resettlement and community cohesion
					Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold/ Paula Massey		

	Understanding everyone's housing needs	Continue to monitor housing needs, using Homeseeker Plus, to inform housing strategy and implementation	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	The Housing Team prevent homelessness for an average of 50 households per quarter. By preventing homelessness before it occurs, this reduces the number of families who need to be accommodated in expensive B&B accommodation, which can also be outside of the district. This approach minimises both disruption for our clients, and reduces the cost burden on the local authority. The Housing Team also have a strong approach to rough sleeping ensuring that when it does occur, it is brief and non recurring. CDC continue to report low to zero rough sleeping in the district.
					Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold		
		Continue to build on the success of the Housing First Project with a new county wide approach	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	The Cotswold Housing First project is recognised across the county as being an exemplary example of how projects of this type should be approached. Successful outcomes are above national averages and the Housing Team continue to work closely with Bromford and P3 to ensure the continued success of this project. There are currently 6 individuals accommodated in Housing First, however external funding has been awarded to P3 to extend the offer to a further 2 clients, giving us 8 spaces in total. Referrals are currently being considered.
					Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold		
	Adopting and implementing our new housing strategy	Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	The finalisation of the Housing Strategy has been passed to the Strategic Housing Manager. It is being updated in light of the emerging options review, the Govt NPPF consultation outcome and will be coordinated with other related strategies/policies (e.g Homelessness/Empty Properties etc)
					Alan Hope Matthew Britton		
Supporting communities	Strengthen our links with town and parish councils and key stakeholders	Continue the annual programme of Town and Parish Council Forum engagement events	Jan-24	Jan-25	Cllr Joe Harris	On Target	We are looking at arranging a town and parish council 'summit' for June, to replace the more frequent forums. This approach would enable a fuller discussion of the role of town and parish councils, in the context of the Devolution White Paper, and also addresses the challenge in attracting attendees to weekday evening events.
					Angela Claridge		
	Address the challenges of flooding and water quality and sewerage discharges	Identify opportunities to influence policy and host a sewage summit with the outcome being reported to the Council in May.	Jan-24	Oct-24	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Complete	Complete
					Matthew Britton		
					Cllr Tristan Wilkinson		

	Identify gaps and bolster the Cotswold Flood wardens programme	Jan-24	Jun-24	Robert Weaver	Complete	Complete
Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Water park	Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road	Jan-24	Review in January 2025	<div>Cllr Juliet Layton</div> <div>Joseph Walker</div>	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Concerns about the condition of an adjacent brick bridge and uncertainty regarding Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) approach to addressing these issues have delayed progress, as pedestrian access to the crossing point depends on access beneath the bridge. GCC has confirmed that the crossing will not proceed independently of the bridge repairs. In the meantime, Cotswold District Council has funded design work for the crossing scheme, which is now underway.
	Install cycle racks, in consultation with the local community	Jan-24	Mar-25	<div>Cllr Juliet Layton</div> <div>Joseph Walker</div>	On Target	Following further discussion and site survey, the final locations have been revised. The final installations should take place in February, with 3 stands going in at Neighbridge, 4 at Cotswold Airport and 4 at the Bakers Arms in Somerford Keynes. The network of locations supporting, including community assets and visitor destinations should enable a variety of linear and circular routes for visitors and residents alike.
	Work with partners to embed the Nature Recovery Plan for the Waterpark	Jan-24	Review every six months	<div>Cllr Juliet Layton</div> <div>Adrian Harding</div> <div>Sophia Price</div>		
				Cllr Joe Harris		
Healthy place making through the Local Plan	Embed Healthy Homes Act into the Cotswold Design Code	Jun-25	Jun-25	<div>Cllr Joe Harris</div> <div>Adrian Harding</div>	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
	Introduce a requirement for Community Access Defibrillators in new developments	Jun-25	Jun-25	<div>Cllr Joe Harris</div> <div>Adrian Harding</div>	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
	Focus on green infrastructure, to enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing	Jun-25	Jun-25	<div>Cllr Joe Harris</div> <div>Adrian Harding</div>	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
Develop and deliver a District Council cultural strategy	Commence development of the cultural strategy	Feb-24	Sep-24	<div>Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</div> <div>Joseph Walker</div>	On Target	To date two workshops have been run between Council officers and representatives of local cultural assets, the most recent of which was held in September. The outcome of this second meeting is being worked up into a outline strategy for further discussion. The focus will be on quick win actions to support partners, rather than longer term actions to support the sector
				Cllr Claire Bloomer		Continuing to support the 'Getting Connected' Digital Inclusion Community Courses with more courses and venues along with a second course – 'Staying Connected' to enhance and improve on the learning. Working

	Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing	Continue to deliver an asset based community development approach	Jan-24	Apr-28	Joseph Walker	On Target	collaboratively with the Digital Hubs Project Manager from Forest Voluntary Action Forum and Gloucestershire County Council to set up Digital Hubs in Cotswolds. Completed a Community Building Roadshow tour using the NHS bus at many locations across the district to engage with residents about topics including Cost of Living, Health & Wellbeing, enhancing communities, reducing isolation etc. Collaboration with partner organisations such as Citizens Advice, Cotswold Friends, The Churn Project, Glos Fire & Rescue, Falls Prevention, Foodbanks, Carer's Hub etc proved successful and beneficial to many residents who were given advice, support and signposting along with gathering information about how they felt about their communities in general.
		Celebrate success - promote the work being done by partners across the district to inspire communities	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	The second round of Unsung Hero Awards ran in November, with the winner and runners up all attending the Council meeting. A third round will take place in January. The work of volunteers and partner organisations continues to be celebrated through press and social media, and directly promoted to residents through the work of the Wellbeing Team.
					Joseph Walker		
		Continue to promote community activity through Crowdfund Cotswold	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	The autumn round ran slightly later than in previous years, reflecting the timing of the Cabinet decision to continue the programme in July. As a consequence, the autumn round projects were still fund raising at the end of quarter three. Following initial interest from a few more projects, four projects were taken forward and offered a CDC pledge of support. Supported activity echoes the pattern from previous rounds, covering community buildings and physical and cultural activity.
					Joseph Walker		
	Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages	Monitor and review delivery of the District leisure contract with Freedom Leisure	Aug-23	Aug-25	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	Regular meetings have taken place, to review performance and to identify and mitigate any risks. These meetings have also presented an opportunity to pick up on complaints, where these may reflect issues in service delivery.
					David Stanley Joseph Walker		
		Continue to deliver the Healthier District and Connected Communities objectives and priorities set out in the Active Cotswolds Action Plan, and implement the Playing Pitch Strategy's action plan.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	The Active Cotswold Support Officer has been working on the evidence base for additional pitch provision in the mid Cotswolds. The draft Local Football Facility Plan identifies deficits in football provision which has sparked conversations with local partners on developing new/improved facilities.
					Angela Claridge Joseph Walker		
		Work with partners to develop a consistent, countywide approach to identify opportunities to support to care leavers	Jun-24	Review December 2024	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	Meeting of the the Cotswold Youth Network in December had an exceptional item to discuss youth voice. There is a patchwork of very positive youth support across the district, with locality and issue based provision in different locations, which levers local organisations and volunteers. However, this makes a consistent approach to youth issues challenging.
					David Stanley Joseph Walker		
					Cllr Claire Bloomer		Working with the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) team at Publica, we continue to develop our electronic

Supporting the economy	Work with partners to ensure vital services cover the district, and offer support to our residents if crises hit	Continue to be a proactive member of the Cotswold Food Network Steering Group and support initiatives under the network's umbrella	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Joseph Walker	On Target	community asset maps for the Cotswolds and have added community food provision places and libraries, amongst other resources.  Members of the Network attending a Policy in Practice briefing on LIFT, the Council's new tool to identify underclaimed benefits – the aim is to work with partners to promote and amplify the Council's campaigns to maximise uptake.
		Continue to work with the NHS Integrated Locality Partnership to support youth mental health	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	Supporting the Cotswold Youth Network mental health services and youth services and linking up organisations who can work collaboratively. Working with Northleach Teen Space to implement training for their team and some outside interventions from Ernest Cook Trust.
					Joseph Walker		
		Maintain a multi-service response to the cost of living crisis, and other challenges to community wellbeing	Jan-23	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Claire Locke Joseph Walker	On Target	The Council has procured an online toolkit, 'LIFT' which reviews the existing cohort of benefits recipients and models potential benefits underclaims, providing the Council with a tool to enhance household income for residents. The first campaign, to identify benefits customers likely to qualify for Pensions Credit and therefore Winter Fuel Allowance, ran in December.
	Keep residents safe, through awareness raising around domestic abuse and fraud	Continue to raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the fear of crime and ensure residents know how, and where, to get support	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson Joseph Walker	On Target	Following agreement on the CSP's action plan earlier in the year, the partnership met in October to discussion progress and learn more about the local response to the Serious Violence Duty, a recently imposed legal duty.
		Deliver Rural Domestic Abuse Champions programme in partnership with other rural Gloucestershire districts and Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services	Feb-24	Mar-25	Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	On Target	The Rural Domestic Abuse Champions scheme is being promoted, reflecting that this issue can present differently in areas such as Cotswold.
		Train frontline staff to identify Domestic Abuse and review internal processes to recognise and support victims of abuse	Feb-24	Jul-24	Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	On Target	GDASS continue to lead on Domestic Abuse across Gloucestershire, with a training offer to staff across partner organisations
		Coordinate activity under Home Office's safer Streets Fund to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and violence against women and girls	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson/Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	On Target	Work on the Argos Alleyway, supported by Safer Streets funding, concluded in quarter three, improved what was otherwise a dark and unwelcoming part of the town.
		Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs, through promotion of apprenticeship opportunities	Feb-24	Apr-28	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital and sustainable aviation to promote employment opportunities. Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders about how to promote apprenticeship opportunities and an article about apprenticeships appeared in the most recent Business Matters newsletter. A campaign will be launched once the detail of the new Government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
	Work with partners to develop the skills of our residents	Deliver a programme of activities in year 3			Cllr Tristan Wilkinson		Being delivered through Gloucestershire County Council's Employment and Skills Hub Outreach programme in partnership with The Churn Project. Output and outcome targets have been agreed and a legal agreement is in

		Deliver a programme of services in year 3 of the Shared Prosperity Fund to help those furthest from the employment market	Apr-24	Mar-25	Joseph Walker Paul James	On Target	place. A publicity visit took place and the ESHO project presented to the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group in November 2024 on progress to date. Cabinet will be asked to approve an additional year of funding for the project in 2025-26 working directly with The Churn Project.
	<b>Attract and manage investment to boost the local economy</b>	Consider the results of the digital and green survey of community buildings, and enable improvements through Rural England Prosperity Fund	Apr-24	Mar-25	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	14 projects have been allocated funding by the REPF grant scheme for village halls. A number have been completed and others are at various stages of delivery. The grant scheme is now closed.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
	<b>Support local businesses and farms, to enhance the vibrancy of our towns and villages, and to manage the opportunity and impact of the visitor economy</b>	Continue to deliver against the six priorities set out in the Cotswold Tourism destination management plan	Jan-24	Mar-25	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Work is underway on enhancing the website. Cotswold Tourism is promoting the destination for high value visitors thorough supporting travel trade visits and influencer visits.
					Joseph Walker Chris Jackson		
		Continue to support the Local Visitor Economy Partnership, to ensure better coordination of tourism activity and delivery against national growth targets	Jan-24	Review January 2025	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	The LVEP has a new Chair, following the departure of Andy Parsons from Cotswold National Landscape. Chris Brant, a CNP board member, will chair the partnership.
					Joseph Walker Chris Jackson		
	<b>Work with local and county partners to grow a strong and sustainable economy</b>	Undertake a refresh of the Green Economic Strategy	Feb-24	Apr-24	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	A draft of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy was approved for consultation by Cabinet in October 2024. The consultation closes on 24th January 2025 and a report will be taken to Cabinet in March with a final version of the strategy for adoption.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
		Continue to support the development of the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village	Jan-24	Jan-25	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	The outline planning application is working its way through the process. Officers and representatives from the RAU and its advisers have met in order to resolve outstanding issues including comments from consultees. It is hoped the application will be able to be determined within the next few months.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
		Continue to work with The Growth Hub to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups, with a focus on the outreach provision supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund	Jan-24	Mar-25	ClIr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Officers meet monthly with representatives from the RAU/Growth Hub to monitor progress against outputs/outcomes and are confident the targets will be achieved. Outreach Navigators continue to work across the district and have held a number of events and discovery meetings at the Moreton Area Centre, which are being well-supported. A report will be taken to Cabinet in February recommending the continuation of funding for another year in 2025-26.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		



# COTSWOLD

## District Council

### COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT

### **October - December 2024**

# Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28

## Our Ambition

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

## Our Priorities



**Delivering Good  
Services**



**Responding to the  
Climate Emergency**



**Delivering Housing**



**Supporting  
Communities**



**Supporting the  
Economy**

## Executive Summary Highlights

- Employees in Phase 1 of the transition successfully transferred to Council employment on 1st November. A detailed transition plan for Phase 2 will be presented to members in March, with identified employees scheduled to be transferred to Council employment in July.
- The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service which will be live on 22nd January. This service offers energy efficiency plans, project specifications, vetted installers, and installation management.
- The locations for the last of the district's community cycle racks have been finalised. Installations are scheduled for February, with 3 stands at Neighbbridge, 4 at Cotswold Airport, and 4 at the Bakers Arms in Somerford Keynes.
- The Autumn Round for Crowdfund Cotswold is actively fundraising, with four projects having been offered a pledge of support.
- The second round of Unsung Hero Awards took place in November, with the winner and runners-up attending Full Council. A third round is scheduled for January.
- In December, the Cotswold Youth Network held a meeting with a special focus on youth voice.
- The first campaign, using the online toolkit LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) ran in December and focused on identifying benefits customers likely to qualify for Pension Credit and, consequently, Winter Fuel Allowance.

