

# Public Document Pack



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Tuesday, 13 May 2025

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## COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Wednesday, 21 May 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

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

Rob Weaver  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

(Councillors Nikki Ind, Mark Harris, Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Andrea Pellegram, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Len Wilkins and Tristan Wilkinson)

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

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

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

# AGENDA

1. **Election of a Chair**

Purpose

To fulfil Council's obligation to elect a Chair for a term of office until the start of the Annual Council meeting in May 2026. The Chair cannot be a member of the Cabinet.

2. **Appointment of a Vice-Chair**

Purpose

To fulfil Council's obligation to appoint a Vice-Chair for a term of office until the start of the Annual Council meeting in May 2026. The Vice-Chair cannot be a member of the Cabinet.

3. **Apologies**

Purpose

To receive any apologies for absence.  
The quorum for Council is 9 members.

4. **Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive**

Purpose

To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council, the Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

Purpose

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

6. **Resignation of Leader**

Purpose

To note the resignation of Councillor Joe Harris as Leader of the Council.  
Councillor Joe Harris has notified the Proper Officer of his resignation as Leader of the Council effective from Tuesday 20 May 2025.

7. **Election of Leader**

Purpose

To elect a Leader of the Council for a term of office extending to the Annual Council meeting in May 2027.

8. **Announcement of the Leader on Cabinet appointments**

Purpose

For the Leader to update Council on the appointment of the Deputy Leader, the appointment of Cabinet members and the allocation of portfolio responsibilities.

9. **Appointment of Committees 2025/26** (Pages 7 - 16)

Purpose

This report sets out those matters reserved to Council at its Annual Meeting:  
To make appointments to Committees for the Civic Year 2025/26  
To make appointments to the positions of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Committees for the Civic Year 2025/26.

Recommendations

That Full Council resolves to:

1. DETERMINE that, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act"), the Council shall continue to apply the political balance provisions under the Act to committees as shown in Annex A;
2. APPOINT Councillors to serve on the Council's Committees and working groups as set out in Annex B for a term of office expiring at the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
3. APPOINT Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Council's Committees and working groups as shown in Annex B;
4. NOTE the arrangements for substitutions set out in part 4 of the report.

Annex B to be circulated separately.

10. **Record of Attendance 2024/25** (Pages 17 - 20)

Purpose

For Council to note the record of attendance for Members in the Civic Year 2024/25.

A Member Attendance report will be published as a supplement once Council meetings for the Civic Year 2024/25 are completed.

11. **Appointments to Outside Bodies 2025/26** (Pages 21 - 24)

Purpose

This report provides Council with a current list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2025/26.

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. NOTE the appointments to outside bodies by the Leader of the Council in respect of executive functions, as set out in Annex A Table 1;
2. CONFIRM the appointments to the Gloucestershire County Council Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Annex A Table 2.

Annex A to be circulated separately.

12. **Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26** (Pages 25 - 30)

Purpose

To update Council on the award of Rural England Prosperity Funding for 2025/26, to seek approval for the approach to delivery of REPF projects in 2025/26 and to agree the necessary delegations.

Recommendation(s)

That Council resolves to:

1. AMEND the capital programme for 2025/26 to include the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) scheme capital budget of £229,240, which is fully funded from the 2025/26 REPF grant allocation.
2. APPROVE the provisional allocations as set out in para 3.1.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment and the Council's Section 151 Officer to allocate the funding, having regard to the recommendations of the REPF Assessment Panel.

13. **Next meeting**

The next meeting of Full Council will be held on 16 July 2025, the meeting will start at 6.00pm.

(END)



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL – 21 MAY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES</b>
Wards affected	None
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	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk">democratic@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Andrew Brown. Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk">democratic@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	This report sets out those matters reserved to Council at its Annual Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make appointments to Council committees and working groups for the Civic Year 2025/26.</li> <li>• To make appointments to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of Committees for the Civic Year 2025/26.</li> </ul>
Annexes	Annex A – Political proportionalities Annex B – Committee nominations 2025/26 (to follow)
Recommendation(s)	That Full Council resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DETERMINE that, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act"), the Council shall continue to apply the political balance provisions under the Act to committees as shown in Annex A;</li> <li>2. APPOINT Councillors to serve on the Council's Committees and working groups as set out in Annex B for a term of office expiring at the next Annual Meeting of the Council;</li> <li>3. APPOINT Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Council's</li> </ol>



