



Cabinet  
10/July2025

## **Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 10 July 2025**

### Members present:

Mike Evely	Juliet Layton
Patrick Coleman	Paul Hodgkinson
Andrea Pellegram	Tristan Wilkinson

### Officers present:

Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy Officer	Gemma Moreing, Business Information Lead
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Jane Portman, Interim CEO
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Paul Lankester, Principal Environmental Health Officer	Jo Symons, Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure
Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director - Planning Services	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

### Observers:

Councillor Gina Blomefield

## **101 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mike McKeown and Councillor Claire Bloomer.

## **102 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Pellegram declared a potential interest in item 14 as the owner of a non-licensable HMO. After due consideration of the matter, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that Councillor Pellegram had no interest to declare in respect of that item and could therefore take part in the decision.

There were therefore no declarations of interest from Members.

### **103 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader noted that the agenda was substantial due to the absence of meetings in June and August.

The Leader formally welcomed Jane Portman, the newly appointed Interim Chief Executive Officer, to her first meeting of Cabinet at Cotswold District Council.

The Leader noted, prior to discussion of the minutes, the recent passing of Alan McQuillan, a 102-year-old D-Day veteran from Kemble who had attended the VE celebrations in May. All those present were invited to stand for a minute's silence in his memory.

### **104 Minutes**

The purpose of this item was to consider the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8 May 2025.

There were no amendments to the minutes

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Councillor Evemy, Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.  
The proposal was put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

4 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions.

<b>Approval of minutes of Cabinet 8 May 2025 (Resolution)</b>		
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of the 8 May 2025 be APPROVED as a correct record.		
For	Mike Evemy, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Tristan Wilkinson	4
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Patrick Coleman and Andrea Pellegram	2
<b>Carried</b>		

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### **105 Public Questions**

No public questions were received.

### **106 Member Questions**

Cabinet

10/July2025

No member questions were received.

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

One Cabinet Member decision taken since the agenda for Cabinet on 10 July was published and was reported to cabinet members.

#### Cabinet Member Delegated Decision 1.

Councillor Clare Bloomer, Cabinet Member for Communities participated in a decision meeting on 23 May 2025 regarding a response to the British Telecommunications consultation on the removal of payphones from 16 locations across Cotswold District, in the light of consultation responses submitted to the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Communities considered the recommendations within the report, noted that the consultation had followed due process and resolved to:

1. Agree to the Council response for each affected kiosk
2. Agree to encourage British Telecommunications Ltd to keep open the offer of community adoption for telephone kiosks retained after the conclusion of the consultation process.

The decision was effective on 6 June 2025.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the decision.

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

The Chair welcomed Councillor Gina Blomefield, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and proposed that the Committee's recommendations be considered at the relevant points during consideration of the appropriate agenda items. Councillor Blomefield agreed to this approach.

### **109 Achieving Corporate Net Zero**

The purpose of the report was to recommend the creation of a Corporate Climate Change Board and note the actions to address the emissions performance gap.

The Leader introduced the item, noting that both Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital, and Olivia McGregor, Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead, were unable to attend as originally planned. The Leader highlighted significant progress made on climate action, including a national rise of over 90 places in the latest scorecard, moving Cotswold District Council into the top six among all district councils. The improvements were particularly notable in areas such as food waste, transport, and biodiversity.

The Leader emphasised the importance of continued efforts to meet the 2030 CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets, particularly in addressing emissions from the waste fleet and council buildings. Programmes such as Cotswold Home Solar and EV charger deployment were acknowledged for their wider community benefits.

Cabinet commended the significant progress made on climate action, highlighting the rapid improvement in the Council's national scorecard ranking. Councillors praised Councillor Mike McKeown for his leadership and commitment, noting the creation of the Corporate Climate Board as a positive step forward. It was acknowledged that while progress had been impressive, continued focus and effort were essential, particularly in addressing emissions from the waste fleet and council buildings.

Councillors recognised the importance of maintaining momentum, avoiding complacency, and striving for further improvements. The impact of climate change was emphasised through recent extreme weather events, reinforcing the urgency of local action. The dedication of officers, particularly Olivia McGregor, was acknowledged, and the value of collaborative work across Cabinet and departments was highlighted. The proposed Climate Board was welcomed as a focused and capable group to embed climate action across all workstreams.

