



Friday, 21 February 2025

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## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Monday, 3 March 2025 at 4.00 pm.**

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

Rob Weaver  
Chief Executive

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

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

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

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies**  
To receive any apologies for absence. The quorum for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is 3 members.
2. **Substitute Members**  
To note details of any substitution arrangements in place for the meeting.
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.
4. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)  
To approve the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held Monday 3 February 2025.
5. **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 13 - 14)  
To consider actions outstanding from minutes of previous meetings.
6. **Chair's Announcements**  
To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7. **Public Questions**  
A maximum of 15 minutes is allocated for an "open forum" of public questions at committee meetings. No person may ask more than two questions (including supplementary questions) and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. The maximum length of oral questions or supplementary questions by the public will be two minutes. Questions must relate to the responsibilities of the Committee but questions in this section cannot relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

The response may take the form of:

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

## 8. **Member Questions**

A maximum period of fifteen minutes is allowed for Member questions. Questions must be directed to the Chair and must relate to the remit of the committee but may not relate to applications for determination at the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

## 9. **Report back on recommendations**

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

## 10. **Publica Transition Plan - Phase 2 – 4:05pm** (Pages 15 - 46)

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.

## 11. **Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three – 5:20pm** (Pages 47 - 120)

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

## 12. **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

### Purpose

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

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

13. **Work Plan and Forward Plan** (Pages 121 - 136)  
For the Committee to note and review its work plan and to select Cabinet decisions for pre-decision scrutiny at future committee meetings.

(END)



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## **Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 3 February 2025**

### Members present:

Gina Blomefield	Gary Selwyn
David Cunningham	Lisa Spivey
David Fowles	Clare Turner
Angus Jenkinson	Michael Vann
Jon Wareing	

### Officers present:

Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer

### Observers:

Councillor Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evemy

### **OS.137 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Slater.

### **OS.138 Substitute Members**

Councillor David Fowles substituted for Councillor Tony Slater.

### **OS.139 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **OS.140 Minutes**

The Chair's amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2025 had been incorporated into the published version contained in the agenda pack. The Chair invited other Members of the Committee to add their comments on the Minutes but there were none.

Upon being proposed and seconded, the approval of the minutes was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: To APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2025.

#### **OS.141 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting.

#### **OS.142 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair stated that due to an over-run of the January meeting the reports from the two Gloucestershire Scrutiny Committees item had not been shared or discussed at that meeting so had been moved to the first part of today's meeting. The Chair encouraged Members and Officers to be succinct with their questions and answers, with timing warnings given by the Vice Chair if it was felt that timings could overrun.

The Chair noted the late supply of the Draft Budget and MTFs report and requested that reports be provided earlier so as to give more time to scrutinise in future.

#### **OS.143 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

#### **OS.144 Member Questions**

There were no Member questions.

#### **OS.145 Report back on recommendations**

The Chair gave feedback that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation on the Climate and Ecological Emergency had been accepted by Cabinet.

#### **OS.146 Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Councillor Jenkinson invited members for any questions on the GESSC report which had been circulated in the agenda pack.

No questions were asked and the Chair expressed their gratitude on the great job Councillor Jenkinson was doing on reporting from Gloucestershire County Council. There was no report from HOSC as Cllr Neill was not present at the meeting.

The Chair explained that a meeting had been held informally earlier in the day to begin the process of formulating a work plan for 2025/2026.

Items for inclusion included:

- Review of Local Plan.
- How to deal with second homes and long-term empty properties.

Members felt that it would be necessary to leave time in the Work Plan to react to changing situations including the impact of devolution and the Phase 2 of the Publica Transition. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee wanted to be able to support Cabinet 'as and when' and noted that the impacts of these changes will filter through as decisions and timetables are made and would come to O&S ahead of the relevant Cabinet Meeting. The Chair was mindful of the pressures on Officers time and capacity during these substantial alterations to the Council and didn't want to add additional items whose relevance might soon be changed.

Councillor Every, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, asked that on the Accountable Member for the Public Conveniences item be changed to Councillor Wilkinson, who now held the brief for this.

**OS.148**      **Update on Strategic Plan for North Cotswolds**

The purpose of the item was to receive an update on the strategic plan for North Cotswolds.

Matthew Britton, the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure, introduced the item and explained that in January 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended setting up a Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group to be part of the Local Plan consultation for the Strategic Growth Proposal to consider the required infrastructure to support the additional 1,500 houses expected in the settlement.

The Officer gave the following updates:

- From the local consultations in February - April 2024 and again in October 2024 run by Planning for Real, there were a substantial number of consultation responses which had been used to update the Local Plan policies.
- Further identified development sites were being assessed in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability update.
- A feasibility study has been commissioned to look at the growth of Moreton-in-Marsh with a focus on the concerns highlighted from the Local Plan consultation on the capacity of the road system and the sewage infrastructure.
- There would be a community event on 12 February to feed back on consultation, brief on the Working Group and the Town council would provide a presentation on the Railway Station redevelopment.

In discussing the report, Members raised the following points:

- Concerns were raised about the slow progress with the first working group meeting happening 15 months after approval. The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure stated that there had been Government changes to National Planning Policy. The Council had bid for £250,000 of government funding as recognition of the delays being caused. The Local Development Scheme would be presented to the 6 March 2025 Cabinet meeting providing an updated timetable for the Local Plan and associated workstreams.
- Members wanted to know what the effect of new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes would be including the emphasis on the prioritisation of places near train stations for development. The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure explained that it was presumed that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill in March 2025 would be favourable to development around train stations.
- The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure identified that the NPPF changes meant that the annual housing target has risen from 504 to 1036 homes, significantly increasing planned growth.
- Members shared the uncertainty about the progress of the feasibility study and the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure reported that whilst the update report was quite minimal, there were about 60 documents that were being updated e.g. Water Cycle Study, Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The consultants tasked with the Feasibility Study had split it into two parts with part 1 looking at whether a development was feasible before looking at key infrastructure to avoid unnecessary expenditure if deemed unsuitable.
- Members asked for details around the timing and publication of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability documents. The Officer reported that the Feasibility Study was being undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council and would be shared once available.
- Members were keen to know when the Working Group would be scheduled to meet and whether members would receive the necessary training to effectively participate. The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure acknowledged the delays in the programme and regular meeting programme would be set up from March 2025.
- Members asked how close the Council was to providing the annual 1036 homes target but the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure was unable to give an answer until the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was complete. The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure acknowledged that the housing supply report was updated annually and included sites from the adopted Local Plan, those with planning permission, and expected windfall sites but data about future local plan site allocations was not yet available.
- The Committee commented on the title of the report as it could confuse residents with the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure agreeing



that it was a 'hangover' from January last year but confirmed that the proposals for the North Cotswolds were a section of the Local Plan.

- Members asked about whether the Working Group would have a statutory consultation function and the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure explained that the role was advisory.
- The Committee asked for clarification as to what aspects of the plans are retained in the partial update compared to the original full plan and the housing proposals and concerns raised about the highway impact and the sewage capacity to any further developments. The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure explained that the Council was undertaking a partial local plan update (2011–2031) and a development strategy & site allocations plan, distinct from a full plan update. The development strategy would likely extend beyond 2041 due to the 15-year planning requirement from the date of adoption with further housing numbers dependent on feasibility studies and the update from strategic housing and land assessments.

RESOLVED: The Committee NOTED the report.

#### **OS.149 Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

This report set out the Revenue Budget for 2025/26, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Mike Evely, introduced the item. They raised the following points:

- There was a £3m reduction in funding from Government in 2026/27.
- The Council was not being fully reimbursed for the impact of changes to Employers National Insurance contributions in April 2025 - £267,000 shortfall.
- The Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) provided district councils with a cash flat settlement only after Council Tax increases were included.
- New Homes Bonus would continue for a further year £0.820m of one-off funding.
- Extended Producer Responsibility – funding of £1.5m had been provided.
- The Rural Services Delivery Grant had been abolished with a loss of £0.820m per annum.
- There would be a £0.662m surplus in 2025/26, followed in 2026/27 by a £1.539m deficit/budget gap and in 2027/28 a £4.829m deficit/budget gap
- The Council would be utilising its Financial Resilience Reserve and Business Rates Risk reserve to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- The needed to be a focus on savings and cost reductions to address the budget gap in 2026/27 in order to provide services to residents.
- The Budget included a £5 Council Tax increase, a Second Home charge, a freeze on car parking charges for stays up to one hour and inflationary rises for stays of two hours or more.
- Garden waste fees would be increased to maintain a cost recovery position.

The Deputy Chief Executive added information on the risks and uncertainties around Transitional Protection estimates assuming a 'quick' transfer of funding along with potential global economy/trade wars.

Members discussed the report, raising the following points:

- Members asked about the Capital Waste Project in light of the future of the Council and the costs involved. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that it would not be unreasonable to review the vehicle replacement programme and see how the life of the vehicles could be extended. Ideas were suggested around increasing the life of the fleet beyond the planned seven-year lifespan of the vehicles, hiring fleet vehicles, opportunities with UBICO providing services across the whole of Gloucestershire or the purchase 'nearly new' vehicles from other local authorities. There was a responsibility to maintain services to residents bearing in mind the impact of devolution changes in the future.
- A Member asked whether circumstances created by the Devolution White Paper would allow for discretionary options with respect to the strategic use of reserves to fund off one-off costs for service improvements e.g. upgrades to critical infrastructure, visible community projects, clearing backlogs of planning enforcement cases. The view of the Chief Financial Officer was that the Section 25 statement would assess the robustness of budget estimates and adequacy of reserves, highlighting that without significant cost reductions in the next few years, continued reliance on reserves would threaten the Council's financial sustainability and the ability to provide the quality of statutory services for residents. Unless there are significant cost reductions in the next two years then the Council would need to apply for Exceptional Financial Support from the Government and so the advice was to retain reserves to support future budgets.
- Members questioned some of the spending included in the budget and whether these costs were necessary – spending on roles that may not have longer term value and Phase 2 of the Publica transition. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation explained that if services were not transformed and run differently, they would cost more money and so felt that the Phase 2 transition of Publica should continue for the lifespan of this Council. The new roles would be funded using reserves to allow for the smooth transformation of staff to Cotswold District Council (CDC) from Publica.
- Members asked for clarification on the CDC pay inflation. The Chief Financial Officer agreed to provide an explanation following the meeting but assured the Committee that the figures were correct.
- Members asked for clarification into the funding provided to Cirencester Town Council for the Cirencester Master Plan. The Chief Financial Officer explained that these were costs associated with the CDC activities.
- Members expressed the difficulties of managing finances with reduced Government funding and asked about the relevance of applying for Exceptional Financial Support. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation

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reassured the Committee that representations were being made to Government and to the Local Government Association that the financial settlement for District Councils was completely inadequate. Applying for EFS would mean massively raising council tax or having to sell off assets to support revenue spending and would take choice away from members. It would provide the Council with a financial lifeline for only a very defined period.

- The Chair wanted to know if there were costs associated with the unoccupied space not let in the Trinity Road offices. The Chief Financial Officer agreed that there would be costs and there was a discussion about the difficulties with renting various parts of the building. Watermoor Point had reported more interest recently and it was hoped that more tenants would be confirmed shortly.