## Delivering Good Services



### The Context

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

### Actions we are taking

Implementation of projects highlighted for the Water Park has continued to focus on making it easier for people to walk and cycle around the area, dispersing visitors more widely and enabling people to be more physically active. Unspent funds from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) were redirected to enable the delivery of additional cycle stands, focusing on the Water Park Area in collaboration with businesses and organisations. Following further discussions and a site survey, the final locations have been revised. A closedown meeting with contractors was held to finalise the locations for the last eight cycle stands. Due to delays in receiving confirmation and necessary permissions from the Gloucestershire County Council Estate Manager, two libraries were unable to have the requested cycle stands installed.

The final installations are scheduled for February, with 3 stands at Neighbbridge, 4 at Cotswold Airport, and 4 at the Bakers Arms in Somerford Keynes. This network of locations, including community assets and visitor destinations, will enable a variety of linear and circular routes for visitors and residents alike. Throughout the project, a total of 78 new cycle stands have been installed across Cotswold Lakes and the surrounding area, creating opportunities for people to connect to key locations using sustainable and active travel.

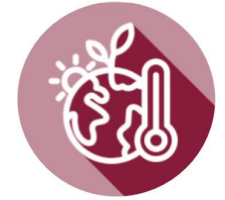
The delivery of a safe crossing point on the Spine Road remains a priority. Discussions and site meetings have been held with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Cotswolds Lakes Trust to progress options for the design detailing of a new crossing. Agreement has been reached to fund the survey and design work for the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road from the remaining COMF money, which is a critical next step towards delivery. However, uncertainty over how GCC will fund repairs to the adjacent brick bridge has prevented progress, as pedestrian access to the crossing point requires access under the bridge. GCC has confirmed they will not action the crossing independently of the bridge repairs. GCC has raised safety concerns regarding the condition of

the existing brick bridge, which will need to be addressed separately. Ongoing discussions are necessary to secure confirmation of the commitment to delivery and to establish longer-term timelines.

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

The Development Management Improvement Plan, initiated after the PAS report, is actively progressing with a focus on streamlining enforcement. Efforts to reduce the case backlog have been supported by the introduction of a "Harm Checklist" to prioritise cases more effectively. A new interactive digital form for submitting complaints, now live on the website, allows users to upload photos, map locations, and access clearer guidance on the enforcement process and timeframes. These enhancements help manage customer expectations and free up staff to focus on investigations. The next phase of the plan will refine case management to concentrate on high-priority cases, with a tracking system in development to boost transparency and responsiveness.

## Responding to the Climate Emergency



### The Context

We are operating under a new Labour government who made some important and positive commitments on tackling climate change in its manifesto including:

- Meeting the UK's internationally agreed target to reduce carbon emissions by over two-thirds by 2030.
- Giving local authorities more powers to deliver a fairer green transition through better public transport and local nature protection.
- Stop granting new oil and gas licences.
- Seriously amp up renewables by 2030, creating jobs and cutting bills.

### Actions we are taking

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 identified the Council's different spheres of influence over carbon emissions. These range from emissions under the council's control (for example emissions produced from its own operations) through to those it can have an influence over by enabling District-wide climate mitigation action.

### 'Direct Control' actions

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 contained a target to make emissions from the Council's own operations net-zero carbon as soon as possible, aiming for an 80% reduction by 2030 against a 1990 baseline, and a 100% reduction by 2045. A new need to comply with the GHG Protocol standards for emissions reporting has prompted a carbon emissions accounting review, and once this has been completed an updated report of progress against the net zero target will be carried out. In tandem a number of activities to reduce council carbon emissions are being carried out. Solar PV has been installed on CDC Council offices at Trinity Road. A business case has been agreed and an offer has been made to New Brewery Arts for the provision of solar PV too. Works will proceed swiftly if they agree to the proposal. Four dual electric vehicle charge points installed in the Trinity Road car park are fully operational, providing accessible charging facilities for staff (and the wider public). Opportunities to carry out further building decarbonisation are being sought.

## **‘Indirect Control’ actions**

Work is progressing with preparing the climate change policies of the partial update of the adopted Local Plan for a final stage of public consultation, ahead of submitting the updated policies to the Secretary of State for examination in public. This work has included consideration of feedback to the previous public consultation on the draft Local Plan, and taking on-board the findings of evidence base studies that inform the policy updates.

## **‘Place Shaping’ actions**

### EV charging infrastructure provision

The Council is working to provide residents without off-street parking with EV charging facilities to enable the uptake of EVs across the District. Plans to install electric vehicle charge points in Council-owned car parks have progressed. The Council have entered into a contract with Connected Kerb for delivery of EVCPs in 4 Council owned car parks in Tetbury, Cirencester, Stow-on-the-Wold and Moreton in Marsh respectively. Installation within these car parks is now confirmed and will be taking place between now and March.

### Solar PV support

The Council is also working to enable residents to install solar PV by helping them to understand their options, find a reliable installer and secure a fair price through the Cotswold Home Solar scheme. The scheme continues to be promoted and delivered. As a result of the scheme 17 homes have already installed solar panels, 20 have paid a deposit and residents are on track to save nearly £450,000 across the district.

### Energy efficiency support

Low carbon retrofit of the District's domestic building stock is an essential component of national emissions reduction but remains a huge challenge. The Council is undertaking significant work in this area. In partnership with all other Gloucestershire authorities, a contractor has been procured to provide a Gloucestershire-wide retrofit support offer for residents. The service launches on the 22nd of January and offers residents the opportunity of a whole house energy efficiency plan, project specification and vetted installer selection as well as an installation management service. In addition, a Cotswold District Retrofit Engagement Officer has been recruited to engage communities directly and provide a series of awareness raising events and bespoke advice between now and September 2025. We have also appointed Contractor Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) to deliver Free energy efficiency advice service specifically for low-income households via the Warm and Well Scheme.

### Net zero energy planning

The Council is also working in partnership with other Gloucestershire-based councils on Local Area Energy Planning which is vital to enabling net zero within Cotswold District since it is needed to build the case to District Network Operators for investment and expansion in electricity grid infrastructure. A contractor has been appointed to undertake initial baselining required for Energy Planning.

### Transport decarbonisation

Work also continues through Climate Leadership Gloucestershire on delivering the Statement of Shared Intent (SoSI) in which all seven local authorities expressed an ambition to reduce surface transport emissions by 80% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050. Gloucestershire councils are strengthening their collaboration regards EV charging infrastructure by considering opportunities for enhanced coordination.

### Affordable housing

We are strengthening our partnership with Bromford to ensure existing homes and communities are resilient and ready to respond to the challenges presented by the Climate Emergency.

## **‘Engaging’ actions**

This remains a very important part of the Council’s overall climate crisis response, and there is much work to do to help build confidence and momentum among all District-wide stakeholders, from staff to residents and from businesses to public sector bodies. We regularly run communication engagement campaigns to encourage behaviour change amongst District stakeholders. For example this January 2025 a campaign is being run to encourage people and showcase the small positive changes that can be made for the environment.

We continue to provide funding for a business net zero engagement support programme. We have also relaunched Crowdfund Cotswolds which supports and enables local communities to invest in carbon reduction technology and activity. Carbon literacy training continues to be rolled out to staff and councillors. We also developed a web resource to communicate to all stakeholders on the work of the council regards climate change.

Finally, a District-wide network of individuals and organisations motivated by the climate challenge has been formed, aiming to replicate the success of West Oxfordshire District Council’s ‘Green Light’ communications platform.’

## Delivering Housing

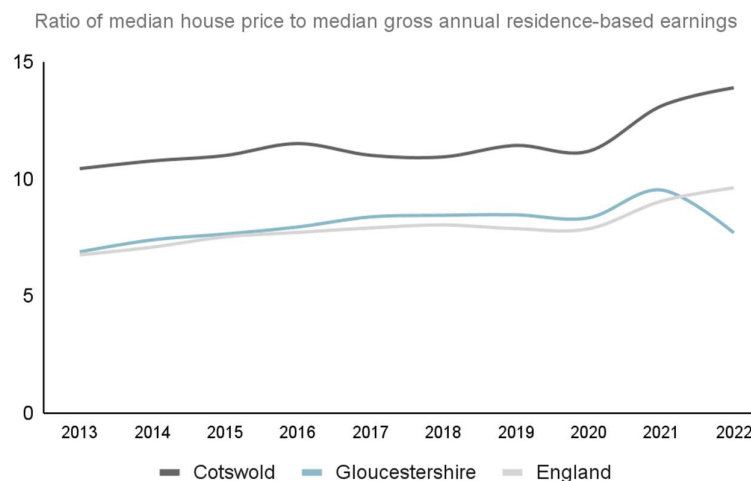


### The Context

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

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

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



### Actions we are taking

The Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy and Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet on 8 February 2021 and set out the delivery strategy for the Council to accelerate the provision of social rented and affordable homes for local people. The current focus is to facilitate the affordable housing identified

within the Local Plan and through rural exception sites and community-led housing opportunities, and to work with Housing Associations to maximise affordable housing delivery. The Council plans to go further and bring forward additional affordable homes through enabling and direct intervention, which may include the provision of land and other funding. In addition, any development the Council acquires or builds must be carbon zero in support of the Council's Climate Change emergency commitment. Although this will increase the cost of affordable housing, it will reduce ongoing revenue costs for tenants. Based on the outcomes from the councillor workshop in October 2020, discussions with local Registered Providers (RPs), and a review of delivery options, Officers recommended that the Council establish a formal partnership with one lead Registered Provider.

The partnership with Bromford to deliver carbon zero affordable homes at a site in Down Ampney is progressing well. The proposal includes a vacant plot owned by CDC and a neighbouring site which has domestic garages on it, which is owned by Bromford. The plans for 13 homes was submitted for planning consent at the end of May with the homes to be owned by Bromford and offer social rents. The carbon efficiency of these dwelling means tenants will have low utility bills, with electricity generated by the roof mounted Solar PV. Bromford are engaging with the Parish Council and Thames Water to discuss the drainage solution. The neighbouring site has repeated flooding problems which Bromford need to diagnose and resolve. The timing of the upgrade of the Sewerage Treatment works will influence the start on site date, meeting being sought with Thames Water to confirm. Heads of Terms for the CDC land transfer being negotiated with Bromford. Site Investigation carried out by Bromford under Licence to assess ground conditions.

The Old station, Sheep street was previously assessed for service provision such as homelessness accommodation and other housing options, but the conversion was found to be unaffordable. In December 2022, Cabinet agreed to develop the Old Station and Memorial Cottages for cultural and community use, working with local organisations to produce detailed designs, obtain quotations for the renovations and seek external grant funding. The Council have been working with New Brewery Arts, who prepared designs and costings to extend and renovate both buildings to provide Art studios, related offices and space that could be used for multiple community and small business purposes. Unfortunately, in December, New Brewery Arts concluded that the capital costs involved and the relatively limited grant funding that could be secured meant neither building is viable for renovation and conversion. In response, the Council issued a 'Call for Interest' in early March to attract a new partner capable of securing funding and development proposals. Following a review of opportunities and future options, a report was presented to Cabinet in July, which agreed to dispose of the Old Station and Memorial Cottages as separate assets in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy adopted by Cabinet in May 2024. The properties were marketed for sale and attracted multiple bids. The successful bidders have been notified and the legal process to complete the sales is now progressing. Meanwhile, work to rebuild the unstable rear wall to the old station has been completed and the scaffolding has been removed. Agreement has been reached with the buyer of this building to enable them to erect scaffolding ahead of completion of the purchase so they can move quickly to protect the building from further deterioration

## Supporting Communities



### The Context

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

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

### Actions we are taking

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

#### Crowdfund Cotswold

The autumn round of Crowdfund Cotswold ran slightly later than in previous years, reflecting the timing of the Cabinet decision to continue the programme in July. As a consequence, the autumn round projects were still fundraising at the end of quarter three. Following initial interest from a few more projects, four projects were taken forward and offered a CDC pledge of support. Supported activity echoes the pattern from previous rounds, covering community buildings and physical and cultural activity.

### Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Funding for the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme may end early next year, at the end of March. We are awaiting notification from the Department of Education regarding the continuation or closure of the HAF programme following changes in the national government. In the meantime, we have secured £50,000 through the Strengthening Local Communities fund to offer 14 events throughout 2025, equally distributed between the south and north of the district. These events will be multi-generational, offering activities for children, young people, and adults during each school holiday, including half terms. The events will provide information from key support organisations for all ages and include food. We will also offer a forum for all ages to share their thoughts on what's good and what could be better in their communities. Using the Asset-Based Community Development model, we will work with local community champions to target the needs of each community. The first event is in Moreton-in-Marsh at the Redesdale Hall on 18th February, and the second is in Cirencester at The Bingham Hall on 20th February. All events begin at 3 pm and finish at 6 pm.

### Rural Domestic Abuse Champions

Cotswold, in collaboration with Tewkesbury, Stroud, and Forest of Dean, funded a joint post to promote Rural Domestic Abuse Champions across districts. The rationale for this post is that in rural areas, victims of domestic abuse are less likely to seek help and support due to lack of transport and isolation. The post, offering training via Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS), helps identify and support individuals in abusive relationships in rural areas. To date, 11 new champions have been trained, with 7 existing champions fully trained, and at least 17 awaiting further training. GDASS continues to offer numerous training dates online, aiming to train employees at Cotswold, starting with members of the revenue and benefits and housing teams.