Cabinet was asked to approve the creation of a Corporate Climate Board to support accountability and drive continued progress.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Every and seconded by Councillor Wilkinson

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

<b>To recommend the creation of a Corporate Climate Change Board and note the actions to address the emissions performance gap (Resolution)</b>		
RESOLVED that Cabinet: 1. NOTED the position as set out in the report (Annex A) and the actions to close the emissions performance gap. 2. AGREED the creation of a Corporate Climate Change Board to provide accountability for an emission reduction programme.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

## **110 Creative Cotswold's Action Plan - Culture Strategy**

The purpose of the report was to present Creative Cotswolds to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Paul Hodgkinson introduced the Creative Cotswolds action plan, aimed at celebrating and strengthening the district's rich cultural sector. The plan, adapted from an earlier full strategy due to anticipated Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), focused on practical steps to promote collaboration among local cultural organisations, including the Corinium Museum, Barn Theatre, Cidermill Theatre, Longborough Opera, and festivals such as the Phoenix Festival in Cirencester.

The plan proposed regular coordination meetings, cross-promotion of events, improved online visibility using the hashtag #CreativeCotswolds, and the inclusion of cultural listings on cotswolds.com. A new permanent exhibition space at the Bingham Library was cited as early progress.

Members expressed strong support for the Creative Cotswolds Action Plan, noting the district's wide-ranging cultural offerings, from professional theatres like Longborough Opera to smaller venues such as the Sundial Theatre and local pubs hosting live music and comedy. Specific examples mentioned included exhibitions by local artist Laurie Plant at the Bingham Gallery, and cultural events at Cotswold Lakes and local breweries.

The importance of linking culture with local economic and tourism development was highlighted, with councillors recognising the potential for mutual benefit to businesses and community wellbeing. The appointment of a dedicated Leisure and Culture Manager and support officer was welcomed as a positive step to deliver the plan. The crossover between culture, business, and wellbeing was seen as a key strength of the initiative. Officers and councillors were thanked for their work on the project.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Paul Hodgkinson and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

### **Adoption of 'Creative Cotswold's' strategy as the Council's approach to supporting the cultural sector (Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

APPROVED the adoption of 'Creative Cotswold's' strategy as the Council's approach to

supporting the cultural sector.

For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Evemy, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **111 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review**

The purpose of the report was to consider the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report 2024.

Councillor Mike Evemy introduced the report which was for noting.

Cabinet considered the follow-up report from the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge review, which took place in November 2024, as a follow-up to the original LGA Peer Challenge conducted in October 2022. It was noted that the follow-up had been delayed to allow assessment of changes made after the first phase of the Publica transition to be taken into account. The report was broadly positive, recognising significant progress made by the Council in response to earlier recommendations; particularly in strengthening governance arrangements and enhancing the role and effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, under the leadership of the current Chair.

It was noted that the peer team also reviewed financial governance during the transition, led by the former portfolio holder, Councillor Mike Evemy, and the Deputy Chief Executive, and provided advice on the second phase of the Publica transition. Cabinet welcomed the staff who formally joined the Council's employment on 1 July 2025 as part of this second phase.

The report also referenced the need to consider organisational change in the context of potential local government reorganisation (LGR). The importance of organisational culture was highlighted, as was ongoing work on a new People and Culture Strategy. It was noted that the report would be presented for full discussion at Council the following week, and no decision was required at this meeting.

It was observed that the Overview and Scrutiny function had significantly improved in recent years, noting a marked contrast with its effectiveness a decade ago. The current Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Councillor Gina Blomefield, was praised for their

Cabinet

10/July2025

integral role in this progress and the positive impact of the constitutional provision allowing the opposition to hold the position was acknowledged. The contribution of the former Vice Chair, Gary Selwyn, was also recognised, highlighting the strength of the cross-party leadership.

RESOLVED that Cabinet NOTED the report.