RESOLVED: The Committee NOTED the report.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 6.18 pm

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**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

ACTION from last Overview and Scrutiny Meeting Monday 3 February 2025

Matthew Britton, Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure was able to confirm that the next Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group would meet 31 March 2025.

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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>



	<p>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.</p>
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 updated 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

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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.

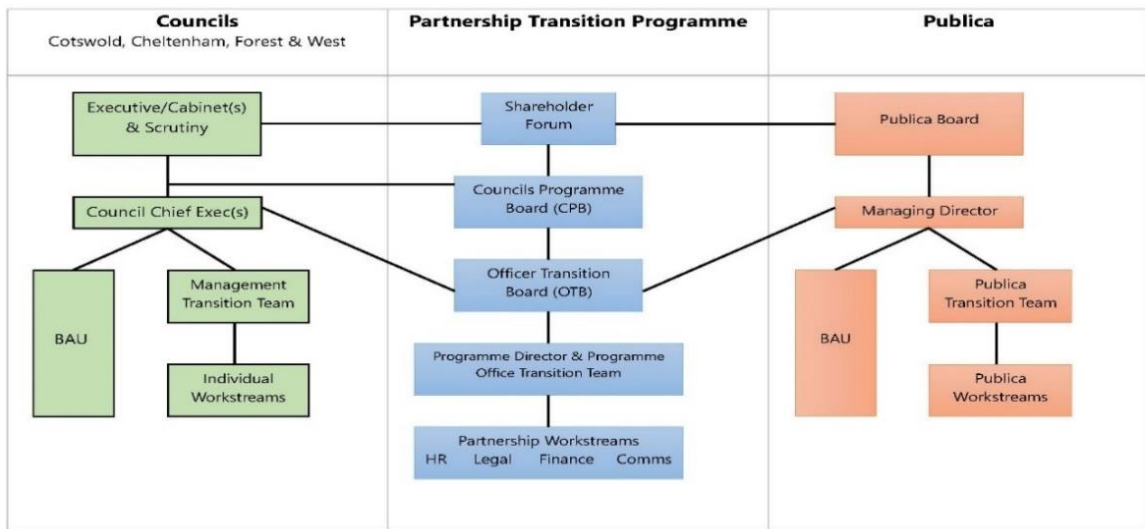
In addition, the District Councils have each engaged at a Member and Officer level on Phase 1 reflections. As part of its People and Culture Strategy Cotswold District Council has undertaken an employee survey seeking views of those that have transitioned in terms of what went well, what could have been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

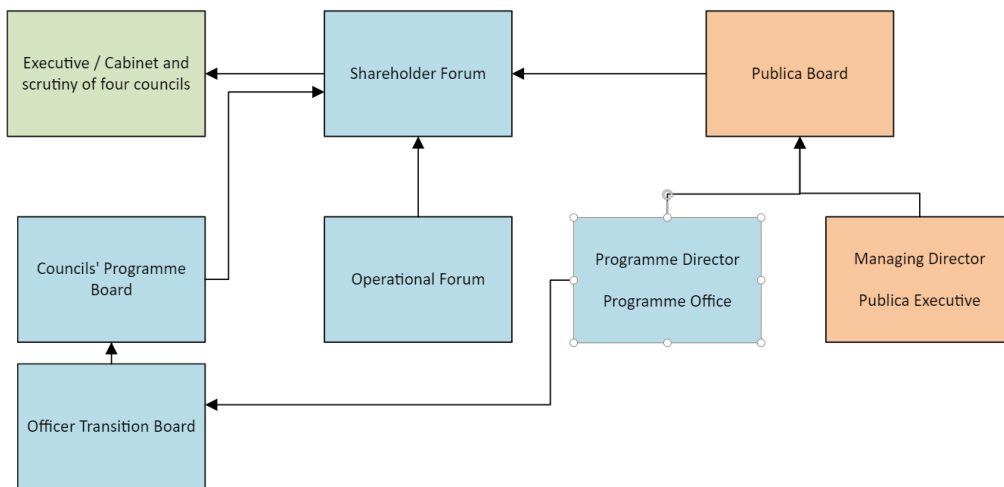
Again, in a similar way to that adopted for Phase 1, the Councils had commissioned Local Partnerships to provide their view and analysis on the processes, project management and governance of Publica, in relation to phase 2.

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 & Hamblins 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 restructuring 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**

<b>Phase 2 Indicative Cost Impact</b>	<b>CDC (£)</b>	<b>FODDC (£)</b>	<b>WODC (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
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>

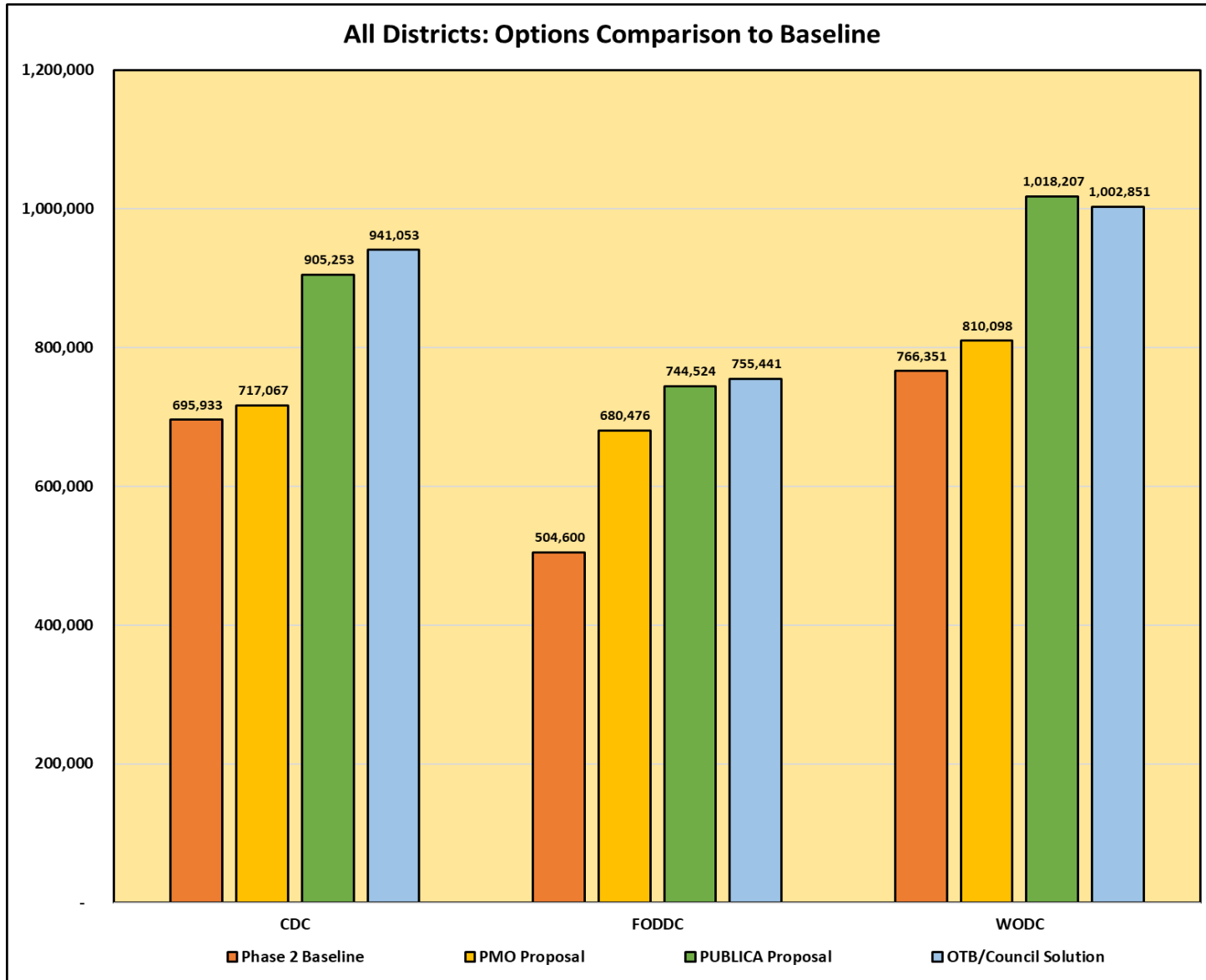
Table 2a – Phase 2 baseline by service

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





Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 6 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**

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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Our Cotswolds, Our Plan: Action Plan 2024 Update - Progress by end of Q3 2024-2025

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

Objectives	Priorities	Actions	Commencement	Target Date	Cabinet Member, Lead officer(s)	RAG Rating	Comment for Q3
<b>Delivering good services</b>	<b>Ensure our workforce can deliver for the council and our community</b>	Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability	Nov-23	Projected timeframe of two years, until 2025	Cllr Joe Harris  Robert Weaver	On Target	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.
		Lease spare office space at Trinity Road	Dec-23	Jul-24	Cllr Mike Evemy  Claire Locke Suzanne Barton	Complete	Completed
	<b>Ensure effective oversight of our services, to ensure value for money and good standards</b>	Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley		
		<b>Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets</b>	Continue to ensure that the Council's MTFS five year strategy reflects economic conditions and the government's funding settlement	Feb-24	Reviewed annually	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley	On Target
	Implement the Council's new asset management strategy and asset plans		Apr-24	Review April 2025	Cllr Mike Evemy David Stanley	Complete	Asset Management Strategy Adopted and Asset Management Plans in place.
	<b>Play our part in maintaining and enhancing the public realm across the district</b>	Instigate second phase of activity to replace worn and damaged street nameplates	Feb-24	Feb-25	Cllr Joe Harris  Claire Locke	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	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.
					Cllr Mike McKeown  Claire Locke	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.
<b>Responding to the climate emergency</b>	<b>Reduce CO2 from Transport: We will actively encourage and support the transition to EVs and increased use of</b>	Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown  Claire Locke	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.