	Committees and working groups as shown in Annex B; 4. NOTE the arrangements for substitutions set out in part 4 of the report;
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Political groups have been asked to nominate members to seats on committees and working groups



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The report sets out the statutory requirement that Council agrees on an annual basis its committee membership for the forthcoming civic year 2025/26.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act") requires the Council to allocate Committee seats to political groups in proportion, as far as is reasonably practicable to the size of those groups on the Council and that the Council review that allocation each year at the Annual Meeting. The requirement is for representation to be proportional on each Committee and across the relevant Committees taken as a whole, subject to Section 15 (5) (b) of the Act which provides that where the majority of seats on the Council are held by one political group, that group shall have a majority on all bodies to which appointments are made.
- 2.2** Under the Council's political groups scheme, if the Council is unable to make appointments or matters change during the year the Chief Executive is authorised to consult with the group leaders and following that consultation to adjust the number and allocation of seats to each group to give effect to the rules on proportionality and to make appointments as necessary, in accordance with the nominations of the group leaders.
- 2.3** It is open to the Council or a Committee or other relevant council body carrying out a review, to adopt some other arrangement and allocate seats on a different basis other than that prescribed by the Act. Notice of such a proposal must be given in the Council summons, and a decision would have to be made without any member voting against the arrangement. This is known as a 'nem con vote' by the Council. Abstentions from voting do not invalidate the 'nem con vote'. Notice has been given on the Agenda so that Council is not denied that opportunity.
- 2.4** Committee membership is for one year with the appointments made at the Annual Meeting and will expire at the next Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2026.
- 2.5** Members who serve on Cabinet cannot serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



- 2.6** Under the Constitution, Members cannot serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee unless they have attended the required training.
- 2.7** It is expected within the Constitution that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be from an opposition group.

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** Under Section 15 of the Act, the Council must review the representation of the different political groups on Committees and other relevant Council bodies at the Annual Council Meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The statutory provisions have been added to by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended in 1991. The allocation of seats to political groups is set out in Annex A.
- 3.2** The Constitution requires the Annual Meeting of Council to appoint Councillors to serve on the Council's Committees and other Council bodies for the Civic Year 2025/26. The members nominated by groups are shown in Annex B and Council is recommended to approve these appointments.
- 3.3** Council may appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of each committee or if Council does not do so the Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected at the first scheduled meeting of each committee. It is the custom and practice of the Council for this to be done at the Annual Meeting. Council is recommended to appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees and working groups as shown in Annex B.

### **4. SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 4.1** Where a member is unable to attend a meeting of a committee of which they are a member, they may arrange for a substitute member to attend in their place. Notification of substitution can be made by the member appointing the substitute, the substitute Member, or in the case of a substitution within a political group by the Leader or Deputy Leader of the relevant political group.
- 4.2** The Constitution states that for each committee where substitution is applicable, substitutes are permitted in respect of each political group, and across non-aligned members as if those members were to have formed a grouping. Substitution is only permitted within each political grouping, or within the non-aligned members (i.e. a





member of a political group cannot substitute for a member of another political group or a non-aligned member; and a non-aligned member cannot substitute for a member of a political group).

- 4.3** Notification of substitution can be made by the member appointing the substitute, the substitute member, or in the case of a substitution within a political group by the Leader or Deputy Leader of the relevant political group.

## **5. WORKING GROUPS**

- 5.1** Full Council has previously agreed to set up a number of working groups to cover a variety of issues which require member input. Some of these working groups report to Council and provide recommendations for approval whilst others are to provide member input for the work of officers or Cabinet Members. Working Groups do not need to be appointed based on political proportionality.
- 5.2** In addition to Working Groups established by Council the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may establish Task and Finish Groups. These groups will be appointed by the Committee when required.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1** If Council wishes to alter the size or general remit of any committee, it could pass a resolution requesting that officers produce a report to a future Full Council meeting with alternative proposals.
- 6.2** If Council wishes to make further changes to the terms of references of working groups, it could delegate authority to the Chief Executive to do so.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** There are none arising.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** None in addition to those mentioned within the report.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1** An effective Committee structure and decision-making process is critical for the Council to deliver its corporate priorities.