### Safe Places Scheme

Cotswold has relaunched the 'Safe Places' scheme in conjunction with the Police. So far, there are at least 18 venues in Cirencester, 10 in Bourton-on-the-Water, and several venues in Stow signed up to offer a safe place for anyone feeling vulnerable or in danger. During the summer of 2024, the Police Cadets will visit Tetbury, Lechlade, and Fairford to sign up cafes, pubs, and other venues that want to offer a safe place during the day and evenings. Each place will be listed on the Safe Places app (<https://www.safeplaces.org.uk/>), which can be downloaded to find the nearest safe venue. Organisations will also display a Safe Places sticker in their window.

### Cotswold Food Network

The 'Cotswold Food Network' continues to thrive and grow, encompassing financial inclusion, food provision via Food Banks, Pantries, and Community Fridges, and gleaning (learning from Stroud's pilot). Over 30 partner organisations regularly join us to share the support they provide and increase their support in areas of need. Due to changes at Feeding Gloucestershire, we now work independently with Lizzie Dyer. This change has had little effect on our positive work, although

there has been a slight change to our budget plans. We are still on track to present the original offer of work and small grants. Additionally, the team is working with the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) team at Publica to develop electronic community asset maps for the Cotswolds, adding community food provision places and libraries, among other resources. Members of the Network attended a Policy in Practice briefing on LIFT, the Council's new tool to identify underclaimed benefits. The aim is to work with partners to promote and amplify the Council's campaigns to maximise uptake.

### Community Building

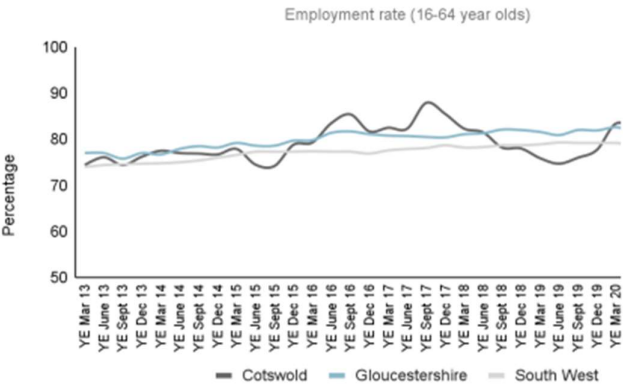
The team is actively supporting the Cotswold Youth Network by enhancing mental health and youth services, and fostering collaboration among organisations. Specifically, the team is working with Northleach Teen Space to implement training for their team and introduce interventions from the Ernest Cook Trust. Additionally, the team continues to support the 'Getting Connected' Digital Inclusion Community Courses by offering more courses and venues, and introducing a second course, 'Staying Connected,' to build on the initial learning. The team is collaborating with the Digital Hubs Project Manager from Forest Voluntary Action Forum and Gloucestershire County Council to establish Digital Hubs in the Cotswolds. Recently, the council completed a Community Building Roadshow tour using the NHS bus, visiting various locations across the district. This initiative aimed to engage residents on topics such as the cost of living, health and wellbeing, community enhancement, and reducing isolation. The council's collaboration with partner organisations like Citizens Advice, Cotswold Friends, The Churn Project, Glos Fire & Rescue, Falls Prevention, Foodbanks, and Carer's Hub proved successful. Many residents received valuable advice, support, and signposting, and the council gathered important feedback on how they feel about their communities.

# Supporting the Economy

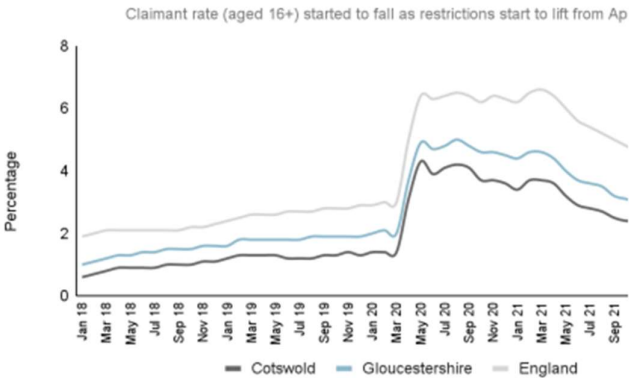


## The Context

The District supports an economically active population of an estimated 42,600 and has strengths in finance and business services, ICT including science and technology, retail, and accommodation and food services. Around 90% of businesses are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. Median wages for people working in the District are below the national average, and affordability of housing is a significant issue for the District, which can result in skill and labour shortages. Historically, unemployment has been relatively low but increased during the pandemic. It has fallen back significantly and now stands at 2% - the lowest in the county, but still slightly above the pre-pandemic level. The national and global economies have faced further uncertainty as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sharply rising prices, particularly for energy and fuel, which continues to impact on disposable income and living standards. Although energy and fuel costs, and the overall inflation rate, have dropped back, they are still significantly higher than prior to the invasion.



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey

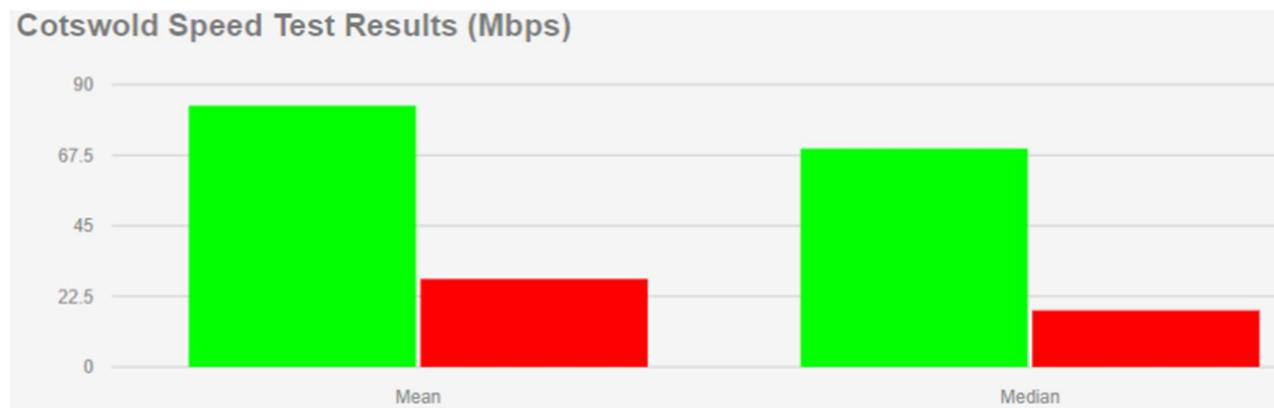
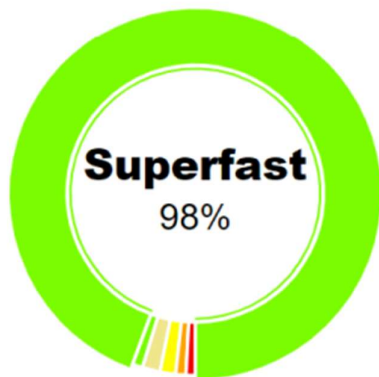


Source: ONS, Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

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

The lack of a reliable broadband connection especially in rural districts can add to social isolation as well as reduce opportunities to be economically active. Openreach has been working in Cirencester and has announced plans to deliver full fibre to Tetbury, South Cerney, Lechlade, Northleach, Fairford and Bourton-on-the-Water by 2026 at the latest. However, there are still some areas where broadband is poor and even superfast connectivity is not sufficient for some businesses to operate in the way they wish to. The Council has been working with the Fastershire Project to address these areas. The Fastershire Project ceased at the end of March 2024 and has been replaced by Project Gigabit, run by BDUK. The contract for Project Gigabit's 'Lot18', which includes parts of the Cotswold District was awarded to Gigaclear in February 2024. We are seeking details of how their programme is going to be rolled out.

The County Council has introduced the Gloucestershire Digital Household Grant to use 4G technology to deliver connectivity in remote locations where fibre is not practical or is prohibitively expensive and residents have speeds of less than 30mbps. The first phase of the scheme started in the Forest of Dean but has been extended to qualifying households across Gloucestershire. The coverage of superfast (>30mbps) has increased slightly and ultrafast (>100mbps)/full fibre has moved up quite quickly according to figures on the ThinkBroadband website. This reflects the ongoing work by the infrastructure providers and the fact that commercial activity is concentrated on providing a full fibre service to the 'easier to reach' areas whereas the last 1.5% who do not yet have superfast broadband fall firmly within the 'difficult to reach' category, which the County Council scheme is seeking to address.



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

### **Actions we are taking**

The Green Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25 sets out the challenges and issues for the District, and how they will be addressed. The strategy is in the process of being refreshed – a new draft was taken to Cabinet on 3rd October and approved for consultation. A final version is due to come back to Cabinet in March for adoption. The draft strategy has been informed by the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which was approved by the County Council’s Cabinet in May 2024 and was noted by the new City Region Board in September 2024.

The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which was set up to advise, oversee and challenge the implementation of the Strategy and provide a link to the main institutions and the wider business community in the District, continues to meet regularly and provide valuable advice and assistance. The group has representation from key stakeholders including Cirencester College, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cotswold Airport, Fairford and Lechlade Business Club, the Federation of Small Businesses and Gloucestershire County Council. Most recently, the Group met at the Cirencester Growth Hub and received presentations on the Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Hub Outreach Project and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in business.

In 2022, the Council was awarded £1 million over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. The Council’s Local Investment Plan, which sets out how the Council proposes to use the money, was approved by the government in early December 2022. The fund has three themes – Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and, in year three, People and Skills. Year one projects have been completed, including ‘Clean and Green’ initiatives, new offices at The Growth Hub/Farm491 and a feasibility study for the Old Station building in Cirencester. Cabinet in March 2023 agreed to allocate up to £135,000 a year for 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Growth Hub in Cirencester to provide business support. One positive benefit of this funding is that the Growth Hub has been able to expand its outreach programme across the district, particularly in the north in areas like Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Campden. The Business Navigators for the outreach programme have been using the Council’s Moreton Area Office as their base when working in the area. A number of events have taken place in the north of the district.

A number of exciting projects have been approved for the UKSPF in 2024-25, including a contribution towards bringing the former House of Fraser in Cirencester back into use and a new, improved and rebranded website for the Cotswold Lakes (formerly the Cotswold Water Park).

A further £764,292 was allocated to the Council from the Rural England Prosperity Fund over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. This is a capital-only fund to support rural businesses to diversify with new products and services and to provide new community infrastructure. An addendum to the Local Investment Plan was submitted to the government at the end of November 2022 and it was approved in early April 2023. The approach has been to allocate funding for business grants, for active travel and for community projects, including assisting village halls with sustainability-related improvements. The Council procured a delivery partner for the business grants (ALP Synergy Ltd) and the village hall grants (GRCC – formerly Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) jointly with the Forest of Dean District Council. Around £400,000 of business grants have been approved out of the overall allocation of £410,000 and these are at various stages of delivery. Fourteen grants for village halls have been approved, with over half completed and others in the process of being delivered. A number of active travel and community and heritage buildings applications have been approved.

Town centres are crucial, both economically and for civic pride. The number of vacant retail units in town centres serves as an indicator of their health and reflects the Council's efforts to support their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey conducted in August 2021 revealed that Cirencester had a town centre vacancy rate of 11%, which was three percentage points below the national average. This rate improved to just under 6% in April 2022 and to just under 5% in October 2022. At the end of September 2024, the vacancy rate stood at 4.8%, with several of the remaining units either under offer or undergoing refurbishment. Notably, the former House of Fraser in the Market Place, which was the longest-standing vacant building, has now been leased to the Grace Network who have now opened under the branding of Monastery & Co. The building houses a number of social enterprises including food-related, bikes, children's clothes and second-hand furniture. In the smaller towns within the district, vacancy rates are generally low, though even a few vacancies can significantly impact percentages. Currently, there are no concerns, but we remain vigilant about the pace of high street changes and the potential effects of the cost-of-living crisis. We will continue to monitor these developments closely. Additionally, the conversion of retail spaces to residential use in smaller towns is a concern as it may impact the town's 'critical mass' and its ability to attract visitors.

The Cotswolds.com website run by the tourism team is firmly established as the leading site for the Cotswolds, no1 on Google with 1.6 million users and 3.8 million views in the last 12 months. However constant updating and improvements are needed to maintain and improve on this position. To this end, Cotswolds Tourism has successfully bid for two separate funding pots: UKSPF funding for website enhancements and via the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) a Visit England grant for asset creation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) to bring forward their Innovation Village project. The plans include teaching and research space, incubator and grow-on business units and hospitality space, although this is likely to evolve as the project progresses. The Council assisted the RAU to secure £100,000 from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Strategic Economic Development Fund to assist with the cost of project management over a two-year period. A public launch of the project took place on 20 January 2023 and attracted considerable media attention. The council continues to liaise actively with the university on this project. A planning application has been submitted for the scheme in April 2024 (Ref: 24/01143/OUT). It is hoped that the application will be determined within the next few months.

- The former Mitsubishi site in Cirencester, is now renamed Watermoor Point and is home to a number of businesses. The office element is now over 90% let. The owners have also introduced an innovative and flexible co-warehousing solution, offering businesses a private, secure space within the warehouse, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 square feet. Businesses also benefit from shared mechanical handling equipment and an on-site qualified forklift driver. Watermoor Point has been granted planning permission to install an additional 310 PV solar panels in addition to its existing 50kWh array, demonstrating its commitment to sustainability.
- ZeroAvia, which relocated from Cranfield to Cotswold Airport in 2021, is a leading innovator in decarbonising aviation and is developing a hydrogen-electric powered aircraft. The Council has been working with the Inward Investment Team at Gloucestershire County Council to support ZeroAvia which has increased its staff numbers from 15 to 150 onsite, with the plans to continue to grow significantly. The Council and Inward Investment Team will continue to support ZeroAvia in its ongoing growth. Other sustainable aviation businesses, such as Vertical Aerospace and S&C Thermofluids, are already based at Cotswold Airport and the council is working with the airport's owners and others to promote it as a hub for such innovative businesses.
- The Fire Service College/Capita regarding the potential for a wider Centre for National Resilience at Moreton-in-Marsh.