<b>public and sustainable transport such as cycling and walking.</b>	Work with partners to implement the Sustainable Transport Strategy	Adoption as part of the Local Plan - projected June 2025	Apr-28	Cllr Joe Harris Jon Dearing Matthew Britton	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
	Taxi Transition - explore the opportunity for the creation of an EV Taxi policy	Apr-24	Jun-25	Cllr Mike McKeown Jon Dearing Mandy Fathers	On Target	Initial exploration began which included meetings with other local authorities who have already implemented incentives to encourage licencees to move to EV transportation. The full Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy is due for a refresh and EV's will be incorporated into the updated Policy. It is anticipated that this piece of work will continue during Qtr 4 and Qtr 1 of 2025/2026
<b>Cut Council Carbon Footprint, implementing sustainable practices in all council operations, emphasising energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, across our buildings, fleet and suppliers.</b>	Create a Climate Board, agree governance arrangements and key outcomes.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGregor	On Target	Initial meetings with departments held to inform terms of reference development
	Support and promote community owned renewables initiatives	Dec-23	Review June 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGregor	On Target	Retrofit engagement officer in post
<b>Increase renewable energy generation within the district, ensuring local benefit</b>	Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on Council owned assets.	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown Claire Locke	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.
	Implement the new requirements around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Jan-24	Review July 2024	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding	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.
<b>Reduce CO2 from Buildings: Foster community-led climate action, supporting residents and businesses adopting renewable heating and improving energy efficiency.</b>	Continue to promote and deliver Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen	Jan-23	Review July 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGregor	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 Olivia McGregor	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 Adrian Harding Matt Britton	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.
		Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds	Sep-23	May-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding Matthew Britton	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.
		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 Adrian Harding Matthew Britton	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.
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 Robert Weaver Alan Hope	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.
		Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney	Dec-23	Apr-28	Cllr Juliet Layton Robert Weaver Claire Locke	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.
	Support refugees to retain adequate housing	Jul-23	Review March 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold/ Paula Massey	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	

	<b>Understanding everyone's housing needs</b>	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		
	<b>Adopting and implementing our new housing strategy</b>	Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Juliet Layton Alan Hope Matthew Britton	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)	
<b>Supporting communities</b>	<b>Strengthen our links with town and parish councils and key stakeholders</b>	Continue the annual programme of Town and Parish Council Forum engagement events	Jan-24	Jan-25	Cllr Joe Harris Angela Claridge	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.	
	<b>Address the challenges of flooding and water quality and sewerage discharges</b>	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 Matthew Britton	Complete	Complete	
					Cllr Tristan Wilkinson			

	Identify gaps and bolster the Cotswold Flood wardens programme	Jan-24	Jun-24	Robert Weaver	Complete	Complete
<b>Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Water park</b>	Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road	Jan-24	Review in January 2025	Clr Juliet Layton Joseph Walker	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	Clr Juliet Layton Joseph Walker	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 Neighbidge, 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	Clr Juliet Layton Adrian Harding Sophia Price		
				Clr Joe Harris		
<b>Healthy place making through the Local Plan</b>	Embed Healthy Homes Act into the Cotswold Design Code	Jun-25	Jun-25	Adrian Harding	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	Clr Joe Harris Adrian Harding	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	Clr Joe Harris Adrian Harding	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
<b>Develop and deliver a District Council cultural strategy</b>	Commence development of the cultural strategy	Feb-24	Sep-24	Clr Paul Hodgkinson Joseph Walker	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 an 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
				Clr 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 Joseph Walker	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.
	Continue to promote community activity through Crowdfund Cotswold	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	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.
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 David Stanley Joseph Walker	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.
	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 Angela Claridge Joseph Walker	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.
	Work with partners to develop a consistent, countywide approach to identify opportunities to support to care leavers	Jun-24	Review December 2024	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson David Stanley Joseph Walker	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.
				Cllr Claire Bloomer		Working with the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) team at Publica, we continue to develop our electronic

	<b>Work with partners to ensure vital services cover the district, and offer support to our residents if crises hit</b>	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 Joseph Walker	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.
		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.
	<b>Keep residents safe, through awareness raising around domestic abuse and fraud</b>	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.
<b>Supporting the economy</b>	<b>Work with partners to develop the skills of our residents</b>	Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs, through promotion of apprenticeship opportunities	Feb-24	Apr-28	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Paul James	On Target	Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital and sustainable aviation to promote employment opportunities. Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders about how to promote apprenticeship opportunities 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.
		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 activities 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	Clr 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	Clr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Chris Jackson	On Target	Work is underway on enhancing the website. Cotswold Tourism is promoting the destination for high value visitors through supporting travel trade visits and influencer visits.
	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	Clr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Chris Jackson	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.
<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	Clr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Paul James	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.
	Continue to support the development of the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village	Jan-24	Jan-25	Clr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Paul James	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.
	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	Clr Tristan Wilkinson Joseph Walker Paul James	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.





# 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 Neighbridge, 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.

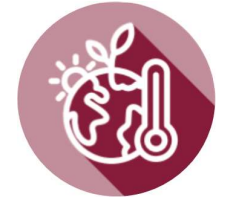
The final installations are scheduled for February, with 3 stands at Neighbridge, 4 at Cotswold Airport, and 4 at the Bakers Arms in Somerford Keynes. This network of locations, including community assets and visitor destinations, will enable a variety of linear and circular routes for visitors and residents 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 carparks 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

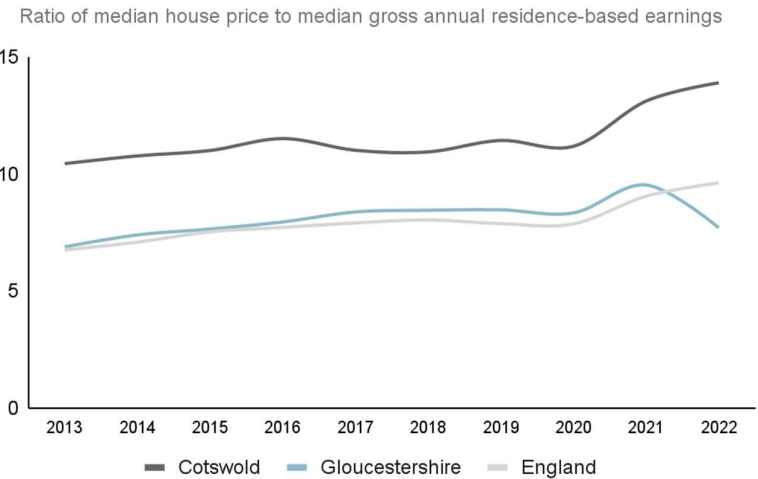


### The Context

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

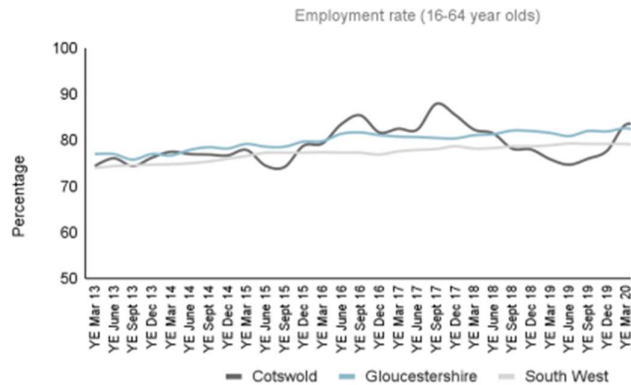
The team is actively supporting the Cotswold Youth Network by enhancing mental health and youth services, and fostering collaboration among organisations. Specifically, the team is working with Northleach Teen Space to implement training for their team and introduce interventions from the Ernest Cook 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

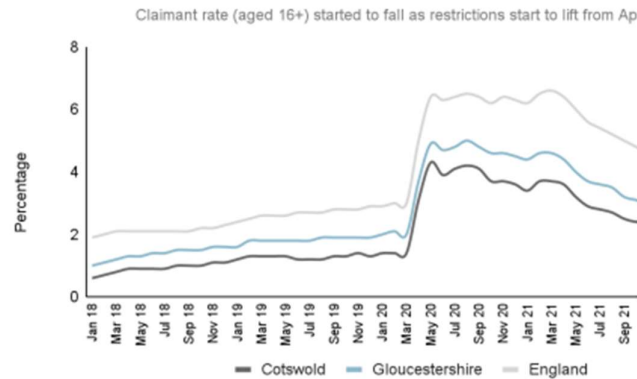


### The Context

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

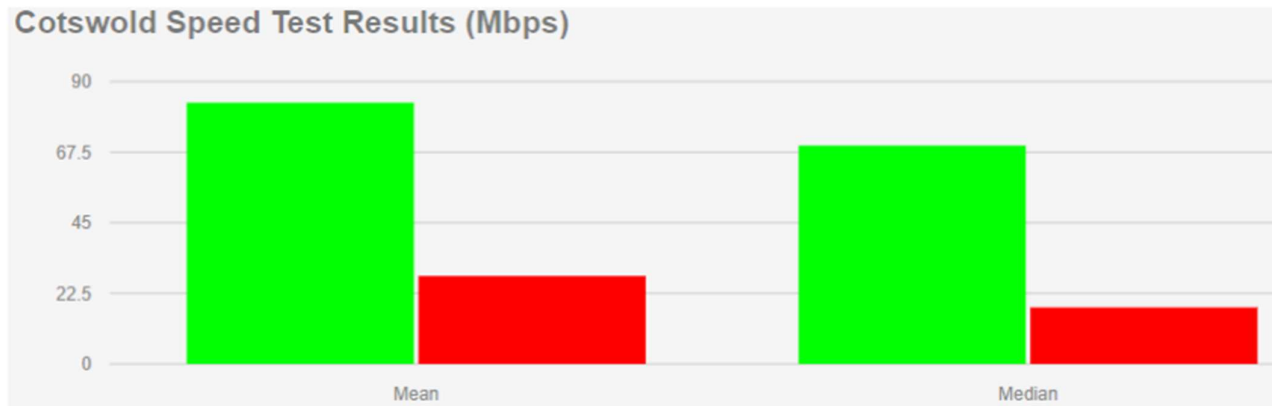
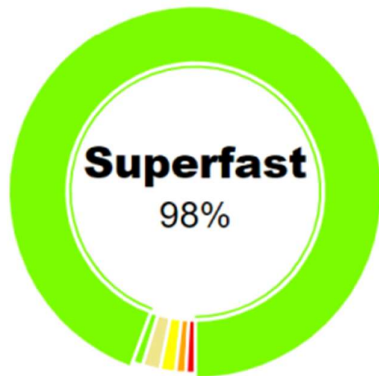


Source: ONS, Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

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 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 Page 86	<a href="#">Percentage of Council Tax Collected</a>	Green	6
	<a href="#">Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected</a>	Orange	7
	<a href="#">Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims</a>	Orange	8
	<a href="#">Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events</a>	Green	9
	<a href="#">Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances</a>	Red	10
	<a href="#">Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay</a>	Green	11
	<a href="#">(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties</a>	Grey	12
Customer Experience	<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/hotels/hostels</a>	Grey	13
	<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Telephone</a>	Green	14
	<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Email</a>	Grey	15
<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face</a>	Green	16	

# Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Customer Experience	<a href="#">Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time</a>	Grey	17
	<a href="#">Complaints</a>	Grey	18
	<a href="#">Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days</a>	Orange	20
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 87</p> Development Management and Land Charges	<a href="#">Building Control Satisfaction</a>	No Data	21
	<a href="#">Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	22
	<a href="#">Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	23
	<a href="#">Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	24
	<a href="#">Total Income achieved in Planning &amp; Income from Pre-application advice</a>	Green	25
	<a href="#">Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed</a>	Green	26
	<a href="#">(Snapshot) Planning Enforcement Cases</a>	Grey	27
	<a href="#">Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days</a>	Green	28
	<a href="#">Number of affordable homes delivered</a>	Red	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

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## 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.