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**9.2** If appointments were not made, this could delay decision-making within the Council.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**10.1** Council is advised of the need to promote equality when appointing to committees.

**11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**11.1** None.

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**12.1** None.

(END)

## Annex A: Political proportionalities on committees 2025-26

Seats on committees are allocated based on the principles set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15). The allocation of seats to political groups has been reviewed based on the political composition of the Council following the by-elections held on 1 May 2025:

Liberal Democrat: 21

Conservative: 10

Green: 2

Independent (non-grouped): 1

**Table 1: Initial seat allocations**

Committee	Seats	Lib Dem	Con	Green	Total	Balance
Overview and Scrutiny	10	6	3	1	9	0
Planning and Licensing	11	7	3	1	10	0
Performance and Appointments	7	4	2	0	7	-1
Audit and Governance	7	4	2	0	7	-1
<b>Total seats allocated (entitlement)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21 (22)</b>	<b>10 (10)</b>	<b>2 (2)</b>	<b>33 (35)</b>	<b>-2</b>

The Liberal Democrat Group has an overall under-allocation of one seat. One seat remains to be allocated on both the Performance and Appointments Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee.

### Steps to allocate remaining seats:

1. The Liberal Democrat Group chooses whether to gain one seat on the Performance and Appointments Committee or the Audit and Governance Committee. Liberal Democrat Group chose to gain an additional seat on the Audit and Governance Committee.
2. The final seat, on the Performance and Appointments Committee is allocated to the non-grouped Independent Member\*.

\*Non-grouped Independent Members have no automatic entitlement to seats on committees but do affect overall proportionality and stand to be offered any seats

left unallocated once all political groups have received their full proportional entitlement.

**Table 2: Final seat allocation after adjustments**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Overview and Scrutiny	10	6	3	1	0	10	0
Planning and Licensing	11	7	3	1	0	11	0
Performance and Appointments	7	4	2	0	1	7	0
Audit and Governance	7	5	2	0	0	7	0
<b>Total seats allocated</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Rounded entitlement</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Real entitlement</b>		<b>21.62</b>	<b>10.29</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>33.97</b>	<b>-1.03</b>
<b>% of seats allocated</b>		<b>(62.86)</b>	<b>(28.57)</b>	<b>(5.71)</b>	<b>(2.86)</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>(0)</b>

(End)

## Annex B: Committee nominations 2025/26

Committee (size)	Liberal Democrat Group	Conservative Group	Green Group	Independent (non-grouped)
Audit and Governance (7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nigel Robbins (Chair)</li> <li>2. Helene Mansilla (Vice Chair)</li> <li>3. Tony Dale</li> <li>4. Nick Bridges</li> <li>5. Jon Wareing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Len Wilkins</li> <li>2. Jeremy Theyer</li> </ol>		
Standards Sub-Committee (3, for appointment by Audit and Governance Committee on 14 July 2025)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vacant</li> <li>2. Vacant</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Len Wilkins</li> </ol>		
Overview and Scrutiny (10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Angus Jenkinson (Vice Chair)</li> <li>2. Michael Vann</li> <li>3. Lisa Spivey</li> <li>4. Joe Harris</li> <li>5. Jon Wareing</li> <li>6. Nick Bridges</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gina Blomefield (Chair)</li> <li>2. David Cunningham</li> <li>3. Tony Slater</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clare Turner</li> </ol>	
Performance and Appointments (7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mike Every (Chair)</li> <li>2. Juliet Layton (Vice-Chair)</li> <li>3. Angus Jenkinson</li> <li>4. Ian Watson</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. David Cunningham</li> <li>2. Tom Stowe</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nikki Ind</li> </ol>
Planning and Licensing (11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dilys Neill (Chair)</li> <li>2. Ian Watson (Vice Chair)</li> <li>3. Ray Brassington</li> <li>4. Nick Bridges</li> <li>5. Patrick Coleman</li> <li>6. Michael Vann</li> <li>7. Mark Harris</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Julia Judd</li> <li>2. David Fowles</li> <li>3. Daryl Corps</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Andrew Maclean</li> </ol>	