Kier Highways are continuing to progress the A417 Missing Link project on behalf of National Highways. The project, which at around £460m, is the biggest infrastructure investment in the District and indeed the whole county for a generation, is designed to reduce congestion and improve road safety on this important link between Cirencester and Gloucester and, more widely, the M4 and M5 motorways. The value to the local economy is being tracked by Kier, who are using local suppliers and sub-contractors wherever possible.

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# COTSWOLD

District Council

Delivering great services locally

## PERFORMANCE REPORT: **October - December 2024**

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

# Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Customer Experience	<a href="#">Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time</a>		17
	<a href="#">Complaints</a>		18
	<a href="#">Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days</a>		20
<div>Page 175</div> <div>Development Management and Land Charges</div>	<a href="#">Building Control Satisfaction</a>	No Data	21
	<a href="#">Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>		22
	<a href="#">Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>		23
	<a href="#">Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>		24
	<a href="#">Total Income achieved in Planning &amp; Income from Pre-application advice</a>		25
	<a href="#">Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed</a>		26
	<a href="#">(Snapshot) Planning Enforcement Cases</a>		27
	<a href="#">Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days</a>		28
	<a href="#">Number of affordable homes delivered</a>		29

# Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Waste and Environment	<a href="#">Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action</a>		30
	<a href="#">Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales</a>		31
	<a href="#">% High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day</a>		32
	<a href="#">Percentage of household waste recycled</a>		33
	<a href="#">Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)</a>		34
	<a href="#">Missed bins per 100,000</a>		35
Leisure	<a href="#">Number of visits to the leisure centres &amp; (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships</a>		36

Page 176

## A note on performance benchmarking

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

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

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

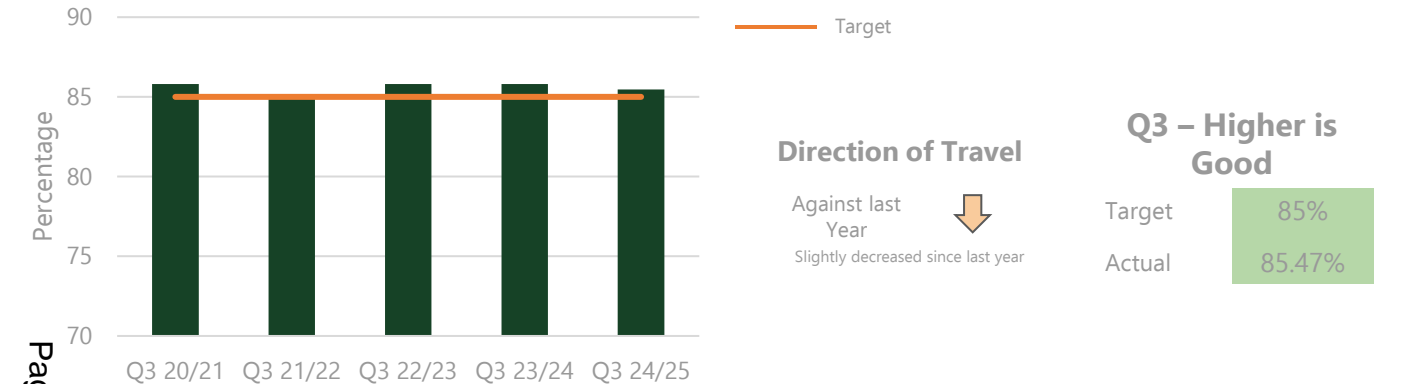
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared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

# Overall Performance

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive. Highlights include progress in Planning Determination Times, inspections of high-risk food premises, and strong numbers of visits to the leisure centres. Customer satisfaction and land charge searches responded to within 10 days continue to be strong. However, processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances and the delivery of affordable homes are showing a negative trend.

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

# Percentage of Council Tax Collected



Previously, collection rates included Direct Debit payments for the month following the end of the quarter, which distorted the data. This has now been corrected, and the updated figures are reflected in the graph above.

## How do we compare?

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

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

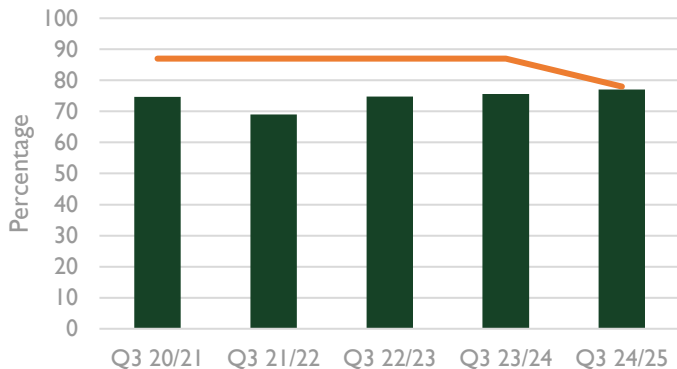
By the end of Q3, the collection rates were comparable to the same period last year although collection rates experienced a slight dip of 0.33% compared to the same period last year. Additionally, the Council is around 1.5% below it's pre-pandemic collection rates for the same period. Notably, there has been an increase in the number of people choosing to spread payments over 12 months, with between 20% more customers opting for this payment method since 2019.

The current recovery cycle is up to date, with the service making progress in collecting debt from previous years. The table below displays the percentage of Council Tax collected in respect of previous years, along with the total outstanding amount:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£480,895.36	£678,612.57	£758,641.82	£1,194,197.90	£3,112,347.65
% collected	99.45%	99.26%	99.22%	98.85%	

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

# Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Target

## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Year



Improved since last year

## Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

78%

Actual

77.03%

Previously, collection rates included Direct Debit payments for the month following the end of the quarter, which distorted the data. This has now been corrected, and the updated figures are reflected in the graph above.

## How do we compare?

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

2023-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Lichfield	99.53	1/12	Top
Ribble Valley	98.69	3/12	Top
East Hampshire	97.81	5/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>96.91</b>	<b>11/12</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
Stratford-on-Avon	96.44	12/12	Bottom

By the end of Q3, the collection rate was broadly comparable to the same period last year with a slight increase of 1.44%. However, the Council remain slightly below target by around 0.91%. Notably, as with Council Tax, there has been a rise in the number of businesses opting to spread payments over 12 months instead of 10 since 2019.

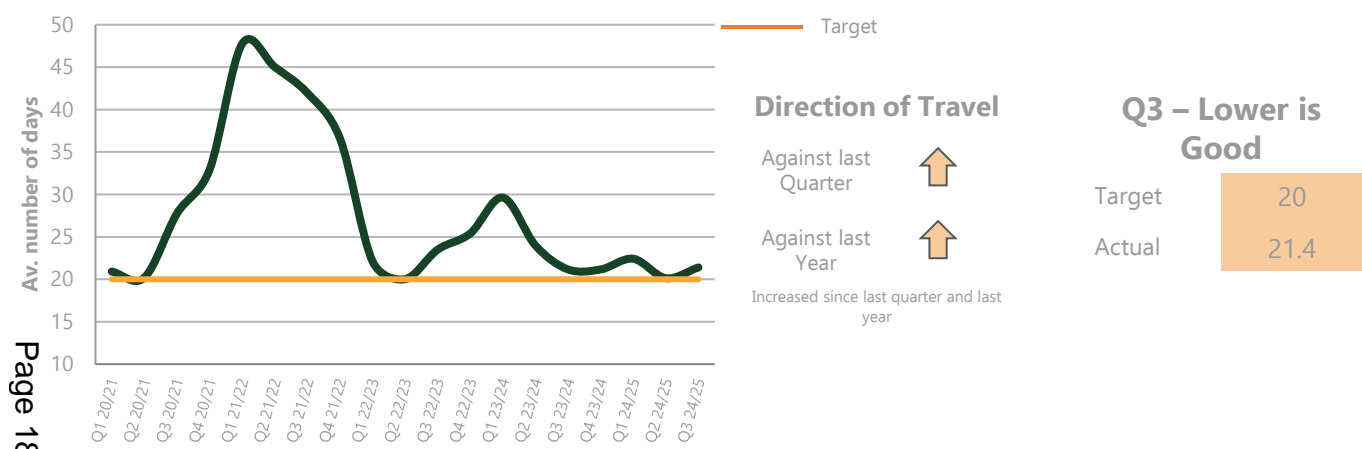
The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The table below displays the percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected in respect of previous years, along with the total outstanding amount:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total Outstanding
<b>Balance at Quarter End</b>	£107,373.19	£216,805.50	£285,010.72	£300,557.64	£909,747.05
<b>% collected</b>	99.32%	99.23%	99.13%	99.16%	

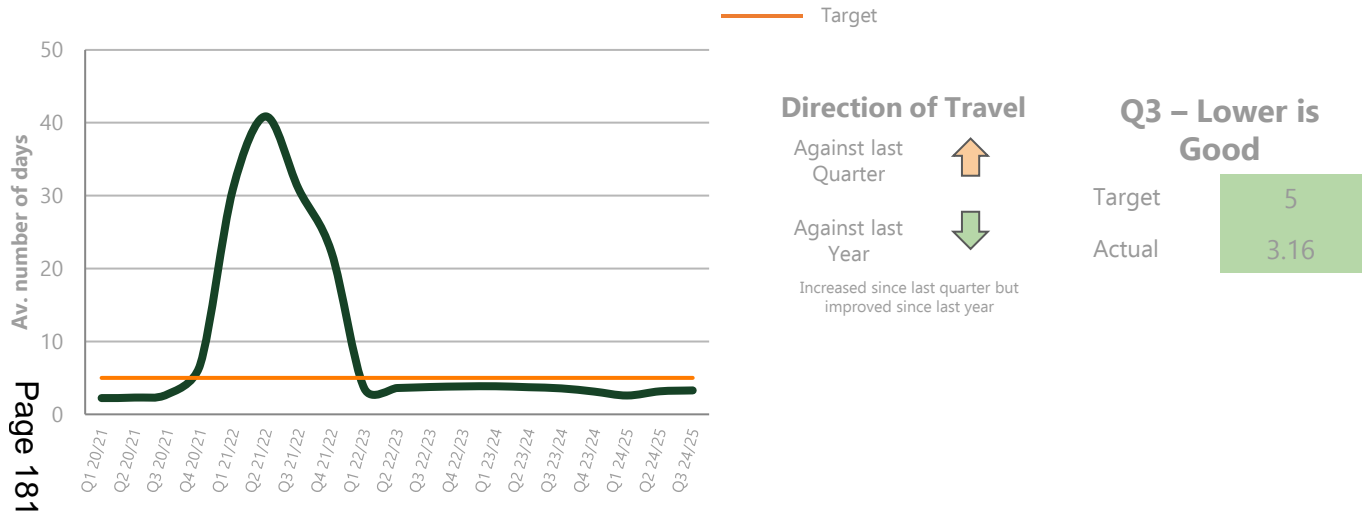
The arrears outstanding for previous year's debts for Business Rates include some data where the amount outstanding now is greater than that brought forward at the beginning of the financial year. There are some processes that can increase the amount that needs to be collected, such as Rateable Value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

Note: The quarterly targets were changed in April 2024 to more accurately reflect if the Council is on track.

# Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



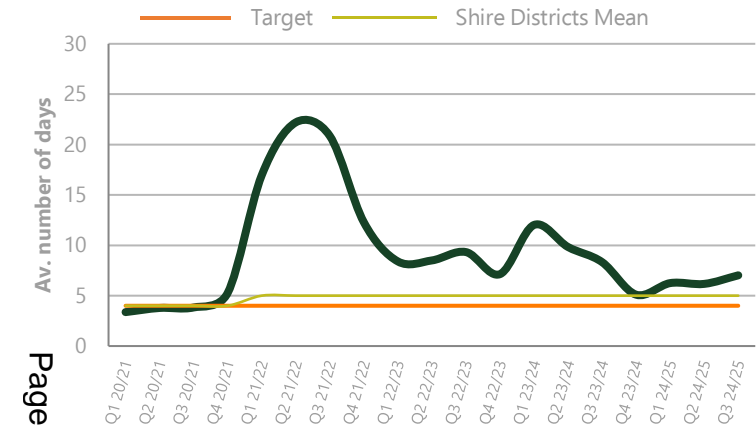
# Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events




The processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events consistently remain well below the 5-day target.


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

# Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter but improved since last year

**Q3 – Lower is Good**

Target	4
Actual	7.02

Page 382  
 How do we compare?

Speed of processing for HB CoCs – LG Inform. Latest dataset is April – June '24 (Q1 2024-25)

Q1 2024-25 Benchmark	Days	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	2.17	3/12	Top
East Hampshire	6.62	6/12	Top
Chichester	6.62	6/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>6.17</b>	<b>8/12</b>	<b>Third</b>
Stratford-on-Avon	8.53	10/12	Bottom
Wychavon	12.1	12/12	Bottom

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

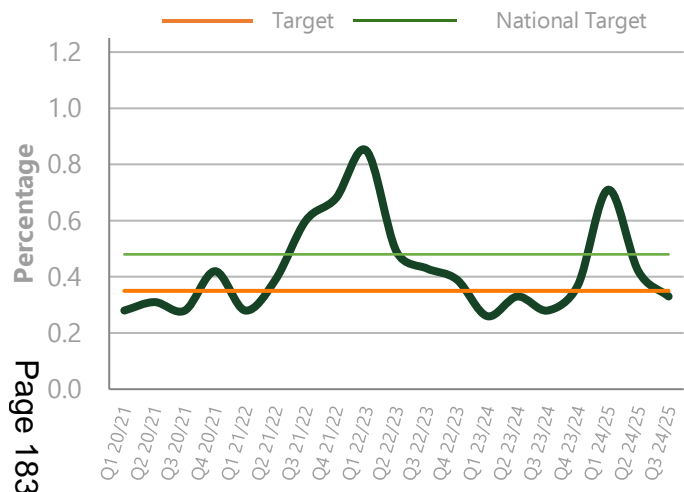
Similar to new Council Tax Support claims, the average processing times for Housing Benefit (HB) changes have increased at the Council. However, in comparison to last year, the Council has reduced it's processing times by approximately one day.