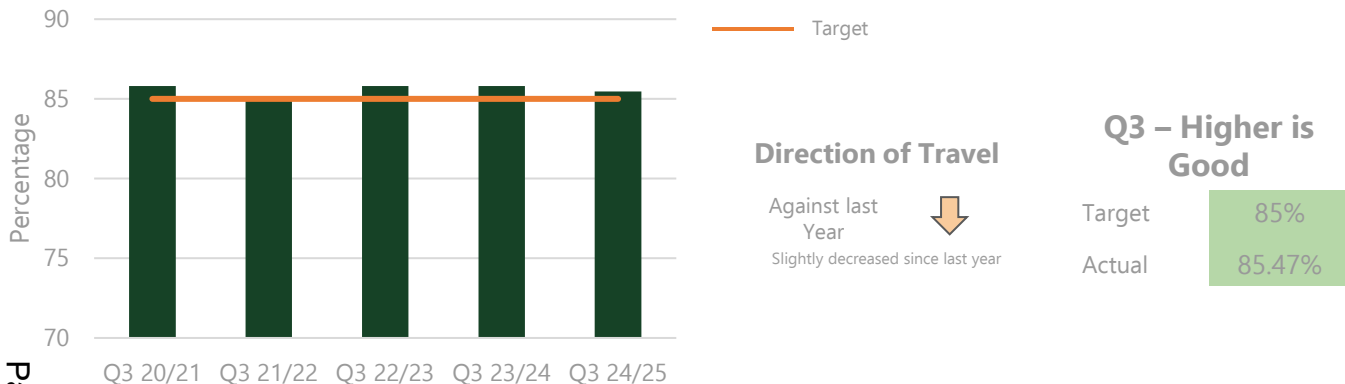


# Overall Performance

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.

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 its 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
<b>Balance at Quarter End</b>	£480,895.36	£678,612.57	£758,641.82	£1,194,197.90	£3,112,347.65
<b>% collected</b>	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://www.gov.uk)).

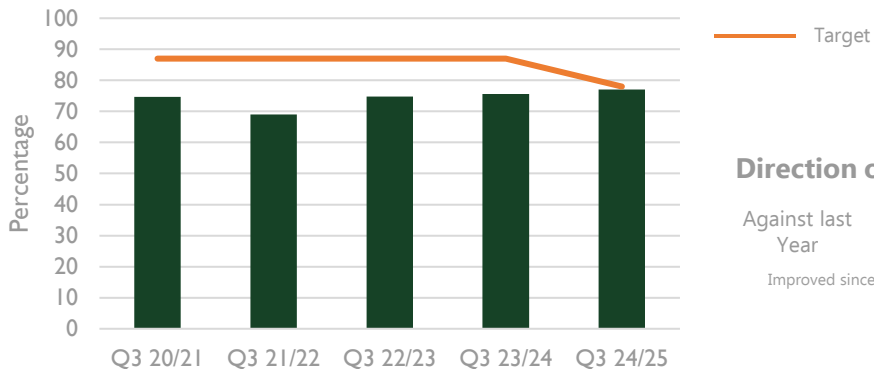
## How do we compare?

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

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

# Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



## 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.

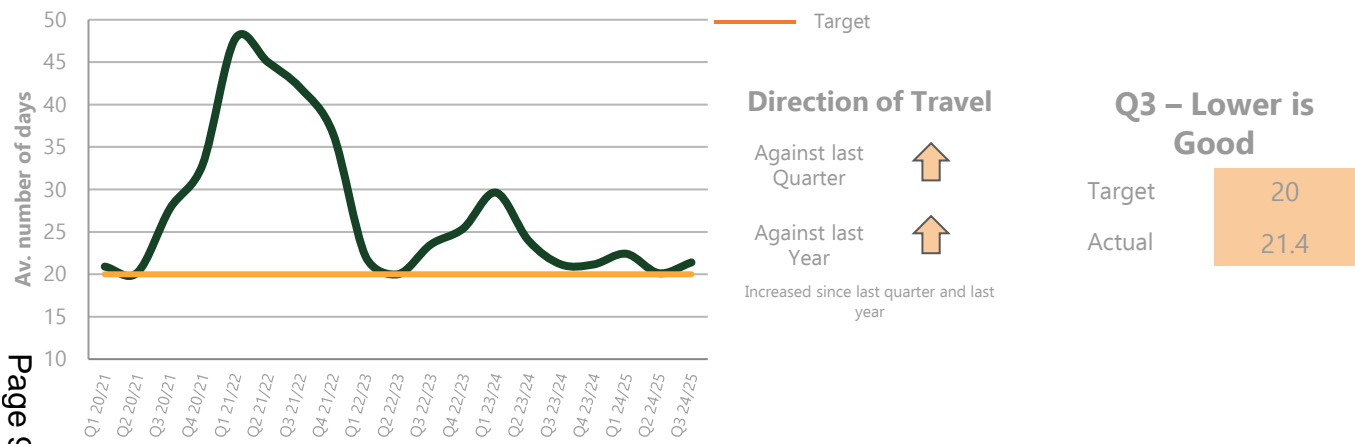
The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The table below displays the percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected in respect of previous years, along with the total outstanding amount:

	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



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## How do we compare?

Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of September 2024 and the percentage change from September 2023 for each authority.

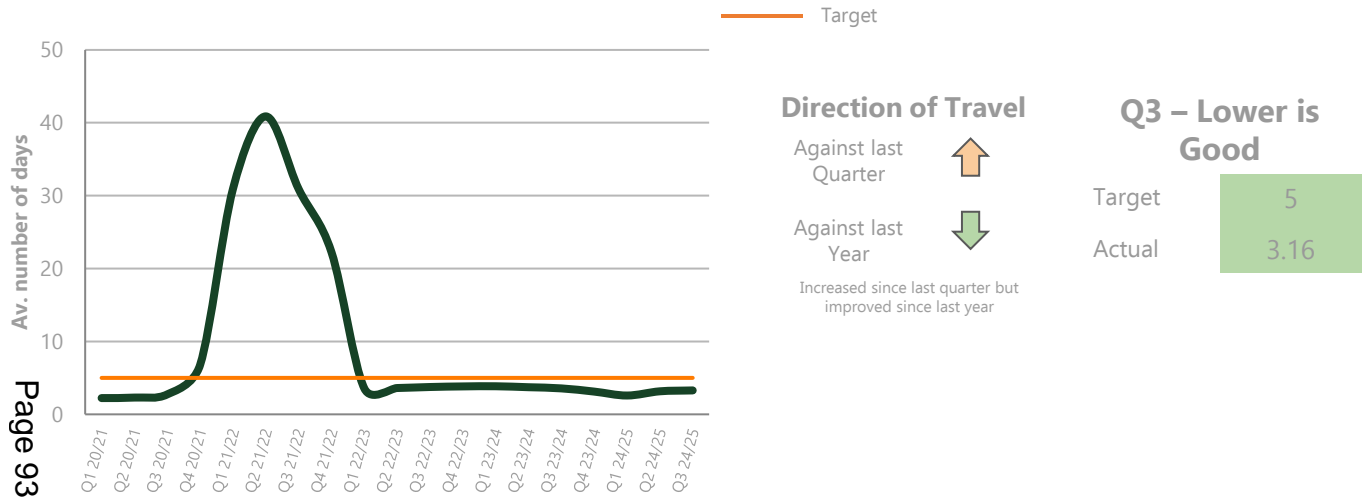
	Number of Claimants at end of Sept 2024	Percentage Change since Sept 2023	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank (Higher = biggest reduction)
Maldon	3,024	-4.21%	1/12
Derbyshire Dales	3,135	-0.76%	4/12
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>3,920</b>	<b>-0.38%</b>	<b>7/12</b>
Lichfield	5,240	5.54%	12/12

During Q3, the standalone processing times for new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims exceeded the 20-day target, with the Council averaging 23.37 days from October to December. Consequently, the rolling cumulative statistics have increased, with the Council remaining above target.

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.

Consultations on proposed changes to the CTS scheme were carried out in September and October. Feedback was gathered and subsequently presented to Cabinet and Full Council as part of the options for the 2025/26 scheme. Full Council approved the updated CTS scheme in November.

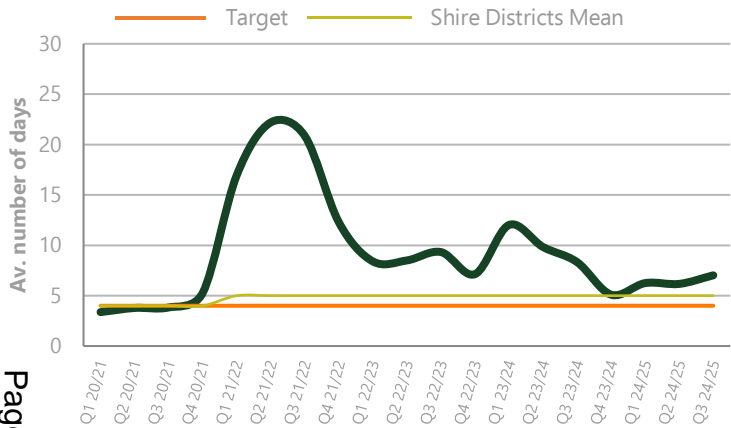
# Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events





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 9 of 44  
 How do we compare?

Standard 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.](#)

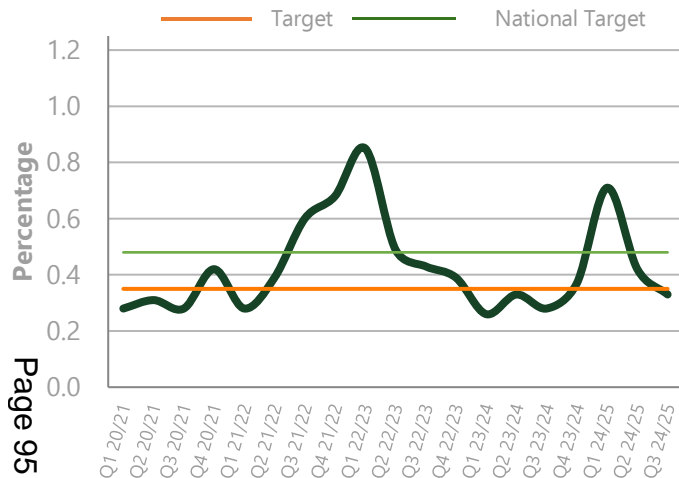
Similar to new Council Tax Support claims, the average processing times for Housing Benefit (HB) changes have increased at the Council. However, in comparison to last year, the Council has reduced its processing times by approximately one day.

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%

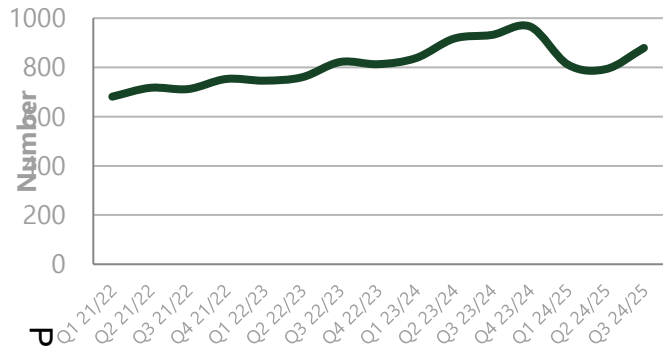
## How do we compare?