## Working Groups for appointment by Council

Working Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Conservative Group	Green Group	Independent (non-grouped)
Constitution Working Group (7)	1. Mike Every 2. Juliet Layton 3. Patrick Coleman 4. Tristan Wilkinson	1. David Fowles 2. Len Wilkins	1. Vacant	
Member Development Steering Group (4)	1. Mike Every 2. Claire Bloomer	1. Julia Judd	1. Vacant	
Cost of Living Working Group (7)	1. Claire Bloomer 2. Dilys Neill 3. Nick Bridges	1. Laura Hall-Wilson 2. Len Wilkins	1. Clare Turner	1. Nikki Ind
Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group (6)  <i>Leader of the Council to chair</i>	1. Mike Every 2. Juliet Layton 3. Angus Jenkinson	1. Daryl Corps 2. David Cunningham	1. Andrew Maclean	



#### Member Attendance 2024/25 Municipal Year

Attendance as a member or substitute at all Council, Cabinet, committee, sub-committee, working group and Cabinet Member decision meetings held from 15 May 2025 (date of Annual Council) to 20 May 2025 (date after the last meeting in the 2024/25 municipal year).

Councillor	Number of meetings attended as a Member	Apologies received	# meetings expected as a Member	Percentage attendance	Comment
Andrea Pellegram	3	0	3	100%	elected 16/01/2025
Andrew Maclean	17	3	20	85%	
Angus Jenkinson	17	1	18	94%	
Chris Twells	2	8	10	20%	resigned 19/03/2025
Claire Bloomer	14	6	20	70%	
Clare Turner	18	0	18	100%	
Daryl Corps	18	1	19	95%	
David Cunningham	15	3	18	83%	
David Fowles	24	6	30	80%	
Dilys Neill	22	6	28	79%	
Gary Selwyn	22	2	24	92%	resigned 24/03/2025
Gina Blomefield	13	2	15	87%	
Helene Mansilla	6	5	11	55%	
Ian Watson	18	2	20	90%	
Jeremy Theyer	13	0	13	100%	
Joe Harris	15	2	17	88%	
Jon Wareing	14	1	15	93%	

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Number of meetings attended as a Member</b>	<b>Apologies received</b>	<b># meetings expected as a Member</b>	<b>Percentage attendance</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Julia Judd	19	3	22	86%	
Juliet Layton	21	3	24	88%	
Laura Hall-Wilson	0	0	0	n/a	elected 02/05/2025
Len Wilkins	17	0	17	100%	
Lisa Spivey	13	6	19	68%	
Mark Harris	18	2	20	90%	
Michael Vann	25	12	37	68%	
Mike Every	23	1	24	96%	
Mike McKeown	14	3	17	82%	
Nick Bridges	0	0	0	n/a	elected 02/05/2025
Nigel Robbins	11	2	13	85%	
Nikki Ind	7	1	8	88%	
Patrick Coleman	28	1	29	97%	
Paul Hodgkinson	19	1	20	95%	
Ray Brassington	16	3	19	84%	
Roly Hughes	2	3	5	40%	resigned 28/11/2025
Tom Stowe	9	0	9	100%	
Tony Dale**	1	10	11		see note below
Tony Slater	9	5	14	64%	
Tristan Wilkinson*	11	5	16	69%	

Comments linked to table above:

Roly Hughes resigned as Councillor for Chesterton ward on 28 November 2024 and Councillor Andrea Pellegram was elected for the same ward on 16 January 2025.

Gary Selwyn resigned as Councillor for Watermoor ward on 24 March 2025 and Councillor Nick Bridges was elected for the same ward on 2 May 2025.



Christopher Twells resigned as Councillor for Tetbury with Upton ward on 19 March 2025 and Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson was elected for the same ward on 2 May 2025.

\*\* Councillor Tony Dale – [Council on 27 November 2024 resolved to approve Councillor Dale's absence from meetings under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds of ill health.](#)

### **Explanatory notes**

Meetings not attended for which apologies were not received are included in the 'total meetings expected' sum.

Member attendance at meetings in other capacities (e.g. as an observer) are not included in the attendance statistics.

The following working groups held meetings during the reporting period and are included in the attendance statistics:

- Boundary Review Working Group,
- Cost of Living Working Group,
- Constitution Working Group,
- Member Development Working Group,
- British Farming Motion Task & Finish Group (established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Attendance at meetings of the Cabinet Transform Working Group, the Publica Review Working Group and the Moreton-in-Marsh working Group are not included as these meetings were not supported by Democratic Services in 2024/25.