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



HB Changes – 2,000 Cumulative  
 CTS Changes – 10,383 Cumulative

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

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



## Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 
- Improved since last quarter but increased since last year

## Q3 – Lower is Good

Target	0.35%
Actual	0.33%

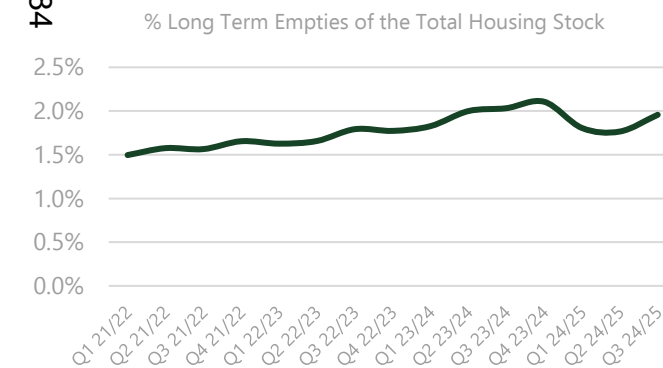
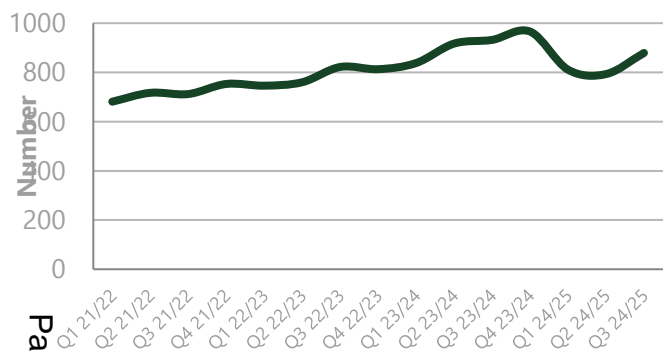
Page 183

The Council sits comfortably below the national target of 0.48% and the stricter service target of 0.35%.

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

To minimise Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments resulting from local authority error, several measures are in place. Approximately 20% of the HB caseload is reviewed by Quality Assurance officers, who focus on high-error areas such as earnings calculations. Additionally, the service participates in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) initiative to address fraud and error.

# (Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



### How do we compare?

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

### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter  
↑

Against last Year  
↓

Q3 – Lower is Good

No Target

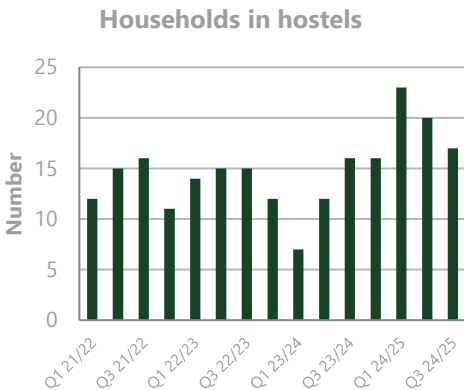
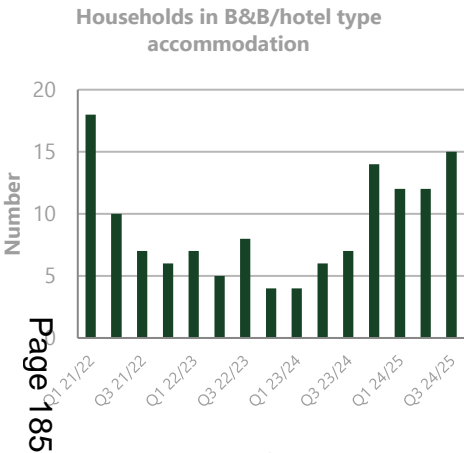
879

Increased since last quarter but improved since last year

Properties continue to be added and removed from the list, and while the graph indicates an upward trend in properties over the past few years, the Council has experienced an increase in long-term empty properties compared to the previous quarter, although the current figure is still lower than the same period last year. This increase is primarily attributed to several properties within a retirement village in Cirencester reaching six months empty.

An updated Long Term Empty Property Strategy covering the period from 2024 to 2029 was approved by the Cabinet in October. The strategy aims to support the management of long-term empty properties within the districts. It outlines the Councils' intentions to engage with property owners to understand the reasons for keeping properties vacant and, where possible, assist in bringing them back into use. This approach aims to reduce the negative impacts of empty properties, better utilize this resource to serve the community, and create more opportunities to address the Councils' housing needs.

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



### Direction of Travel

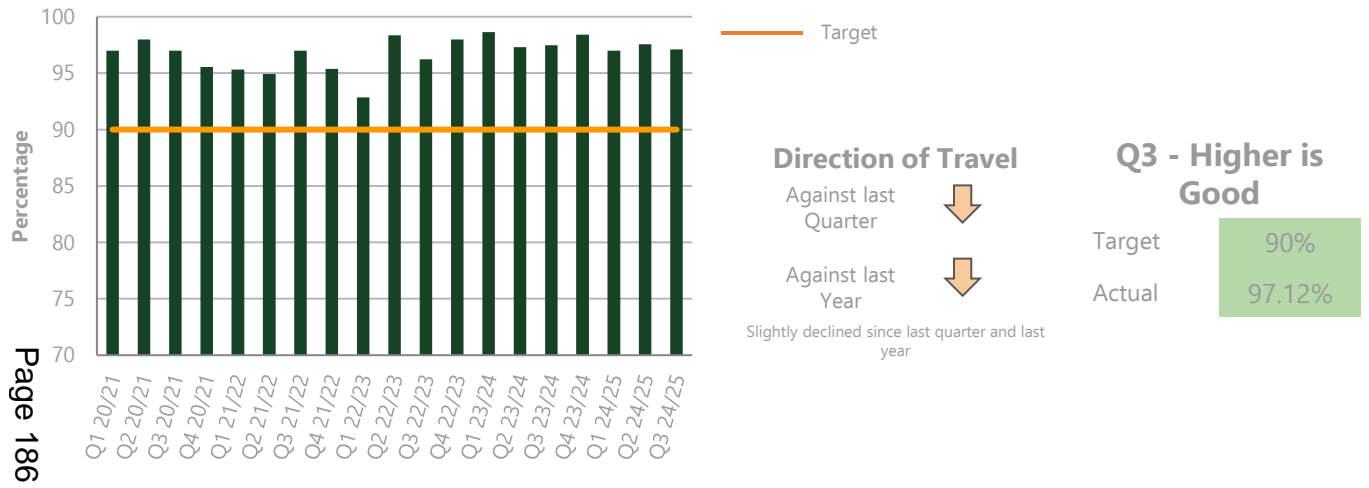
Against last Quarter	B&B/Hotels	↑
Against last Year	B&B/Hotels	↑
Against last Quarter	Hostels	↓
Against last Year	Hostels	↑
Against last Quarter	Move Ons	↓
Against last Year	Move Ons	↑

Homelessness remains a significant issue in Cotswold with numbers having increased following the extended cold weather over Christmas. The situation is complicated by several factors, including full hostels, reduced availability in adult homelessness pathways, and a shortage of affordable housing options outside the social rented sector.

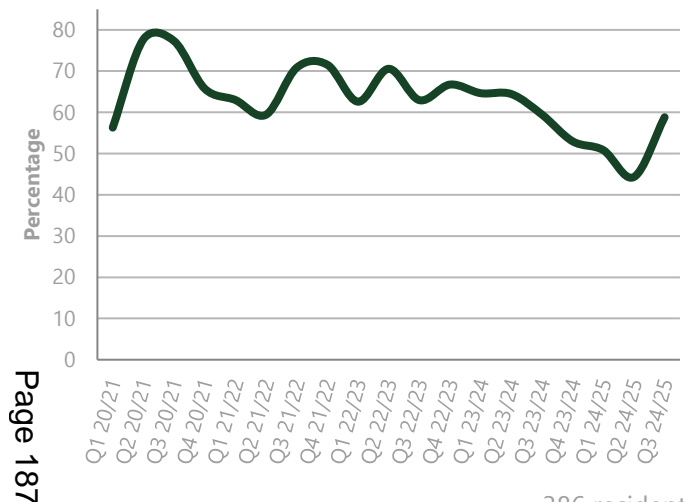
The team remains dedicated to preventing homelessness and has successfully averted homelessness for 152 households for the financial year to date. This includes 108 cases within the statutory 56-day period and 44 cases addressed before statutory duties were triggered. It's important to note that these figures are approximations and have not yet been officially confirmed through the government reporting system.



**How do we compare?**  
 No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

# Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



# Customer Satisfaction - Email



**Direction of Travel**  
 Against last Quarter   
 Against last Year   
 Improved since last quarter but slightly declined since last year

**Q3 - Higher is Good**  
*No Target*  
**58.81%**

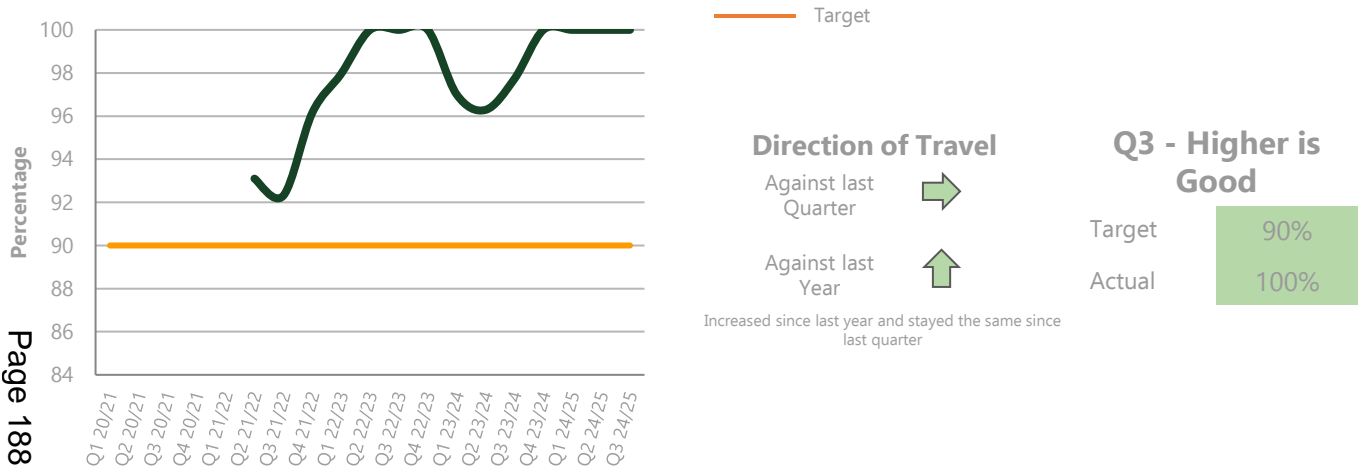
386 residents responded to the survey, of which 227 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 52.01% satisfaction for the quarter, down from 58.28% during Q2.

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

Previously, rising levels of negative feedback prompted a review to identify the underlying causes of dissatisfaction. The analysis highlighted that dissatisfaction primarily arose from service failures, such as missed bin collections, delays in container deliveries, and insufficient responses from Planning and Housing services. In response, each service area introduced targeted improvements to systems and processes to address these concerns effectively.

**How do we compare?**  
 No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

# Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face

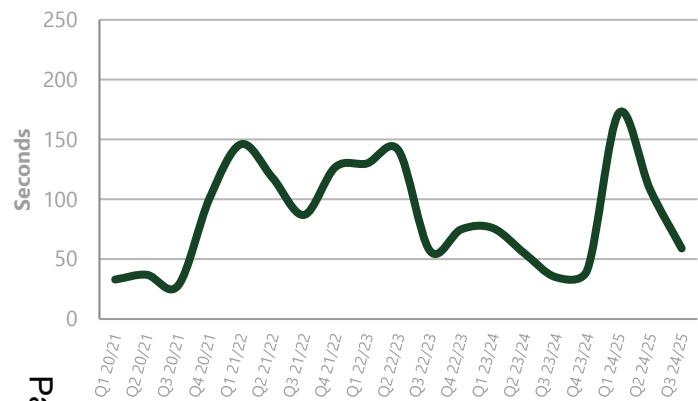


Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high, with a 100% satisfaction rate for the quarter, with all 59 individuals surveyed satisfied with the service.


**How do we compare?**  
No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

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

# Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter but increased since last year

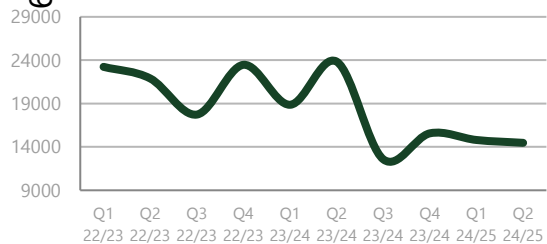
**Q3 - Lower is Good**

*No Target*

59 Seconds

Page 189

## Call Volume over Time



During Q3, the Council saw a significant drop in average wait times by approximately one minute. However, compared to the same period last year, there was a slight increase of 24 seconds.

The service continues to operate with reduced staffing levels due to several vacancies, partly influenced by internal movement within the organisation. Recruitment efforts are actively underway to address these gaps. Despite these challenges, the team remains committed to improving customer experience. Recent achievements include successful User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for the Alloy upgrade project and testing new e-forms for the Councils' websites.