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

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

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



## Direction of Travel

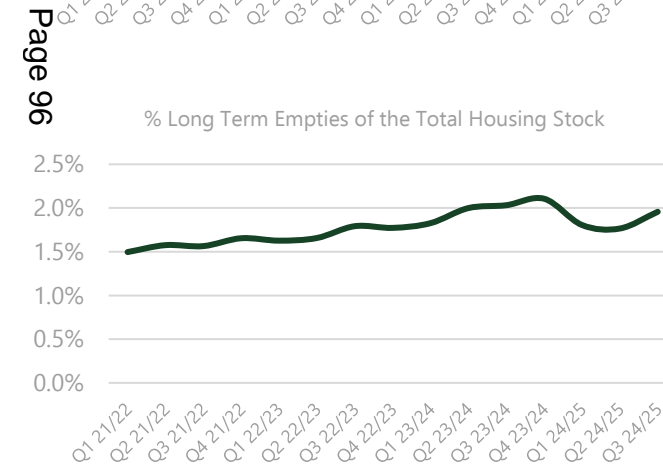
- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

**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.

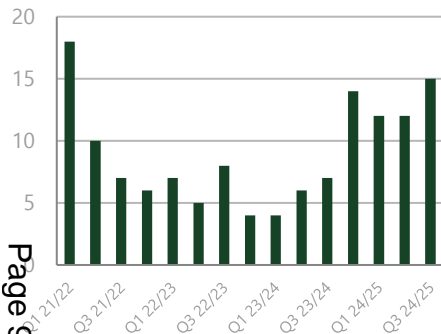
### How do we compare?

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

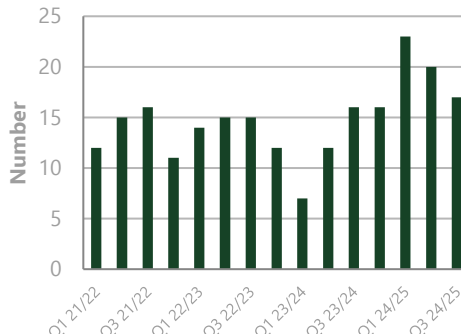


# (Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels

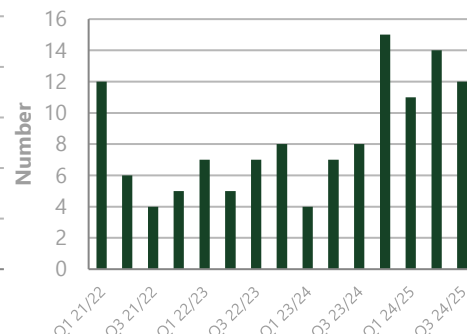
### Households in B&B/hotel type accommodation



### Households in hostels



### Successful 'Move on' into suitable independent/LT accommodation



## Direction of Travel

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

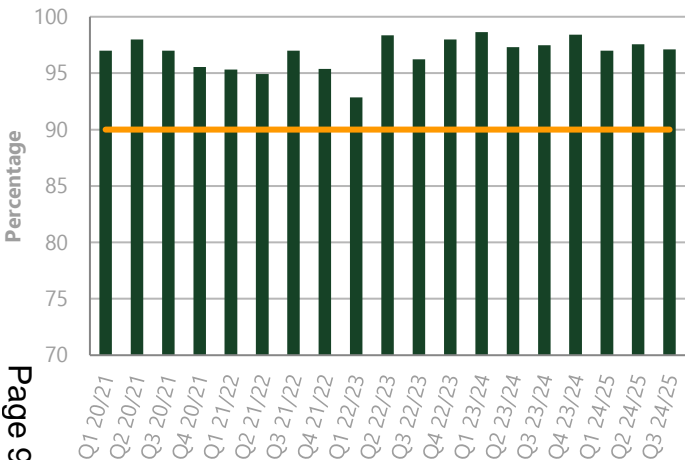
Homelessness remains a significant issue in Cotswold with numbers having increased following the extended cold weather over Christmas. The situation is complicated by several factors, including full hostels, reduced availability in adult homelessness pathways, and a shortage of affordable housing options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



— Target

### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly declined since last quarter and last year

### Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	97.12%

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### How do we compare?

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

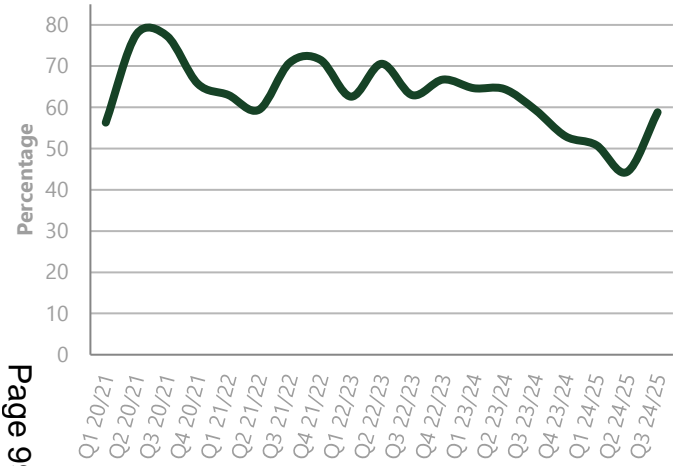
	Oct Rank	Oct Net Sat.	Nov Rank	Nov Net Sat.	Dec Rank	Dec Net Sat.
Cotswold	7	92%	1	97%	TBC	TBC
Forest	1	99%	N/A	N/A	TBC	TBC
West	2	97%	2	97%	TBC	TBC

A total of 551 residents participated in the survey, of these, 538 customers reported being satisfied with the service, reflecting a high level of overall satisfaction.


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


This consistent performance highlights the partnership's ongoing commitment to delivering excellent customer care across all channels.

# 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.

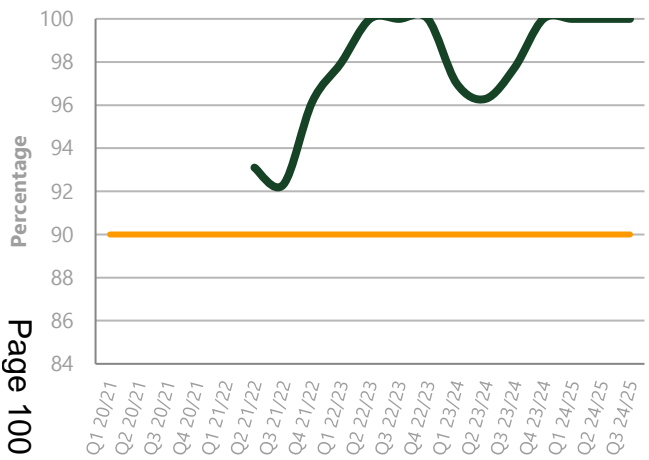
All outbound emails sent by customer services from Salesforce contain a link to the survey.

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



— Target

### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year ↑

Increased since last year and stayed the same since last quarter

### Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	100%

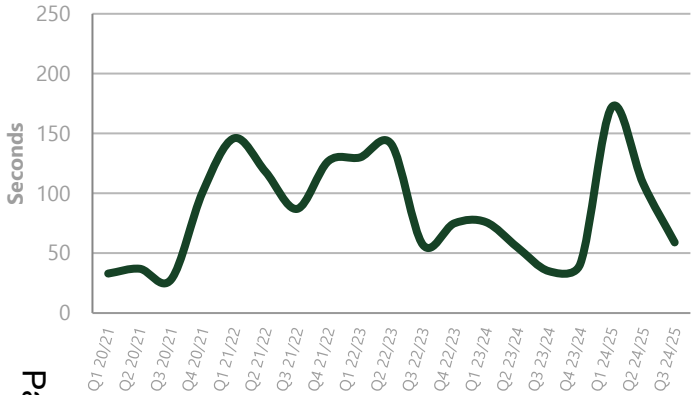
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high, with a 100% satisfaction rate for the quarter, with all 59 individuals surveyed satisfied with the service.

### 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

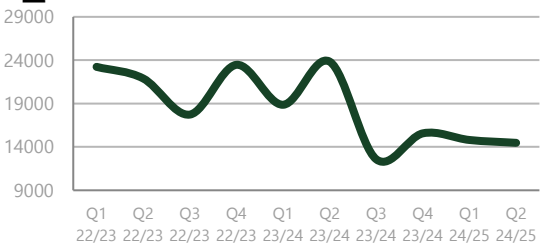
**Q3 - Lower is Good**

*No Target*

59 Seconds

Page 101

### 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

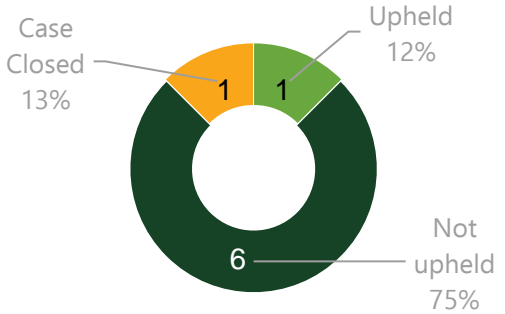
The number of calls decreased this quarter. This period marks the first opportunity to compare call volumes on the reduced phone lines since the trial was introduced in September 2023, providing a clearer view of the trial's impact on overall call trends. This aligns with a broader trend of decreasing 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 102

### 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.

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

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

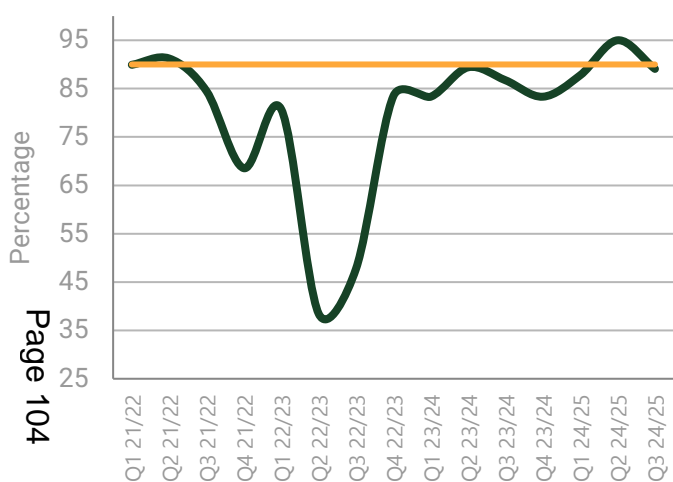
The new process has the following stages:

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

# Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
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

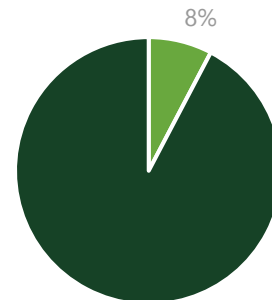
89.08%

## 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

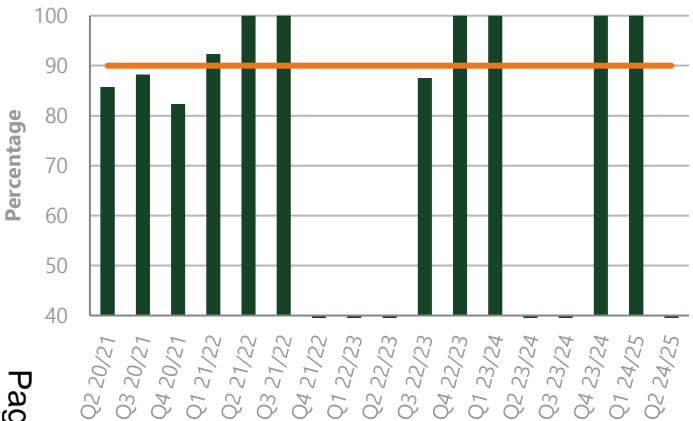


92%

20



# Building Control Satisfaction



### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter: N/A  
 Against last Year: N/A  
 No Data

### Q3 – Higher is Good

Target: 90%  
 Actual: No Data

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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.