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Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL – 21 MAY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2025/26</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	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer Email: <a href="mailto:nickie.mackenzie-daste@cotswold.gov.uk">nickie.mackenzie-daste@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	This report provides Council with a current list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2025/26.
Annexes	Annex A – Representatives on Outside Bodies 2025/26 (to follow)
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the appointments to outside bodies by the Leader of the Council in respect of executive functions, as set out in Annex A Table 1;</li> <li>2. Confirm the appointments to the Gloucestershire County Council Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Annex A Table 2.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	Supporting Communities
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO



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Consultees/ Consultation	N/A
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report sets out the appointment to outside bodies.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Appointments to most outside bodies are the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, who makes such appointments annually in May.
- 2.2** The exception is the appointment to the Gloucestershire County Council Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as these are non-executive committees for appointment by Council.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** The proposed appointments for 2025/26 are included in Annex A to this report.

## **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** The Leader is free to make such appointments as they consider appropriate in respect of executive functions.
- 4.2** Council is free to appoint any non-executive member to the external non-executive committees.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Travel and subsistence allowances will be payable in respect of the majority of appointments made, if claimed.
- 5.2** Provision for this is included in the Council's budget.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** None.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** None.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1** None.

## **CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** There may be climate change implications arising from car travel to meetings of the outside bodies.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1** None.  
(END)



**COTSWOLD**  
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Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL 21 MAY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF) UPDATE</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tristan Wilkinson Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment Email: <a href="mailto:tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Email: <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To update Council on the award of Rural England Prosperity Funding for 2025/26, to seek approval for the approach to delivery of REPF projects in 2025/26 and to agree the necessary delegations.
Annexes	None.
Recommendation(s)	That Council RESOLVES to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amend the capital programme for 2025/26 to include the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) scheme capital budget of £229,240, which is fully funded from the 2025/26 REPF grant allocation.</li> <li>2. Approve the provisional allocations as set out in para 3.1.</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment and the Council's Section 151 Officer to allocate the funding, having regard to the recommendations of the REPF Assessment Panel.</li> </ol>



Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding to the climate emergency</li><li>• Supporting communities</li><li>• Supporting the Economy</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Consultation has taken place throughout the running of the REPF programme, through the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, the UKSPF/REPF Assessment Panel and the UKSPF/REPF Partnership Group, all of which contain key stakeholders.





## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Council was awarded £764,292 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund over two years (2023-24 and 2024-25). This funding has been used to provide grants to businesses, village halls and community buildings, heritage and cultural buildings and active travel schemes. The use of the funding was set out in detail in a report to Cabinet in [February 2025](#) and the accompanying [annex](#). The end of project figures are being finalised and will be made available on the Council's website.
- 1.2** In March 2025, it was announced that the Government had allocated a further £229,240 to the Council for 2025-26. This report sets out the proposed use of the funding in the current financial year, along with the process for allocating funding and seeks the necessary delegations to enable efficient decision-making.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Council was awarded £764,292 in September 2022 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which is a fund targeted at improving rural productivity and connectivity and is essentially a 'rural top-up' to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This was subject to approval of an addendum to the Local Investment Plan, which took place in April 2023.
- 2.2** At the beginning of March 2025, the Government announced that a further £33 million had been allocated to the Rural England Prosperity Fund. At the end of March 2025, it was announced that Cotswold District Council's allocation was £229,240.
- 2.3** Cabinet has received reports on the REPF, in [November 2022](#) and [July 2023](#) as well as joints report with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in [January 2024](#) and [February 2025](#). The REPF funding was used in a number of different ways, as follows:

**Business Grants** – Over £410,000 was allocated for business grants. Individual grants were for between £5,000 and £50,000 and applicants were required to give a minimum of 50% match funding.

**Community Infrastructure Grants** – Over £90,000 was allocated for improvements to village halls and community buildings across the district, with a particular focus on sustainability. Projects have included solar panels, improved lighting and insulation.

**Active Travel** – A number of active travel schemes have been supported, including improving and extending paths in Lechlade and Fairford.



**Cultural and heritage buildings** – A number of schemes have been delivered for cultural and heritage buildings, including a new heating system for Holy Ascension Church at Oddington and solar panels at Bowmoor Sailing Club in Lechlade.

- 2.4** The REPF [prospectus](#) has been updated to reflect the new Government's missions. The REPF supports the missions to "kickstart economic growth", "break down barriers to opportunity" and "build an NHS fit for the future". It supports two of the three UKSPF priorities – 'Communities and Place' and 'Supporting Local Business'. Flowing from that, there are four relevant sub-themes – 'Advice and support to business', 'Development of the visitor economy', 'Bringing communities together, tackling homelessness' and 'Improving health and wellbeing'.

### **3. PROPOSED APPROACH FOR 2025-26**

- 3.1** The Council is required to produce a forecast of how the funding will be spent and the outcomes and outputs it will deliver, based on the four sub-themes listed in para 2.4 above. It is proposed that, based on the experience from the previous two years of administering the REPF that funding is allocated as follows:

Advice and support to business – 40%

Development of the visitor economy – 20%

Bringing communities together – 20%

Improve health and wellbeing – 20%

It should be noted that these are merely forecast/indicative figures, which can be amended depending on the composition of the applications approved.

- 3.2** Cabinet will be aware that an open application process has been run for the approximately £120,000 of unallocated UK Shared Prosperity Fund money for 2025-26. Many of the projects that applied would be eligible for funding from the REPF. It is therefore proposed that eligible applications already received during the UKSPF application window are automatically considered for REPF funding, but that a reasonable additional period of time of three weeks is allowed for any other applications to come forward.

- 3.3** On the advice of the UKSPF Partnership Group, applicants for UKSPF funding for 2025-26 were given guidance that ordinarily grant awards would be between £5,000 and £25,000 and that a minimum of 20% match funding would be required, but that



a higher level of funding would strengthen the application. It is proposed to follow the same approach for the REPF.

- 3.4** During 2023-24 and 2024-25, a Rural Business Grant scheme as part of the REPF was administered by ALP Synergy Ltd on the Council's behalf and a Community Infrastructure Grant scheme, for villages halls and community buildings, was administered by GRCC on the Council's behalf. It is proposed that, given the reduced amount of funding available and the knowledge and experience gathered over the last two years, that all applications are dealt with in-house.
- 3.5** As before, it is proposed that an Assessment Panel, made up of internal and external stakeholders, reviews applications and makes recommendations to the Chief Executive for decision in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment.

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

- 4.1** The Council could choose not to undertake an open application process, but that would not be sufficiently transparent and would not enable the widest range of potential projects to be considered.
- 4.2** The Council could outsource the administration of grant schemes under the REPF. Given the smaller amount of money available in 2025-26 and the knowledge and experience gained over the last two years, it is recommended that all applications are dealt with in-house.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** The REPF has been a valuable source of funding for the Cotswold district over the past two years, supporting a significant number of projects within the district, leveraging in additional investment, safeguarding and creating jobs helping the Council towards its climate objectives.
- 5.2** The extension of the REPF for another year is also welcome and will enable the Council to support projects that will bring benefits to businesses, communities and individuals in the district.

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

- 6.1** The REPF allocation will be added to the capital programme, subject to formal approval by Full Council. Projects will be funded from the Council's allocation of



funding from the Government. All funding will need to be spent by 31st March 2026 otherwise any unspent portion will need to be returned to Central Government. Regular monitoring of spend and reporting to Government is being undertaken by the UKSPF/REPF Project Manager in conjunction with the Economic Development Lead and other relevant Officers.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The Council will continue to require external project promoters to enter into a legal agreement with the Council. The Council undertakes due diligence before grants are awarded. The Council also ensures that grants are awarded in line with rules on Subsidy Control (formerly State Aid). It can take up to two months to complete all necessary checks and finalise the details of grant agreements. This should be factored into the decision when to seek input from Legal Services.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** Each project will be assessed in terms of risks and managed using the Project Management Framework.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** Each project supported by the REPF will be assessed for its equalities impact.

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

- 10.1** The REPF prospectus state that councils should consider how any investments from the funds contribute to nature recovery and Net Zero objectives, including reaching Net Zero by 2050, resilience to natural hazards and the 25 Year Environment Plan. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their projects contribute to delivery of the Council's climate change objectives and form part of the consideration of application by the Assessment Panels, using a scoring matrix.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None.