## Call Volume Trends

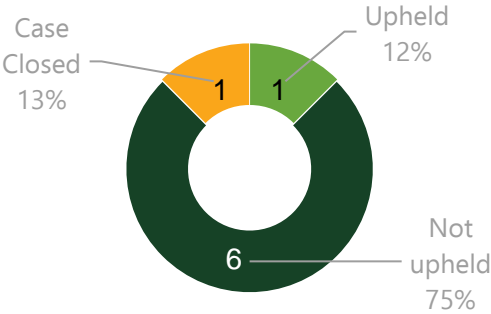
The number of calls decreased this quarter. This period marks the first opportunity to compare call volumes on the reduced phone lines since the trial was introduced in September 2023, providing a clearer view of the trial's impact on overall call trends. This aligns with a broader trend of decreasing call numbers, a pattern expected to continue as Channel Choice initiatives promote customer self-service options.

## How do we compare?

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


# Number of complaints upheld


Complaints by Status



## Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

*No Target*

Page 190

**How do we compare?**

The table outlines the complaints received by the Ombudsman over the period, the decisions made on these cases, and the Council's compliance with any recommendations issued by the Ombudsman during this time. Complaints received by the Ombudsman reflect cases where customers, having completed the Council's complaint process (see to the right), feel that the Council has not satisfactorily resolved the matter.

During Q3, the Council experienced a decrease in the number of complaints received in comparison to last quarter. The majority of the cases were not upheld.

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

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

The new process has the following stages:

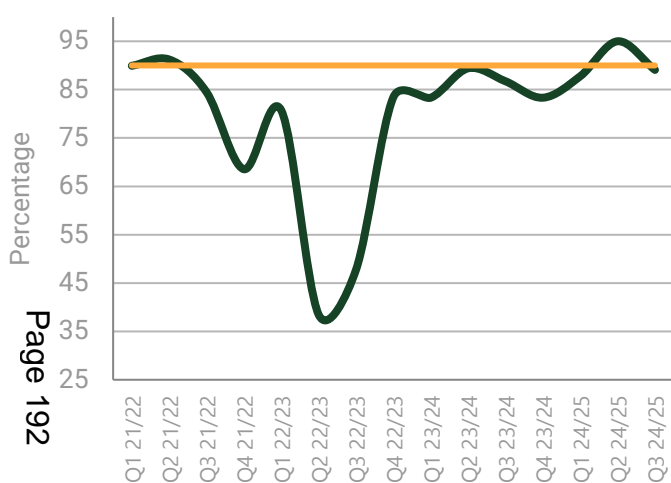
- Stage 1: Relevant service area responds to complaint within 10 working days
- Stage 2: Complaint is reviewed by Corporate Responsibility Team, response is signed off by relevant Business Manager, and sent to complainant within 10 working days
- Stage 3: Complaint is reviewed by relevant Business Manager,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

2023-24	Complaints Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactorily Remedy	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	1	0%	0	N/A	N/A	1/8	Top
Chichester	1	100%	1.1	100%	0%	4/8	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6/8</b>	<b>Third</b>
Wychavon	4	100%	3	N/A	100%	8/8	Bottom

# Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Housing	Customer raised concerns about incorrect rebanding and felt that the language used by staff during the interaction was unprofessional.	The banding has been reinstated, and an apology has been extended to the customer. Reassurances were also given that staff retraining will take place to prevent similar issues in the future.	Upheld	1

# Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Target

## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

**Q3 - Higher is Good**

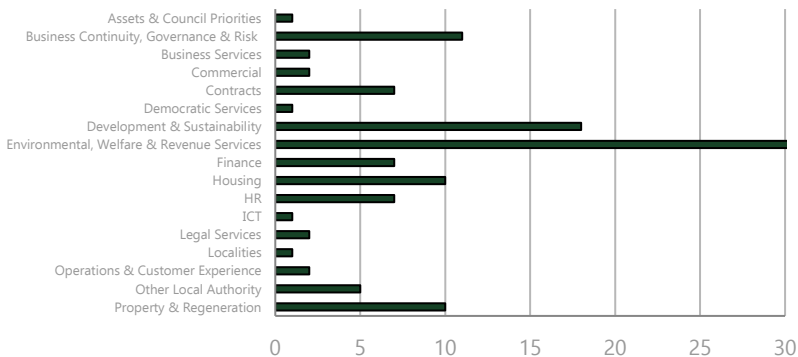
Target

90%

Actual

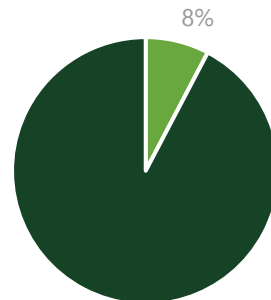
89.08%

## Requests by Service Area



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

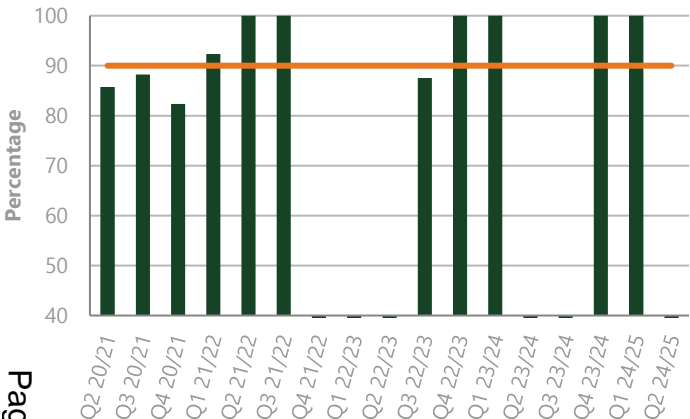
- Awaiting clarification from requester
- Service Area not provided Information in time



92%

20

# Building Control Satisfaction



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter N/A

Against last Year N/A

## Q3 – Higher is Good

Target 90%

Actual No Data

No Data

The team has employed various methods to engage customers for satisfaction surveys. Initially, traditional paper forms were distributed, enabling customers to provide feedback via mail. As digital communication gained prominence, an online survey platform, SurveyMonkey, was introduced to cater to those preferring digital responses. Unfortunately, this approach garnered limited feedback. Recently, the team implemented direct phone calls to customers to assist them in completing the online form, hoping to add a personal touch. Even with this method, the completion rate remained low. Consequently, the satisfaction survey data continues to face challenges due to a low response rate, with no surveys returned in Q3.

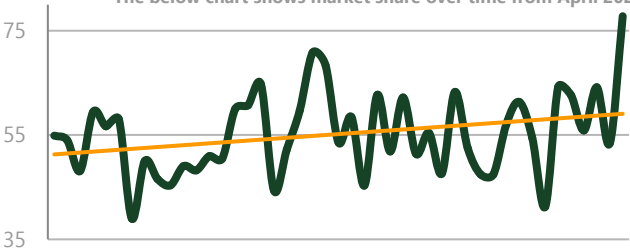
Given the current intensive survey process and the low response rate, the team is exploring options to improve the process. This includes collaborating with the Data Team to create a webform that will be emailed to customers who have received a completion certificate.

## How do we compare?

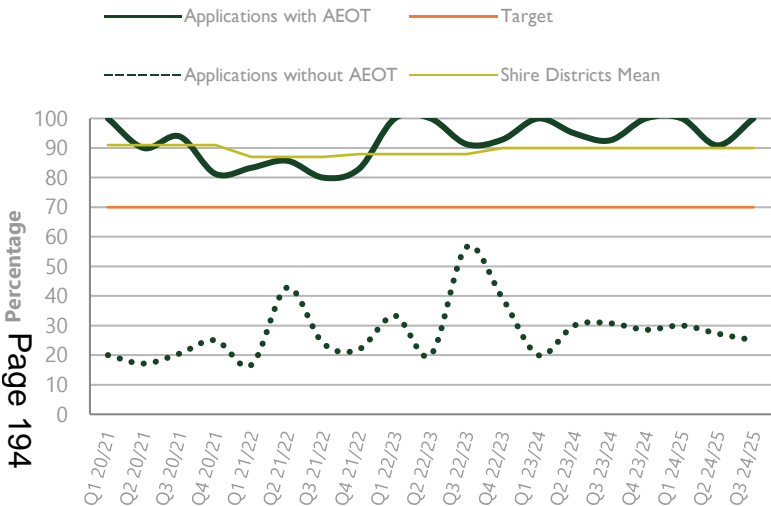
Percentage of share in the market

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	64%	53%	78%	120


The below chart shows market share over time from April 2021




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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

## Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	70%
Q3 Actual	100%
Year to Date (Cumulative)	96%

## How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is July - September '24 (Q2 2024-25)

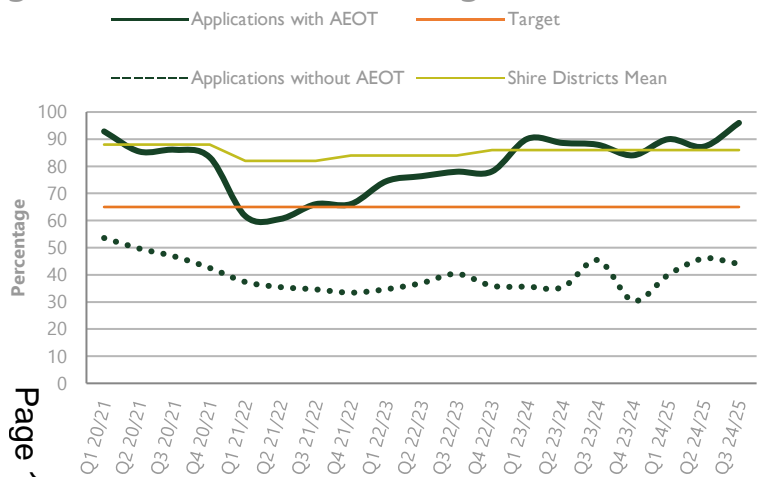
Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
East Hampshire	100	1/12	Top
West Devon	100	1/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5/12</b>	<b>Second</b>
Ribble Valley	86	8/12	Third
Lichfield	80	12/12	Bottom
Maldon	80	12/12	Bottom

The service has maintained strong performance in processing Major applications within the agreed timeframes with an increase of just over 9% compared to the previous quarter, with the in-time determinations increasing from 90.91% in Q2 to 100% in Q3.

During Q3, four major applications were determined.

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

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

## Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	65%
Q3 Actual	96%
Year to Date (Cumulative)	88.51%

Page 195

**How do we compare?**

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is July - September '24 (Q2 2024-25)

Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
West Oxfordshire	94	1/12	Top
West Devon	91	3/12	Top
Cotswold	84	6/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>7/12</b>	<b>Third</b>
East Hampshire	82	10/12	Bottom
Derbyshire Dales	69	12/12	Bottom

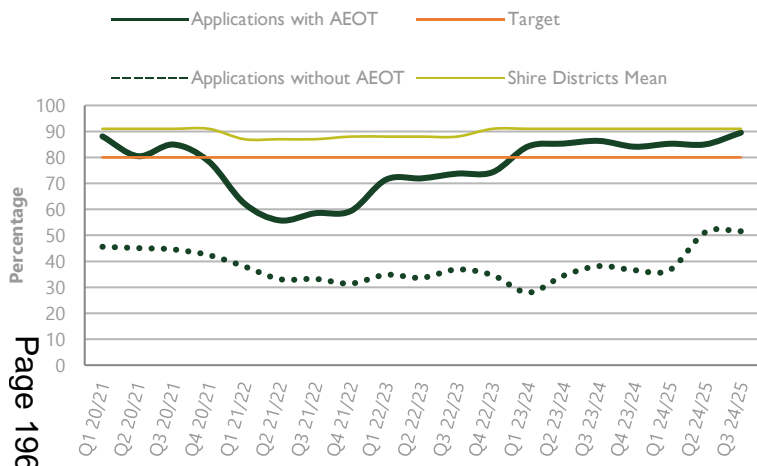
This quarter, the Council has continued to perform well in processing minor applications within the required timeframes. Determination times have improved by approximately 8% compared to both the previous quarter and the same period last year.

The service remains focused on addressing applications that have been with the Council for some time, working to resolve these outstanding cases and optimise workflows. Additionally, the team is providing clearer guidance on when application amendments are allowed or required, aiming to speed up the determination process and ensure applications are completed within statutory timeframes.

An update to the government's criteria for assessing local planning authority performance was published in December 2024. The revised criteria shortened the timeframe for evaluating decision speed, shifting from a two-year rolling average to a one-year rolling average. As of the end of Q2 2024-2025, the Council's rolling average stands at 86.33%, well above the government's 70% threshold, reflecting strong performance in meeting the updated expectations.

In Q3, 75 minor applications were determined.

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



## Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 
- Improved since last quarter and last year

## Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	80%
Q3 Actual	89.53%
Year to Date (Cumulative)	86.76%

## How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is July - September '24 (Q2 2024-25)

Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
West Devon	98	1/12	Top
Ribble Valley	97	2/12	Top
Chichester	91	5/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>9/12</b>	<b>Third</b>
Derbyshire Dales	84	10/12	Bottom
East Hampshire	81	12/12	Bottom

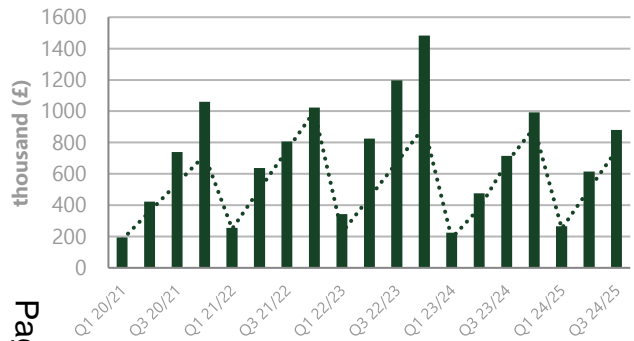
Determination times for Other applications have improved compared to both the previous quarter and the same period last year, with increases of approximately 4.5% and 3%, respectively. Notably, the proportion of applications determined without an agreed extension of time has consistently remained at around 50%, marking a 12% increase from the previous year. This highlights the effectiveness of the improvements implemented under the Development Management Improvement Plan.

In Q3, a total of 258 Other applications were determined

[See slide for Minor Developments for additional narrative](#) 24


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

**Total planning income**




## Direction of Travel

Total Planning Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Pre-Application Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Total Income declined since last quarter but increased since last year  
 Pre-App Income declined since last quarter but increased since last year

## Q3 – Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target **751,408**

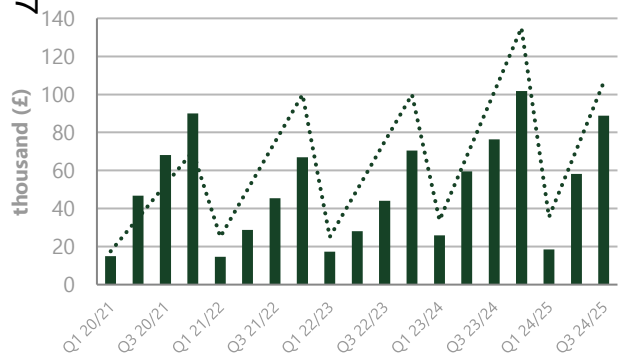
Actual **880,102**

Pre-Application Income (£)

Target **106,500**

Actual **88,868**

**Pre-application income**

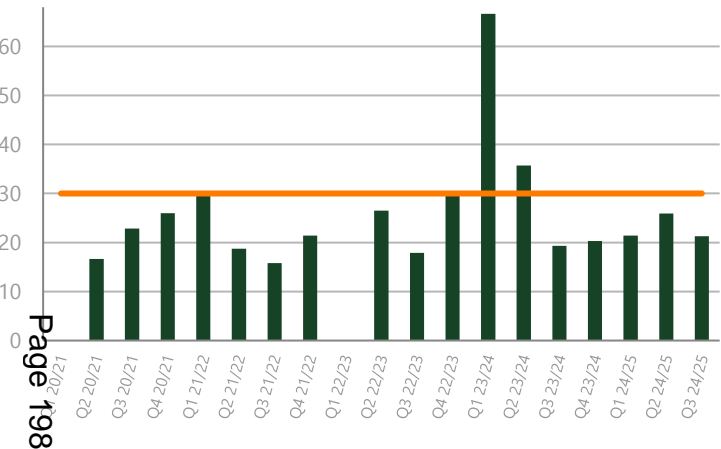


At the end of Q3, total planning income for the Council exceeded its target. Compared to Q3 of 2023-24, total planning income saw an increase of approximately £125,000, while pre-application income rose by around £12,500.

## How do we compare?

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

# Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Declined since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

↓

↑

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target

Actual

30%

21.28%

## How do we compare?

Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform. Latest dataset July – September '24 (Q2 2024-25)

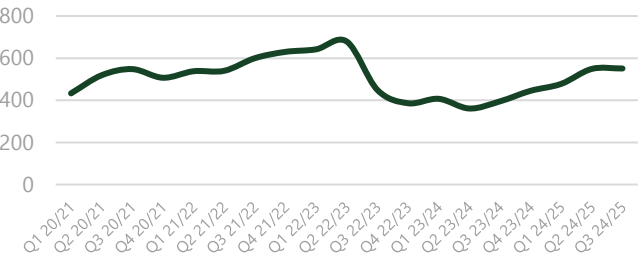
Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	17	1/12	Top
Maldon	22	3/12	Top
Ribble Valley	29	6/12	Second
Chichester	43	8/12	Third
West Devon	50	10/12	Bottom
Derbyshire Dales	57	12/12	Bottom

This indicator aims to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed in favor of the applicant, with a lower percentage being more favorable. According to the latest statistics from the Planning Inspectorate, the national average for Section 78 planning appeals granted is 28% (source: [gov.uk](https://gov.uk)).


Between 1 October 2024 and 31 December 2024, twenty appeals were decided, with three allowed in favour of the applicant, resulting in a 15% allowance rate. As this metric is cumulative, the year-to-date total stands at 47 appeals, with 10 allowed.

# (Snapshot) Planning Enforcement Cases

Open Cases at end of Quarter over Time



## Direction of Travel for Open Cases at end of Quarter

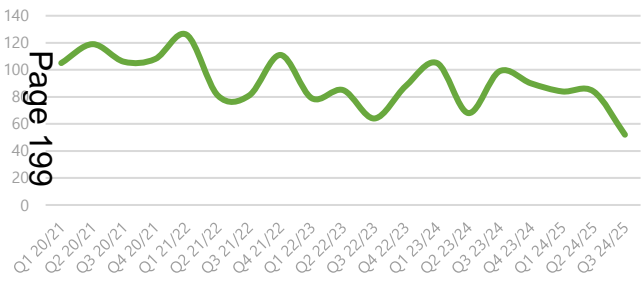
- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

## Q3 – Lower is Good

No Target

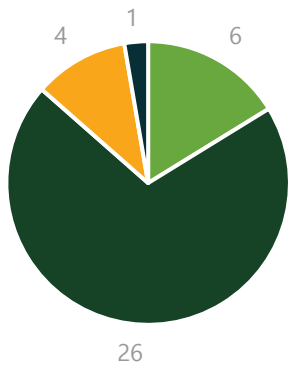
Open Cases at End of Quarter 551

Number of Cases Opened During the Quarter over Time

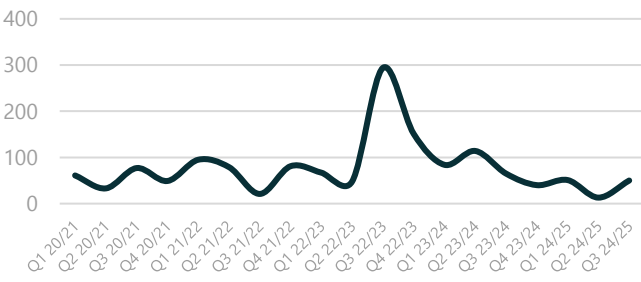


## Reasons Cases Closed

- Breach resolved through negotiation
- No breach occurring
- Breach identified but no harm
- Closed following prosecution



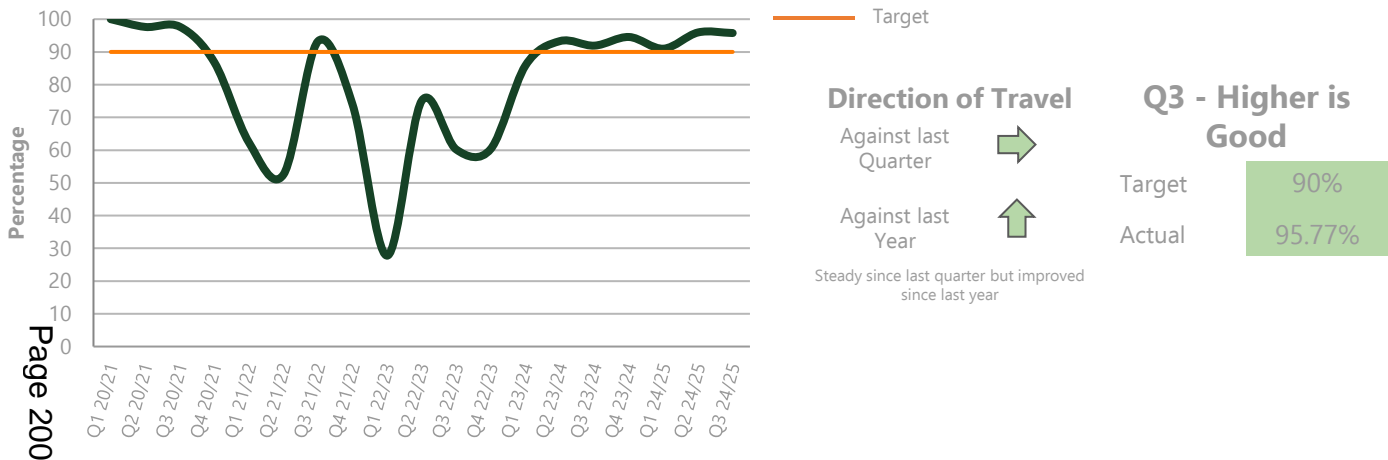
Number of Cases Closed During the Quarter over Time



The enforcement team has experienced prolonged staff shortages, resulting in a backlog of cases. However, as staffing levels are nearing full capacity the team are reaching the peak of the backlog of cases. As such, work is underway on work on updating and reviewing the enforcement plan to improve service efficiency and effectiveness.

Page 199

# Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days

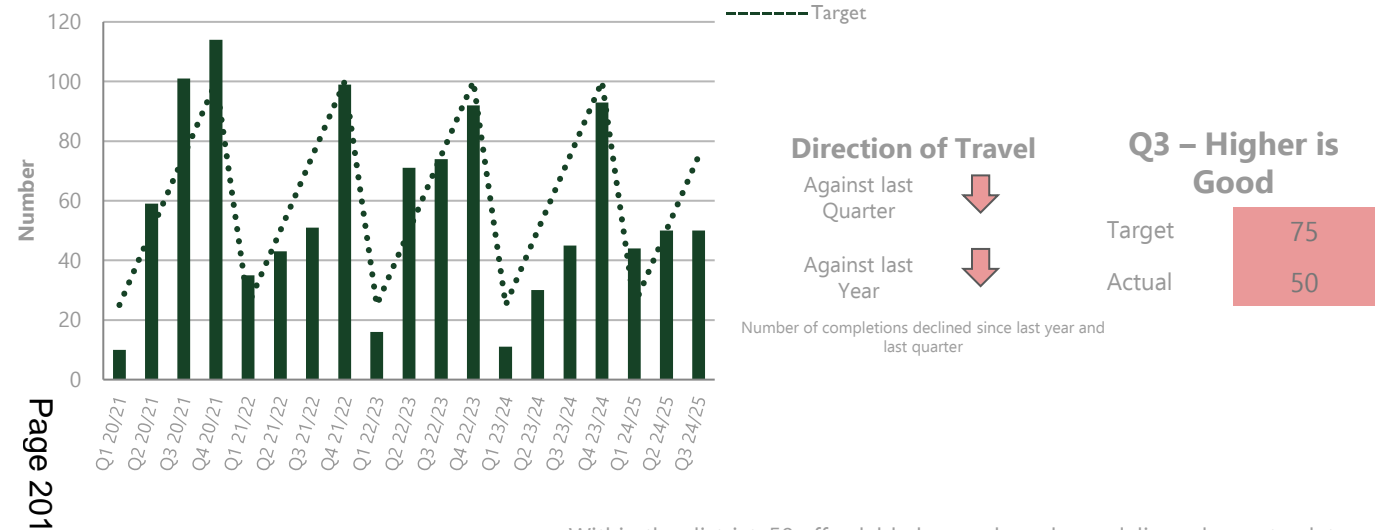


During Q3, the Council continued to exceed its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days.

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

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

# Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)

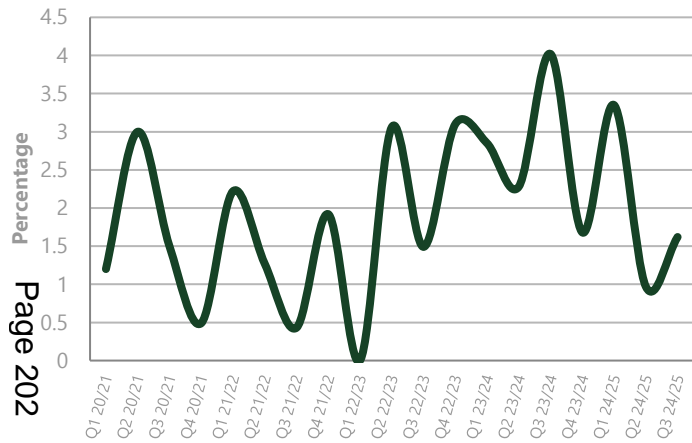


Within the district, 50 affordable homes have been delivered year-to-date. Notably, Q1 delivered 44 properties rather than the 29 previously reported, as delays in completion reports from Registered Providers (RPs) meant these were not initially accounted for. However, delays on planned delivery sites, such as Down Ampney, due to weather conditions and project re-phasing, have pushed the completion of some affordable homes to Q4 and early 2025/26. Housing completions tend to fluctuate throughout the year, as developments typically take 12 months or longer to complete, with some projects spanning several years in phases. The initial overdelivery of affordable housing at the start of the current strategy has contributed to reduced delivery levels in recent years. Furthermore, projections from Registered Providers indicate a shortfall compared to the annual target of 100 homes.