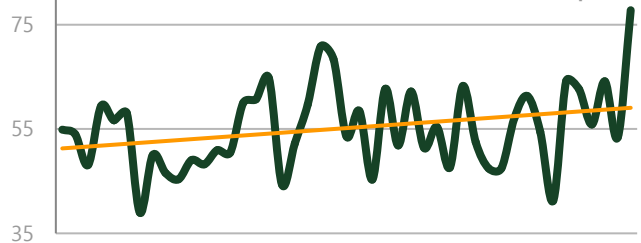
Given the current intensive survey process and the low response rate, the team is exploring options to improve the process. This includes collaborating with the Data Team to create a webform that will be emailed to customers who have received a completion certificate.

### How do we compare?

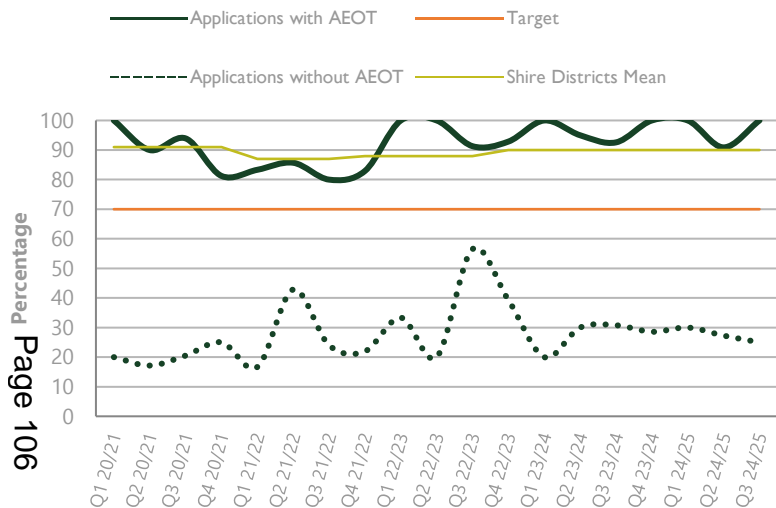
Percentage of share in the market

	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)

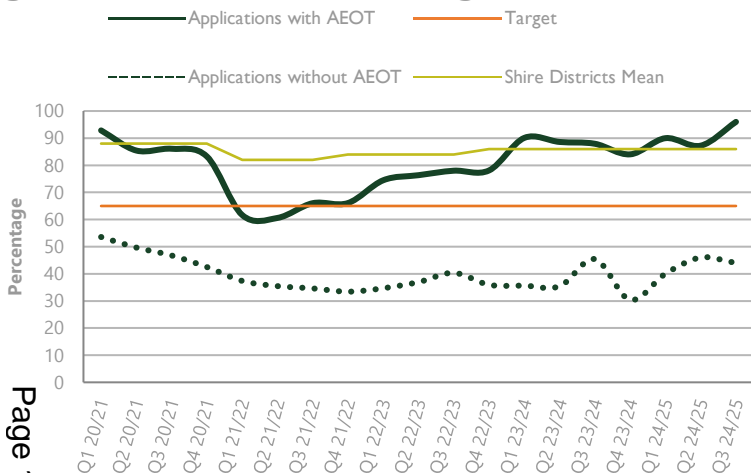
Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
East Hampshire	100	1/12	Top
West Devon	100	1/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5/12</b>	<b>Second</b>
Ribble Valley	86	8/12	Third
Lichfield	80	12/12	Bottom
Maldon	80	12/12	Bottom

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%

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### 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

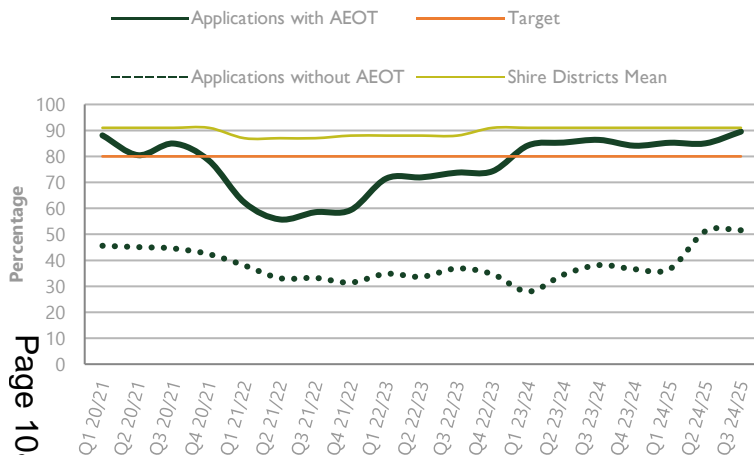
This quarter, the Council has continued to perform well in processing minor applications within the required timeframes. Determination times have improved by approximately 8% compared to both the previous quarter and the same period last year.

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%

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## 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

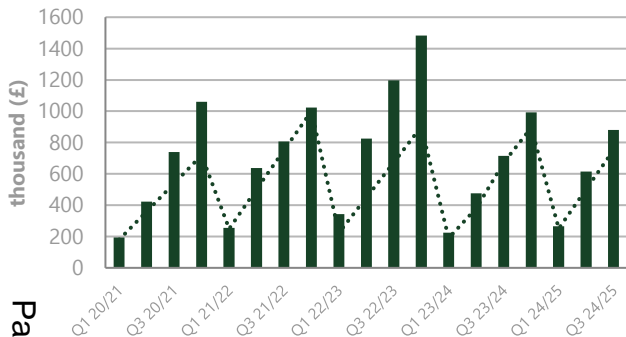
Determination times for Other applications have improved compared to both the previous quarter and the same period last year, with increases of approximately 4.5% and 3%, respectively. Notably, the proportion of applications determined without an agreed extension of time has consistently remained at 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 

## Q3 – Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target 751,408

Actual 880,102

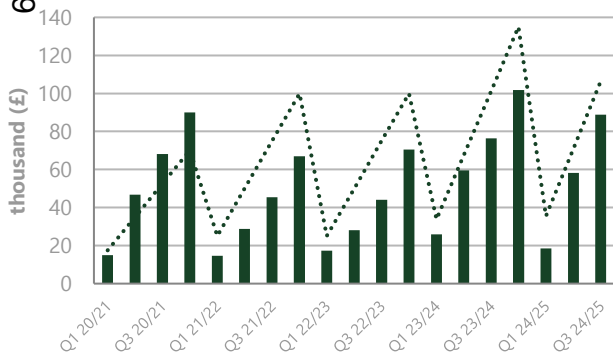
Pre-Application Income (£)

Target 106,500

Actual 88,868

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

## Pre-application income

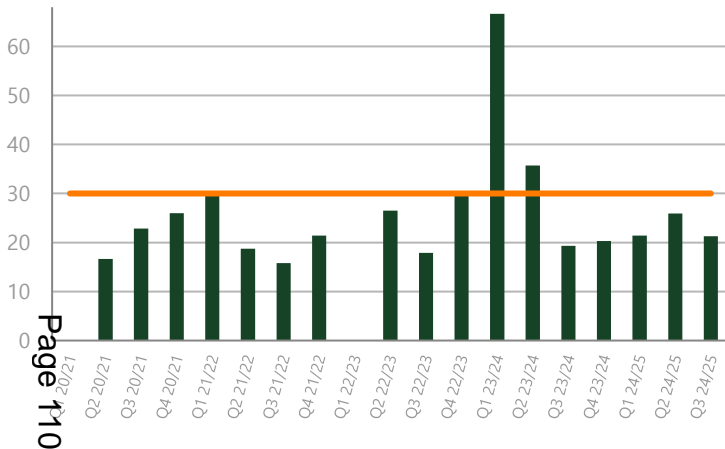


At the end of Q3, total planning income for the Council exceeded its target. Compared to Q3 of 2023-24, total planning income saw an increase of approximately £125,000, while pre-application income rose by around £12,500.

## 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

30%

Actual

21.28%

## How do we compare?

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

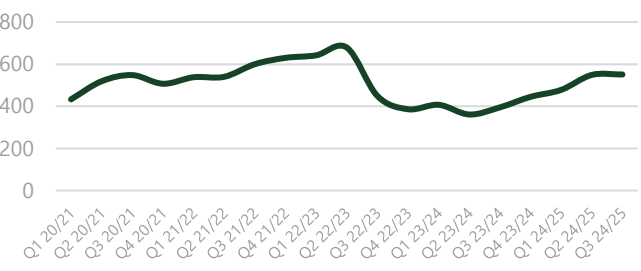
Q2 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1/12</b>	<b>Top</b>
Maldon	22	3/12	Top
Ribble Valley	29	6/12	Second
Chichester	43	8/12	Third
West Devon	50	10/12	Bottom
Derbyshire Dales	57	12/12	Bottom

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



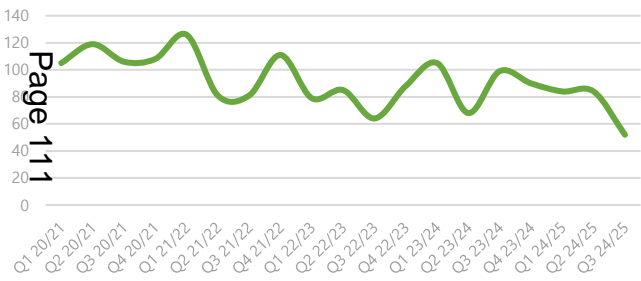
## Direction of Travel for Open Cases at end of Quarter

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 

## Q3 – Lower is Good

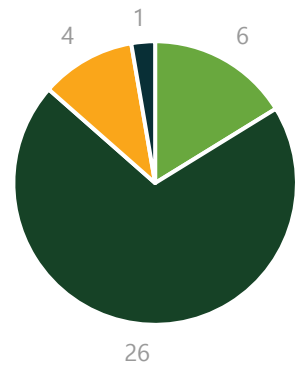
No Target  
Open Cases at End of Quarter 551

Number of Cases Opened During the Quarter over Time

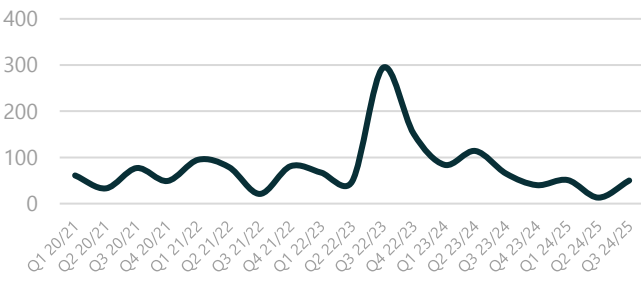


## Reasons Cases Closed

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



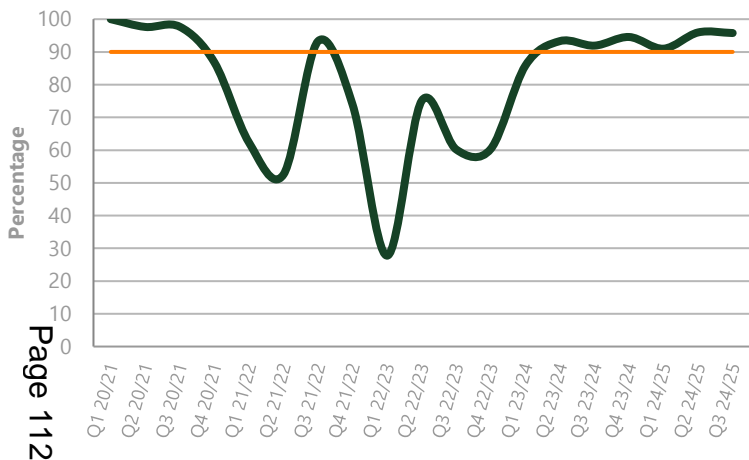
Number of Cases Closed During the Quarter over Time



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.