## **112 Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Review and Action Plan**

The purpose of the report was to invite Cabinet to welcome the findings of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Planning Service Peer Challenge report (May 2025) and to agree the proposed Action Plan

Before inviting Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to introduce the report, the Leader of the Council confirmed a minor amendment to the recommendations. The word "endorse" was to be replaced with "welcome" in reference to the report, and Cabinet was to "agree" the resultant action plan rather than "endorse" it, as the action plan would be owned and implemented by Cabinet.

Councillor Juliet Layton introduced the item and confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the report. She also noted that both she and the report authors had attended the Overview and Scrutiny meeting to address any questions and provide clarification.

Councillor Layton advised that the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) had conducted a peer review of the planning service from 25 to 27 March 2025, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to assess strengths and identify areas for improvement. The review highlighted the strength and collaborative approach of the planning team, with particular praise for the positive working culture.

The newly appointed Assistant Director of Planning Services and the Director of Communities and Place were present during the feedback session, contributing to a sense of stability and renewed leadership. An action plan had since been developed in response to the PAS recommendations, and confidence was expressed in the team's ability to deliver the actions within the proposed timescales.

Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director of Planning Services, introduced herself to Cabinet and confirmed that she had joined the Council during the week of the PAS peer review. The officer noted the positive feedback received across all areas of the planning service, including policy, development management, and enforcement and confirmed that all 13 recommended actions would be taken forward, recognising this as an ambitious but achievable plan, supported by a strong team and aimed at improving services for residents and stakeholders. Regular updates on progress would

Cabinet

10/July2025

be provided to Councillor Layton, and the action plan was seen as a valuable foundation for future local government reorganisation.

The Leader then invited Councillor Gina Blomefield, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give the committee's view.

Cabinet received and appreciated three key recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined by Councillor Blomefield:

1. **Planning Enforcement Resourcing** – Councillor Blomefield highlighted long-standing concerns about whether planning enforcement was sufficiently resourced, noting the imminent departure of a valued officer.

Cabinet recognised the challenges in recruitment and retention and confirmed that resourcing enforcement would remain a priority within existing planning team resources, noting that the issue was not budgetary but due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.

2. **Improved Communication Between Officers and Ward Members** – It was recommended that enforcement officers engage more regularly with local ward members, where appropriate, to share insights and potentially resolve cases more swiftly.

Cabinet agreed to arrange an all-member briefing on planning enforcement to promote shared understanding of legal constraints, improve communication, and strengthen working relationships between officers and members.

3. **Better Use of Technology** – Councillor Blomefield stressed the importance of enabling officers to make full use of available technology and AI, not just through access but through adequate training and process support.

Cabinet welcomed this and confirmed that the transformation team would prioritise digital innovation and user support to maximise the benefits of existing and future IT systems.

All three recommendations were well received, clearly understood, and considered valuable contributions to the improvement of the planning service.

The Assistant Director of Planning expressed full support for improving communication with ward members and highlighted the national challenges in recruiting enforcement officers. It was reported that the service was actively exploring internal options, including the potential redeployment of an experienced planning officer into an enforcement role.

It was noted that enforcement was a frequent concern at Town and Parish Council meetings. The gap between public expectations and the practical realities of enforcement was acknowledged, and improved communication was suggested as a way to help manage this.



Cabinet  
10/July2025

Councillor Every committed to liaising with the Head of Communications to support officers in improving communications, including communications to members.

Councillor Layton proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Every with the inclusion of the word 'welcome' and 'agree' as moved earlier in the discussion.

The recommendations as amended were put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting Record  
6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**To welcome the findings of the PAS (Planning Advisory Service) Planning Service Peer Challenge report (May 2025) and to agree the proposed Action Plan. (Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Cabinet

1. WELCOMED the findings of the PAS (Planning Advisory Service) Planning Service Peer Challenge report (May 2025) and
2. AGREED the proposed Action Plan and publication of the plan on specific pages of the CDC website.

For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

**Carried**

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## **113 Local Plan Update**

The purpose of the report was to confirm the way forward for the Local Plan.

Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, introduced the report, recommending that Cabinet propose to Council the merging of the Partial Update of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011–2031 with the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan into a single, comprehensive Local Plan. The proposal aimed to align with the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan where appropriate, with the objective of submitting the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate by December 2026 and securing adoption by late 2027.

To meet the submission deadlines a timetable was proposed:

Cabinet

10/July2025

- Regulation 18 Consultation: by September 2025
- Regulation 19 (Pre-submission) Consultation: by June 2026
- Submission to Planning Inspectorate: by December 2026

It was noted that failure to meet this timetable could result in delays of 5 to 7 years if local government reorganisation led to the creation of a new unitary authority, which would likely require restarting the process.

The urgent need for an updated Local Plan to maintain control over development in the district was highlighted, especially in light of the revised government housing target of 1,036 new homes per year. Councillors also noted the challenge posed by the fact that approximately 80% of the district falls within the Cotswold National Landscape (formerly AONB), significantly limiting land available for development. The importance of using up-to-date evidence, including an updated flood risk map from the Environment Agency, to support the case for a more realistic housing requirement was noted.

Cabinet also noted the tension between government-imposed housing targets and the district's climate ambitions. While higher-density urban development was more sustainable, members reaffirmed their commitment to delivering the best plan possible within current constraints and to challenging arbitrary housing targets where supported by robust evidence.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance spoke to the financial implications of delivering the Local Plan and councillors noted that a total of £1 million had been allocated to the Local Plan programme to date. This included:

- An initial £500,000 in core budget provision
- A further £250,000 from internal resources
- A £240,000 grant from the Local Plan Delivery Fund (awarded March 2025)
- An additional £70,000 grant related to the Green Belt review

The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed that any residual funding gaps would be manageable within existing contingency planning.

Cabinet acknowledged the need for external consultancy support to meet tight delivery timescales and noted that some consultancy costs had already been anticipated in the budget forecasts.

Officers also confirmed that further resource requirements would be monitored closely, and contingency funding options considered by the Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer as work progressed.

Cabinet noted forecast savings of between £300,000 and £400,000 by moving from a twin-track Local Plan update to a single comprehensive plan, thereby reducing duplication of process, consultation, and evidence gathering.

Cabinet considered the establishment of a Local Plan Oversight Board, to meet monthly and monitor delivery. The Board would include:

- Cabinet Members
- Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
- Officers from Planning Policy
- Relevant advisors

The Terms of Reference would be updated to reflect Cabinet input, including the removal of political group designations, to focus on delivery and accountability.

Cabinet acknowledged the importance of engaging Town and Parish Councils as key stakeholders, and that the Statement of Community Involvement was being adhered to, with further consultation planned.

The need for clear communication, balanced against available resources, to support the plan's successful delivery was acknowledged.

Concerns about the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan were mentioned and the Assistant Director of Planning confirmed that an update would be provided to councillors with a full report expected to Cabinet in October 2025.

Cabinet received and appreciated six key recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined by Councillor Blomefield and a full response to the recommendations was tabled at the meeting. Responses are summarised here:

**1. Timely Updates to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives timely and regular updates as the Local Plan continues to develop, ensuring appropriate oversight and scrutiny throughout the process.

Cabinet welcomed ONS's involvement and committed to providing regular updates, proposing a meeting to agree how and when scrutiny would take place.

**2. Communications and Engagement Strategy**

That a publicly available communications and engagement strategy be prepared for the Regulation 18 and 19 consultations, setting out:

- Methods of engagement (digital, in-person, targeted)
- Stakeholder mapping, including hard-to-reach groups
- Resourcing plans

Cabinet

10/July2025

- Validation of AI-generated summaries
- Plans to lobby government on unrealistic housing targets

Cabinet supported a strong engagement strategy beyond statutory requirements, including clear communication on site allocations, validation of AI summaries, and lobbying government on unrealistic housing targets.

### **3. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils**

That Town and Parish Councils are engaged in two-way dialogue on site allocations and development priorities from June 2026 as part of the Regulation 19 consultation.

Cabinet fully agreed and committed to proactive engagement with Town and Parish Councils, recognising them as key stakeholders in shaping site allocations and development priorities.

### **4. Establishment of a Local Plan (Contingency) Reserve**

That Cabinet considers establishing a Local Plan Contingency Reserve as part of the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update in October 2025.

Cabinet noted the suggestion and said while currently considering the existing £1 million funding sufficient, they would review the need for a contingency reserve in August 2025.

### **5. Assessment of Resource Sufficiency**

That Cabinet reviews whether proposed resources are sufficient to manage identified risks.

Cabinet agreed this was essential, confirmed resources have been reviewed, and added the Section 151 officer to the oversight board to ensure continued financial oversight and risk management.

### **6. Resourcing of Business-as-Usual Planning Functions**

That adequate resources are maintained for core planning functions, including applications and enforcement, and this is reflected in the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update in October 2025.

Cabinet fully accepted the recommendation, assuring that core planning services would be protected, with additional funds used to avoid diverting staff from essential planning operations.

Councillor Layton concluded by thanking officers, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and councillors for their ongoing support. She emphasised that the Council was building on four years of preparatory work and reiterated the shared commitment to protecting the Cotswolds while delivering a viable and timely Local Plan.

Cabinet

10/July2025

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

The recommendations were proposed as two separate votes.

**Vote 1.** To confirm the way forward for the Local Plan

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain

**Vote 2.** To approve recommendations subject to Council approval of the recommended way forward for the Local Plan

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**To confirm the way forward for the Local Plan (Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Cabinet RECOMMEND to Council to resolve to merge the two ongoing Local Plan projects currently known as:

- a) the partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031); and
- b) the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan,

into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update, incorporating work of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan, where appropriate, with a view to submission of the single Local Plan in 2026 and adoption in 2027.

For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

**Carried**

**To approve recommendations subject to Council approval of the recommended way forward for the Local Plan (Resolution)**

Subject to Council's approval of merging the two Local Plans RESOLVED THAT Cabinet:

1. UPDATE the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy in parallel with the Local Plan process.
2. INVEST in additional resources to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan to enable the December 2026 submission deadline to be hit.
3. CONFIRM the delivery of the Local Plan as a Council priority.

4. ESTABLISH a Local Plan Oversight Board and confirm a new Terms of Reference.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

#### **114    Licenced HMO fee policy and HMO Amenity Standards policy**

The purpose of the report was to renew the HMO Licensing policy setting fees and the licence period.

Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services introduced the report which reviewed the Council's enforcement of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing, proposing an increase in the maximum license period from three to five years to benefit compliant landlords and allow focus on higher-risk properties. The report also addressed license fees, which consist of a non-refundable initial application fee and a subsequent fee covering inspection costs. The revised fees were designed to recover costs without generating surplus or significantly increasing landlords' expenses. A discount was recommended for landlords with a good compliance record who reapply promptly. The recommendations were to amend HMO license fees effective 1 September 2025 and to extend license durations to five years.

Councillor Pellegram thanked Paul Lankester, Principal Environmental Health officer for his work and support.

There were no questions for clarity.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Andrea Pellegram and seconded by Councillor Patrick Coleman.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:  
6 For, 0 Against ,0 Abstentions.

**To review the Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing fees and the licence period (Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agreed to AMEND the HMO Licence Fees as set out in the report and for them to apply from 1st September 2025;
2. APPROVED the HMO licence period increase from 3 years to 5 years.

For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Evemy, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **115 15 Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4**

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance for Q4 2024-25.

The report was introduced by Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, given that the report had been presented to Overview and Scrutiny on 14 July Councillor Evemy confirmed that he and the officer were happy answer questions.

It was noted that Councillor Andrea Pellegram was responsible for street signs and that the report should be updated on p.189 to reflect that.

Members noted that leisure centre performance had exceeded targets, with gym memberships and visitor numbers performing strongly despite the fragile economy. This success was attributed to Freedom Leisure, the provider in place for nearly two years. It was also reported that delivery of the cultural strategy, previously listed as behind target, had now commenced.

Concerns were raised regarding the unresolved crossing issues on the Spine Road in South Cerney, which were seen as critical for health, safety, tourism, and active travel. Members requested an update, noting the involvement of the sustainable transport officer. Clarification was provided that the issue related to a road crossing near a historic bridge, which could not be moved and continued to present constraints.

**ACTION:** Business Information and Performance Lead to provide an update on the Spine Road Crossing.

Members discussed the electrification of taxis in relation to climate goals, and it was agreed that while Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and

Cabinet

10/July2025

Digital, would lead, close coordination with the Councillor Andrea Pellegram, the Cabinet Member responsible for licensing, would be necessary to support implementation.

It was further noted that 45 households had installed solar and attention was drawn to Cotswold Housing First an exemplary model helping those in most need to resolve the challenges they faced.

Cabinet welcomed the fact that 14 village halls had received grants from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Councillor Blomefield, as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, informed Cabinet that she wished to invite representatives from Freedom Leisure to attend a meeting together with the responsible Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor experience

It was noted that planning service performance had exceeded all application determination targets, and the rate of appeals allowed remained well below target, which was welcomed. While the Planning Advisory Service had raised concerns about reliance on extensions of time, it was acknowledged this practice was common and appropriate in certain circumstances. Members highlighted the importance of continued focus on underperforming areas, with portfolio holders committing to work with lead officers to improve future outcomes. The receipt of grant funding to support delivery was also noted positively.

RESOLVED that Cabinet NOTED the report.

## **116 Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4**

The Purpose of the report was to set out the final outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, introduced the report which had been reviewed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A positive outturn for the 2024/25 revenue budget was reported. While the original 2024/25 budget had anticipated a contribution of £516,000 to the Financial Resilience Reserve, the actual outturn delivered a surplus of £778,000 — an additional £262,000 above budget.

Cabinet was reminded of the Council motion approved in November 2023, which required the replenishment of the Financial Resilience Reserve following the use of £1.852 million to balance the budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24. Based on current



Cabinet

10/July2025

projections, contributions to the reserve could total £1.874 million across 2024/25 and 2025/26, representing a more favourable position than originally expected.

It was confirmed that the additional £262,000 surplus would be transferred to the Council's Transformation Reserve to support service redesign and prepare for potential local government reorganisation.

Cabinet was informed that the Council had been contacted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and invited to a meeting on 22 July 2025 to discuss transitional arrangements under the Fair Funding Review. Cotswold District Council, along with Stroud and Tewkesbury, had been identified as potentially facing a negative funding adjustment. In view of this and other financial risks, Members were advised to exercise caution and prioritise essential spending.

Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, expressed concern that the outcomes of the Fair Funding Review were likely to disadvantage smaller, rural councils such as Cotswold. He acknowledged the longstanding structural funding challenges but commended the proactive financial planning undertaken. He noted that the Council had secured significant capital receipts and praised the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for maintaining close oversight of national developments and making effective use of external financial advice from consultants PIXEL.

Councillor Gina Blomefield raised concerns regarding underperformance in car park enforcement and income from annual parking permits and requested that these matters be included in the Council's Scrutiny Programme for autumn 2025. It was confirmed that enforcement activity had already been strengthened, and that a revised Parking Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in October or November 2025.

Cabinet reiterated the importance of maximising local revenue sources in light of expected reductions in government grant funding. Councillors welcomed the 2024/25 outturn surplus and supported the transfer of part of the surplus to the Transformation Reserve. It was further noted that although current higher interest rates and limited borrowing had temporarily benefitted the Council's financial position, significant future challenges remained. These included the impact of the Fair Funding Review and the potential for local government reorganisation within the coming years.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Patrick Coleman and seconded by Councillor Mike Every.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**To note the Outturn Position for 2024/25 and approve and note recommendations (Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. REVIEWED and NOTED the outturn financial position set out in the report.
2. REVIEWED and NOTED the Non-treasury Prudential Indicators in Annex B.
3. APPROVED the transfer to and from reserves as set out in paragraph 2.15 to 2.18 and 6.1 to 6.6 and Annex C.
4. APPROVED the carry forward of unspent capital budget included in paragraph 6.5 of £0.565m into the 2025/26 Capital Programme.
5. NOTED the change in provisions as set out in paragraph 2.14

For	Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

**Carried**

**117 Next Meeting.**

The next meeting of Cabinet was noted as being on 4 September at 6pm.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.00 pm

(END)