**How do we compare?**  
 No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

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

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



## Direction of Travel

<b>Number of Fly Tips</b>		<i>No Target</i>
Against last Quarter		Number of Fly Tips Collected
Against last Year		137
<b>Percentage Enforcement Action</b>		Percentage Enforcement Action
Against last Quarter		1.62%
Against last Year		

Fly Tips – Decreased since last quarter but increased since last year  
 Enforcement Action – Improved since last quarter but decreased since last year

## How do we compare?

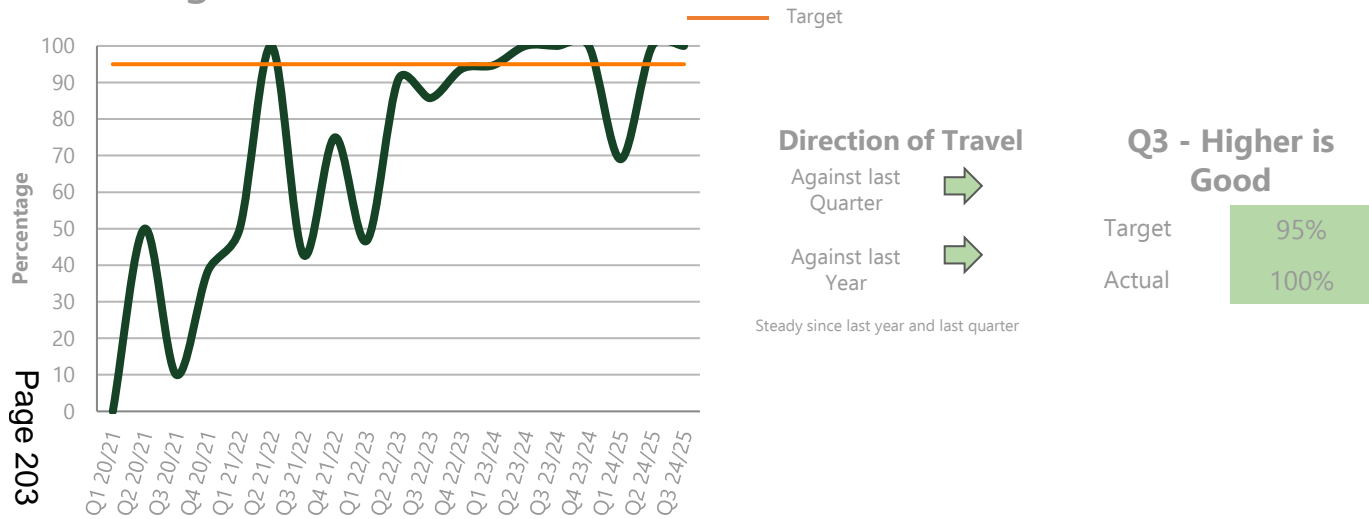
Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is 2022-23

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

During Q3, fly-tipping incidents in the district saw a continued decline, with a reduction of approximately 38% since Q1. This reflects the success of recent initiatives aimed at combating illegal waste disposal. Earlier this year, the Council was awarded over £38,000 from the Government's Fly-tipping Intervention Grant Scheme to strengthen enforcement efforts.

The funding has supported various new initiatives, including the S.C.R.A.P. fly-tipping campaign, which focuses on cracking down on environmental offences. Additionally, the Council successfully recruited 20 "Fly-tipping Guardians" to help safeguard the district from illegal waste dumping, further enhancing the effectiveness of its anti-fly-tipping strategy.

# Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales

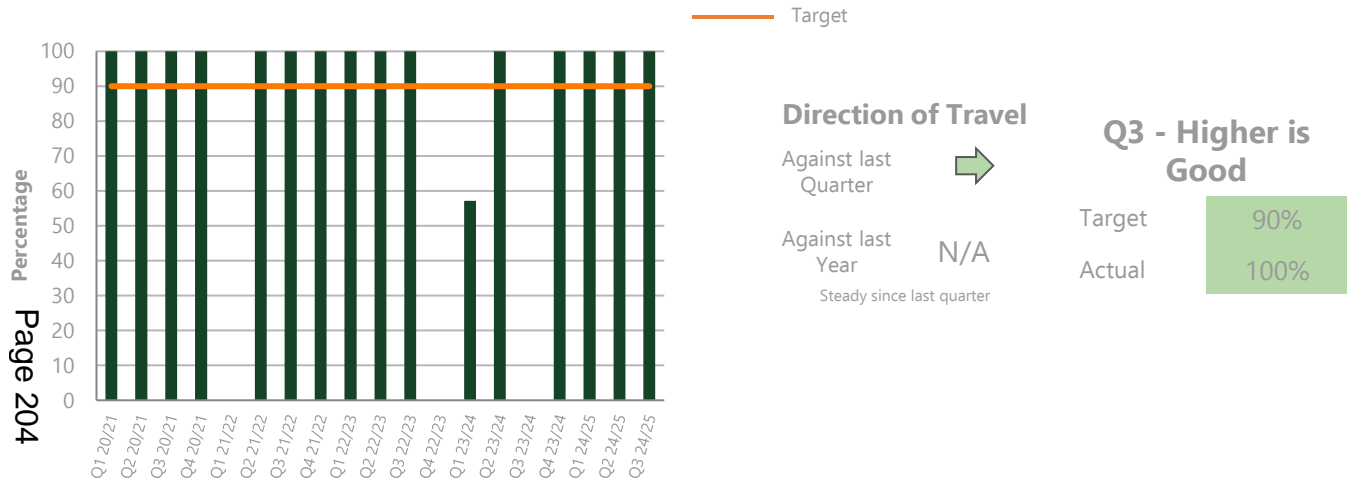


The Council conducted nine inspections during Q3, all of which were completed within the timescale.

High-risk food inspections are prioritised due to their greater potential impact on public health and safety enabling issues to be addressed swiftly. However, this focus can occasionally delay scheduled inspections for lower-risk food businesses. To mitigate this, the service uses a dashboard to track both high- and lower-risk inspections, ensuring that, despite the emphasis on high-risk establishments, lower-risk inspections are still completed promptly to maintain overall compliance and safety standards.

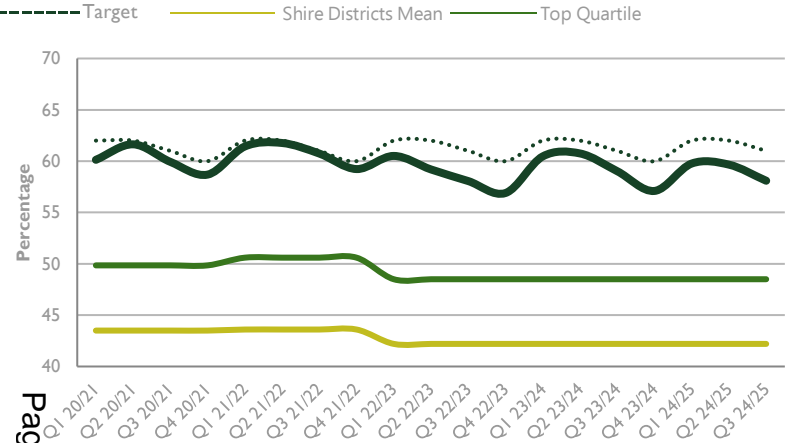
# % High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day

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



Three notifications were received during Q3 which was assessed within one working day.

# Percentage of household waste recycled



### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter  
Against last Year  
Declined since last quarter and last year

Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	61%
Actual	58.09%

### How do we compare?

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in October – December '23 (Q3 2023-24) – **Within this Dataset 6 authorities are missing data**

Q3 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Stratford-on-Avon	62.34	1/6	Top
Cotswold	55.83	2/6	Top
West Ox	55.7	3/6	Second
Derbyshire Dales	50.9	4/6	Third
Lichfield	47.03	5/6	Bottom
Malvern Hills	42.99	6/6	Bottom

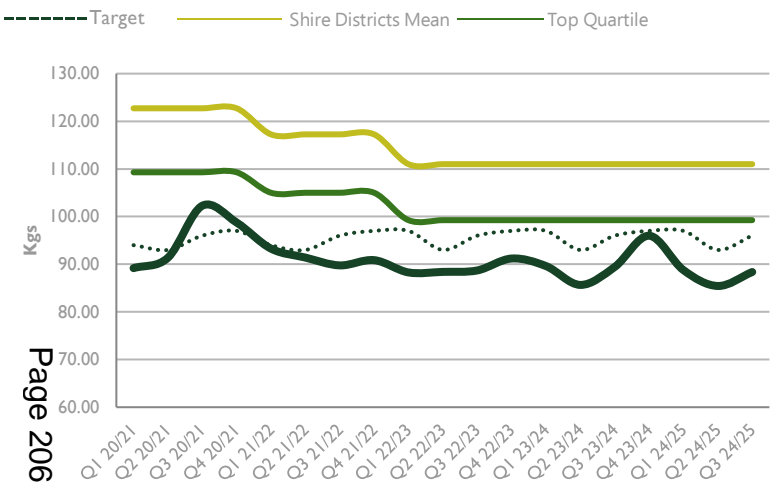
The recycling rates for Q3 stand at 58.09%, which is approximately 1% lower than the same period last year.

Over Halloween, the Council encouraged residents to eat decorated pumpkins rather than discard them. If inedible, residents were advised to compost them instead. The Council also promoted the use of second-hand or DIY costumes to reduce waste. To further support greener practices, residents were reminded of the reduced rates available on compost bins through <https://getcomposting.com>.

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

Page 205

# Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



## Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter but steady since last year

Q3 - Lower is Good

Target	96
Actual	88.37

## How do we compare?

Residual household waste per household (kg/household) – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in October – December '23 (Q3 2023-24) – **Within this Dataset 6 authorities are missing data**

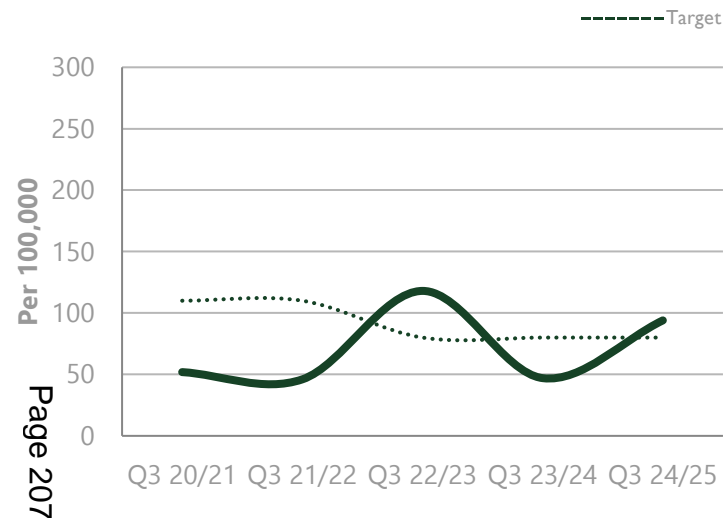
Q3 23-24 Benchmark	Kg	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	81.37	1/6	Top
Stratford-on-Avon	88.96	2/6	Top
West Ox	89.13	3/6	Second
Malvern Hills	99.02	4/6	Third
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>113.05</b>	<b>5/6</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
Lichfield	113.71	6/6	Bottom

Residual waste follows a cyclical pattern throughout the year, with targets set accordingly. A typical increase is observed in Q3, largely due to the Christmas period.

In Q3, the Council recorded a seasonal rise in household waste tonnage, increasing by 2.93kg from the previous quarter to 88.37kg. However, compared to Q3 2023-2024, this represents a decrease of 1.07kg per household.

Despite this seasonal fluctuation, the Council remains well within the first quartile of all English authorities, maintaining a comfortable margin of approximately 10kg.

# Missed bins per 100,000



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Increased since last quarter and last  
year

## Q3 - Lower is Good

Target

80

Actual

94

How do we compare?

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

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

During Q3, the Council exceeded its targets despite a notable reduction in missed bin collections. While flooding in the district caused minor delays for crews earlier in the quarter, November marked a significant achievement with the lowest number of missed collections since the reorganisation of collection rounds. This highlights the success of the improvement initiatives introduced last quarter, such as daily huddles to enhance communication and management oversight.

However, December saw a rise in missed bin collections, largely due to the Christmas period, which brought an expected increase in household waste.

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

The missed bins target was revised to 80 per 100,000 scheduled collections from 2022-23 Q1 to reflect improvements made over the previous year. 35

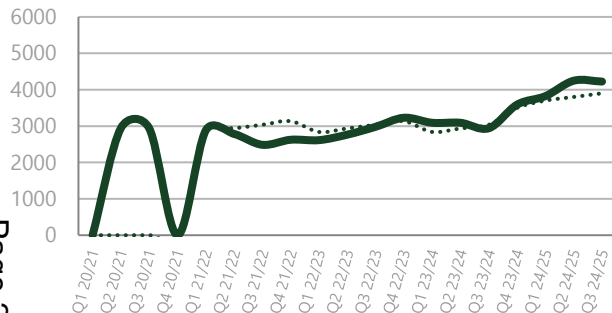
# Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot)

## Number of gym memberships

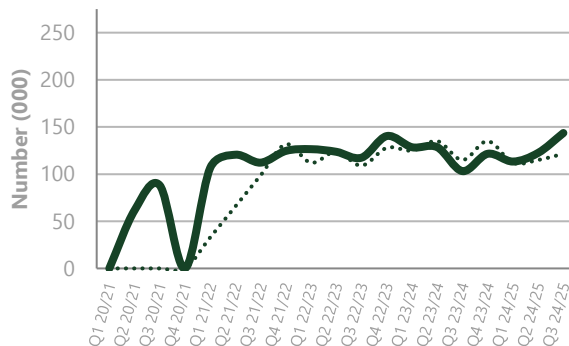
Page 208

Number of gym memberships

-----Target



Visits to leisure facilities



### Direction of Travel

#### Gym Memberships

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



#### Leisure Visits

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



### Higher is Good

#### Gym Memberships

Target

3,900

Actual

4,223

#### Leisure Visits

Target

121,000

Actual

143,584

Gym Memberships – Slight decrease since last quarter but improved since last year

Leisure Visits – Improved since last quarter and last year

At the end of Q3, gym memberships experienced a minor seasonal decline, with a loss of 24 members compared to the previous quarter. Such decreases are typical during the winter months, particularly over the Christmas period, when many customers are less likely to actively use their memberships.

In contrast, visits to leisure facilities in the district showed a significant upward trend. Compared to the previous quarter, visits increased by 21,000, and year-over-year visits rose by 40,000. This growth can be attributed, in part, to the recent improvement works at Cirencester Leisure Centre completed over the summer. These upgrades included the installation of new bikes in the indoor cycling studio, enhancing the facility's appeal.

Additionally, the Council secured £208,000 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund to implement energy efficiency improvements at Cirencester Leisure Centre. Planned upgrades include the installation of additional solar PV panels and enhanced triple glazing around the swimming pool area, further improving the facility's sustainability and reducing energy costs.

How do we compare?

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