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# Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



— Target

### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Steady since last quarter but improved since last year

### Q3 - Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	95.77%

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.

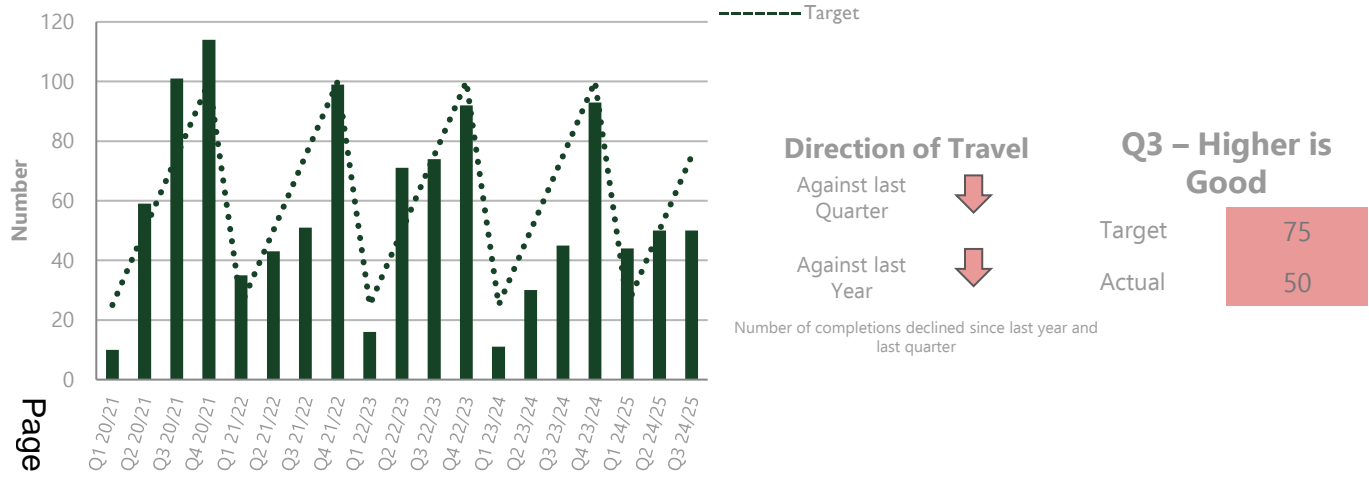
The HMLR project, aimed at creating a national local land charges service to speed up searches, has commenced and is currently in the early stages.

### How do we compare?

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



# Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



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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.

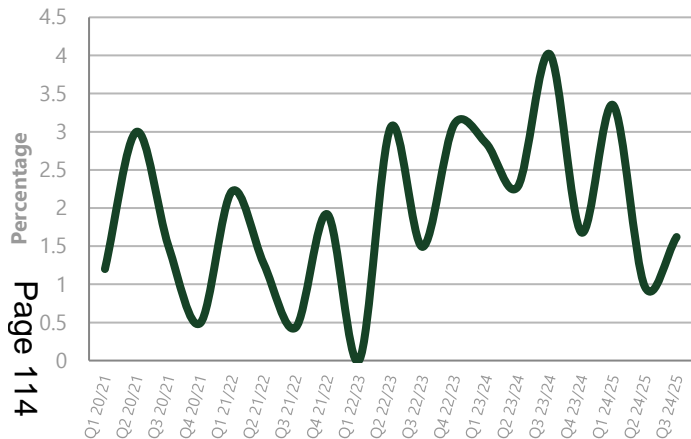
### How do we compare?

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

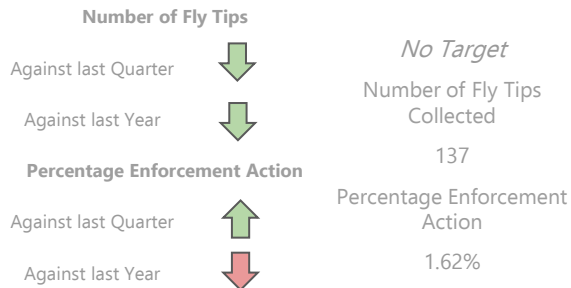
Note: this data is collected cumulatively from the beginning of the financial year to account for peaks and troughs

# 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



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?

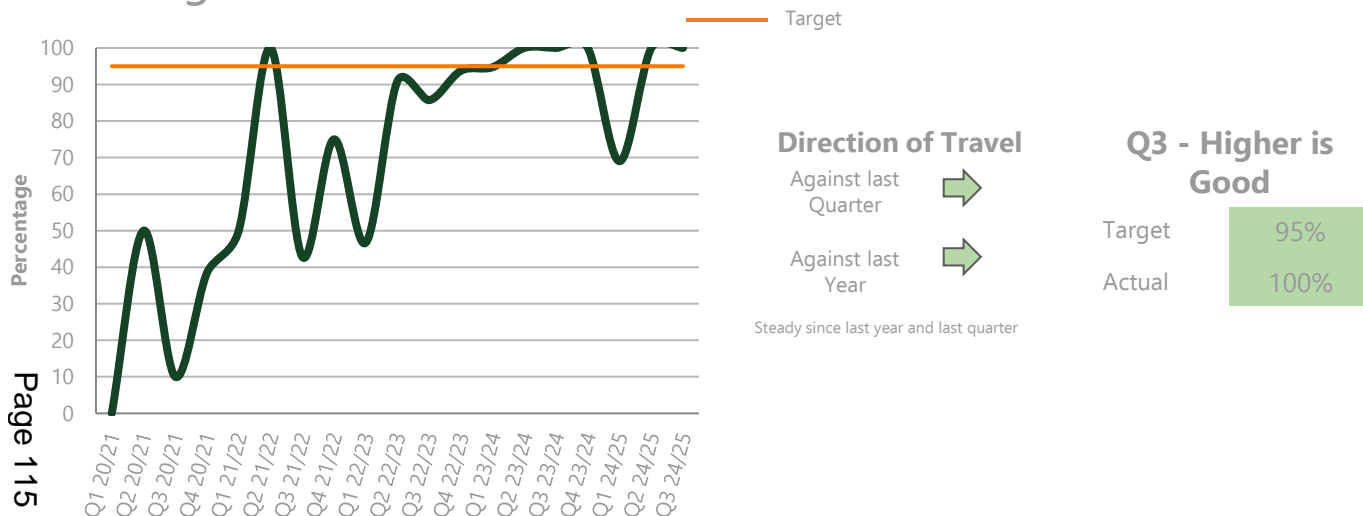
Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is 2022-23

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.

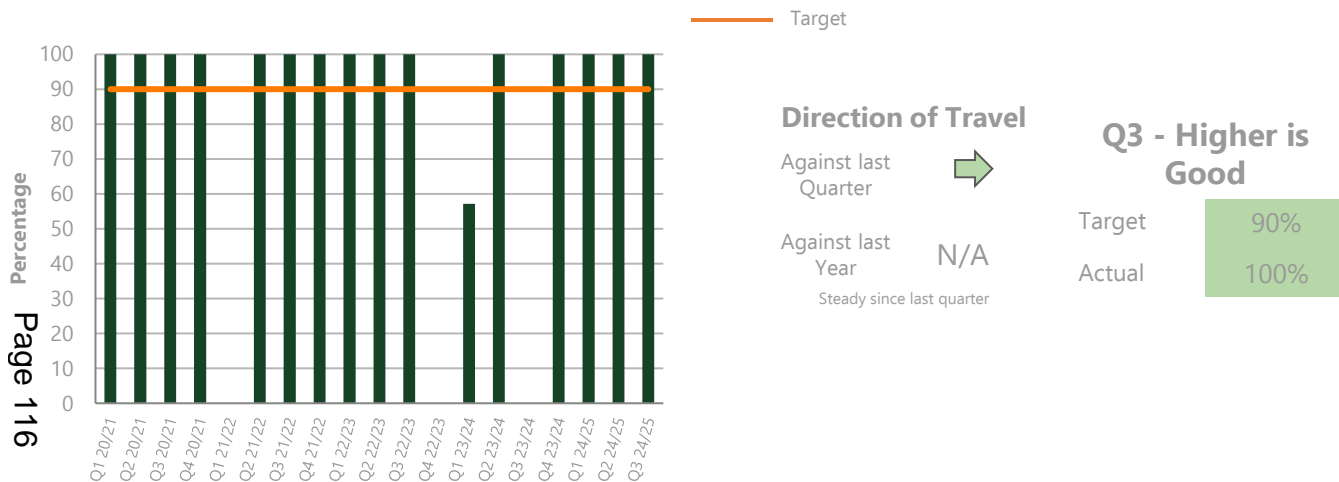
High-risk food inspections are prioritised due to their greater potential impact on public health and safety enabling issues to be addressed swiftly. However, this focus can occasionally delay scheduled inspections for lower-risk food businesses. To mitigate this, the service uses a dashboard to track 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.

## How do we compare?

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

# % 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)

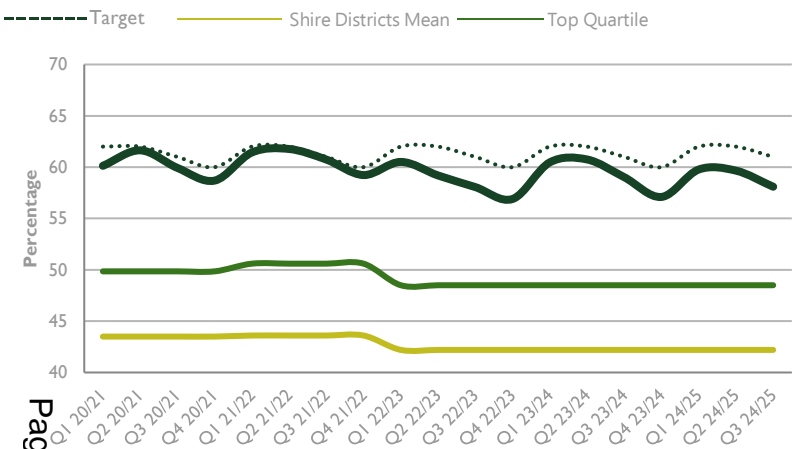


Three notifications were received during Q3 which was assessed within one working day.

## How do we compare?


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

# Percentage of household waste recycled



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

**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**

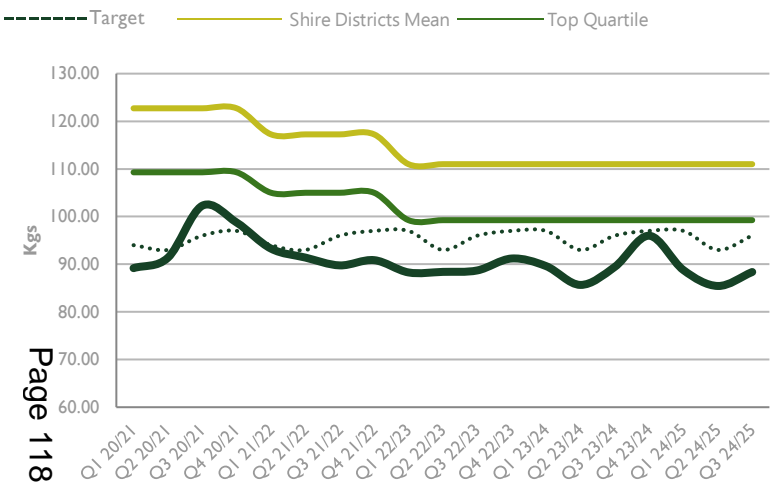
Q3 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Stratford-on-Avon	62.34	1/6	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>55.83</b>	<b>2/6</b>	<b>Top</b>
West Ox	55.7	3/6	Second
Derbyshire Dales	50.9	4/6	Third
Lichfield	47.03	5/6	Bottom
Malvern Hills	42.99	6/6	Bottom

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.

# 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

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### 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**

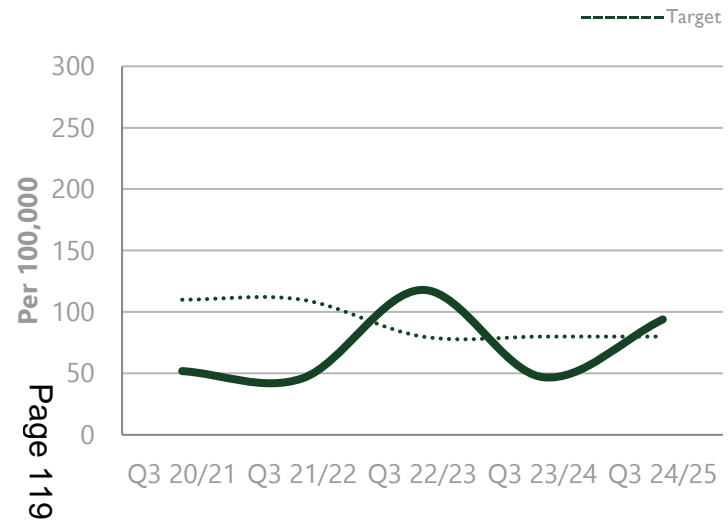
Q3 23-24 Benchmark	Kg	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	81.37	1/6	Top
Stratford-on-Avon	88.96	2/6	Top
West Ox	89.13	3/6	Second
Malvern Hills	99.02	4/6	Third
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>113.05</b>	<b>5/6</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
Lichfield	113.71	6/6	Bottom

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

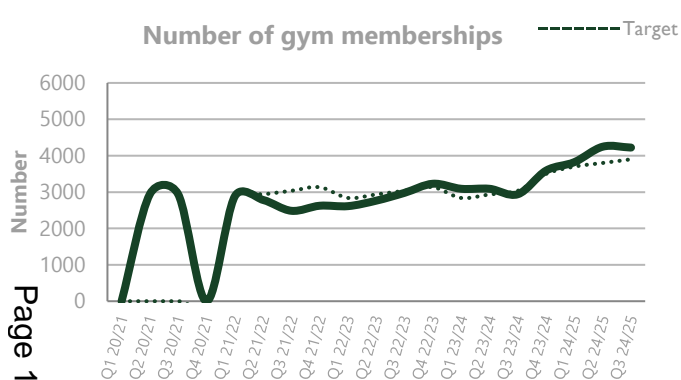
2022-23 Benchmark	Missed collections per 100,000 collections	Family Group Rank	Family Group Quartile	Whole Service Rank	Whole Service Quartile
Cotswold	109.89	12/14	Bottom	39/45	Bottom

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.

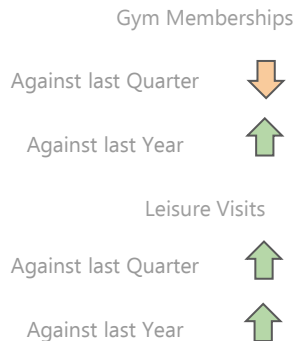
However, December saw a rise in missed bin collections, largely due to the Christmas period, which brought an expected increase in household waste.

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.

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



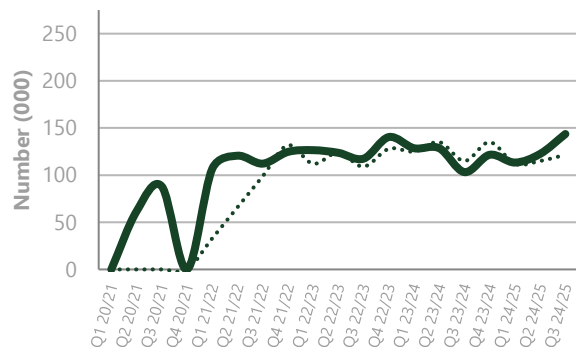
### Direction of Travel



### Higher is Good

	Gym Memberships
Target	3,900
Actual	4,223
Leisure Visits	
Target	121,000
Actual	143,584

### Visits to leisure facilities



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.





### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

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

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

**Timeliness:** Is it timely to consider this issue?

**Organisational priority:** Is it a Council priority?

**Public Interest:** Is it of significant public interest?

**Influence:** Can Scrutiny have meaningful influence?

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

### **Call in**

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

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>Monday 3 March 2025</b>		
Publica Transition Plan - Phase 2	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 31 March 2025</b>		
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evemy	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
<b>Tuesday 6 May 2025</b>		
Asset Management Strategy	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk
Public Conveniences Update on Changes	Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk

**Indicative items for 2025 – 2026**

<b>Monday 2 June 2025</b>		
Agreed Draft Work Plan 2025/26	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer julia.gibson@cotswold.gov.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Every	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Local Government Devolution Update		Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 7 July 2025</b>		
Ecological Emergency Update	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability - Cllr Mike McKeown	Olivia McGregor, Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
Local Plan Review Progress Update	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Cllr Juliet Layton	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk

<b>Monday 1 September 2025</b>		
Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 13 October 2025</b>		
Local Government Devolution Update	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Long term empty homes/second homes strategy update	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning - Cllr Juliet Layton	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 17 November 2025</b>		
Community Safety Partnership Update	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Cllr Lisa Spivey	Jacqueline Wright, Business Manager - Leisure and Wellbeing Jacqueline.Wright@Cotswold.gov.uk
Planning Enforcement Report	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning - Cllr Juliet Layton	Harrison Bowley, Head of Planning Services Harrison.Bowley@Cotswold.gov.uk

<b>Monday 5 January 2026</b>		
Budget Consultation Responses	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Climate Emergency Update	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability - Cllr Mike McKeown	Olivia McGregor, Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 2 February 2026</b>		
Budget 2026-27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Ubico Business Plan 2025-26 For Cabinet to receive the Ubico Business Plan for 2025/26	Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Simon Anthony, Business Manager for Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk

**Monday 2 March 2026**

Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Every	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk

**Monday 13 April 2026**



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

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

**The Forward Plan**

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

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

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

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

## **Key Decisions**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Matters To Be Considered in Private**

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

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

## **Documents and Queries**

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

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



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

**Contact Details:**

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

**E-mail:** [democratic@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk) **Telephone:** 01285 623000 **Website:** [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk)

**The Council's Executive Arrangements**

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

By law, the Cabinet can comprise a Leader of the Council, together with up to nine other Members to be appointed by the Leader (one of whom has to be appointed as Deputy Leader). The Leader will be elected by the Council, for a four-year term; and the Deputy Leader appointment is also for a four-year term.

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

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

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

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

Joe Harris	Leader	Communications; Democratic Services; Executive functions and Corporate Plan delivery; Forward Planning and the Local Plan; Publica; Town and Parish Council liaison.
Mike Evely (Deputy Leader)	Finance	Council transformation; Financial strategy and management; Grant funding and Crowdfund Cotswold; Property and Assets; Revenues and Benefits.
Mike McKeown	Climate Change and Sustainability	Climate and biodiversity emergency response; Community energy; Council sustainability; Energy efficiency programme; Sustainable transport.
Juliet Layton	Housing and Planning	Cotswold Lakes (formerly known as Cotswold Water Park); Development Management, Heritage and Conservation; Homelessness; Neighbourhood Planning; Regulatory Services – planning and building control; Strategic Housing.
Paul Hodgkinson	Health, Leisure and Visitor Experience	Community Safety Partnership; Culture; Leisure Centres; Museums; Parking Strategy and Operations; Public Health; Tourism.
Claire Bloomer	Communities	Cost of living support; Diversity, inclusion and young people; Domestic Abuse; Liaison with 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector; Refugee and Asylum Response; Safeguarding.
Tristan Wilkinson	Economy and Environment	Economic Development; Flooding; Sewage; Street Cleaning; UBICO; Waste and Recycling.

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>6 February 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Review of Parking Charges and Season Tickets	No	Open	Cabinet	6 Feb 2025	Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk
Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	6 Feb 2025 26 Feb 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update	Yes	Open	Cabinet	6 Feb 2025	Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>26 February 2025 - Full Council</b>						
Pay Policy Statement 2025	No	Open	Council	24 Feb 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	John Llewellyn, Head of Human Resources john.llewellyn@publicagroup.uk
<b>6 March 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Green Economic Growth Strategy refresh - outcome of consultation	No	Open	Cabinet	6 Mar 2025	Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Publica Transition Plan - Phase 2	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	6 Mar 2025 19 Mar 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk  Chief Executive Officer
Ubico Business Plan	No	Open	Cabinet	6 Mar 2025	Cabinet Member for	Simon Anthony,

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
2025-26					Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Business Manager for Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	No	Open	Cabinet	6 Mar 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>19 March 2025 - Full Council</b>						
Community Governance Review - Upper Rissington	No	Open	Council	19 Mar 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Sarah Dalby, Elections Manager sarah.dalby@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>3 April 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three	No	Open	Cabinet	3 Apr 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evely	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@publicagroup.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>8 May 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
<b>21 May 2025 - Full Council</b>						
Record of Attendance 2024/25	No	Open	Council	21 May 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
Outside Body Appointments 2025/26	No	Open	Council	21 May 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
Appointment of Committees 2025/26	No	Open	Council	21 May 2025	Leader of the Council - Cllr Joe Harris	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Key decisions delegated to officers</b>						
Decision on future	Yes	Fully	Cabinet	25 Jul 2024	Deputy Leader -	Claire Locke, Interim

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
regeneration of The Old Station and Memorial Cottages, Cirencester		exempt Likely to contain commercially sensitive information	Council  Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer)	31 Jul 2024  Before 31 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk  Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer)
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update	Yes	Open	Cabinet  Chief Executive Officer	11 Jan 2024  6 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Rural England Prosperity Fund	Yes	Open	Cabinet  Chief Executive Officer	17 Jul 2023  19 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Disposal of Property in Bourton on the Water	Yes	Open	Cabinet  Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer)	9 May 2024  Before 31 Dec 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evely	Jasmine McWilliams, Estates Manager jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer