

# Public Document Pack



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Tuesday, 8 July 2025

Tel: 01285 623181

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

## **COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Wednesday, 16 July 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

Jane Portman  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

(Councillors Mark Harris, Ray Brassington, Nikki Ind, Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Every, 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. **Apologies**

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

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes**

Purpose

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on

a) 19 March 2025

b) 21 May 2025

c) and the minutes of Extraordinary Council of 26 June 2025.

3.a Minutes of Full Council 19 March 2025

9 - 24

Purpose

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 19 March 2025.

3.b Minutes of Full Council 21 May 2025

25 - 38

Purpose

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 21 May 2025.

3.c Minutes of Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025

39 - 44

Purpose

To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Full Council held on 26 June 2025.

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

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

5. **Unsung Heroes Awards July 2025**

For the Chair to declare the winners of the Unsung Heroes awards for July 2025.

6. **Public Questions**

To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than one minute each and relate to issues under the

Council's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

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

The response may take the form of:

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

## **7. Member Questions**

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

A Member may only ask a question if:

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

An answer may take the form of:

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

The following member questions have been submitted for response:

### **Question 1:**

#### **Cllr Gina Blomefield to Cllr Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council**

As the second phase of the transition from Publica to CDC was completed earlier this month it would be useful to have an organogram showing the different officers, their roles and lines of command so that as members we can better understand the shape and staffing of the new CDC.

When I first became a District Councillor I was given printed organograms of both

Publica and CDC which were enormously helpful. Why can these not be provided now preferably in an online format which can be accessed through the CDC portal and can be updated when required?

**Question 2:**

**Cllr Julia Judd to Cllr Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Digital**

I attended the excellent Retrofit Roadshow on 22 May, held in Kemble Village Hall where I met Justine Mallinson, a talented CDC officer to be proud of, she has extensive knowledge and expertise on retrofit and climate change mitigation for housing. Back-up support from Redbridge was also illuminating. Retrofit in the Cotswolds is a subject for the whole district. We have already corresponded on this subject, but I would like to expand the proposal. Please could district-wide presentations be held in CDC Council Offices in Cirencester and in Moreton-in-Marsh and streamed to make it available to all Members and residents in both the North and South of the district? Furthermore, could such a roadshow be extended to other corners of the Cotswolds such as Chipping Campden, Tetbury and Stow-on-the-Wold?

**Question 3:**

**Cllr Gina Blomefield to Cllr Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance**

From my observations the take up of tenants in the space at Trinity Road managed by Watermoor Point is still very poor measured against the capacity available.

Now that it is highly likely that CDC will be dissolved and its functions moved to a new Unitary in the next few years, how is this affecting the appeal of the location as well as the terms and conditions of the letting arrangements of these office facilities at Trinity Road bearing in mind that new tenants will be aware that the future of the building has not yet been decided and so they may only have use of these offices on a relatively short term basis?

**Question 4:**

**Cllr Laura Hall-Wilson to**

**Cllr Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation**

Following the recent announcement regarding the £120k UKSPF grant awards across the district. Please can you confirm whether the scheme was oversubscribed and if so, what was the total value of the applications received, and how many applications missed out on funding?

**Question 5**

**Cllr Len Wilkins to Cllr Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council**

Now that the Publica Phase 2 transition is complete, it is a good time to reflect on our agile working arrangements. Please could you confirm what percentage of overall staff time is spent in the office or on site versus working from home?



**Question 6:**

**Cllr Tony Slater Cllr Tristan Wilkins Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation**

Following the completion of the second phase of the Publica transition, can the member confirm that no further integration work (phase 3) will be undertaken on this project until the outcomes of the local government reforms (LGR) have become clearer, and that there is ongoing discussion between the partner councils to this effect?

**Question 7:**

**Cllr Corps to Cllr Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning**

The Moreton-in-Marsh working group has now been postponed twice and most recently cancelled on 10th June without any notice to members, residents, or local Town and Parish councils.

Can you give the residents of Moreton and the surrounding villages a new confirmed date for the first meeting — and ensure that all relevant parties are properly informed this time?

**Question 8:**

**Cllr David Fowles to Cllr Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services**

Several years ago the Lib Dem administration made the decision to remove waste bins in lay- bys across the district to save money

The rationale was twofold. Firstly, it was cheaper for Ubico to periodically remove discarded litter left in lay-bys and secondly, people would take their waste home rather than throw it out of a car window.

The neighbourhood watch group which operates across the Coln valley and Chedworth/ Churn valley wards either side of the Fosseway monitor the road and report that waste is regularly strewn across lay-bys and in fields. This they feel is a poor advertisement for visitors to the Cotswolds.

Could you confirm how regularly the lay-bys are swept and whether this approach is saving money?

**8. Recommendations from Constitution Working Group (Pages 45 - 50)**

Purpose

To present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from a meeting on 24 June 2025 in relation to:

- Appeals Committee
- Representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee

Recommendation(s)

That Council resolves to:

1. AGREE to the establishment of an Appeals Committee with responsibility

for considering appeals by the Council's statutory officers about disciplinary action taken against them, in accordance with the Local Government Association's Model Procedure;

2. AGREE that the Appeals Committee will be a politically balanced committee comprising 5 Members, including one Member of Cabinet, who are not members of the Performance and Appointments Committee, with a quorum of 3 Members;
3. APPOINT Members (named in Annex A) to the Appeals Committee based on political proportionality (3 Liberal Democrats, 2 Conservative);
4. AUTHORISE the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include the Appeals Committee within the Constitution;
5. NOTE that further proposals relating to Statutory Officer employment rules will be considered by the Constitution Working Group.
6. AUTHORISE the Director of Governance and Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include within the Planning Protocol a deadline for representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee of 2.00pm two working days before a meeting.

9. **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review** (Pages 51 - 78)

Purpose

To consider the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report 2024

Recommendation(s)

That Council resolves to NOTE the report at Annex A

10. **Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Member(s)** (Pages 79 - 84)

Purpose

To seek approval to appoint members of the public to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, which is responsible for assessing and making recommendations on the allowances paid to councillors.

Recommendation(s)

That Council resolves to:

Approve the appointment of Nikki Clark, Nick Craxton, David Hindle and Graham Russell to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

11. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25** (Pages 85 - 114)

Purpose

To receive the annual report from Overview and Scrutiny for 2024/2025.

Recommendation(s)

That Council NOTES the report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2024/25.

12. **Report Back from British Farming Motion Task and Finish Group** (Pages 115 - 132)

Purpose

To report back from the Task & Finish Group on the evidence they received from stakeholders during their inquiry into the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax (IHT) for farmers and the messages they recommend are included in the Council's representations to Government.

Recommendation(s)

That Council resolves to:

REQUEST that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax rules as they relate to farms will have unintended consequences that could have far reaching implications for the viability of the farming sector of the Cotswolds.

13. **Local Plan Update Report** (Pages 133 - 170)

Purpose

To confirm the way forward for the Local Plan Update

Recommendation(s)

Subject to the resolutions of Cabinet on 10 July 2025, Council is recommended to: AGREE to merge the two ongoing Local Plan projects:

1. the partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031); and
2. the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan, into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update in conjunction with incorporating work of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan, where appropriate, with a view to submission in 2026 and adoption in 2027.

14. **Notice of Motions**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the following Motions have been received:-

15. **Next meeting**

The next meeting of Council will be held on 24 September 2025.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

Council  
19/March2025



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 19 March 2025**

### Members present:

Nikki Ind	Mark Harris	
Gina Blomefield	Paul Hodgkinson	Tony Slater
Claire Bloomer	Angus Jenkinson	Lisa Spivey
Ray Brassington	Julia Judd	Tom Stowe
Patrick Coleman	Juliet Layton	Jeremy Theyer
Daryl Corps	Mike McKeown	Clare Turner
David Cunningham	Dilys Neill	Michael Vann
Mike Evemy	Andrea Pellegram	Jon Wareing
David Fowles	Nigel Robbins	Ian Watson
Joe Harris	Gary Selwyn	Len Wilkins

### Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager - Business Continuity, Governance and Risk
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
John Llewellyn, Head of Human Resources	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Ciaran Okane, Senior Procurement Business Partner

### Observers:

## **86 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, Councillor Helen Mansilla, Councillor Tony Dale and Councillor Andrew Maclean.

It was noted that the Chief Executive had received Councillor Chris Twells' resignation on 19 March 2025.

## **87 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

In relation to Agenda item 9 The Pay Policy Statement it was noted that if a Member wished to raise pay for specific officer posts, proceedings would be paused for the officer(s) concerned to leave the room if necessary.

## **88 Minutes**

Council considered the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 24 February 2025.

Councillor Blomefield reminded Councillor Joe Harris that she was waiting for a written answer to her question from a previous meeting. An answer was promised.

There were no amendments.

Councillor Every proposed the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Fowles, put to a vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes are accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting of 24 February 2025.

### Voting Record:

For 26, Against 0, Abstain 3

<b>Approval of the minutes of Full Council held on 24 February 2025. (Resolution)</b>		
RESOLVED that the minutes are accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting of 24 February 2025.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Every, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	26
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Gina Blomefield, Angus Jenkinson and Tony Slater	3
<b>Carried</b>		

## **89 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive**

### Chair's Announcements

The Chair noted the sad passing of Officer Daisy Catterall, expressing condolences to her family and friends.

The Unsung Heroes Awards were then announced, with three awards being noted for March.

- Jerry Watkins: Winner, recognised for his selfless work with the *Food for Thought* van, supporting the homeless with food, clothing, and shelter.
- Michael Smedley & Repair Café Volunteers: Recognised for their work at *St James' Church Repair Café*, helping the community repair items, reduce waste, and foster connections.
- Joanne Moore & Feed the Community: Recognised for providing free meals and organising community events to support struggling families.

The Chair encouraged more community nominations and thanked all award recipients.

As this was Councillor Ind's final meeting as Chair, she reflected on representing Tetbury East and Rural as an Independent District Councillor and thanked residents and officers for putting their trust in her as well as fellow Councillors for supporting her in the role of Councillor and Chair. The importance of local voices in devolution discussions was emphasised, and councillors' role in ensuring those voices were heard was highlighted.

The Chair shared a personal story of early political engagement and thanked Councillor Joe Harris for his leadership and encouragement.

Tewkesbury Borough Mayor's Charity Concert, the Annual Legal Service for the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire and the Royal Society of Saint George and Cotswold Homes and Interiors Festival were mentioned as being the last official engagements that Councillor Ind would have the honour of attending in her capacity as Chair of the Council.

Gratitude was also expressed to family and colleagues for their support over two years as Chair. And finally, the Chair encouraged young people to believe that anything is possible, to pursue their ambitions and really make a difference.

### Leader's announcements

The Leader began by thanking the Chair on behalf of the Council for her service, praising her fairness and dedication to both Tetbury and the wider Cotswolds. He also congratulated the three Unsung Heroes award recipients, recognising their vital contributions to the community and highlighting the importance of the voluntary sector in supporting local services.

Attention was drawn to the recently adopted LIFT Scheme, helping residents access benefits and welfare entitlements. It was noted that nearly £1.3 million had been distributed to older people struggling with costs. He thanked Councillor Bloomer and the Revenues and Benefits team for their efforts in implementing the scheme.

The Leader then spoke about the tragic passing of Daisy Catterall at just 25. He reflected on her positive attitude, dedication to her role, and the impact of her loss on colleagues and the community. He shared a personal memory of their last conversation and a minute's silence was held in her honour.

#### Chief Executive's announcements

The Chief Executive echoed condolences to Daisy Catterall's family and colleagues, highlighting her dedication and positive impact.

The well-attended memorial service at Bingham Hall and the daisy pin badges worn in her honour were mentioned.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for her leadership and also acknowledged Councillor Harris's contributions as Leader, appreciating his guidance on the Council's direction and corporate plan.

A by-election for the Tetbury and Upton seat would be held on 1 May 2025, following the resignation of former Councillor Chris Twells.

Matt Abbott was welcomed as the new Head of Communications.

The Council's upcoming Red Nose Day celebrations, including a cake sale and themed attire, was noted, and all those involved were thanked for their efforts.

#### **90 Public Questions**

No public questions were received.

#### **91 Member Questions**

Member questions, supplementary questions and responses can be found in Annex A attached.

#### **92 Publica Transition Plan - Phase 2**

##### Purpose

The purpose of the report was to consider the document 'Publica Transition: A Plan for Phase 2 of Council Services', known as Phase 2 Transition Plan, to note its contents and to approve the recommendations therein.



Councillor Harris, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, summarised its key points, and explained the purpose of the transition: to create leaner, more efficient services and improve staff management for better services to residents. He acknowledged the challenges of Phase 1 but stated that the transition had been well managed by the senior management team. Phase 2 was noted as being another step on the journey.

The Chief Executive then spoke to the detailed Phase 2 transition plan. Key lessons from Phase 1 had helped refine the approach, including insights from a staff engagement survey. Feedback from the 75 transferred staff was largely positive.

Phase 2 was expected to be more complex due to fragmented roles requiring careful restructuring. It was noted that HR would lead the transition process, ensuring smooth staff engagement.

The Phase 2 transition prioritised high-spend and politically significant service areas, including:

- property and estates
- waste and recycling
- leisure contract management, and
- project management.

The report presented outline costs and processes, mirroring the approach taken in Phase 1, with Phase 2 focused on improving service delivery and securing council autonomy.

The resolution was formally moved and opened for questions.

Straight Through Processing (STP) was clarified as referring to a streamlined approach to enabling decisions and actions to be executed directly without requiring multiple levels of approval or intervention from external entities. In the context of Phase 2, STP would allow direct execution of decisions, removing external approvals, reducing delays, and ensuring Council autonomy.

The notion of a 'local employee' was also clarified. It was noted that this terminology referred to staff who lived within or near the Council's jurisdiction. This approach aligned with Council priorities, strengthened community ties, and supported sustainability by reducing commutes.

Councillor Every seconded the report and reserved the right to speak.

The Chair then moved to the debate on the resolution.

Members of the Conservative Group raised concerns about the transition process, predicting that both costs and risks would escalate. They acknowledged the potential benefits of bringing some services back in-house but urged that these benefits be weighed against the financial impact and the risks of the process, which would ultimately fall on taxpayers.

They urged a pause in the process for risk assessment and cost estimation. They noted that the Phase 1 transition cost had significantly exceeded estimates, with the additional costs for delivering services outside of Publica projected to be £750,000 per year, five times the original estimate in the Human Engine report. The additional costs of Phase 2 were deemed unjustifiable, due to ongoing Phase 1 issues.

It was noted that there was a sense that Phase 1 had been rushed and had lacked a detailed business case and proper due diligence.

It was mooted that the main goals of the Phase 1 transition had not been fully achieved, with recruitment and staff retention issues remaining unresolved.

Members of the Liberal Democrat Group noted the importance of having a skilled team, especially for planning and compliance and it was noted that the transition had allowed for better recruitment and better focus on building competent teams.

It was noted that some key positions, which had stayed vacant for months, were now filled. Staff turnover remained largely unchanged. It was noted that the impending local government reorganisation and devolution would also have an effect on recruitment and retention.

Members of the Conservative Group stated that they saw the transition as the single biggest threat to the Council's ability to deliver a balanced budget over the coming years.

Councillor Every rose to second the resolutions and noted that the decision was an important one. Members were reminded that the administration had been in place for six years and had initially worked with Publica for four years to make the structure function, although failures were acknowledged.

The Publica model, intended as a cost-saving measure, had not succeeded.

At this point a significant disparity in pension contributions was noted, with employer contributions of 20% under the LGPS versus 5% in Publica's scheme.

Phase 1 had yielded positive outcomes, particularly in planning, where officer recruitment improved efficiency and reduced reliance on costly agency staff. Councillor Every emphasised that reintegrating staff aligned with the corporate plan and addressed financial constraints. The transition, including redundancy and associated costs, amounted to £1.1 million, already budgeted.

Councillor Every rejected claims that the Publica transition posed the greatest financial threat, instead pointing to the potential loss of millions in government grants, which had been factored into the February budget.

Acknowledging the difficulty of the Phase 2 decision, members deemed it necessary to bring services like property, estates, waste, and leisure back in-house for better asset management and service delivery. The waste service alone cost nearly £9 million annually, and direct management was expected to improve control and savings. The transition had been carefully considered, and appreciation was expressed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their contributions.

Councillor Every urged colleagues to support Publica transition Phase 2.

Councillor Stowe responded and challenged the Phase 2 figures stated, citing budget papers proposed in February. It was suggested that the transition costs had already exceeded £2 million, with transition costs having reached £1.1 million, and a further £750,000 in annual recurring costs. An explanation of the costs was requested.

The Chair invited Councillor Joe Harris to sum up. Councillor Harris dismissed opposition criticism as unconstructive. It was emphasised that Publica had failed to deliver savings or provide transparency, making budget planning difficult. With partner councils already moving forward, reversing course was no longer an option. Bringing services in-house was deemed to be essential for financial control, better service delivery, and value for taxpayers. Councillor Harris urged support for the transition and cautioned that abandoning the transition would be a costly mistake.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the Phase 2 transition report recommendations, proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Mike Every.

Voting Record:

For 20 , Against 9 , Abstention 0.

**To consider the Phase 2 Transition Plan , to note its content and to approve the recommendations therein. (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED to

1. Approve the implementation of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition on the basis of the Phase 2 Transition Plan;
2. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the decision to deal with any final detail matters arising from the Phase 2 Transition Plan;
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance in liaison with the Leader to update the constitution by making any consequential changes required as a result of Phase 2 of the Publica Transition.
4. Carry out a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year so that the funding provided to Publica would be proportionate to the services received.

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Mike Every, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Lisa Spivey, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing and Ian Watson	20
Against	Gina Blomefield, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, David Fowles, Julia Judd, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer and Len Wilkins	9
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

### **93 Community Governance Review - Upper Rissington**

#### Purpose

To approve the final recommendation of the Community Governance Review for Upper Rissington.

Councillor Joe Harris introduced the report, which proposed the transfer of land from Great Rissington Parish to Upper Rissington Parish through a change in parish boundaries.

The Council reviewed a proposal to amend parish boundaries between Upper and Great Rissington. Upper Rissington Parish Council had built and maintained a skate park located in Great Rissington which was primarily used by Upper Rissington residents. Following a consultation with no objections, members supported transferring the land to Upper Rissington.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the final recommendations of the Community Governance Review for Upper Rissington. The resolution was proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Clare Turner.

Voting record:

For 28, Against 0, Abstain 0.

#### **To approve the final recommendations of the Community Governance Review for Upper Rissington. (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the final recommendations in relation to the Upper Rissington and Great Rissington parish boundaries
2. Authorise the Head of Legal Services to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order to implement the changes agreed by Council.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Every, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

#### **94 Pay Policy Statement 2025 (as 9)**

Before commencing item number 9 the Chair asked if any members present wished to discuss individual officer terms, which would require the officers concerned to leave the room. No such requests were made, and the discussion proceeded.

The purpose of the report was to consider the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2025/6. Councillor Joe Harris introduced the report and asked John Llewellyn, Business Manager for Human Resources, to summarise the content and outline any changes.

The Council reviewed the amended pay policy statement, which included officer pay bandings and a commitment to the living wage. It was noted that if approved, the statement would be published on the Council website.

A question was raised about pensions, and officers confirmed that pension details could be included in future statements.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2025/6. The resolution was proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Mike Every.

Voting record:

For 28, Against 0, Abstain 1.

<b>To consider the Councils Pay Policy for 2025/26 (Resolution)</b>		
Council RESOLVED to approve the Council's Pay Policy for 2025/26.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Every, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram,	28

	Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Jeremy Theyer	1
<b>Carried</b>		

## **95 Amendments to the Constitution - Report of the Constitution Working Group (March 2025)**

The Chair requested that Council consider proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution from the Constitution Working Group. Given the complexity of the five topics, each item would be introduced separately before a decision was taken about whether the items would be voted on individually or en-bloc.

The item was introduced by Councillor Mike Every, who stated that the proposed changes had been discussed thoroughly at the Constitution Working Group, and thanked group members for their work and consideration.

The first amendment discussed was the removal of some words from paragraph 4.18 of Part D6: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules. The words were to be removed as they were no longer applicable.

The second amendment suggested was around the inclusion of a Webcasting Protocol. The protocol was introduced as a guide to good practice in order to ensure a good experience for people following meetings remotely. Support for the protocol was encouraged.

The third item amendment was around questions at Cabinet and in Committees and was aimed at tidying up and clarifying the process.

The fourth amendment considered was Contract Rules. The Council's contract rules had been updated to align with new procurement legislation. VAT was now included in contract values. And a new category had been introduced for goods and services between £30,000 and £60,000. It was noted that procedure rules changes primarily affected mid-range contracts.

Finally the Probity and Licensing Protocol was discussed. It was reported that the probability and licensing protocol had been reviewed, with changes aimed at improving readability and clarity. The updates reflected the responsibilities of the Planning and Licensing Committee and its subcommittee while eliminating duplication.

Questions from members were invited.

Councillor Fowles seconded the proposal and chose to speak.  
Appreciation was expressed for the working group and its chair for well-run meetings.  
It was confirmed that a lengthy discussion had taken place on webcast meetings, with members agreeing that, despite potential future government changes, maintaining physical meetings remained preferable for transparency and engagement.

The Chair then moved to the debate on the resolution. There was no debate.  
Members confirmed that they agreed to vote for the recommendations en-bloc rather than individually.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution. The resolution was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor David Fowles.

Voting record:

For 29, Against 0, Abstain 0.

**To consider proposals from the Constitution Working Group for amendments to the Constitution. (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED to

1. Agree to remove the words "The Chief Executive will act as the Cost Centre Manager for that budget" from paragraph 4.18 of Part D6: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules.
2. Approve the Protocol for Webcasting Meetings for inclusion in the Constitution.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Development to update the Protocol for Webcasting Meetings in the event that the government changes the law to enable remote attendance and/or proxy voting at local authority meetings.
4. Approve the changes to Part D1 11.3 to clarify how questions on notice will be dealt with at Cabinet and Committee meetings.
5. Approve the updated Probity in Licensing Protocol.
6. Approve the updated Contract rules.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Every, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	29
Against	None	0

Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **96 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

The purpose of this report was to note the work underway across Gloucestershire in response to the formal invitation received from the Government to develop proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR).

Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council, introduced this item, which was for noting. It was reported that significant time and resources had been dedicated to finding a solution for local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire, though no consensus had been reached. A letter, agreed upon by district and county council leaders, had been sent to the government outlining three potential proposals:

- a. a single unitary authority,
- b. a two-unitary structure, and
- c. An alternative expanded city model from Gloucester City Council.

The letter signalled ongoing work without endorsing a preference. With upcoming elections, it was acknowledged that differing views might lead to multiple submissions, and while government ministers were monitoring the situation, no concrete plans had yet been finalised.

There were no questions for clarity.

Councillor Mike Evely reserved his right to speak.  
The Chair moved to the debate.

The future of local government in Gloucestershire was seen as uncertain but full of potential.

There was agreement that efforts should focus on delivering the best outcomes for the district and county.

Three options for reorganisation were acknowledged, but no single one was officially endorsed.

- There was some support for the continuation of the two-tier system, but it was acknowledged that reorganisation was inevitable.
- It was argued that a unitary system was the simplest and most effective, while some of the alternative proposals were criticised as being politically motivated.
- Past unitary government transitions were discussed, and it was noted that some, such as Wiltshire, had demonstrated increased efficiency and accountability.



- Concern was expressed over the high costs of unitary reform and the potential loss of local representation, particularly for parish councils.
- Views were divided on whether more politicians were needed; some argued against this, pointing out that proposed changes would actually decrease the number of councillors by 63%.
- Concerns were raised that town and parish councils might feel ignored by larger unitary authorities, with calls for stronger devolution and power-sharing structures.
- There was some support for financial compensation for parish councillors to encourage greater engagement, as well as discussion around alternative methods of providing support.
- It was agreed that the main priority should be delivering good public services rather than politicising the decision.
- There was general recognition that local knowledge could be lost during the transition, and mechanisms should be put in place to retain it.
- Public consultation was considered essential to ensure residents understood the implications of any changes.
- There was consensus that rural communities needed to be supported to prevent their voices from being overshadowed by urban areas.
- There was widespread agreement on the need to support staff through the transition to maintain morale and ensure continuity in statutory services.
- The approach of town and parish councils being given more devolved powers, particularly for managing services such as roads and highways, was generally supported.
- It was acknowledged that, regardless of the outcome, business as usual should be maintained to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities.

Councillor Harris concluded by thanking everyone for the debate. The growing role of town and parish councillors in the new structure was emphasised. A Town and Parish summit was confirmed for June to enhance communication and collaboration.

#### Council NOTED

- a. the work taking place across Gloucestershire in response to the formal invitation from Government to develop proposals for Local Government Reorganisation
- b. the joint Gloucestershire letter to Government on interim proposals.

A Break of 10 minutes took place.

#### **97 Motion A: Farmers Motion**

The Chair invited Councillor Julia Judd to speak as the proposer of the motion. Councillor Judd made the following points:

- The issue of Inheritance Tax (IHT) on farmers was highlighted as catastrophic and misunderstood.
- Farming was not comparable to other businesses due to its complexity and the passion involved.
- The imposition of IHT could lead to farmland being sold to industrial landowners, changing the countryside forever.
- Farming in the UK was already vulnerable, as only 60% of food was produced domestically. This created risks with potential tariffs and global crises.
- Strong political support for farming was lacking, and there weren't enough MPs or local politicians who understand farming issues.
- The IHT policy lacked consultation with DEFRA and the NFU and had been rushed with misleading information about land measurements.
- The policy was expected to affect 75% of commercial family farms, forcing many farmers to sell land and potentially leaving it out of food production.
- Farming was an expensive business, with high costs for machinery and unpredictable factors like diseases and natural disasters.

The recommendation of the motion was that

1. the Council agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
2. that the Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers.

Councillor Theyer then spoke as seconder of the motion and made the following points, emphasising that the Inheritance Tax (IHT) on farmers was unworkable and financially unsustainable.

- Previous governments had never implemented such a tax due to its inherent issues.
- The cost of machinery and other farming expenses, such as feed bills, were astronomical, making it hard to manage financially.
- The speaker shared their own experience of buying a 95-horsepower tractor for £55,000, which was financed due to affordability issues.
- Farmers were struggling with high costs, like feed and veterinary expenses, and managing livestock, as the speaker described the stress of caring for animals while balancing other responsibilities.
- The proposed Inheritance Tax changes had caused significant distress within the farming community.
- Farmers were committed to producing quality products for the marketplace but were burdened by stringent regulations and unforeseen challenges, such as disease outbreaks.
- The speaker highlighted the high cost of vaccinations to protect livestock from diseases like blue tongue, further draining resources.
- The speaker warned that without fair treatment, small farms would disappear, affecting food production and leaving the industry in crisis.

- They urged the Council to send a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reconsider the IHT policy and provide a fair solution for farmers.

Councillor Harris spoke to the proposed IHT changes and agreed that they could threaten the existence of family farms and rural communities. In response, the speaker moved a motion to:

- Refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the impact of the changes on farmers in the Cotswold district and report back to Council with recommendations on how to make a strong representation to the government by July.

This approach aimed to ensure the Council's representation was well-informed and effective.

Councillor Every seconded the proposal to refer the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair moved to the debate on referring the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Clarity was sought as to whether the choice to support the proposed referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee precluded an initial letter being sent. It was confirmed that this was the case.

Concerns were raised about the urgency of sending a letter to the Chancellor before 1 April, with calls for consultation with DEFRA, the NFU, and local farmers. The government's lack of understanding of the local farming economy was criticised, with confusion over land measurements cited. Some Councillors doubted the letter's impact on policy and advocated for a thorough review via Overview and Scrutiny to ensure a well-evidenced response. It was suggested that the Committee could establish a task and finish group to gather evidence on the local impacts of IHT changes.

The argument that large farms were exploiting tax benefits was debated, with some seeing it as a valid justification for reform, while others dismissed it as lacking evidence.

The importance of supporting farmers in their role of food production was highlighted, with calls for clear action from the Council.

The option of the Leader sending a letter to the Chancellor requesting a pause in implementation, followed by further scrutiny and a more detailed report was discounted.

The Chair opened the vote on the proposal to refer the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Council

19/March2025

Voting record:

For 19, Against 9, Abstain 1.

**Motion A Farmers motion - to be referred to Overview and Scrutiny (Resolution)**

That a revised and strong letter to be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Mike Evemy, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Lisa Spivey, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing and Ian Watson	19
Against	Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, David Fowles, Nikki Ind, Julia Judd, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer and Len Wilkins	9
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Clare Turner	1

**Carried**

**98 Next meeting**

It was noted that the 21 May 2025 Annual Council meeting would start at 6pm.

Chair: Councillor Nikki Ind

Council  
21/May2025



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 21 May 2025**

### Members present:

Mark Harris

Nikki Ind

Gina Blomefield

Claire Bloomer

Nick Bridges

Patrick Coleman

Daryl Corps

Mike Evely

David Fowles

Laura Hall-Wilson

Joe Harris

Paul Hodgkinson

Angus Jenkinson

Julia Judd

Juliet Layton

Andrew Maclean

Helene Mansilla

Mike McKeown

Dilys Neill

Andrea Pellegram

Nigel Robbins

Lisa Spivey

Tom Stowe

Jeremy Theyer

Clare Turner

Jon Wareing

Ian Watson

Len Wilkins

Tristan Wilkinson

### Officers present:

Matt Abbott, Head of Communications

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

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

Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer

Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer

Rachael White, Communications Officer

Frank Wilson, Interim Managing Director (Publica)

Kirsty Winters, Communications Officer

Kira Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

## **1 Election of a Chair**

The outgoing Chair of Council, Councillor Nikki Ind opened the meeting and welcomed newly elected councillors Laura Hall-Wilson (Tetbury with Upton) and Nick Bridges (Watermoor). District Councillors Daryl Corps, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, and Lisa Spivey were congratulated on their recent election to Gloucestershire County Council. It was noted that Councillor Spivey had made history as the first woman elected as leader of the County Council.

Council

21/May2025

The first item of business was the election of the new Chair of Council,

The outgoing Chair called for nominations for the position of Chair of Council.

Councillor Joe Harris proposed Councillor Mark Harris as Chair. Councillor Harris was commended on a personal and professional level, his many years of public service and valuable experience as Vice-Chair of Council were noted.

Councillor Claire Bloomer seconded the nomination, reaffirmed the comments made by Councillor Harris and noted the excellent work done in representing Cotswold District Council.

There were no further nominations for the position of Chair of Council so the nomination was put to a vote and agreed by Council.

Voting Record:

28 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention

Having been elected Councillor Harris signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chair. The Proper Officer witnessed the signature.

The Exchange of the Council Regalia took place, during which the chains of office were formally transferred from Councillor Ind to Councillor Harris.

Councillor Harris expressed his gratitude for the honour of being elected Chair of Council. The outgoing Chair, Councillor Nikki Ind, was thanked for her exemplary leadership and strong sense of community. Reflecting on his journey from humble beginnings to local involvement, the Chair affirmed his deep connection to the Cotswolds and his commitment to constructive, efficient debate. He pledged to represent the district's communities and uphold values both in the chamber and beyond.

**To APPOINT Councillor Mark Harris as Chair of Council (Resolution)**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mark Harris be appointed as Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2025/26.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0

Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Mark Harris	1
<b>Carried</b>		

## 2 Appointment of a Vice-Chair

The Chair presided over the appointment of a Vice-Chair of Council and called for any nominations.

Councillor Juliet Layton nominated Councillor Ray Brassington, who had recently stepped down as Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee, stating that his experience would be extremely valuable in the role of Vice-Chair.

Councillor McKeown seconded the nomination and echoed the comments made by Councillor Layton.

There were no further nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of Council.

The nomination was put to a vote and agreed by Council.

### Voting Record:

29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

It was noted that Councillor Brassington had sent apologies and would sign the Acceptance of Office at a later date.

### **To APPOINT Councillor Ray Brassington as Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2025/26. (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED that Councillor Ray Brassington be appointed as Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2025/26.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	29
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

### **3 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ray Brassington, Tony Dale, Tony Slater, Michael Vann, and David Cunningham. Apologies were also noted from the Chief Executive Officer, Robert Weaver.

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

The Chair echoed the earlier congratulations to newly elected Members of Cotswold District Council and to the Members of Gloucestershire County Council.

The Chair invited Councillor Daryl Corps to pay tribute to Sue Stapley, a long-standing Moreton-in-Marsh resident who had recently passed away. She was remembered as a passionate advocate for community service, with a career spanning the BBC, legal advocacy, and extensive voluntary work. She served in roles including Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Chair of Playground Proms, and Trustee of LAMDA. A founding member of the SDP and the first national chair of the 300 Group, she championed women in politics. Locally, she contributed to the Moreton Neighbourhood Plan and Moreton Against Overdevelopment. Her warmth, style, and strong principles were fondly remembered. Councillor Corps thanked members for the opportunity to honour her.

There were no announcements from the Leader.

There were no announcements from the Deputy Leader.

### **5 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members present.

### **6 Resignation of Leader**

Councillor Joe Harris had notified the Proper Officer of his resignation as Leader of the Council, effective from 20 May 2025. His resignation was formally noted, and the Chair thanked him for his significant achievements and dedicated service to Cotswold District Council.

The outgoing Leader of the Council reflected on his six years in leadership and eleven years as Leader of the Liberal Democrat group. He expressed pride in the Council's achievements, including pandemic support, affordable housing, poverty reduction, and environmental and community initiatives. He acknowledged the collaborative efforts of council members, staff, and his Cabinet, highlighting his deputy, the Chief Executive,



Council

21/May2025

and Councillor Tony Dale. He emphasised the importance of principled leadership, teamwork, and public service, and confirmed he would remain a ward councillor.

Members expressed heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Leader for his leadership, dedication, and vision over the past six years. They acknowledged his influence on colleagues' political journeys and his encouragement for others to stand for election. His compassionate and determined leadership, commitment to the Cotswolds, and the strong, supportive group dynamic he fostered were widely praised. His move to a cabinet role at the County Council was welcomed, with confidence in his continued positive impact. His energetic and relentless campaigning style, was seen as a reflection of his passion for public service.

## **7 Election of Leader**

The Chair introduced the item, noted the requirement to elect a Leader of the Council until the annual meeting in May 2027 and called for nominations.

Councillor Lisa Spivey formally nominated Councillor Mike Evemy, highlighting his extensive local government experience, long-standing public service, and leadership as Cabinet Member for Finance since 2019. She described him as a principled, pragmatic leader and inspiring colleague.

Councillor Patrick Coleman seconded the nomination, praising Councillor Evemy's thoughtful, patient, and reliable nature, and thanked him for his willingness to take on the role.

The opposition were thanked for their patience and courtesy during the item.

There were no further nominations for Leader of Council.

The nomination was put to a vote and agreed by Council.

Voting Record;

29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

<b>Resolution : to Elect Councillor Mike Evemy as Leader of the Council (Resolution)</b>		
Council RESOLVED that Councillor Mike Evemy be appointed as Leader of Council for a term of office extending to the Annual Council meeting in May 2027.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy	29

	Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

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

The newly elected Leader thanked members for their support and their vote of confidence.

He paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, Nikki Ind, for her friendly but firm leadership over the past two years and congratulated the newly elected Chair and Vice-Chair. A warm welcome was extended to new councillors Laura Hall-Wilson and Nick Bridges. The leader also congratulated Councillor Lisa Spivey on her election as Leader of Gloucestershire County Council and acknowledged the success of members elected to County Council.

Tribute was paid to the outgoing Leader for transformational leadership and the positive changes to the Council during his tenure were noted. Emphasis was placed on a commitment to being an approachable and inclusive Leader for all members, regardless of party.

Key priorities were outlined with the emphasis on maintaining focus on core services, affordable housing, climate action, community wellbeing, and digital transformation.

The emerging challenge of local government reorganisation(LGR) was noted and the Leader pledged to lead the Council's response while maintaining focus on current objectives.

The Leader then announced the following Cabinet Appointments:

### **Leader – Councillor Mike Every**

- Executive functions and corporate plan delivery
- Local government reorganisation and devolution
- Town and parish council liaison
- Communications
- Publica and UBICO
- Member development

### **Deputy Leader and Housing and Planning – Councillor Juliet Layton**

- Strategic housing

Council

21/May2025

- Homelessness
- Forward planning and the local plan
- Development management, heritage and conservation
- Biodiversity emergency response
- Neighbourhood planning

**Finance – Councillor Patrick Coleman**

- Financial strategy and management
- Property and assets
- Revenues and benefits
- Grant funding and Crowdfund Cotswold

**Climate Change and Digital – Councillor Mike McKeown**

- Climate emergency response
- Community energy and energy efficiency
- Council sustainability and sustainable transport
- Digital innovation, inclusion, and accessibility
- Adoption and governance of AI technologies
- Cybersecurity and data governance

**Economy and Council Transformation – Councillor Tristan Wilkinson**

- Economic development
- Council transformation
- Business liaison
- Flooding and sewage

**Health, Culture and Visitor Experience – Councillor Paul Hodgkinson**

- Public health
- Parking operations and public toilets
- Leisure centres
- Culture and museums
- Tourism
- Community safety partnership

**Communities – Councillor Claire Bloomer**

- Cost of living support
- Liaison with third sector
- Diversity, inclusion and young people
- Safeguarding
- Refugee and asylum response

**Environment and Regulatory Services – Councillor Andrea Pellegram**

- Waste and recycling
- Environmental and regulatory services

Council

21/May2025

- Street cleaning
- Public realm

The Leader made the following points:

- Councillor Juliet Layton, appointed Deputy Leader; retained Housing and Planning portfolio and passed Environmental and Regulatory Services to:
- Councillor Andrea Pellegram, who had joined Cabinet to lead on Waste and Recycling, drawing on her professional background.
- Councillor Patrick Coleman was appointed Cabinet Member for Finance, bringing extensive experience, including prior chairing of the Audit and Governance Committee.
- Councillor Paul Hodgkinson would continue in his portfolio for Health, Culture, and Visitor Experience, with the added responsibility for Public Toilets; a role seen as complementing his County Council position.
- Councillor Claire Bloomer retained the Communities portfolio, continuing work to support low-income residents and tackle cost-of-living challenges.
- Councillor Tristan Wilkinson had taken on the Transformation portfolio, focusing on internal change to support financial sustainability.
- Councillor Mike McKeown had been appointed to a new Digital portfolio, with a focus on technology for improved services and cost efficiency, and he would continue to lead carbon reduction efforts.

The Leader concluded by thanking councillors for their support and looked forward to working with members and officers to enhance the district.

RESOLVED: The Full Council NOTED the appointments of the Cabinet portfolio holders.

## **9 Appointment of Committees 2025/26**

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, introduced the annual report on political balance and committee appointments.

The report set 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 Chair and Vice Chair of Committees for the Civic Year 2025/26.

A change in political balance following a recent by-election was noted, increasing the number of Conservative members from 9 to 10. Committee allocations were adjusted accordingly, with revised seat distributions and nominations.

The report also confirmed committee chair and vice-chair appointments and the continuation of existing substitution arrangements. Councillor Evemy moved the

Council

21/May2025

recommendations as set out in the report, and the Chair invited comments or questions

On behalf of the Conservative Group, Councillor Tom Stowe thanked the Chair and congratulated Councillor Evely on his election as Leader of the Council, highlighting his experience and knowledge. The Group expressed hope for steady leadership through upcoming challenges and confirmed their intention to hold the administration to account while offering constructive alternatives.

The importance of committee work was emphasised, particularly given ongoing financial pressures, uncertainties around local government reorganisation, and national policy changes.

The dedication of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Chair, Councillor Gina Bloomfield, was praised, along with a call for continued support for the Committee.

Continuity on the Planning and Audit & Governance Committees was welcomed, with recognition of members' valuable experience.

Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson was introduced as the newest Conservative member, noted for strong local representation.

Regarding devolution and local government reorganisation, a call was made for all members to work collaboratively to ensure an effective transition and improved governance.

The Conservative Group thanked the former Vice Chair and outgoing member for their valued contributions. They welcomed new members and noted the apolitical nature and importance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work. The Group also welcomed the new Vice-Chair of the committee.

Additionally, the Conservative Group expressed gratitude to the former Leader, Councillor Joe Harris, for his effective leadership and acknowledged the importance of cross-party cooperation.

There were no further comments or questions.

Councillor Mike Evely proposed the nominations which were seconded by Councillor Tom Stowe .

The recommendations were put to a vote and agreed by Council.

Voting Record:

25 For, 0 Against, 0Abstain

Council

21/May2025

Councillors David Fowles, Joe Harris, Nigel Robbins and Ian Watson did not vote.

**To AGREE appointments to Council committees and working groups for the Civic Year 2025/26 and to make appointments to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of Committees for the Civic Year 2025/26. (Resolution)**

Full Council RESOLVED 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;

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	25
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **10 Record of Attendance 2024/25**

The Leader introduced the report, the Councillors' Record of Attendance for the Civic Year 2024/25, noting it was for information only.

It was highlighted that the published attendance record covered Council, committee, and working group meetings from the past year, as detailed in the supplement dated 21 May 2025.

It was also noted that Councillors attended other, mostly external meetings, which were not included in the figures presented in the report.

The Leader proposed the report for noting and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Juliet Layton, seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: Full Council NOTED the report

## **11 Appointments to Outside Bodies 2025/26**

The Leader presented the report which provided Council with a list of nominations to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2025/26 for consideration.

Annex A – Outside Body Nominations was circulated during the meeting.

The Leader drew attention to the nominations for appointment by Council as set out in Annex A, Table 1 as :

- Councillor Angus Jenkinson to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee and
- Councillor Dilys Neill to the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A vacancy for a substitute member on the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee was also noted.

Council also noted the Leader's executive appointments to outside bodies, as listed in Annex A, Table 2.

The resolution was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the recommendations of the Outside Bodies report.

### Voting Record:

29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

### **To AGREE nominations to Outside Bodies for the 2025/26 civic year. (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED 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.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and	29
-----	---	----

	Len Wilkins	
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **12 Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26**

Councillor Tristan Wilkinson introduced the report and gave an update on the award of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) for 2025-26, with a capital allocation of £229,240. It was outlined that the fund provided a valuable opportunity to support a range of small local organisations with relatively small grants, which made a significant difference to those groups. Approval of the proposed allocation process was requested as was delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation, and the Council's Section 151 Officer, to approve funding decisions based on recommendations from the REPF assessment panel.

It was noted that

- The capital programme would need to be amended to include the REPF allocation, which was fully government-funded.
- Demand exceeded available funds.

Councillor Tom Stowe expressed support for the scheme and sought clarification on the application window, noting concerns about the tight deadline for applications of 30 May 2025.

The challenging application process for local organisations was acknowledged and the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the existing deadline could be extended by a few weeks to allow broader participation and increase outreach.

Councillor Patrick Coleman enquired about the involvement of the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC), given their past role in the administration of related schemes. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the current round would be administered internally due to the late timing of the allocation and the Council's increased capacity.

The decision to manage the fund in-house, was welcomed and the opportunity for the Council's support to be visibly acknowledged in the community was highlighted

There were no further comments or questions for clarity

The resolution was proposed by Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, and seconded by Councillor Mike Every.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the recommendations in the report.



Voting Record:

29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**To APPROVE the approach for delivery of REPF projects in 2025/26 and AGREE the necessary delegations (Resolution)**

Council RESOLVED 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 Council Transformation and the Council's Section 151 Officer to allocate the funding, having regard to the recommendations of the REPF Assessment Panel.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	29
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

### **13 Next meeting**

The Chair in closing the meeting confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of Full Council would be on 16 July 2025 at 6pm.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.27pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

Council  
26/June2025



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Thursday, 26 June 2025**

### Members present:

Mark Harris (Chair)	Ray Brassington (Vice-Chair)	
Nikki Ind	Paul Hodgkinson	Lisa Spivey
Claire Bloomer	Andrea Pellegram	Tom Stowe
Patrick Coleman	Angus Jenkinson	Clare Turner
Daryl Corps	Juliet Layton	Michael Vann
Mike Evely	Helene Mansilla	Ian Watson
David Fowles	Mike McKeown	Len Wilkins
Laura Hall-Wilson	Dilys Neill	Tristan Wilkinson
Joe Harris	Tony Slater	

### Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager - Business Continuity, Governance and Risk

## **14 Apologies**

Apologies were noted for Councillors Gina Blomefield, Nick Bridges, Andrew Maclean, Jon Wareing, Nigel Robbins and Tony Dale.

## **15 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members of Council.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer left the room for agenda item 4.

## **16 Appointment to vacant seat on the Planning and Licensing Committee**

Councillor Juliet Layton proposed that Councillor Tristan Wilkinson be appointed to the vacant seat on the Planning and Licensing Committee and explained that planning training had been arranged for Councillor Wilkinson. This training would also be available to other members. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Ray Brassington, was put to the vote and agreed by Council.

Council resolved to: APPOINT Councillor Tristan Wilkinson to the Planning and Licensing Committee.

<b>Appointment to a vacant seat on the Planning and Licensing Committee (Resolution)</b>		
Appointment of Councillor Tristan Wilkinson to the Planning and Licensing Committee.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	24
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

Did not vote: Helene Mansilla

## **17 Appointment of an Interim Chief Executive Officer**

Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council, thanked members for attending the extraordinary Council meeting and stated that this was a significant moment for the Council. The Leader explained that the Council's Chief Executive Officer, Rob Weaver, had announced his intention to stand down and his last working day would be Monday 30 June 2025. The Leader thanked the Chief Executive Officer for his service and leadership, highlighting key achievements which included:

- The transition of several services back under Council control.
- Working successfully with partners across Gloucestershire, most recently to lay the groundwork for local government reorganisation.
- Leading initiatives to streamline Council operations and service delivery for residents.

With the administration's key objectives achieved and the transition of services due to be largely complete on 1 July 2025, the Chief Executive Officer had concluded that the time was right to seek fresh challenges and spend more time with his young family. The Leader wished the Chief Executive well in his future endeavours.

The Leader explained that over recent weeks the focus had been on finding a suitable successor. This was an important decision for the Council in view of local government reorganisation. The Council needed a Chief Executive who could work with members to ensure that the interests of the residents were heard and to inform the collective proposals for reorganisation in Gloucestershire that would be submitted to the government later in the year. The Chief Executive would need to be able to guide and direct Council staff through the change and uncertainty that reorganisation brings. This was just one challenge; there was also a need to continue to serve residents over the coming years in an increasingly challenging financial environment and to deliver the Council's priorities:

- Ensuring an efficient waste collection service
- Delivering affordable housing with sustainable infrastructure
- Supporting residents through the cost of living crisis
- Responding to the climate emergency
- Ensuring that communities thrive in a prosperous local economy.

The Leader was pleased to propose Jane Portman as Interim Chief Executive Officer, noting that the Selection Panel had been impressed by all aspects of the interview, as well as her credentials and background. The Leader believed that Jane Portman would bring fresh energy and clear leadership and looked forward to working with her.

Councillor Tom Stowe seconded the proposed appointment and paid tribute to the Head of HR for supporting the recruitment process. Councillor Stowe highlighted the recent changes in senior roles and the opportunities ahead. Jane Portman would bring a wealth of experience and a track record of leading organisations through a range of circumstances. It was felt that her experience resonated with the needs of the Council at the current time and that she would bring fresh thinking and constructive challenge at an important time.

The Director of Governance and Development explained that should Jane Portman be unable to start on 1 July 2025 then it was recommended that the Deputy Chief Executive Officer would step up temporarily as Head of Paid Service to cover any gap, hence the Deputy Chief Executive Officer was not in the room.

In questioning and debate, Council noted and highlighted:

- The important role of the Performance and Appointments Committee.
- The term of the interim appointment would be for 6 months but with an option to extend to up to 9 months without the need to come back to Council.
- The financial pressures and the challenge of local government reorganisation.
- The Interim Chief Executive would be coming to the role with valuable qualities and experience to guide the Council through challenging times ahead.

Council

26/June2025

- Staff were being kept abreast of developments, and a staff briefing was planned for 7 July 2025. Thanks were given to the Head of Comms as well as the Head of HR for the communications that had gone out to staff.

The Leader clarified that Jane Portman was the name to be included in the first and third resolutions. While the Head of HR was confident that the appointee would be able to take up the role on 1 July 2025, it was suggested that Council agree the interim arrangements set out in recommendation 2 should the need arise because the Council had to have a Head of Paid Service.

The Chair drew Council's attention to the recommendations. Having been proposed and seconded, the recommendations were put to a vote and agreed by Council.

#### RESOLUTION:

Council resolved to:

1. APPROVE the recommendation of the Performance & Appointments Committee's Selection Panel that Jane Portman be appointed as Chief Executive Officer/Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer for a period of up to 9 months from 1 July 2025 or the date of commencement in post of a permanent Chief Executive Officer, whichever is earlier, to ensure the Council's statutory duties are fulfilled and provide sufficient time for a permanent appointment to be made;
2. APPOINT the Interim Chief Executive Officer as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, from 1 July 2025 until a permanent Chief Executive Officer is appointed;
3. APPROVE the recommendation of the Selection Panel that Jane Portman is appointed as Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 1 July 2025 or as soon as practically possible after that date;
4. APPOINT, in the event that the Interim Chief Executive Officer is unable to take up the role with effect from 1 July 2025, David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, to undertake the role of Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until such time as the Interim Chief Executive Officer is available to take up the role;
5. AUTHORISE the Head of HR to commence the process of appointing a permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer.

<b>Appointment of an Interim Chief Executive Officer (Resolution)</b>
Council resolved to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. APPROVE the recommendation of the Performance &amp; Appointments Committee's Selection Panel that Jane Portman be appointed as Chief Executive Officer/Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer for a period of up to 9 months from 1 July 2025 or the date of commencement in post of a permanent Chief Executive Officer, whichever</li></ol>

is earlier, to ensure the Council's statutory duties are fulfilled and provide sufficient time for a permanent appointment to be made;

2. APPOINT the Interim Chief Executive Officer as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, from 1 July 2025 until a permanent Chief Executive Officer is appointed;

3. APPROVE the recommendation of the Selection Panel that Jane Portman is appointed as Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 1 July 2025 or as soon as practically possible after that date;

4. APPOINT, in the event that the Interim Chief Executive Officer is unable to take up the role with effect from 1 July 2025, David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, to undertake the role of Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until such time as the Interim Chief Executive Officer is available to take up the role;

5. AUTHORISE the Head of HR to commence the process of appointing a permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer.

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	25
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 4.22 pm

Chair

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank



# Agenda Item 8



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP (APPEALS COMMITTEE AND REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE)</b>
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Chair of the Constitution Working Group Email: <a href="mailto:Mike.Every@Cotswold.gov.uk">Mike.Every@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development 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	To present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from a meeting on 24 June 2025 in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appeals Committee</li><li>• Representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee</li></ul>
Annexes	Annex A – Nominated Members (to follow)
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Agree to the establishment of an Appeals Committee with responsibility for considering appeals by the Council's statutory officers about disciplinary action taken against them, in accordance with the Local Government Association's Model Procedure;</li><li>2. Agree that the Appeals Committee will be a politically balanced committee comprising 5 Members, including one Member of Cabinet, who are not members of the Performance and Appointments Committee, with a quorum of 3 Members;</li><li>3. Appoint Members (named in Annex A) to the Appeals</li></ol>



	<p>Committee based on political proportionality (3 Liberal Democrats, 2 Conservative);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Authorise the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include the Appeals Committee within the Constitution;</li><li>5. Note that further proposals relating to Statutory Officer employment rules will be considered by the Constitution Working Group.</li><li>6. Authorise the Director of Governance and Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include within the Planning Protocol a deadline for representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee of 2.00pm two working days before a meeting.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Constitution Working Group



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Council is recommended by the Constitution Working Group to consider the establishment of an Appeals Committee, and the introduction of a deadline for representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee, set at 2.00pm two working days before the start of a meeting.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Constitution Working Group met on 24 June 2025 to consider a number of items on its work plan. This has resulted in the recommendations contained in this report.

## **3. APPEALS COMMITTEE**

- 3.1** The Council, together with its Public Partners, is undertaking a review of its employment rules for statutory officers (Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer) to ensure compliance with regulations and the Local Government Association's Model Discipline Procedure and Guidance.
- 3.2** This process has identified the need for the Council to establish a politically balanced Appeals Committee comprised of 3 or 5 Members (one of whom must be a Cabinet Member), as per the Model Discipline Procedure and Guidance. Under the Model Procedure, the Appeals Committee must have a different membership to the Performance and Appointments Committee, which would act as the Investigations and Disciplinary Committee in relation to disciplinary action against a statutory officer.
- 3.3** The role of the Appeals Committee would be to consider any appeal by a Statutory Officer against disciplinary action taken against them, other than an appeal by the Head of Paid Service against dismissal, as that would be a decision for full Council.
- 3.4** Council is recommended to establish an Appeals Committee consisting of five Members (with a quorum of 3). One member must be a Cabinet Member and no members may also serve on the Performance and Appointments Committee. Appointments to the committee should be based on political proportionality and the preferences of political groups.



**Table A: Political Proportionality on a 5 Member Committee**

Group	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Green	Total
Real entitlement	3.09	1.47	0.29	4.85*
Rounded entitlement (rounded up at 0.5)	3	1	0	4
Seats allocated	3	2**	0	5

*\*Non-grouped independent members impact overall proportionality but do not have an automatic entitlement to seats on committees and sub-committees.*

*\*\*The Conservative Group has the strongest proportional entitlement to the final seat at 0.47 (compared to 0.29 for the Green Group and 0.09 for the Liberal Democrat Group) and is allocated the final seat.*

- 3.5** Further proposals relating to employment rules for statutory officers will be considered at a future meeting of the Constitution Working Group, which may result in further recommendations to full Council.

#### **4. REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

- 4.1** The Constitution Working Group considered a proposal that the Planning Protocol includes a deadline for representations to the Committee, set at 2.00pm two working days before a meeting.
- 4.2** The proposed deadline would stop third parties from making representations on the day or the day before the committee meeting and would provide members with sufficient time to read and consider the materials.
- 4.3** The Working Group noted that representations are often submitted shortly before the start of meetings which can require committee time to be used for members to read through the representations.
- 4.4** The Working Group questioned what would happen if representations were received after the deadline, noting that the Council has a duty to consider all relevant



information. The late submission of important or lengthy papers could lead to applications being deferred. The Council would need to clearly communicate this risk to all interested parties.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1** Council could choose not to agree recommendations in this report however the recommendations are aimed at strengthening the Council's governance arrangements and have been recommended to Council by the cross-party Constitution Working Group.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** There are no financial implications arising directly from the information in this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** Full Council, through its responsibilities as set out in the Constitution, recognises the requirement to observe specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on the Council by public law, but also accepting responsibility to use its legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in its area. Section 9P Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to keep its Constitution up to date.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** The recommendations are intended to reduce risks to the Council, specifically in relation to Statutory Officer employment arrangements and the determination of planning applications.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** There are no differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

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

- 10.1** There are no climate and ecological emergencies implications.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE 2024 – PROGRESS REPORT</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk">david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk">david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report 2024
Annexes	Annex A – Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report 2024
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Note the report at Annex A
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering Good Services</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet, Corporate Leadership Team and those able to attend Peer Challenge Feedback session (officers and Councillors)



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Local Government Association Peer Review process supports councils in a 'critical friend' capacity, identifying areas that could be improved and setting out recommendations. Progress reports seek to assess the extent to which those recommendations have been embedded. This report provides the progress report undertaken at the end of last year. In summary, the review team was satisfied that good progress had been made by the Council.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2022. The feedback report and an associated Action Plan was presented to Council in January 2023.
- 2.2** It is good practice to have a follow up or 'progress review' 6-12 months after the original peer review to assess progress against the original recommendations. Following discussion with the Local Government Association, it was agreed that the progress review would be undertaken after the first group of services were repatriated to the Council. (This was scheduled to take place in July 2024, with services operating council-side from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024).
- 2.3** This report details the outcomes of a progress review that was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 2.4** The review was undertaken by a team that is knowledgeable and experienced in local government and includes both officer and councillor representatives. The team acts as a 'critical friend' and produces feedback that provides a health check and commentary on areas of strength and potential areas for further consideration.
- 2.5** A Progress Review is an integral part of the corporate peer challenge process and is designed to provide space for the Council's senior leadership (officers and members) to:
- Receive feedback from peers on the progress made by the Council against the recommendations and the Council's related action plan.
  - Consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team was on-site including any further support needs.
  - Discuss the early impact and learning from the progress made to date.





### **3. MAIN POINTS**

#### **3.1** The following peers were involved in the Progress Review:

- John Robinson, Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Councillor Alan Connett, Devon County Council
- Sarah Pennelli, Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, Blaby District Council
- Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer, East Devon District Council
- Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

#### **3.2** A corporate peer challenge forms a key element of sector-led improvement. The team provides feedback as critical friends, not as assessors, consultants or inspectors. The team reported that it had been made to feel welcome and had been very well supported throughout the peer review process and they found those they engaged with to be open and honest.

#### **3.3** The Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report 2024 is provided at Annex A. Cabinet is asked to note the Feedback Report.

#### **3.4** Feedback from the peer review team was positive and noted the following

- **Governance:** The feedback team commented on the significant change and improvements made following the October 2022 report "*The council has clearly embraced the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge in October 2022 and driven forward significant change and improvement*"
- **Financial Management and Planning:** Whilst acknowledging that the Council has a clearer understanding of the financial position, the progress report does note the scale of the funding gap identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and in particular "*plans need to be put in place to close the substantial gap that remains*".
- **Publica Transition:** The progress review was conducted shortly after the transfer of staff and services under Phase 1 of transition with the report noting the need to take stock and understand the potential impact from the (at the time) forthcoming White Paper.
- **Organisational Culture:** With a growing number of staff employed directly by the Council as a result of the Publica Transition, the progress report notes that "It is of crucial importance for the 'growing' organisation that there is constructive



dialogue around the leadership style and organisational culture that is right for Cotswold District Council.”

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1** Not applicable.

**5. CONCLUSIONS**

**5.1** It is recommended the progress report is noted.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**8.1** Not applicable.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**9.1** Nothing specifically in relation to this report.

**10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** None directly associated with this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**11.1** None.

(END)

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

**Cotswold District Council**

**19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Feedback**



**Corporate Peer Challenge**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Summary of the approach .....	3
3. Progress Review - Feedback .....	5
4. Final thoughts and next steps .....	12

## 1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in October 2022 and promptly published the full report with an action plan.

A Progress Review is an integral part of the corporate peer challenge process and is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- Receive feedback from peers on the progress made by the council against the CPC recommendations and the council's related action plan
- Consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were on-site including any further support needs
- Discuss the early impact and learning from the progress made to date

The LGA would like to thank Cotswold District Council for their commitment to sector led improvement. The Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, open and close relationship that the council has with LGA sector support. It took place at a very timely moment that was well chosen by the council.

## 2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at Cotswold District Council took place on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It focused on the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge as follows:

- The council needs to reassure itself that its governance arrangements are robust
- Refine and adapt the leadership approach in engaging local authority partners in order to ensure shared objectives can be achieved
- Determine what Overview and Scrutiny is there to do and provide the appropriate support to it
- Establish a training and development programme for elected members and ensure good induction arrangements are in place for after the election
- Cabinet continue to be cognisant of the financial challenge that exists and demonstrate the required leadership and collective responsibility for addressing it

- Take stock of the Recovery Investment Strategy and what it can deliver
- Ensure all necessary due diligence is undertaken in relation to the budget proposals and that the proposals are realisable
- Address the concerns of staff about the way they are treated by some senior leaders within the council and the Publica organisation
- Undertake more direct dialogue between the senior leadership of the council and Publica in order to address the following issues:
  - The continued appropriateness of some functions remaining with Publica
  - Where direction is set from, clarity of roles and where accountability sits
  - How increased strategic capacity is provided to support the council
  - Translating the political objectives into manageable deliverables
  - Developing a focus on organisational culture and behaviours and staff well-being

The following peers were involved in the Progress Review:

- John Robinson, Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Councillor Alan Connett, Devon County Council
- Sarah Pennelli, Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, Blaby District Council
- Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer, East Devon District Council
- Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

### 3. Progress Review - Feedback

#### **Governance**

The council has clearly embraced the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge in October 2022 and driven forward significant change and improvement in

response to them, not least in relation to its approach to a number of aspects of governance.

Amongst all of the elected members that we met, there was recognition and a valuing of the councillor induction and the elected member training and development arrangements that have been put in place. People praised the comprehensive induction pack that was provided to them on the night of the election count in May 2023 and the induction programme that was delivered in the weeks that followed. These arrangements were supplemented with a 'buddying' system that linked newly elected members with experienced council officers.

A wide-ranging and on-going training and development programme has followed on from the induction activity and there is also a programme of monthly briefings open to all councillors on pertinent issues within the organisation and the district. The latter has been seen as a positive step that now enables Overview and Scrutiny to concentrate on its core business rather than as a means of briefing elected members on key issues, as had previously often been the case.

The challenge around elected member training and development now seems to have shifted to councillors embracing in greater numbers what is available to them. That said, there are really positive signs of a changing culture around this, including a growing number of elected members who are participating in training and development activity provided at the national level, through the likes of the Local Government Association and the Planning Advisory Service.

The corporate peer challenge in 2022 highlighted the Extraordinary Council meeting held in the October of that year to "authorise the Monitoring Officer to publish a final clean version of the Constitution" that incorporated the revisions agreed at various points over the previous few years. Since that meeting, a review of the Constitution has been undertaken and completed, shaped through the cross-party Constitution Working Group and culminating in the adoption of a 'definitive' version of the document.

The council has also re-positioned the Audit and Governance Committee. This has seen its remit being revised to include governance explicitly, in a switch from 'Audit Committee'. This change is more profound than a revision of the title and the committee has embraced the governance element of the role. The appointment of

two co-opted members has injected alternative perspectives and sent strong messages around the council's commitment to openness and transparency and embracing independent external challenge.

There have been tangible improvements in Democratic Services. This is a function that is widely held in high regard now by councillors, with officers there being seen to be easy to approach and responsive to elected members' needs. Arrangements for council meetings, including the dissemination of papers in a timely manner, flow much more smoothly than previously and trust and confidence on the part of councillors has therefore increased. There is recognition that capacity is about to be lost temporarily in this function, as a result of career progression – which in itself is a success story.

The corporate peer challenge highlighted mixed views about the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny. As touched on earlier, it was previously largely valued as a means of keeping councillors informed of key developments across the district and within the council. Overview and Scrutiny has been transformed since the corporate peer challenge, with a number of important contributory factors here. The approach of the Chair is seen to have been absolutely integral and an element within this is the remit given, through the Constitution, for the Opposition to hold that position. There is good officer support and effective work programming. Cabinet value the role of Overview and Scrutiny, reflected in it carefully considering recommendations that it puts forward, and there is a capitalising upon the role pre-decision scrutiny can play in the functioning of the council. All of this combines to see effort and focus now being centred upon the probing of important issues in the Cotswolds, such as the reduction by Great Western Railway in ticket office availability and public toilet provision in the district.

## **Financial Management and Planning**

The council now has a clearer understanding of its financial position, aided by the changes that have taken place to transfer aspects of the finance function back to the council from Publica, with the direct insight that this has provided for the council.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy published in February 2024 indicated a budget gap of just under £4.2m. An updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been drafted for the four-year period from 2025/26 to 2028/29 and this was presented to Cabinet in November. Some savings and income opportunities have been identified



to help address the medium-term funding gap, including proposals to increase car parking and garden waste charges. However, plans need to be put in place to close the substantial gap that remains.

Thinking around a 'transformation programme' is emerging, reflected in the role of the Finance Cabinet Member (who is also Deputy Leader) being retitled to that of 'Finance and Transformation'. Plans around such a programme need to be developed much further and then made concrete if it is to become a recognised and reliable source of savings and/or increased revenue streams.

The latest version of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy outlines that the return to the council from Publica of the majority of services is likely to have increased the unfunded budget gap in the last six months. People we spoke to within the organisation are very attuned to the cost being added to the council's budget through investment being made in a number of service areas as the organisational transition takes place – at a time when the council is needing to save money.

Overall, increased collective ownership of the financial challenge by Cabinet and the senior managerial leadership is required in order to supplement the leadership in this area being shown by the Deputy Leader, who is working closely with the Section 151 Officer.

## **Publica Transition**

'Phase 1' of the transition of services back to the council has been delivered on a short timescale. This has seen around 70 people joining the council under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights). Whilst complex and demanding in its own right and featuring the largest proportion of staff likely to transfer relative to any further phases, 'Phase 1' is seen as having been more straightforward than any future phases to come. This is because it has involved services and functions that are core to a local council in its place leadership role and fulfilling its governance remit and has largely involved staff whose roles could be

seen essentially to be dedicated to Cotswold District Council and thus, for whom, a TUPE case could relatively easily be made.

Partner councils appreciate the drive that Cotswold's political and managerial leadership has provided around the transition, prompting the initial thinking and discussion and then really making it happen. They also value the 'heavy lifting' that the council has undertaken in relation to some of the detailed work, including providing the financial focus.

Inevitably, given the magnitude and significance of the undertaking, the transition has been a very significant focus for the council in the last couple of years and that continues to be the case.

There is widespread understanding on the part of council staff, Publica staff and elected members that there was always an intention to 'take stock' upon the conclusion of 'Phase 1'. It is now unclear to people what the intention is, with much dialogue and thinking around an immediate move to a further phase and for that to be delivered on relatively short (although not yet clearly defined) timescales of a few months.

We would encourage the council to take the time to consider where that 'taking stock' now sits. This is, in part, in a context of the imminent Government White Paper, which may signal a move to undertake wider change in local government. Also, it is clear from our discussions with staff and elected members that there is a desire to see the learning being drawn out around what has worked well and less well during 'Phase 1'. In saying this, we recognise the dilemma around prolonging uncertainty for employees through any such period of 'taking stock' relative to expediting things and concluding the period of change.

Currently, there are competing narratives and a lack of shared understanding around the transition. As an example, the concept of the council 'taking back control' has a high profile and features heavily in the communication and dialogue around the transition. Whilst the peer team understand the ambition that this communicates – placing services and functions more directly back under local democratic control – some staff have interpreted it negatively. Another narrative is that of the council undertaking the transition to secure savings, which contrasts with the additional investment that people are seeing being made in certain services currently.

The council's political and managerial leadership is dynamic, energetic and passionate for its place and its people. This is the type of narrative that is more compelling for staff and would benefit from being articulated.

In addition, further change must be founded upon an in-depth options appraisal that enables informed decision-making. The council has delivered and continues to deliver on a broad and exciting agenda but there is a risk that the Publica transition becomes all consuming. This is not a criticism, rather a reflection that a change programme of such strategic significance to the council could become too great a distraction from the many other positive interventions that the council is leading.

## **Organisational Culture**

As mentioned above, the council has ambitious, driven and strong political and managerial leadership, reflected, as an example, in the way the Publica transition has moved forward and the council has responded to the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge.

The council's Corporate Plan provides clear direction through its Objectives and Principles. This focuses on the difference to be made in the district and its communities through effectively and appropriately positioning the council.

### Objectives

- Delivering good services
- Responding to the climate emergency
- Delivering housing
- Supporting communities
- Supporting the economy

### Principles

- Rebuilding trust and confidence in the council by promoting a culture of openness and transparency
- Providing value for money for our residents and businesses by using our resources wisely and investing in the district's fabric and future
- Listening to the needs of our community and acting on what we hear

The organisational change that is taking place currently requires a leadership style and approach that carries the council's current and potential future workforce through times of uncertainty. Ultimately, the Publica transition is about fulfilling the above objectives and principles through capitalising upon the potential and the opportunities that the organisational change provides.

People we met, both internally and externally and covering elected members as well as staff, were very direct and clear about the leadership style and organisational culture as they see and experience them. This mirrors the openness and honesty that staff provided during a series of externally facilitated workshops aimed at developing a set of values and behaviours as part of the work on a People Strategy for the council. It is of crucial importance for the 'growing' organisation that there is constructive dialogue around the leadership style and organisational culture that is right for Cotswold District Council.

There are a variety of reasons as to why such a dialogue and getting the response right are important but key within them is ensuring people feel valued, cared for and motivated and want to work for Cotswold District Council. The council now has 70 new employees who should be acting as advocates for the council as a place to work. Through the Publica transition, some people are having to make choices as to which organisation to join – and Cotswold District Council needs to be as attractive as possible in a competitive employment market. Organisational culture will always be a key factor for people. Key considerations for the council here are:

- On-going engagement with staff around developing the new organisational culture
- An embracing of different styles and approaches in the way people work and the value and benefits that such diversity offers – with a lot to be gained by ensuring that the sort of drive needed to get the Publica transition to the stage it has is complemented through an embracing and valuing of more reflective styles and approaches
- Developing 'wider top team' working to strengthen delivery of the council's objectives led by the Chief Executive – which would be relevant anyway but the need for which is increased by the anticipated appointment of a Director of Place and Communities. There are other dimensions to the development of 'top team' working too. This

includes at Cabinet level, given recent changes there and the opportunity on the back of that to develop greater insight to one another's styles and approaches. Another strand is joint working across the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team as collectives to supplement bilateral relationships between Cabinet Members and senior officers.

## 4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank Cotswold District Council for undertaking the Progress Review.

We appreciate that the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an on-going offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Paul Clarke, Principal Adviser for the South-West region, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Paul is available to discuss any further support the council requires and can be reached via [paul.clarke@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@local.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

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

**Cotswold District Council**

**19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Feedback**



**Corporate Peer Challenge**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Summary of the approach .....	3
3. Progress Review - Feedback .....	5
4. Final thoughts and next steps .....	12



## 1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in October 2022 and promptly published the full report with an action plan.

A Progress Review is an integral part of the corporate peer challenge process and is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- Receive feedback from peers on the progress made by the council against the CPC recommendations and the council's related action plan
- Consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were on-site including any further support needs
- Discuss the early impact and learning from the progress made to date

The LGA would like to thank Cotswold District Council for their commitment to sector led improvement. The Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, open and close relationship that the council has with LGA sector support. It took place at a very timely moment that was well chosen by the council.

## 2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at Cotswold District Council took place on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It focused on the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge as follows:

- The council needs to reassure itself that its governance arrangements are robust
- Refine and adapt the leadership approach in engaging local authority partners in order to ensure shared objectives can be achieved
- Determine what Overview and Scrutiny is there to do and provide the appropriate support to it
- Establish a training and development programme for elected members and ensure good induction arrangements are in place for after the election
- Cabinet continue to be cognisant of the financial challenge that exists and demonstrate the required leadership and collective responsibility for addressing it

- Take stock of the Recovery Investment Strategy and what it can deliver
- Ensure all necessary due diligence is undertaken in relation to the budget proposals and that the proposals are realisable
- Address the concerns of staff about the way they are treated by some senior leaders within the council and the Publica organisation
- Undertake more direct dialogue between the senior leadership of the council and Publica in order to address the following issues:
  - The continued appropriateness of some functions remaining with Publica
  - Where direction is set from, clarity of roles and where accountability sits
  - How increased strategic capacity is provided to support the council
  - Translating the political objectives into manageable deliverables
  - Developing a focus on organisational culture and behaviours and staff well-being

The following peers were involved in the Progress Review:

- John Robinson, Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Councillor Alan Connett, Devon County Council
- Sarah Pennelli, Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, Blaby District Council
- Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer, East Devon District Council
- Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

### 3. Progress Review - Feedback

#### **Governance**

The council has clearly embraced the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge in October 2022 and driven forward significant change and improvement in

response to them, not least in relation to its approach to a number of aspects of governance.

Amongst all of the elected members that we met, there was recognition and a valuing of the councillor induction and the elected member training and development arrangements that have been put in place. People praised the comprehensive induction pack that was provided to them on the night of the election count in May 2023 and the induction programme that was delivered in the weeks that followed. These arrangements were supplemented with a 'buddying' system that linked newly elected members with experienced council officers.

A wide-ranging and on-going training and development programme has followed on from the induction activity and there is also a programme of monthly briefings open to all councillors on pertinent issues within the organisation and the district. The latter has been seen as a positive step that now enables Overview and Scrutiny to concentrate on its core business rather than as a means of briefing elected members on key issues, as had previously often been the case.

The challenge around elected member training and development now seems to have shifted to councillors embracing in greater numbers what is available to them. That said, there are really positive signs of a changing culture around this, including a growing number of elected members who are participating in training and development activity provided at the national level, through the likes of the Local Government Association and the Planning Advisory Service.

The corporate peer challenge in 2022 highlighted the Extraordinary Council meeting held in the October of that year to "authorise the Monitoring Officer to publish a final clean version of the Constitution" that incorporated the revisions agreed at various points over the previous few years. Since that meeting, a review of the Constitution has been undertaken and completed, shaped through the cross-party Constitution Working Group and culminating in the adoption of a 'definitive' version of the document.

The council has also re-positioned the Audit and Governance Committee. This has seen its remit being revised to include governance explicitly, in a switch from 'Audit Committee'. This change is more profound than a revision of the title and the committee has embraced the governance element of the role. The appointment of

two co-opted members has injected alternative perspectives and sent strong messages around the council's commitment to openness and transparency and embracing independent external challenge.

There have been tangible improvements in Democratic Services. This is a function that is widely held in high regard now by councillors, with officers there being seen to be easy to approach and responsive to elected members' needs. Arrangements for council meetings, including the dissemination of papers in a timely manner, flow much more smoothly than previously and trust and confidence on the part of councillors has therefore increased. There is recognition that capacity is about to be lost temporarily in this function, as a result of career progression – which in itself is a success story.

The corporate peer challenge highlighted mixed views about the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny. As touched on earlier, it was previously largely valued as a means of keeping councillors informed of key developments across the district and within the council. Overview and Scrutiny has been transformed since the corporate peer challenge, with a number of important contributory factors here. The approach of the Chair is seen to have been absolutely integral and an element within this is the remit given, through the Constitution, for the Opposition to hold that position. There is good officer support and effective work programming. Cabinet value the role of Overview and Scrutiny, reflected in it carefully considering recommendations that it puts forward, and there is a capitalising upon the role pre-decision scrutiny can play in the functioning of the council. All of this combines to see effort and focus now being centred upon the probing of important issues in the Cotswolds, such as the reduction by Great Western Railway in ticket office availability and public toilet provision in the district.

## **Financial Management and Planning**

The council now has a clearer understanding of its financial position, aided by the changes that have taken place to transfer aspects of the finance function back to the council from Publica, with the direct insight that this has provided for the council.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy published in February 2024 indicated a budget gap of just under £4.2m. An updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been drafted for the four-year period from 2025/26 to 2028/29 and this was presented to Cabinet in November. Some savings and income opportunities have been identified

to help address the medium-term funding gap, including proposals to increase car parking and garden waste charges. However, plans need to be put in place to close the substantial gap that remains.

Thinking around a 'transformation programme' is emerging, reflected in the role of the Finance Cabinet Member (who is also Deputy Leader) being retitled to that of 'Finance and Transformation'. Plans around such a programme need to be developed much further and then made concrete if it is to become a recognised and reliable source of savings and/or increased revenue streams.

The latest version of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy outlines that the return to the council from Publica of the majority of services is likely to have increased the unfunded budget gap in the last six months. People we spoke to within the organisation are very attuned to the cost being added to the council's budget through investment being made in a number of service areas as the organisational transition takes place – at a time when the council is needing to save money.

Overall, increased collective ownership of the financial challenge by Cabinet and the senior managerial leadership is required in order to supplement the leadership in this area being shown by the Deputy Leader, who is working closely with the Section 151 Officer.

## **Publica Transition**

'Phase 1' of the transition of services back to the council has been delivered on a short timescale. This has seen around 70 people joining the council under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights). Whilst complex and demanding in its own right and featuring the largest proportion of staff likely to transfer relative to any further phases, 'Phase 1' is seen as having been more straightforward than any future phases to come. This is because it has involved services and functions that are core to a local council in its place leadership role and fulfilling its governance remit and has largely involved staff whose roles could be

seen essentially to be dedicated to Cotswold District Council and thus, for whom, a TUPE case could relatively easily be made.

Partner councils appreciate the drive that Cotswold's political and managerial leadership has provided around the transition, prompting the initial thinking and discussion and then really making it happen. They also value the 'heavy lifting' that the council has undertaken in relation to some of the detailed work, including providing the financial focus.

Inevitably, given the magnitude and significance of the undertaking, the transition has been a very significant focus for the council in the last couple of years and that continues to be the case.

There is widespread understanding on the part of council staff, Publica staff and elected members that there was always an intention to 'take stock' upon the conclusion of 'Phase 1'. It is now unclear to people what the intention is, with much dialogue and thinking around an immediate move to a further phase and for that to be delivered on relatively short (although not yet clearly defined) timescales of a few months.

We would encourage the council to take the time to consider where that 'taking stock' now sits. This is, in part, in a context of the imminent Government White Paper, which may signal a move to undertake wider change in local government. Also, it is clear from our discussions with staff and elected members that there is a desire to see the learning being drawn out around what has worked well and less well during 'Phase 1'. In saying this, we recognise the dilemma around prolonging uncertainty for employees through any such period of 'taking stock' relative to expediting things and concluding the period of change.

Currently, there are competing narratives and a lack of shared understanding around the transition. As an example, the concept of the council 'taking back control' has a high profile and features heavily in the communication and dialogue around the transition. Whilst the peer team understand the ambition that this communicates – placing services and functions more directly back under local democratic control – some staff have interpreted it negatively. Another narrative is that of the council undertaking the transition to secure savings, which contrasts with the additional investment that people are seeing being made in certain services currently.

The council's political and managerial leadership is dynamic, energetic and passionate for its place and its people. This is the type of narrative that is more compelling for staff and would benefit from being articulated.

In addition, further change must be founded upon an in-depth options appraisal that enables informed decision-making. The council has delivered and continues to deliver on a broad and exciting agenda but there is a risk that the Publica transition becomes all consuming. This is not a criticism, rather a reflection that a change programme of such strategic significance to the council could become too great a distraction from the many other positive interventions that the council is leading.

## **Organisational Culture**

As mentioned above, the council has ambitious, driven and strong political and managerial leadership, reflected, as an example, in the way the Publica transition has moved forward and the council has responded to the recommendations from the corporate peer challenge.

The council's Corporate Plan provides clear direction through its Objectives and Principles. This focuses on the difference to be made in the district and its communities through effectively and appropriately positioning the council.

### Objectives

- Delivering good services
- Responding to the climate emergency
- Delivering housing
- Supporting communities
- Supporting the economy

### Principles

- Rebuilding trust and confidence in the council by promoting a culture of openness and transparency
- Providing value for money for our residents and businesses by using our resources wisely and investing in the district's fabric and future
- Listening to the needs of our community and acting on what we hear

The organisational change that is taking place currently requires a leadership style and approach that carries the council's current and potential future workforce through times of uncertainty. Ultimately, the Publica transition is about fulfilling the above objectives and principles through capitalising upon the potential and the opportunities that the organisational change provides.

People we met, both internally and externally and covering elected members as well as staff, were very direct and clear about the leadership style and organisational culture as they see and experience them. This mirrors the openness and honesty that staff provided during a series of externally facilitated workshops aimed at developing a set of values and behaviours as part of the work on a People Strategy for the council. It is of crucial importance for the 'growing' organisation that there is constructive dialogue around the leadership style and organisational culture that is right for Cotswold District Council.

There are a variety of reasons as to why such a dialogue and getting the response right are important but key within them is ensuring people feel valued, cared for and motivated and want to work for Cotswold District Council. The council now has 70 new employees who should be acting as advocates for the council as a place to work. Through the Publica transition, some people are having to make choices as to which organisation to join – and Cotswold District Council needs to be as attractive as possible in a competitive employment market. Organisational culture will always be a key factor for people. Key considerations for the council here are:

- On-going engagement with staff around developing the new organisational culture
- An embracing of different styles and approaches in the way people work and the value and benefits that such diversity offers – with a lot to be gained by ensuring that the sort of drive needed to get the Publica transition to the stage it has is complemented through an embracing and valuing of more reflective styles and approaches
- Developing 'wider top team' working to strengthen delivery of the council's objectives led by the Chief Executive – which would be relevant anyway but the need for which is increased by the anticipated appointment of a Director of Place and Communities. There are other dimensions to the development of 'top team' working too. This



includes at Cabinet level, given recent changes there and the opportunity on the back of that to develop greater insight to one another's styles and approaches. Another strand is joint working across the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team as collectives to supplement bilateral relationships between Cabinet Members and senior officers.

## 4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank Cotswold District Council for undertaking the Progress Review.

We appreciate that the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an on-going offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Paul Clarke, Principal Adviser for the South-West region, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Paul is available to discuss any further support the council requires and can be reached via [paul.clarke@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@local.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBER(S)</b>
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development 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:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to appoint members of the public to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, which is responsible for assessing and making recommendations on the allowances paid to councillors.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Approve the appointment of Nikki Clark, Nick Craxton, David Hindle and Graham Russell to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Good Services</li> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	An open recruitment exercise was undertaken between February and June 2025.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Council is recommended to appoint four members of the public to its Independent Remuneration Panel following a recruitment exercise. This will ensure that the Panel is quorate and can undertake a mid-term review of the Member Allowance Scheme 2023/24 to 2026/27 over the coming months.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 ("The Regulations") provides for local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The Council's IRP is responsible for the monitoring of the Councillors' Allowances Scheme and making recommendations to the Council regarding the scheme.
- 2.2** The Regulations require that an IRP comprising at least three independent members of the public review and assess councillors' allowances and make a recommendation on the scheme to be adopted by the Council. The Panel produces a report making recommendations about the payment and amount of allowances, the duties to which special responsibility allowance are applicable, and whether allowances should be index-linked. The IRP also makes recommendations to the Council whenever the Council decides to either revoke or amend its current scheme. The Council is under a duty to have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) when determining its members' allowances.
- 2.3** The Council has adopted a four-year Members' Allowances Scheme, effective from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2027. In accordance with good governance practice, the scheme is scheduled for a mid-term review.
- 2.4** One of the Council's three IRP Members, Jane Winstanley, resigned from the Panel for personal reasons on 6 January 2025.

## **3. RECRUITMENT OF PANEL MEMBERS**

- 3.1** The Council is legally required to advertise any vacancy for Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) members in a manner it considers likely to bring the vacancy to the attention of the public. It must also invite applications to fill the vacancy and ensure that any proposed appointment is approved by full Council



**3.2** Accordingly, the role of Independent Remuneration Panel Members was advertised on a number of platforms including the Council's website. The recruitment campaign closed on 24 February 2025.

**3.3** Four applicants were assessed as meeting the required criteria and were subsequently invited to attend an interview:

- Graham Russell is a former Head of Democratic Services at a local authority in the South West region and a current member of a number of Independent Remuneration Panels in the region.
- Nick Craxton works in the telecommunications industry and has a background in reward and more recently risk management and governance. Nick currently sits on his organisation's Ethics Forum.
- Nikki Clark, a local resident, offers strong governance and compliance experience, including chairing committees and leading recruitment panels as a school governor. Her background in HR and contract management also demonstrates sound judgment, process awareness, and a clear understanding of public accountability.
- David Hindle, now retired, offers over 20 years of senior local government experience, a deep understanding of councillors' roles, strong ethical standards, financial and analytical expertise, full eligibility and independence, and a demonstrated commitment to public service, making him well-aligned with the requirements of the role.

**3.4** Of the four candidates, two reside within the District, while the remaining two live outside the District but within a commutable distance of the Council's offices.

**3.5** The appointment of four additional Panel Members will bring the total membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to six, exceeding the statutory minimum of three. This approach enhances the Panel's resilience, supports a broader diversity of perspectives, and helps distribute workload more effectively across its members.

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

**4.1** Council could choose not to confirm the proposed appointments. However, this option is not recommended. Independent Remuneration Panel roles are often



challenging to recruit to, and the Council currently has the opportunity to appoint four strong and suitably qualified candidates.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.1.** At its meeting on 26 May 2021, Full Council resolved that each Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) member should receive a one-off annual payment of £250 in recognition of their time commitment. Subject to the approval of the proposed appointments, the newly appointed Panel Members will be entitled to this payment. The annual payments will be met from existing budget provision.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) members is a matter for Full Council. Individuals meeting any of the disqualifying criteria outlined below are not eligible for appointment. These eligibility requirements were clearly stated in the public advertisement for the role:

- An elected Member of the local authority
- A member of any committees of the local authority (including co-opted members)
- Anyone disqualified from becoming a member of the local authority
- Anyone with a close personal relationship with a member or officer of the Council
- Anyone working for an organisation that receives grants from the Council
- Anyone under 18 years of age

- 6.2** All candidates confirmed at interview that they are eligible for appointment.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** Failure to maintain a properly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) with at least three public members would prevent the Council from undertaking a mid-term review of the Members' Allowances Scheme at a future meeting, potentially resulting in non-compliance with governance expectations and legislative requirements.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**



**8.1** In appointing members to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), the Council must have due regard to its statutory duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. This duty extends to ensuring fair and inclusive consideration of candidates in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

By adhering to these criteria, the Council demonstrates its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the appointment process.

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

**9.1** There are no climate or ecological implications arising directly from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1** None.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank





**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL - 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025</b>
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Gina Blomefield, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Email: <a href="mailto:gina.blomefield@cotswold.gov.uk">gina.blomefield@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer Email: <a href="mailto:julia.gibson@Cotswold.gov.uk">julia.gibson@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To receive the annual report of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Annexes	Annex A – Executive Scrutiny Protocol (Part E10 of the Constitution) Annex B – Recommendations to Cabinet 2024/25 Annex C – O&S Work Programme – July 2025
Recommendation(s)	That the Committee resolves to: 1. Approve the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2024/25 for submission to full Council.
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



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Consultees/ Consultation	Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Director of Governance, Interim Executive Director (Publica), Cotswold Management Team
-----------------------------	---



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** An annual report may be submitted to Full Council to demonstrate the impact of Overview and Scrutiny and the effectiveness of the Executive Scrutiny Protocol under Part E10 (point 10.3) of the Constitution.
- 1.2** The Council therefore is asked to note the report for the previous civic year and the future work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** A Corporate Peer Challenge Report from October 2022 noted that there were different views about the effectiveness of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. The report welcomed the requirement for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be an opposition member as a mature constitutional change that provided a good foundation. The report also noted that the Leader and Cabinet were clear that they wished to be held to account by Overview and Scrutiny.
- 2.2** Following the Peer Challenge report, the Council has refocused the role of Overview and Scrutiny on to holding Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development on behalf of the local community.
- 2.3** The Council under the Cabinet and Leader model now operates an effective Overview and Scrutiny Committee which provides pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and contributes to the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The Committee is also empowered to consider other issues that affect the district or its people.
- 2.4** Decisions to be taken by Cabinet are (subject to urgency rules) notified on the Forward Plan for a minimum of 28 days in line with the statutory provisions of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. These decisions will also include Key Officer Decisions which are delegated by Cabinet. For completeness, Council decisions are also included on the Forward Plan.
- 2.5** The Committee of 10 Members, chaired by an opposition Member, provides oversight of the work of the Cabinet and will question Cabinet Members about proposals within their portfolio responsibilities.



- 2.6** Council in November 2022 adopted the Executive Scrutiny Protocol which sets out the relationship between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive (Cabinet).
- 2.7** The protocol describes how important good relations between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet will enable strong decision-making.
- 2.8** Paragraph 10.1 of the protocol sets out the following requirements to demonstrate the success of the protocol. These are:
- Recognition of the value of scrutiny;
  - A clear record of constructive challenge;
  - Valuable scrutiny reviews that achieve impactful outcomes;
  - An open and accountable decision-making process
- 2.9** Officers have also taken into account the guidance from the work of external bodies such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to help guide the Committee in using best practice to achieve the aims of the Protocol.

### **3. THE VALUE OF SCRUTINY AND CONSTRUCTIVE CHALLENGE**

- 3.1** For Overview and Scrutiny to be successful, it must be able to demonstrate its ability to scrutinise and provide a 'critical friend' analysis of the work of Cabinet and proposals that are set to come before Cabinet.
- 3.2** Under the Executive Leader and Cabinet Model operated by the Council, Overview and Scrutiny has a key role in providing democratic checks and balances on the role of the Cabinet.
- 3.3** In the 2024/25 civic year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to undertake effective pre-decision scrutiny of selected Cabinet reports.
- 3.4** Annex C provides the current Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. This work programme is agreed annually but reviewed at each meeting and adjusted to take account of emerging priorities and any adjustments to the Cabinet Forward Plan.
- 3.5** Overview and Scrutiny at each meeting will hear from the Leader/Cabinet Member responsible for each report for pre-decision scrutiny. There is then the opportunity for the Committee to discuss various aspects of reports and ask the Cabinet Member detailed questions. On occasions, other Members or public speakers have made representations to the Committee which have informed its deliberations.



- 3.6** Annex B provides the list of recommendations that have been presented to Cabinet in the 2024/25 civic year. Any recommendations are agreed by the Committee at the conclusion of each item, with the Chair and Vice-Chair confirming with officers the final wording of the recommendations after the meeting if necessary.
- 3.7** Cabinet Members are then given the opportunity to consider the recommendations and the responses are agreed to by Cabinet collectively, before being reported back to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.8** In total, 9 recommendations have been made to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2024/25, with all 9 recommendations being accepted by Cabinet. This compares to 10 recommendations in 2023/24, all of which were accepted, in whole or in part, by Cabinet.
- There are several recommendations which made a noticeable contribution to the quality of decisions made by Cabinet, notably on the Publica Transition (a major insourcing programme).

#### **4. VALUABLE SCRUTINY REVIEWS THAT ACHIEVE IMPACTFUL OUTCOMES**

- 4.1** Scrutiny Reviews conducted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee play an important role in enabling Members to have input into the policy-development process.
- 4.2** Under Article 7.3 of the Constitution, Task and Finish Groups can be set up by the Committee to provide critical oversight of areas of policy within the Council and oversee external policy too.
- 4.3** These groups are made up of a select number of Members on a cross-party basis. The membership of Task and Finish Groups may include non-Executive Members who are not Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **5. BRITISH FARMING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

- 5.1** The British Farming Task and Finish Group was established during the 2024/2025 civic year on 16 April 2025.
- 5.2** The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was to engage with interested parties to understand the local impacts of Inheritance Tax changes in the district and to report back to Council on the key messages.



- 5.3** The membership of the Task and Finish Group comprised Councillors David Cunningham (sub: Councillor Gina Blomefield), Angus Jenkinson, Clare Turner, Jeremy Theyer and Michael Vann.
- 5.4** The Group engaged with relevant experts including representatives from National Farmers Union, Monahans Chartered Accountants, Taylor and Fletcher's land agency office and local farmers,
- 5.5** The Task and Finish Group's findings will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council in July 2025.

## **6. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO CABINET**

- 6.1** Overview and Scrutiny has the authority to make recommendations to Cabinet on any issue that it sees fit regardless of whether it is a Cabinet decision. Whilst the majority of recommendations made to Cabinet were on pre-decision scrutiny items, there were other topical recommendations made.
- 6.2** Overview and Scrutiny also made some important recommendations to Cabinet on other community and Council priority items. These were in relation to Council communication channels and accessibility for Cotswold residents.
- 6.3** The Committee discussed these topics with the relevant Cabinet Members and officers to gain background knowledge and understanding of the issues involved.
- 6.4** Key areas of public concern received focused scrutiny this year, particularly in relation to neighbourhood planning, waste round rezoning, and the climate and ecological emergency.

## **7. AN OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

- 7.1** Overview and Scrutiny through all of the methods described in the previous sections, promotes the overall objective of open and accountable decision-making processes which is a fundamental part of the decision structures of the Council.
- 7.2** Cabinet is expected within the Protocol to be open and honest with the Committee and to assist in allowing the Committee to scrutinise decisions before them.
- 7.3** Cabinet Members for items are invited to meetings of Overview and Scrutiny and are substituted by the Leader or another Cabinet Member where possible if they are not able to attend.



- 7.4** Whilst senior officers in the room may assist in providing specialist details to the Committee, the focus of the Committee has been to engage with Cabinet Members.
- 7.5** In addition to the pre-decision scrutiny approach outlined above, all Cabinet decisions, Cabinet Member decisions and key decisions taken by officers are subject to call-in by any three members of the Committee (who must be from at least two political groups) within 5 working days of the decision being taken. Call-in is intended to be used in exceptional circumstances where a decision is believed to be contrary to the authority's decision-making principles.
- 7.6** If a valid call-in is made, the decision will be referred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (which may be a specially convened meeting). The Committee will hear why the decision was taken and why it was called in before deciding whether the decision can stand and be implemented immediately, or whether the decision is referred back to the decision maker with comments, or in some circumstances, referred to Council.
- 7.7** No decisions were called in during the 2024/25 civic year.

## **8. GLOUCESTERSHIRE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

- 8.1** At the start of each civic year the Council is invited to appoint one member as district representative on the Gloucestershire Economy Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and one member as a district representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 8.2** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a standing item on its agenda for those two members to report back to the Council on the work of the external overview and scrutiny committees, and to receive any feedback to take to future meetings of those external committees.
- 8.3** This system worked well in 2025/26, with Councillors Jenkinson and Neill providing regular detailed written and verbal reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, facilitating discussion of key economic and health issues affecting the district.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1** The relationship between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet is important to the overall governance arrangements of the Council.
- 9.2** Overview and Scrutiny performs an important role of checking the authority of Cabinet and providing an accountability mechanism for community issues.



- 9.3** The Executive Scrutiny Protocol (Part E.10) agreed by full Council sets out the requirements for the relationship to operate in order to provide good policy development and effective pre-decision scrutiny.
- 9.4** The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the 2024/25 Civic Year can be clearly seen in scrutinising the decisions of Cabinet and contributing to overall policies, for example through the work of Task and Finish Groups.
- 9.5** In doing so, the Committee demonstrates its ability within the Council to provide constructive and insightful work within the decision-making processes.

## **10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 10.1** Council is being asked to note the effectiveness of the Protocol and the scrutiny processes. It can ask officers to bring a future report in a different format if it wishes to do so.
- 10.2** Council can refer any Constitutional matters regarding scrutiny processes to the Constitution Working Group if any such concerns arise.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1** There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

## **12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1** There are none arising from the report.

## **13. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 13.1** None.

## **14. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 14.1** Not applicable to this report.

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

- 15.1** Members are required to travel to Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in-person as required by statutory provisions which may have a climate impact. Meetings of Task and Finish Groups as they are not decision-makers are usually held remotely as allowed for the convenience of Members and other participants.

## **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**





**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

**16.1** None.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

## **EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLORS OF COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**November 2022**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Overview & Scrutiny must be located at the strategic heart of the authority and is a key element of the decision making process acting as a 'critical friend'.

1.2 This Protocol applies to Scrutiny (all members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, including substitutes and any Member who sits on an Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Group), and the Executive (all Members of Cabinet and executive officers with delegated authority to undertake executive functions).

### **2. Trust**

2.1 All Members should promote an atmosphere of openness at Overview & Scrutiny meetings and should strive to ensure that questioning and debate takes place within a climate of mutual respect and trust.

2.2 Overview & Scrutiny Members need to trust that Members of the Executive are being open and honest.

2.3 Executive Members need to trust Overview & Scrutiny Members with information and to trust in their views.

### **3. Policy Development and Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

3.1 "Policy Development" refers to the development of the Budget and Policy Framework, which is defined in Article 4 of the Constitution as comprising the following plans and strategies (as agreed by Full Council 14 July 2021):

- Corporate Strategy/Corporate Plan
- Community Strategy
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan (the Cotswold District Local Plan and the Council's input into the Gloucestershire County Structure Plan)
- Housing Strategy
- Pay Policy
- Licensing Policy Statements (Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005)

3.2 The Budget and Policy Framework also includes a number of budgetary policies which may be more appropriately developed in conjunction with Audit Committee - The Medium-Term Financial Strategy; Capital Programme; Setting the Council Tax; Decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirements, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits, and The Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies.

3.3 The importance of early input from Overview & Scrutiny into policy development is recognised. Scrutiny can act as a sounding board and a think tank in investigating issues coming up on the horizon, bringing in added value. Cabinet Members and Executive Officers should draw to the attention of Overview & Scrutiny Committee any key policy in addition to those in the Budget and Policy Framework that is being developed or is due for review to ensure timely input.

3.4 The development of the Budget and Policy Framework needs to be an inclusive process involving both Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet and relevant lead Officer will consider the views of Scrutiny in the development of the policy and provide a response to the recommendations of Scrutiny within 28 days or earlier should the report of the Cabinet require publication. The detail of Scrutiny's involvement shall also be included within the body of the Cabinet report. The Cabinet/Full Council will continue to be responsible for approving and adopting policy.

3.5 Cabinet Members may wish to request views from Scrutiny on a decision before it is taken. The Cabinet Member will be responsible for circulating the details to the relevant Scrutiny Committee Members, through Democratic Services. Utilising this as an option does not exclude the decision from being subject to call-in. However, it will give the Cabinet Member the ability to consider different views and perspectives of a decision to be taken before it is taken.

3.6 Scrutiny may review the Forward Plan and select upcoming decisions for pre-decision scrutiny.

#### **4. Holding Decision Makers to Account**

4.1 A key role of Scrutiny is in holding the Cabinet to account for decisions taken and performance of services. In holding the Cabinet to account Scrutiny Members will:

- Consider decisions taken by the Cabinet, individually and collectively and items on the Forward Plan through formal Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings;
- Review service performance and performance against policy and targets;
- Be prepared to ask searching questions that provide a constructive challenge;
- Be positive and respectful in their interactions with Cabinet Members and Executive Officers;
- Represent the voice of the public;
- Listen to the responses provided and assist the Cabinet in identifying areas for further consideration and improvement.

4.2 In return, Cabinet Members will:

- Be willing to be open, honest and engaged in providing a response to constructive challenge;
- Value the importance of Scrutiny;
- Be supportive of the scrutiny process and invite and seek opinion from Scrutiny on decisions to be taken, where appropriate;
- Provide a positive contribution to Scrutiny meetings;
- Attend meetings when invited to do so to answer questions and present information;

- By way of a direct answer
- By reference to published publications
- By referring a matter to an Officer in attendance, if they are not able to respond
- If an answer cannot immediately be given, by providing a written answer within five working days unless it is not reasonable to do so. If considered unreasonable, an explanation as to why will be given.
- A combination of the above four options.

4.3 The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a legal role in respect of any key executive decision that has not been notified on the Council's Forward Plan for 28 clear days prior to the date of decision. In exceptional circumstances the Council may need to operate alternative decision making arrangements for a period of time e.g. in response to an emergency. In any such situation it is expected that the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be consulted on any urgent key decisions in the normal way.

## **5. Scrutiny Work Planning**

5.1 Prior to the start of each Municipal Year, Scrutiny will hold a Work Planning Workshop. As part of this Workshop the views of the relevant Cabinet Member(s) will be inputted, as will the views of Overview & Scrutiny Members, Officers, any external guests who are invited to contribute, and any members of the public who submit suggestions to the Council. The advice of the Cabinet Member(s) may be sought regarding the priorities of the Council, areas of planned policy development and they will be asked to highlight any areas of conflict and instances where Scrutiny may be invited to assist in work. The Workshop will inform the development of a draft Scrutiny Work Programme. At the beginning of the Municipal Year the views of any new Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members and Cabinet Members will be sought before the draft work plan is presented to the first meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their endorsement.

5.2 The Chair & Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will informally meet periodically with the Leader and Cabinet Members in order to:

- Discuss upcoming issues and provide for ongoing Cabinet input into Scrutiny work plans;
- Ensure liaison between Scrutiny and the Cabinet over Council priorities, targets and performance;
- Continue to build on the positive working relationship between the two functions.

5.4 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?

## **6. Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations to Cabinet**

6.1 Scrutiny may make recommendations to the Cabinet about functions for which the Council is responsible or about issues that affect the district and its people through a report arising from a formal Committee meeting or by way of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group report.

6.2 Once Scrutiny has agreed a recommendation, the views of the relevant Cabinet Member(s) will be sought within 10 working days (if not already provided at a meeting) and will be included within the report. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to meet with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to discuss the recommendation and the response before the final report is submitted to the Cabinet for consideration. Upon formal receipt of a recommendation from Scrutiny, Cabinet will:

- Give due consideration to any recommendations or views expressed and respond to recommendations in writing within 2 months of receipt of the recommendations;
- Provide an explanation for the reasons why recommendations made by Scrutiny have not been pursued (where applicable).

## **7. What Scrutiny Can Expect From Senior Officers.**

7.1 Whilst Scrutiny undertakes to deliver effective outcomes for local people, it will only be able to do this if senior officers make a commitment to work with and respond to Scrutiny in a constructive manner. The following are proposed as the roles and responsibilities that will govern the Council and Public's relationship with Scrutiny. Senior Officers will:

- Provide professional advice to Scrutiny;
- respect the independence of Scrutiny;
- recognise the value that Scrutiny can add to service improvement;
- co-operate positively with Scrutiny in developing and undertaking its work programme;
- participate in the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations made by Scrutiny that are agreed by Cabinet;
- Contribute to a positive culture that values constructive scrutiny.

## **8. Call-in**

8.1 Decisions may be called in in accordance with the procedure rules set out in Part 4.13 of the Constitution. Cabinet Members will be expected to attend any meetings of Scrutiny at which a call-in request in relation to their area of responsibility is being considered. If the relevant Cabinet Member cannot attend, the Leader or a Deputy Leader should attend in their absence. The purpose of their attendance will be to answer questions of fact not to present the item. The following procedure will take place where call-ins are being considered:

- i. The Member who called in the decision will speak first;
- ii. The Chair will invite the Cabinet Member (decision maker) to respond;
- iii. The Committee will then ask questions of the decision maker, who may ask a relevant Officer to supply further information if necessary;
- iv. Scrutiny debates the issue and votes on the outcome. The Committee will either agree with the decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately, or agree

to refer the decision back to the decision maker with comments. Alternatively the Committee could refer the call in to Full Council.

## **9. Scrutiny Consideration of Confidential or Exempt Decisions**

9.1 Scrutiny Members have a right to access exempt information pertaining to their engagement with policy development or decisions that have been taken or are yet to be taken in order to allow effective scrutiny. Should a Scrutiny Member wish to ask questions pertaining to exempt information at a public Committee meeting, the press and public will be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Cabinet Member will be expected to answer in an open and transparent manner. The exempt information will remain confidential and all elected Members and Officers who receive that information shall maintain that confidentiality in line with the Codes of Conduct for Elected Members and Officers.

## **10. Ensuring Compliance with the Protocol**

10.1 The Monitoring Officer and the Business Manager (Democratic Services) will be responsible for overseeing compliance with the Cabinet/Scrutiny Protocol which should be used by Members to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny. The success of the Protocol will be determined by:

- Recognition of the value of scrutiny;
- A clear record of constructive challenge;
- Valuable scrutiny reviews that achieve impactful outcomes;
- An open and accountable decision making process.

10.2 An Annual Report may be submitted to Full Council each year with the aim of demonstrating the impact of Scrutiny and the effectiveness of the Protocol. The report may also include the draft Scrutiny Work Programme for the following year.

This page is intentionally left blank



## Annex B

### Recommendations to Cabinet from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2024/25

Recommendation	Agree (Y/N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>Ecological Emergency Update - 07 May 2024</b>				
That Cabinet considers the necessity to increase resourcing for ecology, given our goal (green to the core), declared climate and ecological crisis and increased legal monitoring obligations.	Y	It was agreed that the outcome of the trial would come back to Cabinet as soon as we have reliable data to suggest that it has been successful (or not) and that the follow up report would go to O&S before going back to Cabinet.	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Transformation	Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Resident Services

<b>Publica Detailed Transition Plan – 7 May 2024</b>				
That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a report reviewing the implementation of Phase 1 before proposals for Phase 2 are brought forward for decision.	Y	Officers and Cabinet undertake to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a report reviewing the implementation of Phase 1. This report will encompass review of the successes, challenges, and lessons learned during Phase 1. It will provide valuable insights and data that will help to inform the planning and development of Phase 2.	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
That Cabinet provide more clarity on what success looks like, sounds like and feels like and what key actions will deliver the Council's objectives (service quality, greater control and cost reductions).	Y	Ultimately success will be measured against timely delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities, and key performance indicators. Cabinet will task the programme director and programme team to collate and develop specific metrics and benchmarks that will inform what 'success' looks like. These will include detailed descriptions of service quality improvements, enhanced control measures, and where appropriate cost reduction targets. Key actions to achieve these objectives will also be clearly identified, ensuring a transparent and measurable path to achieving the Council's goals.	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

### Channel Choice and Telephone Access – 22 July 2024

That the Cabinet ensures services are accessible to everyone, including those who cannot access services via digital channels and ensure the route for support is publicised.	Y	All access channels remain open, and with the increase in residents helping themselves digitally, the team have more time to help those who are digitally excluded and/or vulnerable. The office opening hours have not changed, so customers are still able to access the Council's services in this way. The emergency line remains available every afternoon and during the election period we were able to make lines available 9am-5pm in the weeks leading up to the election, and 6am -10pm on election day.	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Council Transformation and the Economy	Michelle Clifford/ Jon Dearing
---	---	---	---	-----------------------------------

**Climate and Ecological Emergency - 6 January 2025**

1. That the Council ensures that it has processes in place for testing and developing the value of the work it is undertaking on the climate and ecological emergency with a view to providing positive ongoing investment in this field.	Y	The council has adopted governance and decision-making processes that give significant priority to climate change. All reports prepared for decision-making purposes now include a mandatory section on the implications for the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. Additionally, the council is trialing a Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool, designed to ensure that sustainability considerations are reviewed at key stages of projects including the design stage when beneficial changes can still be made. The tool ensures for example: the carbon implications of building/operating new buildings is assessed; opportunities to mitigate negative impacts by design is identified; facilities and access to sustainable transport is provided; and ecological enhancement in site landscaping is maximised.	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability	Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead
---	---	--	--	--

<b>Publica Transition Plan – Phase 2 – 3 March 2025</b>				
That consideration be given to what Phase 3 of the Publica Transition may look like in view of local government re-organisation.	Y	A key dependency for any Phase 3 is local government re-organisation. CEOs of the Publica council shareholders will begin to give thought to options concurrently with discussions on local government re-organisation with an options paper to be brought back to Cabinet re: Phase 3.	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader	Andrew Pollard, Programme Director
That the Council undertakes an annual review of the Publica Transition.	Y	A key aspect of the Publica Transition was to develop services more focused to locality and so improve performance. It is too early to judge performance at this stage, therefore key is to review this in early 2026 when performance data should be available and 12 monthly thereafter.	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader	Andrew Pollard, Programme Director
That consideration is given to wider communications about the Publica Transition to the public and town and parish councils following the pre-election period for the County Council elections.	Y	This presents an opportunity for CDC to explain the rationale for a locality focused service delivery that is aligned to the Council's corporate plan objectives. Following local government elections there is an opportunity for the Council to communicate its goals for delivery of these objectives and how the re-patriation of services is supportive of this. The impact of Local Government Reorganisation and its impact should also be considered.	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader	Andrew Pollard, Programme Director

## Service Performance Report 2024/25 Quarter Three – 3 March 2025

That a review is undertaken of the performance indicators used to measure the waste collection service with a view to supplying the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with additional data (already collected/measured by Ubico) that gives a more accurate picture of collection performance.	Y	Strategic indicators are reviewed each financial year (ready for Q1 monitoring in April and reporting in June/July) by Executive Portfolio Holders. Although current indicators accurately reflect performance and allow benchmarking at a national level, there is scope for additional information to enhance and augment this strategic picture. This would be best achieved through working collaboratively to discuss which metrics would support strategic scrutiny of the waste service, without blurring the picture with large amounts of operational detail. The metrics and information defined through collaboration will provide all Councillors with the necessary assurance that their waste service is operating as it should be. Cabinet requests officers to continue to explore route level real-time reporting that highlights repeated challenges.	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment	Gemma Moreing, Business Information and Performance Lead
--	---	--	--	--



This page is intentionally left blank





### **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.

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>Monday 7 July 2025</b>		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25	Gina Blomefield, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
Farming Motion Working Group Update	David Cunningham, Chair of the Farming Motion Task and Finish Group	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>8 July 2025</b>		
Local Plan Update	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Jo Symons, Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure jo.symons@cotswold.gov.uk
PAS Peer Review and Action Plan	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk

<b>Monday 1 September 2025</b>		
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Update	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Asset Management Strategy	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Every	Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director Claire.Locke@publicagroup.uk
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
<b>Monday 13 October 2025</b>		
Local Government Devolution Update	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	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
Bromford Housing Update	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning - Cllr Juliet Layton	Alan Hope, Strategic Housing Manager alan.hope@cotswold.gov.uk

Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Monday 17 November 2025</b>		
Community Safety Partnership Update	Cabinet Member for Communities - Cllr Claire Bloomer	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities joseph.walker@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	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.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	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk

<b>Monday 2 February 2026</b>		
Budget 2026-27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Monday 2 March 2026</b>		
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk
<b>Monday 13 April 2026 - no items currently scheduled</b>		
<b>Items to be scheduled</b>		
Impact of tax changes on hospitality and retail	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Councillor Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Car Parking	Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk
Leisure Contract	Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>REPORT BACK FROM THE BRITISH FARMING MOTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Chair of Farming Motion Task & Finish Group – Councillor David Cunningham Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@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	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Purpose	To consider the report from the Task & Finish Group on the evidence they received from stakeholders during their inquiry into the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax (IHT) for farmers and the messages they recommend are included in the Council's representations to Government.
Annexes	Annex A – Motion debated by Council and related minute Annex B – Terms of Reference for Task & Finish Group
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: REQUEST that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax rules as they relate to farms will have unintended consequences that could have far-reaching implications for the viability of the farming sector of the Cotswolds.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO



Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Task & Finish Group consulted with a wide range of relevant stakeholders including the National Farmers' Union (NFU), a tax expert, a land agent, individual farmers and other interested parties.





## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed changes to the treatment of farms in relation to Inheritance Tax in order to discourage the purchase of agricultural land as a means of tax avoidance by some wealthy individuals.
- 1.2** The Council is concerned about the unintended consequences of the proposals and as a result of a motion brought to Full Council in March 2025 requested that a Task & Finish Group be established under the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look further into the detail of this issue and its local impacts. This report sets out the results of the Task & Finish Group's deliberations, noting the concerns of those who have given evidence and suggesting a number of potential alternative approaches for the Government to take.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in her Budget on 30 October 2024, proposed changes to the Inheritance Tax (IHT) rules for farmers. The proposed changes are quite complex but, in essence, it is proposed that IHT is levied on farm estates above a certain value at a rate of 20%, whereas currently there is no IHT payable. The changes are proposed to take effect from April 2026.
- 2.2** Council on 19 March 2025 considered a motion proposed by Councillor Julia Judd on this issue. The motion set out a number of concerns with the proposed changes, including a lack of consultation and the impact on the countryside and food security. In response to this concern, it was suggested that further investigation of this important issue affecting the district was undertaken.
- 2.3** A second motion was then proposed as an alternative, which was to refer the original motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This motion was passed by Council. The Committee was asked to consider the local impacts of the proposed changes to IHT and report back in July 2025 at the latest with suggestions as to how the Council can make strong representations to Government.
- 2.4** A cross-party task & finish group was established, comprised of 5 Members based on nominations made by political groups. The group has met on four occasions (three in-person and one online) to gather and consider evidence on this issue.



### **3. APPROACH**

- 3.1** The Task & Finish Group took evidence from a range of interested parties at two face-to-face meetings. Interested parties were asked to complete a simple online survey prior to attending the meeting to enable key areas of concern to be properly explored. Any written representations received by interested parties was also considered by the Group.
- 3.2** Representations were sought from a wide range of interested parties. Representatives from the National Farmers' Union (NFU), Monahans Chartered Accountants, Taylor and Fletcher Chartered Surveyors/Land Agents and individual farmers gave evidence to the Task & Finish Group. Representations were also received from the South Cotswold Labour Party. A number of other organisations and individuals were contacted without response. Members also considered a number of resources including publications by the [House of Lords](#), the [House of Commons Library](#) and other bodies and experts.

### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1** Agriculture is a major employer in the Cotswold District, accounting for 4% of jobs (2019 figures, ONS) compared with 1.4% average for England. Over 80% of land in the Cotswold District is agricultural and it plays a huge role in the beautiful landscape for which the area is renowned. Therefore, this issue is a legitimate subject for the Council to concern itself with.
- 4.2** The Government's rationale for proposing the changes is based on a concern that some wealthy individuals were buying up large amounts of land in order to minimise their IHT liability. Some people have also expressed concerns that land being bought for this purpose is not being as actively farmed as it should be.
- 4.3** The Council recognises the Government's motivation to address the tax avoidance issue, but is concerned that the measures they are proposing to deal with it will have significant negative unintended consequences.
- 4.4** The Council is concerned that the proposed measures would impact family farms disproportionately and, at the same time, not provide a sufficient disincentive to be used as an IHT minimisation vehicle by wealthy individuals.



## **5. KEY GENERAL POINTS RAISED BY THOSE GIVING EVIDENCE**

### **5.1** The key general points raised by those giving evidence to the working group were:

- a) Agricultural land values in the UK are very high in relation to the returns available from farming. The purchase of agricultural land for the primary purpose of avoiding IHT is likely to contribute to distorted land values.
- b) There is an acknowledged issue of tax evasion by wealthy individuals, which has the effect of distorting the land market. Farmers are opposed to this.
- c) UK farmers are typically price takers selling into global commodity markets.
- d) Weather will impact farming more than most other businesses and there is concern that yields are becoming less reliable as a result of climate change.
- e) Most farms are barely profitable in normal years. Many depend on unreliable and reducing Government grants. Where farmers earn the minimum wage for the hours worked there will be generally be no profit.
- f) The UK has a managed countryside and farmers play a significant role as stewards of the land and in their local communities (ploughing snow, removing fallen trees, supporting wildlife, etc.).
- g) There is a need to encourage the next generation of farmers and ensure that young people enter the farming sector, given that it is a vocation which involves long hours and is relatively low paid.
- h) Farmers and others noted the benefit of encouraging succession planning, having regard to the particular issues and considerations faced by farmers. Succession planning is not a simple process for farmers and is about more than the transfer of wealth, it's a life-choice in a family setting and is about the management of the land for potentially decades to come.
- i) The farming sector benefits from a stable and predictable policy environment.

### **5.2** As a result of the above points, it is felt that there are strong arguments to treat agricultural land differently from other assets for the purposes of IHT.

## **6. KEY POINTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGES**

### **6.1** In relation to specifics about the proposed changes, the following key points were raised:

- a) Retaining a 20% IHT on land acquired mainly to avoid death duty would not eliminate this incentive: it remains advantageous.



- b) The timing of the implementation of the changes does not provide sufficient opportunity for agricultural landowners to properly succession plan.
- c) The assessment of farm values for the purposes of IHT will be inclusive of livestock and machinery in addition to the value of the land. These often have significant value for a working farm and are needed for its viable future.
- d) The IHT thresholds are set at a level which is on the borderline of what is an economically sustainable farm in the Cotswold District.
- e) The ability to pay will vary across different types of farming but the proposed IHT rules takes no account of this.
- f) Many farmers who are heavily dependent on farm income to pay IHT will be unable to pay over a 10-year period as the economics are farming will not enable regular payments to be made each year. As a result, farmers will be forced to intensify farming practices and to sell parcels of land, which will make the residual land-holding less economically sustainable.
- g) The proposed IHT reforms are causing real and significant concern in farming communities across the Cotswold and beyond is already affecting the local agricultural economy, with investment decisions being delayed and businesses closing or laying off staff with negative consequences for employment. The Council is concerned about the mental health impacts on farmers.
- h) The Government has committed to UN Declarations regarding climate and biodiversity goals — and made its own — that require the government to encourage transition pathways for farmers. These involve medium or long-term commitments that adversely affect incomes in the short term. The Council considers it likely that transitioning will be adversely affected in Cotswold District and nationally.
- i) The Council is concerned about the impact of the IHT on the future of our National Landscape, which occupies some 80% of our land and its ability to contribute to key government goals.
- j) The Council understands that some (or many) farmers will feel forced to intensify farming practices because sustainable farming practices won't be economical in the short term.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE POLICY APPROACHES**

- 7.1** It would not be realistic to expect a group of Members from a small district council to provide a detailed assessment of the potential policy options available to the



Government, but there are a number of alternative approaches the Government could pursue:

- a) Maintain the full value of 40% IHT on landowners who are not primarily farmers. This proposal would remove the incentive to buy agricultural land as a means of reducing an IHT liability and would likely increase tax revenues.
- b) Exempting farmers whose primary source of income derives from farming.
- c) Exempting farmers who are on transformation pathways as recommended in COP28 towards sustainable farming that mitigates climate change and biodiversity loss.
- d) The [National Farmers' Union \(NFU\)](#) has proposed that IHT is waived for land that remains in continuous ownership for 7 years. This may or may not be sufficient to deter those who wish to use it as an IHT avoidance/minimisation tool.
- e) The Government's wider aims may be better achieved by introducing a "pay if you sell" principle e.g. levying a capital gains tax on the sale of agricultural land rather than IHT on the death of the landowner. This would also support farmers to succession plan and keep more land in agriculture compared to the IHT proposal.
- f) Increasing the time period before which agricultural reliefs are applied from the current two years may discourage people from buying agricultural land as a form of tax avoidance.
- g) Significantly higher thresholds would be appropriate in the Cotswolds and many other parts of the UK.
- h) Providing joined up long-term support for integrated farming systems.
- i) Reviewing the system of roll-over reliefs whereby tax continually gets deferred.
- j) Considering ways to secure the next generation of farmers e.g. providing 100% exemptions where land is leased to young tenant farmers.

**7.2** It is recommended that the Council requests that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking them to reconsider their proposals and to take account of the above points.



## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1** The Council could choose not to make representations to the Government, but this would not be in keeping with its community leadership role given the importance, economically and environmentally, of farming within the Cotswold District.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1** There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

## **11. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1** There are no risks associated with making the proposed representations to the Government.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 12.1** There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

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

- 13.1** Farming is a major contributor to climate change and an important part of the solution. The proposed representation to Government suggests using the tax system to encourage sustainable farming that mitigates climate change and biodiversity loss.

## **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1** None.

(END)



## **Annex A**

### **AGENDA EXTRACT: COUNCIL 19 MARCH 2025**

#### **Motion A: Farmers Motion**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the following Motion has been received:

#### Farmers Motion

Proposer: Councillor Julia Judd

This Council notes that we currently only produce 60% of the food that we need here in the UK. Food imports already outnumber exports by £33.2 billion. A reduction in the food that we produce will only increase our vulnerability to international factors outside our control - we have already felt this impact in the energy market.

This Council also notes that:

- According to the NFU: 7,419 people are directly employed in agriculture in Gloucestershire, that's 12.1% of the South West's farm workers
- Gross Output = £318 million, GVA = £128 million
- Of the 85,397.1 Hectares of arable farmland, 63.2% (53,965.1Ha) is cereal crops, that's 24.1% of Gloucestershire's farmed area and 18% of all the South West's cereal production.
- The National Farmers Union calculates that 75% of commercial family farms will fall above the £1 million threshold across the UK.
- Over the past 60 years the proportion of household income spent on food in the UK has halved, from 33% in 1957, 11.8% in 2022. Food prices have come down, farmers' income from food production has come down and supermarket profits have ballooned.
- neither DEFRA, the Government's own department, nor industry experts in the farming sector were consulted before the chancellor made her announcement. DEFRA did not even know about the decision until after the chancellor's announcement.

This Council believes that

- proper consultation with farmers and industry experts could have led to fairer and more appropriate solutions that are not detrimental to family

farms or the wider industry. The changes were rushed out and have not been subject to due diligence or proper consideration.

- If hard-pressed farmers are forced to sell their farms because they can't afford to carry on due to a huge tax burden, the land is less likely to stay in food production.
- Large farms are being bought by businesses so that they can take advantage of the 20% tax advantage, and small pockets of land which farmers sell off to cover tax burdens are often re-purposed for example dog walking fields, equestrian or amenity land such as re-wilding, but not put back into food production
- Tax discount to businesses or individuals buying agricultural land to avoid tax should be abolished

This Council resolves to :

1. Agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
2. Request that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers.



## MINUTES EXTRACT: COUNCIL 19 MARCH 2025

### Motion A: Farmers Motion

The Chair invited Councillor Julia Judd to speak as the proposer of the motion. Councillor Judd made the following points:

- The issue of Inheritance Tax (IHT) on farmers was highlighted as catastrophic and misunderstood.
- Farming was not comparable to other businesses due to its complexity and the passion involved.
- The imposition of IHT could lead to farmland being sold to industrial landowners, changing the countryside forever.
- Farming in the UK was already vulnerable, as only 60% of food was produced domestically. This created risks with potential tariffs and global crises.
- Strong political support for farming was lacking, and there weren't enough MPs or local politicians who understand farming issues.
- The IHT policy lacked consultation with DEFRA and the NFU and had been rushed with misleading information about land measurements.
- The policy was expected to affect 75% of commercial family farms, forcing many farmers to sell land and potentially leaving it out of food production.
- Farming was an expensive business, with high costs for machinery and unpredictable factors like diseases and natural disasters.

The recommendation of the motion was that

1. the Council agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
2. that the Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers.

Councillor Theyer then spoke as seconder of the motion and made the following points, emphasising that the Inheritance Tax (IHT) on farmers was unworkable and financially unsustainable.

- Previous governments had never implemented such a tax due to its inherent issues.
- The cost of machinery and other farming expenses, such as feed bills, were astronomical, making it hard to manage financially.
- The speaker shared their own experience of buying a 95-horsepower tractor for £55,000, which was financed due to affordability issues.
- Farmers were struggling with high costs, like feed and veterinary expenses, and managing livestock, as the speaker described the stress of caring for animals while balancing other responsibilities.
- The proposed Inheritance Tax changes had caused significant distress within the farming community.

- Farmers were committed to producing quality products for the marketplace but were burdened by stringent regulations and unforeseen challenges, such as disease outbreaks.
- The speaker highlighted the high cost of vaccinations to protect livestock from diseases like blue tongue, further draining resources.
- The speaker warned that without fair treatment, small farms would disappear, affecting food production and leaving the industry in crisis.
- They urged the Council to send a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reconsider the IHT policy and provide a fair solution for farmers.

Councillor Harris spoke to the proposed IHT changes and agreed that they could threaten the existence of family farms and rural communities. In response, the speaker moved a motion to:

- Refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the impact of the changes on farmers in the Cotswold district and report back to Council with recommendations on how to make a strong representation to the government by July.

This approach aimed to ensure the Council's representation was well-informed and effective.

Councillor Every seconded the proposal to refer the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair moved to the debate on referring the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Clarity was sought as to whether the choice to support the proposed referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee precluded an initial letter being sent. It was confirmed that this was the case.

Concerns were raised about the urgency of sending a letter to the Chancellor before 1 April, with calls for consultation with DEFRA, the NFU, and local farmers. The government's lack of understanding of the local farming economy was criticised, with confusion over land measurements cited. Some Councillors doubted the letter's impact on policy and advocated for a thorough review via Overview and Scrutiny to ensure a well-evidenced response. It was suggested that the Committee could establish a task and finish group to gather evidence on the local impacts of IHT changes.

The argument that large farms were exploiting tax benefits was debated, with some seeing it as a valid justification for reform, while others dismissed it as lacking evidence.

The importance of supporting farmers in their role of food production was highlighted, with calls for clear action from the Council.

The option of the Leader sending a letter to the Chancellor requesting a pause in implementation, followed by further scrutiny and a more detailed report was discounted.

The Chair opened the vote on the proposal to refer the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Voting record:

For 19, Against 9, Abstain 1.

<b>Motion A Farmers motion - to be referred to Overview and Scrutiny (Resolution)</b>		
That a revised and strong letter to be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Mike Evemy, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Lisa Spivey, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing and Ian Watson	19
Against	Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, David Fowles, Nikki Ind, Julia Judd, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer and Len Wilkins	9
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Clare Turner	1
<b>Carried</b>		

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Annex B: Terms of Reference: Farming Motion Working Group**

### **Purpose**

To engage with interested parties to understand the local impacts of Inheritance Tax (IHT) changes in the district, including any available data or other evidence.

To report back to Cabinet/Council on the key messages and evidence to ensure the Council can make strong representations to Government.

The working group will not explore other matters relating to farming, financial support, broader tax issues or legislation. Its focus will be limited to Inheritance Tax implications for the farming community and local economy.

### **Background**

Council on 19 March 2025 considered a Farmers Motion which contained the following resolution:

"This Council resolves to:

1. Agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
2. Request that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers."

Council resolved to refer the motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee was asked to consider the local impacts of IHT and report back in July 2025 at the latest with suggestions as to how the Council can make strong representations to Government.

### **Approach**

The Working Group will take evidence from a range of interested parties at one or two meetings. Interested parties will be asked to complete a simple online survey prior to attending the meeting to enable key areas of concern to be properly explored. Any written representations provided by interested parties will also be considered by the Working Group.

### **Membership**

The Working Group will comprise 5 Members based on nominations made by political groups.

The Chair of the Working Group will be appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and must be a member of the Committee.

Other members of the Working Group do not have to be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but cannot be members of Cabinet.

The Working Group does not have to be politically proportionate, but the membership will be cross-party, and all political groups will be invited to nominate one or more members:

Liberal Democrat Group – 2 Members

Conservative Group – 2 Members

Green Group – 1 Member

### **Meetings and access to information**

One or two meeting dates for May and/or early June 2025 will be set in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group. Meetings will be held in-person in the Council Chamber.

The Working Group is not a formal Committee or Sub-Committee and is not subject to access to information regulations. To ensure that all attendees feel that they can speak openly about the issues, meetings will not be open to the public but will be open to all Cotswold District Councillors. Formal minutes will not be taken but key actions, messages or recommendations will be recorded. The Working Group's findings will be made public.

### **Invitees**

The following interested parties may be invited to attend a meeting and to complete an online survey before doing so. This list is indicative and subject to refinement:

- National Farmers Union
- Local MPs
- DEFRA
- Royal Agricultural University
- Gloucestershire Young Farmers
- RABI the farmers charity
- Farming Community Network
- Gloucestershire Farming Friends
- Paul James, Economic Development Lead
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

**Timeline**

31 March 2025 – Working Group established by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 May 2025 – Working Group meeting to plan evidence session

3 June 2025 – Working Group meeting (main evidence session)

7 July 2025 – Working Group findings considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 July 2025 – Working Group findings considered by Council

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank





**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL - 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>LOCAL PLAN UPDATE</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Juliet Layton Deputy Leader of Cotswold District Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Email: <a href="mailto:Juliet.Layton@cotswold.gov.uk">Juliet.Layton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Geraldine LeCointe – Assistant Director of Planning Services Email: <a href="mailto:Geraldine.LeCointe@cotswold.gov.uk">Geraldine.LeCointe@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report authors	Jo Symons – Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure Email: <a href="mailto:Jo.Symons@cotswold.gov.uk">Jo.Symons@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To confirm the way forward for the Local Plan Update
Annexes	Local Plan Oversight Board Terms of Reference July 2025
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet recommends for Council to resolve merge the two ongoing Local Plan projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031); and</li> <li>the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan,</li> </ul> <p>into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update in conjunction with incorporating work of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan, where appropriate, with a view to submission in 2026 and adoption in 2027.</p> <p>That, if this is approved by Council, Cabinet resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy in parallel with the Local Plan process.</li> </ol>



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Invest in additional resources to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan to enable the December 2026 submission deadline to be hit.</li><li>3. Confirm the delivery of the Local Plan as a Council priority.</li><li>4. Establish a Local Plan Oversight Board and confirm a new Terms of Reference.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li><li>• Delivering Housing</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li><li>• Supporting the Economy</li></ul>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Local Management Team



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Cotswold District Council began updating its Local Plan<sup>1</sup> in June 2020. Since then, significant progress has been made.
- 1.2** Initial work was primarily to make the adopted Local Plan 'Green to the Core' in response to the Council's climate change and ecological emergency declarations. In January 2024, the Council also began making preparations to deliver development requirements beyond 2031 (the end of the adopted Local Plan period).
- 1.3** Due to a deadline to submit Local Plans under the current planning regulations, which were considered to be more advantageous to the Council than the new planning regulations, and uncertainty around expected national planning policy changes at the time it was decided to keep the two Local Plan projects separate but progress them in parallel. The intention was to combine the two Local Plan projects into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update further down the line if it was possible to do so, allowing the Council to keep its options open and 'hedge its bets'.
- 1.4** Since then, the government has undertaken radical changes to national planning policies. These included:
- Introducing a new centralised calculation of the number of homes needed in each local planning authority area, which more than doubled the number of homes the government calculates to be needed in the district to 1,036 homes a year<sup>2</sup>; and
  - Extending the deadline to submit Local Plans to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public from June 2025 to December 2026.
- 1.5** As a result, Cotswold District no longer has a five-year housing land supply. The adopted Local Plan policies governing the supply of housing are now out-of-date and must be updated. There may still be justification to refuse planning applications for new homes. However, the harms of granting planning permission must now significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The 1,036 home a year target has potential to harm the district with an increase of unplanned developments. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) – adopted 3 August 2018

<sup>2</sup> Note, this figure is updated annually to incorporate updated housing affordability data.



Council is already receiving a large increase in planning applications for new homes on greenfield sites next to towns and villages in the district.

**1.6** Cotswold District is a truly special place, and the district has many “areas and assets of particular importance” that the Council must protect. For example, the district has:

- 80% of its land area within the Cotswolds National Landscape (a greater coverage by a National Landscape designation than any other district in England);
- 144 Conservation Areas (more than any other district in England);
- Over 5,000 entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest (second after City of Westminster);
- 239 Scheduled ancient monuments;
- 32 registered historic parks and gardens;
- 38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Over 260 locally designated wildlife sites;
- 1 registered battlefield; and many more.

**1.7** Further land is susceptible to high flood risk, where development should be avoided.

**1.8** National planning policies specify that all these areas and assets of particular importance can justify a lower housing requirement in the adopted Local Plan than the 1,036 homes a year that the government calculates to be needed in the district. However, until a new Local Plan is adopted, the Council must continue to use the 1,036 home a year target as the basis for measuring its five-year housing land supply.

**1.9** Local Government Reorganisation is also on the horizon. Cotswold is currently set to become part of a unitary authority in April 2028.

**1.10** Council is not being asked to support a new Local Plan. It is being asked to combine the two ongoing Local Plan projects into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update – something which was always the intention to do. The key ask is that, in making this decision, Cabinet commits itself to prioritising and resourcing the Local Plan so that the updated Local Plan can be submitted for examination by December 2026.



**1.11** This is an ambitious target, and its delivery will require some streamlining of the current Local Plan process, as well as investment in staff resources<sup>3</sup>. However, it also has significant benefits to the Council:

- i. The Council will be able to adopt its Local Plan and regain its five-year housing land supply as fast as possible.
- ii. The Council will have an adopted Local Plan that can be transferred to the new unitary authority, which will provide a long-lasting legacy for Cotswold District Council.
- iii. There is an opportunity to increase the amount of affordable housing, especially social rented housing, from developments, whilst also increasing the proportion of smaller and more affordable house types.
- iv. The district's areas and assets of particular importance will have greater protection, and these may provide justification to set a lower housing requirement in the Local Plan.
- v. The Council will be able to deduct any previous over-delivery of housing on its Local Plan housing requirement from the remaining requirement that its five year housing land supply is measured against.
- vi. The Council will be able to update its Community Infrastructure Levy to help secure infrastructure first development.

**1.12** Aiming to deliver this target is also not without risk. For example, there have been various national policy consultations and rule changes that have already delayed the delivery of the Local Plan, and there may be further changes ahead. However, even if the Council does not submit the Local Plan by December 2026, all is not lost. There may be other opportunities including through the new government regulations to submit a Plan, particularly if government reorganisation is delayed. The important issue is that progression on the Plan needs to continue at pace to ensure that a legacy is set for Cotswold District that ensures development takes place in the right places with an infrastructure first approach.

---

<sup>3</sup> Any necessary staff resources would be fixed term for two years. Any other additions are being made from the existing budget.



## **SUMMARY TIMELINE**

Cotswold District Council began updating its Local Plan<sup>4</sup> in June 2020. This report recommends the Council to continue updating its adopted Local Plan through the merger of the ongoing Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan and progress a single, unified Local Plan to submission. With 80% of the district designated as National Landscape and a further 4% with other nationally protected characteristics or constraints, there may be justification for the Council to set a lower housing requirement figure, thus enabling the Council to locate development and its associated infrastructure in the right places.

- 2018: Plan adopted
- 2020: Decision to do partial review to make Plan green to core
- 2023: Review of housing requirement – no significant change to housing need so no need to update housing requirement
- 2024: Decision to do Site Allocations Document – Feb/March 2024 Reg 18 Issues and Options Consultation on DM policies & on Development Strategy
- December 2024: Government introduces new standard method for calculating housing need – significant change with Cotswold District Council now needing to provide 1,036 homes a year, triggering statutory requirement to update the Plan.
- April 2025: Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review – concludes it is critical for the Council to prioritise options that deliver an up-to-date Local Plan without delay.
- June 2025: Development management policies 'green to core' and substantially ready for Regulation 19 draft Plan consultation BUT site allocations required to meet new housing requirement figure. Now require further evidence for site allocations and selection of site allocations > further consultation required on approach to site selection in area – to take place in Autumn 2025
- Spring 2026: Consultation on Draft Plan and allocated sites
- December 2026: Submission of Local Plan for examination through existing regulations<sup>5</sup> (the new regulations expected may provide an alternative route for submitting the Plan although there is currently only one option of submitting a Plan under the current regulations in December 2026)
- 2028: Adoption

<sup>4</sup> Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) – adopted 3 August 2018

<sup>5</sup> Government response to the proposed plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation - GOV.UK Government response to the proposed plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation - GOV.UK



## **2. BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Terminology:** This report refers to several types of plan-making terms, so the following definitions provide a useful reference:

- **Adopted Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (the adopted Local Plan):** The extant plan used to determine planning applications.
- **Partial update of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (Partial Local Plan Plan):** The plan the council has been preparing to date. It updates parts of the adopted Local Plan, mostly the development management policies, and it does not extend the plan period or alter the development strategy.
- **Development strategy:** This is a core component a local plan. It specifies the quantum and location of development to meet identified needs.
- **Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan:** Specifies the quantum and location of development in Cotswold District during the period 2026 to 2041.
- **Full Local Plan Update:** It combines the Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update that meets development needs beyond 2031. To achieve this the Full Local Plan Update would need to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public by 31 December 2026.
- **New Style Plan:** The government is changing how future local plans are made. From 1 January 2027 authorities that haven't already submitted their draft local plan for independent examination in public will need to prepare and submit their local plan using new plan-making regulations. A New Style Plan would include a new/updated development strategy and a few development management policies of local importance that are not covered by the new National Development Management Policies (a new sister document to the National Planning Policy Framework, which the government proposes to consult on in 2025).

**2.2 Progress on the Local Plan:** The following sets out the timeline of work that has been undertaken on the Local Plan update so far:

- **August 2018:** Cotswold District Council adopts its Local Plan<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> [Cotswold District Local Plan \(2011-2031\)](#)



- **June 2020:** A review of all the adopted local plan policies<sup>7</sup> was completed to assess whether they required updating. In response, the Council commenced a partial update of the adopted Local Plan (the Partial Local Plan Update), primarily to make the Local Plan 'Green to the Core' in response to the Council's climate change and ecological emergency declarations. The Partial Local Plan Update also responded to national planning policy changes and made improvements to the Local Plan in response to feedback from the Council's Development Management team from their experience of using the newly adopted Local Plan.
- **February / March 2022:** The Council undertook an initial consultation (known formally as a Regulation 18 consultation) on the Partial Local Plan Update to identify 'Issues and Options' that the Local Plan needed to respond to.
- **August 2023:** A further review of the adopted Local Plan housing requirement was completed to establish whether this required updating. A relatively small percentage increase of 4.95% was found to be well within the bounds of flexibility, and the change was not deemed to be "significant". It was concluded that the adopted Local Plan housing requirement did not require updating and could continue to be used as the basis for measuring the five-year housing land supply.
- **January 2024:** As there would soon be less than five years remaining of the Local Plan period, it was decided to proactively begin the process of planning for development requirements beyond 2031 before a lack of a five-year housing land supply became an issue. The Council therefore approved the commencement of a Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan (2026-41). It was decided to keep the two Local Plan projects separate due to a government-imposed deadline of June 2025 to submit Local Plans to the Secretary of State for examination in public under the current Local Plan regulations. Plans submitted after this date would be examined under new planning regulations, which although the detail had not been published were believed to be less advantageous for the Council's aspirations. It was recommended to keep the situation under review in the hope of being able to

---

<sup>7</sup> Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 makes it a legal requirement for planning authorities to review their local plan every five years.





combine the two Local Plan projects. It was highlighted that doing so would bring considerable financial savings.

- **February / March 2024:** The Council undertook consultations on both the 'Draft Policies' of the Partial Local Plan Update and 'Issues and Options' for the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan, the latter considering development options beyond 2031. This concluded that the Local Plan should focus development in and around the district's principal settlements and transport nodes, as well as exploring whether strategic scale development around Moreton-in-Marsh as a Principal Settlement with a railway station would be feasible. This strategy was based on the housing target of the previous government, which at that time was 493 homes a year.
- **December 2024:** The newly elected Government produced a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (the NPPF). The changes included a new, mandatory Standard Method for calculating the number of homes needed in each local planning authority area. Areas with the highest levels of unaffordable housing were given increased housebuilding targets. As a result, and due to high house prices in Cotswold District, the district received a more than 100% increase in its target. more than doubling of its target. The number of homes needed in the district is now calculated to be 1,036 homes a year. Due to this being a significant change, the NPPF requires an update to the local plan housing requirement. The national policy changes also extended the deadline from June 2025 to December 2026 to submit local plans to the Secretary of State for examination in public under the current planning regulations Authorities that do not meet the December 2026 submission deadline will need to prepare plans under the new planning regulations, although the detail of these is still awaited<sup>8</sup>.
- **March 2025:** The Planning Advisory Service completed a review of the Planning Service, which concluded that: *both internal and external stakeholders have expressed concerns regarding the progress of developing an up-to-date Local Plan. This delay poses risks not only to the delivery of key corporate objectives*

---

<sup>8</sup> [Government response to the proposed plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation - GOV.UK](#) (note Chapter 2 and Chapter 6)



*but also to the planning service itself, as not having an up-to-date Local Plan can lead to unplanned development. The council faces several important challenges that require a strategic focus and for which the Local Plan is an important delivery tool. These include an increase housing need in nationally mandated figures and the exploration of growth options for residential and economic development, all within the context of ongoing national changes to the planning system. An up-to-date Local Plan is essential for establishing the spatial framework for the area, ensuring development occurs in appropriate locations. Consequently, it is critical for the council to prioritise options that facilitate the creation of a comprehensive and up-to-date Local Plan without delay. Conducting an options appraisal and implementing robust project management and governance frameworks will be essential to this process.*

- **July 2025:** The partially updated Local Plan policies and their evidence base are substantially complete in readiness for the final stage of public consultation (formally known as Regulation 19 consultation). The Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan has undergone an Issues & Options (Regulation 18) consultation. Various evidence is completed or is in train, including a Settlement Role and Function Study to assess the sustainability of settlements; a Broad Locations Study and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Update to identify sites; Moreton-in-Marsh Feasibility Study to assess the feasibility of development in Moreton; Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure the right infrastructure is provided to support developments; Housing and Economic Needs Assessment to ensure the Local Plan provides for the right homes and job types to support the district's population; a Town Centres Study to protect our town centres whilst enabling them to diversify and remain viable; and many more.

**In summary, a substantial amount of work has already been completed or is underway on both Local Plan projects, which can be transferred into the single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update.**

- 2.3** The proposed option in this report builds on the work completed since the Local Plan update commenced in 2020. It demonstrates that by merging the two ongoing Local Plan projects into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update, the Council will be able to submit a Local Plan for examination that is green to the core and that addresses



the district's significantly increased housing target. Once adopted, the Local Plan can be carried forward into the new Unitary Authority as the adopted Plan for the Cotswold District. This Plan would then be the Plan by which development applications are determined and will remain so until such time as the new unitary authority produces its own plan, which may take up to five years post vesting.<sup>9</sup>

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** It is a statutory requirement for all local planning authorities to have an up-to-date local plan. A significant amount of work has already been completed to proactively deliver a single and comprehensive Full Local Plan Update through the two ongoing Local Plan projects. Given the government's significantly increased housing target for the district, which mean the Council can no longer use some of the most important policies from its adopted Plan to determine planning applications, an updated Local Plan is now urgently needed.
- 3.2** Paragraph 34 of the NPPF provides: *Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future.*"
- 3.3** Furthermore, members will be aware that due to the new Government housing figure, the Council no longer has a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) of deliverable housing sites. The recently published 5YHLS report established that the Council has a 1.8 year supply. This means that the tilted balance in favour of granting planning permission to sustainable housing developments now applies. The balance is whether the harms 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits of granting permission. This is where the decision-maker will afford varying degrees of weight to the harms and benefits associated with a proposed development (NPPF, paragraph 11d). The result is that the Council is already receiving a significant uplift in speculative applications for housing developments, and this can be expected to continue. Each

---

<sup>9</sup> *Town and Country planning: The Transition Regulations make clear that a local development document (such as a development plan) adopted by a predecessor council prior to re-organisation shall continue to apply after reorganisation as if it had been adopted by the unitary authority in relation to the area the plan covers. Additionally, the new unitary must adopt its own local development plan within 5 years of the re-organisation date.*



application must now be considered on its merits, and with no 5YHLS, the presumption would be in favour of granting planning permission in unplanned locations.

- 3.4** National Landscapes are a location where the harm caused by the proposed development may significantly outweigh its benefits. However, it is a nuanced and subjective process, and not as clear-cut as one benefit outweighs one harm. Each would require a specific individual assessment to be undertaken, on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.5** The Council has enjoyed a long period with a low number of appeals, but this is likely to change because the Council no longer has an up-to-date Local Plan or a 5YHLS.

**Additional benefits of fast tracking the Local Plan**

- 3.6** Through updating the Local Plan, the Council has the opportunity to seek to reduce its housing requirement figure.
- 3.7** Paragraph 11 of the NPPF specifies that, "*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:*

*a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*

*b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>6</sup>, unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area<sup>7</sup>; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole." (emphasis added)*

Footnote 7: "*The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: **habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as***



***Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.***” (emphasis added to show the protected areas and assets of particular importance in Cotswold District that may justify a lower housing requirement).

- 3.8** This means that if a local planning authority has evidence to show that it cannot meet the government’s housing requirement figure, then a reduced figure would be allowed if the Plan was found sound at examination. The Plan would then be adopted on that basis.
- 3.9** Officers are currently undertaking a Broad Locations study which looks at the constraints of the district and assesses where appropriate locations may be situated for new settlements or extensions to existing settlements.
- 3.10** Paragraph 189 of the NPPF provides that: *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.* Therefore, there can be no strategic sites within the National Landscape which covers 80% of the district.
- 3.11** This leaves 20% of the district. However, a further 4% is either land covered by other protected areas and assets of particular importance referred to in NPPF Footnote 7 or land which is already developed, leaving only 16% of the district as possible options for strategic sites. In addition, this remaining land will have further constraints which may limit development options (e.g. land not being available for development). Therefore, it is highly likely that the Cotswold District will not be able to provide for the full 1,036 homes per year in the district and that the Council would then have to provide for a reduced housing figure, whilst looking to other adjoining authorities to help in providing for the district’s housing need; the Planning Policy and Infrastructure team has already reached out to other districts in this regard. Notably, Exmoor National Park Authority, which has the same status of protection in the NPPF as the Cotswolds National Landscape, successfully argued for a significantly reduced housing requirement when they adopted their plan in 2017, arguing that the National Park has the highest status of protection and therefore has exceptional circumstances.



*Community Infrastructure Levy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update*

- 3.12** 'Infrastructure First' is a prominent ambition of the Council. This approach to planning development provides an opportunity to improve the district's local infrastructure and the regeneration of our towns and villages, whilst expanding the modal shift from cars to public transport and active travel. This can be achieved by coordinating the Local Plan with infrastructure providers, enabling them to make long-term investment decisions and plan their delivery programmes based on the pipeline of development set out in the Council's Local Plan. Development that is not plan-led is less likely to benefit from this longer-term infrastructure planning and is unlikely to provide the infrastructure benefits that would be secured in an updated Local Plan. Local services, such as hospitals, doctors, schools, transport infrastructure and sewage treatment works would therefore be likely to be further stretched due to the lack of planned investment and new facilities.
- 3.13** Cotswold District is a highly desirable place to live and work, and our residents rightly expect that the infrastructure to meet their needs is delivered alongside economic and residential growth. Infrastructure must keep up the pace, so the Council can maintain truly sustainable, cohesive communities with their own identity. Sometimes our residents have mixed or less-positive feelings about development in their area, but they do appreciate the infrastructure improvements which flow from it. This is a positive outcome that the Council can provide to its residents.
- 3.14** To deliver on this promise, and to mitigate the impact of developments, the Council relies significantly on financial contributions from developers via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 3.15** CIL is a set charge on the developer per square metre of built development (with some exceptions). The rate of charge was last set in the Council's CIL Charging Schedule in 2018. This was based on a 2016 assessment<sup>10</sup> of the infrastructure that was required to support the now adopted Local Plan. The cost of that infrastructure and the funding gap was also assessed. The Council's annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) monitors what has been delivered and what remains in the pipeline.
- 3.16** Whilst the Council's CIL rate is indexed to reflect the market, it does not (and cannot) reflect the changing overall cost of infrastructure or changing infrastructure needs. For

---

<sup>10</sup> Cotswold District Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Arup, 2016)



example, infrastructure needs can change over time with the constant rate of growth. There can also be changing circumstances, such as the need to respond more urgently to climate change and reduce private car travel rising up the priority list.

**3.17** Irrespective of this, planning for growth beyond 2031 will have additional infrastructure requirements. It is therefore fundamentally important that the district's infrastructure requirements for the new Local Plan period are reassessed, and that this assessment takes consideration of the district's current priorities. It is only by following this process that the Council can review its CIL rate of the charge.

**3.18** The following actions are therefore proposed:

- Update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (last updated 9 years ago); and
- Review the CIL charging schedule (last updated 7 years ago).

**3.19** The cost of updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy charging rate is built into the costings provided in the Financial Implications section. There are no existing deadlines for submitting the CIL Charging Schedule for examination. It is envisaged that new Charging Schedule would be consulted at Regulation 19 alongside the Local Plan and the submission of the CIL Charging Schedule will follow on from the submission of the Local Plan and the examination again will follow after. The same evidence will be required to support both CIL and the Local Plan. Previously, the CIL examination followed on after the local plan examination using the same Inspector.

#### *Local Plan Update Timetable*

**3.20** Officers will not be starting from scratch when updating the Plan: the Local Plan update began in 2020 with the partial update of the adopted Local Plan's development management policies and this is now substantially complete, with these policies green to the core. This part of the plan is ready for a Regulation 19 consultation. Work on the Development Strategy and Site Allocations aspect of the Local Plan commenced in January 2024 and has already undergone a Regulation 18 consultation in February/March 2024 when a call for sites was undertaken. Various evidence base work has also already been completed or is nearing completion.

**3.21** In terms of what is required going forwards, given the significant increase to the number of homes the government calculates to be needed in the district, a further





Regulation 18 consultation is required. As noted above, Officers are currently undertaking a Broad Locations Study which looks at the constraints of the district and assesses where appropriate locations may be situated for new settlements or extensions to existing settlements. It is intended that this study will have an Integrated Impact Assessment. A Settlement Role and Function Study is also being undertaken, and this consults our parishes on their facilities and looks at public transport to establish the sustainability of each settlement. From this Study, it is intended that a settlement hierarchy will be established to help in allocating a sustainable level of development across the district whilst considering constraints.

- 3.22** The Regulation 18 consultation will publish these documents alongside a consultation questionnaire to seek views on the most appropriate locations for development; another call for sites will also be undertaken. Further relevant pieces of evidence will be consulted on as and when they are ready including the updated Gypsy and Traveller Assessment, the Town Centre Study, and the Housing and Employment Needs Assessment. These will provide the necessary requirement figures for gypsy and travellers, retail and employment as well as the types of housing required.
- 3.23** Sites will then need to be assessed and allocated and appropriate evidence produced to support a draft Plan. A Regulation 19 consultation of the draft plan and its evidence can then be undertaken in Spring 2026 with a view to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination in December 2026.
- 3.24** In previous local plan consultations, processing the consultation responses has been a labour intensive and time-consuming, and this is a primary reason why local plans across the country take so long. This has been recognised by the government as an issue, and Cotswold District Council has been part of a government funded pilot scheme (Protech) to speed this process up through the use of AI. The Council now has specialist software (Go Vocal and Konveio) that uses AI to both input and then summarise consultation responses. This will bring a considerable time and cost savings compared to past consultations.
- 3.25** To deliver the Local Plan update by the required deadlines, the Local Plan project plan has been streamlined to include essential items and activities only. Similarly, the staff resources needed to accelerate the delivery the Local Plan have been considered. Details of funding these posts are set out in the financial implications of the report.





### *Governance*

- 3.26** To ensure the delivery of the Local Plan remains on track, a Local Plan Oversight Board will be reinitiated. This will include a new Terms of Reference. Monthly updates will be provided to the Board to monitor progress and discuss any arising issues.
- 3.27** A detailed project plan for delivering the Local Plan by the December 2026 submission deadline has been drawn up, alongside a budget and risk register. This will be reviewed monthly and will be shared with the Board. A full time Planning Project Manager will be secured to progress the Plan at pace and minimise any risks.

### *Summary*

- 3.28** In summary, Officers recommend that the work to date on the two ongoing Local Plan projects is merged into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update with the intention to go out to Regulation 18 consultation in Autumn 2025 and Regulation 19 consultation in Spring 2026, ahead of submitting the Plan in December 2026. A detailed timetable is available in section 5 and will need to be brought before Cabinet at a later date in the form of an updated Local Development Scheme. Although the timetable may seem ambitious and does contain risk, it needs to be remembered that a significant amount of work has already been completed since 2020, and the Council is already in a relatively advanced position. This is therefore an opportunity for the Council to build on its legacy; to set a deliverable housing requirement figure; to ensure the Plan is green to the core; to take ownership of the Plan without any Government intervention; and to provide an adopted Plan for the Unitary Authority with a five-year housing land supply which will protect the district against inappropriate, unplanned development and will in turn provide the necessary infrastructure required.
- 3.29** A risk register which looks at the risks of progressing the Plan is provided in section 8 with appropriate mitigation measures.

## **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** Cabinet may choose not to merge the two Local Plan projects or to look to join with other local planning authorities in the local plan update or to work alongside the other



Gloucestershire Authorities in drawing up a Gloucestershire Strategic Plan whilst updating the Local Plan; they may therefore choose to consider:

**a) Joining with other Gloucestershire Planning Authorities**

- i. The Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) Authorities (formerly known as the Joint Core Strategy Authorities) of Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, took a report to their Joint Advisory Board on 12 June 2025 to look at options of joining with other authorities to take the Plan forward. They have opted to progress the SLP with the three authorities only, whilst taking consideration of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan.
- ii. Stroud District Council is currently in examination and has its Plan paused due to concerns with transport issues on the M5. They are looking to resolve these issues whilst at the same time exploring taking their plan forward with adjoining authorities.
- iii. Forest of Dean District Council does not adjoin Cotswold District and is looking to take their plan forward for submission in December 2026.

There are many risks with joining with these authorities:

- The need to agree a Plan across one or more authorities will take more time and increase the risk of not meeting the December 2026 deadline. For example, if joining with the SLP authorities, it will take several months to agree the Regulation 19 consultation by all three authorities of the SLP alone. In addition, there is then the need to collate all the consultation responses across three or more authorities, which again takes more time.
- There are numerous unresolved transport issues particularly along the M5 corridor and its junctions that must be overcome, both from the development planned in Tewkesbury through to the Tewkesbury Garden Town, but also in Stroud District, if we were to look to join in a Gloucestershire wide Plan. Stroud has recently had its examination paused due to such concerns.



- The budget of the SLP is £5.5 million over the next three years, which is substantially more than the budget for the delivering Cotswold Plan Update, even when split three ways.

**or**

**b) Undertaking a Local Plan Review in tandem with and to accord with the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan where appropriate**

Due to local government re-organisation, and the likelihood of joining with another or all the Gloucestershire Authorities to form a Unitary, the Gloucestershire councils are looking to work together to provide a Gloucestershire Strategic Plan. Cotswold District Council is committed to this process and there is therefore the option to update the Cotswold Local Plan whilst taking account of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan. This may include, for example, a Gloucestershire wide vision and aligned strategic objectives for the respective Local Plans across Gloucestershire.

Irrespective of this option, the Council is already undertaking various joint evidence base studies with the other Gloucestershire councils, which not only builds a picture of Gloucestershire at a point in time in preparation for a Unitary but also saves on cost. This work can contribute to the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan. However, undertaking a Gloucestershire Strategic Plan will have its own resource and financial costs and implications.

**or**

**c) Awaiting the new regulations to progress the Plan**

At the time of writing the new regulations for progressing a Plan are yet to be revealed. Currently there is only one option in terms of submitting the Plan by December 2026. There may be other options in terms of submitting the Plan under the new regulations at a later date, and if government reorganisation gets delayed this may be a favourable option for the Council, particularly if there is delay in progressing the plan. PAS are providing workshops to advise on how to align evidence to ensure it complies with the new regulations, and council officers will be attending PAS's Southwest workshop in regard to this. This option may be appropriate to explore further in the future, but at present does



not provide the accelerated timetable option to progress the Plan at pace to ensure the Council has an up-to-date Plan and a 5YHLS.

**or**

**d) Not undertaking a Plan Update**

This is not a reasonable alternative option but has been included for completeness. The Government has made clear the intention to make rapid progress towards universal local plan coverage both through support and using Government's powers of intervention when needed. Within the new planning reforms, the Government introduced new powers for government intervention where progress on local plans is not being made, bringing in government officers and attributing the bill to the council in question. By not undertaking a review of the Plan, the Council runs the risk of reputational damage through government intervention, being overrun with unplanned development and appeals, and the possibility of judicial review of such a decision and being required to foot the bill for an external organisation delivering the Council's Local Plan.

**4.2** A SWOT analysis for updating the Plan and the various options is provided in Table 1.



**Table 1:** SWOT analysis for updating the Local Plan

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team began a partial update of the Local Plan in 2020, and much work has already been done.</li> <li>• Development Management policies are ready for Regulation 19 consultation.</li> <li>• Regulation 18 consultation on the development strategy and call for sites undertaken in 2024.</li> <li>• Much evidence work has been undertaken and jointly with the other Gloucestershire Authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to undertake further evidence work to support the housing allocations.</li> <li>• There would be a need to update some evidence that is deemed out-of-date (more than 2 years old) or overtaken by events.</li> <li>• A lack of development opportunities due to the district's constraints and lack of land suitable that is available for development.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide evidence to set a realistically deliverable housing requirement for the district.</li> <li>• Developers are already coming forward with large scale strategic sites in areas that may be appropriate for development.</li> <li>• If we are already undertaking a Plan update, there may be other opportunities to progress the Plan through the new gateway assessment process, particularly if local government re-organisation is delayed.</li> <li>• To align with adjoining councils' local plans and look to deliver the Council's housing need figure through allocations in neighbouring authority plans through the duty to co-operate and memorandums of understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local plans often take a long time to progress and time, and risks will have to be carefully managed to ensure the Council meets the submission date of December 2026.</li> <li>• The Government may introduce new guidance or legislation which the Council may have to take account of.</li> <li>• Either the Council cannot agree with developers or multiple developers cannot agree with each other on the way forward to progress a strategic site.</li> <li>• Unresolvable objections from major stakeholders, such as Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.</li> <li>• Consultants delaying the production of evidence.</li> <li>• Issues with major infrastructure providers which means we cannot provide the</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To align the Council's evidence with other Gloucestershire authorities to provide a strong evidence base for Gloucestershire for going into a Unitary Authority.</li><li>• To align with the Gloucestershire strategic plan in particular with the vision and objectives.</li><li>• The deadline for forming a Unitary Authority may change.</li><li>• To create a long-lasting legacy for Cotswold District.</li></ul>	<p>necessary infrastructure to progress our housing sites.</p> <p>Threats if we do not review the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Costly appeals.</li><li>• Unplanned development in inappropriate locations.</li><li>• Lack of investment in infrastructure.</li><li>• Government intervention.</li><li>• Reputational damage.</li><li>• Judicial review.</li><li>• Special measures.</li></ul>
---	--

## **5. Project Timeline**

- 5.1** The Local Plan must be progressed at pace to achieve the December 2026 submission deadline. Updating the Plan started with the partial review in 2020, and all the development management policies are now substantially complete and ready for a Regulation 19 consultation. The update of the Development Strategy and sites began in 2024 with a consultation in February/March of that year. Further consultation on the development strategy and where sites are located is required due to the significant increase to the calculation of the number of homes needed in the district. Therefore, it is intended to undertake a further Regulation 18 (Issues and Options) consultation on the broad locations for development and the methodology for establishing a settlement hierarchy. This will take place in Autumn 2025.
- 5.2** Further evidence will need to be completed to support the draft Plan, and site allocations will need to be identified for development. These will be consulted on formerly at the Regulation 19 stage alongside the draft Plan. This consultation will take place in Spring 2026. The Local Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in December 2026.
- 5.3** Some of the required evidence base documents to be produced are dependent on other evidence; the viability assessment for example will be one of the last pieces of evidence to be completed, as all the sites and infrastructure will need to be identified before this work can be completed. After the Regulation 19 consultation and prior to

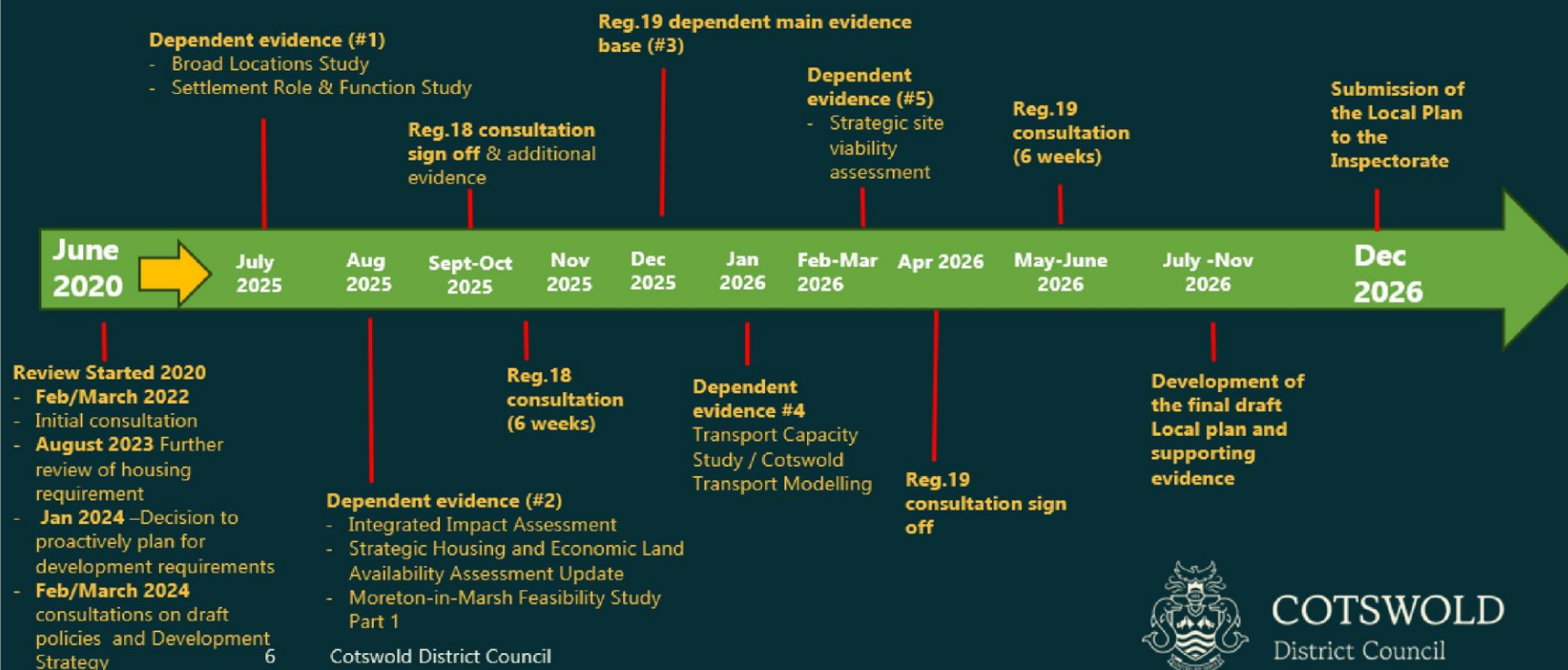


submission, time needs to be allowed to ensure the Council can address any issues raised from the consultation including a schedule of proposed modifications to the draft Plan and producing any necessary additional evidence.

- 5.4** Once the Plan is submitted, progress on the Plan is mainly in the control of the Planning Inspectorate. Further work can be expected throughout the examination process – e.g. responding to Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) from the Inspector and the public hearing sessions.
- 5.5** The Government is keen to progress Plans at pace and all Plans submitted under the current regulations will need to be submitted by December 2026. This timing will then allow the Plan to form the adopted Development Plan for the district under the new Unitary Authority.
- 5.6** Please see below the timetable from now until submission and from submission to adoption.



# Local Plan Timeline







# Local Plan timeline from submission to adoption

Submission of the  
Local Plan to the  
Planning  
Inspectorate

Hearings

Main  
modifications  
consultation

Adoption

Dec  
2026

Jan - Mar  
2027

Apr  
2027

May - June  
2027

Jul - Sept  
2027

Oct - Nov  
2027

Dec  
2027

Preparing  
responses to  
Matters,  
Issues and  
Questions  
(MIQs)

Inspector's  
initial report

Inspector's  
final report





## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

*Money spent to date and remaining reserve balance.*

**6.1** Since commencing the update of the adopted Local Plan in 2020, the Council has spent £762k on the Local Plan. This does include other work and commitments including on the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan but does reflect the amount of work that has already been completed and demonstrates the level of financial commitment the Council has given to updating the Local Plan.

**6.2** As of 1 April 2025, there was a remaining earmarked reserve of around £1 million to complete the Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan with an estimated cost of £1.3 to £1.4 million.

**6.3** Switching to a Full Local Plan Update brings a large cost saving of around £300,000 to £400,000 on the Local Plan process, bringing the projected spend back within the £1 million budget. In addition, the work done to date on the Partial Local Plan Update and the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan is not abortive work. It can also be translocated into the single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update without cost.

*Cost savings from combining the two Local Plan projects and streamlining the Local Plan process.*

**6.4** The cost savings come from a range of factors, including:

- Requiring only one Local Plan examination instead of two;
- Avoiding the duplication of some evidence base documents (e.g. the viability assessment of the Local Plan policies);
- Streamlining the Local Plan process to doing only what is necessary;
- Needing to undertake only two additional public consultations before submitting the Local Plan for examination, instead of three;
- The use of AI to process and summarise Local Plan consultation responses; and
- Delivering the Local Plan more quickly (i.e. submitting both Local Plan projects by December 2026, instead of the current programme which prioritises the delivery of the Partial Local Plan Update followed by the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan after December 2026). This will avoid the cost of having to update / refresh some of the older evidence base documents.

*Recent funding allocated / awarded for the delivery of the Local Plan*



- 6.5** In February 2024, Cabinet resolved to add £500,000 to the Local Plan reserve. This was to ensure the next stages of the Local Plan preparation could be delivered in accordance with the timetable set out in the Cotswold District Local Plan Update report to Council in January 2024. It was highlighted in the January 2024 Council report that *"additional funding will be required should the council need to use the fall-back approach... [i.e. producing a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update]. This may require up to an additional £500,000, although it is difficult to quantify at this stage as it requires far greater clarity on the new plan-making system. The new system is being advertised as being quicker and more efficient, but this remains to be seen in the absence of secondary legislation. Furthermore, the planning system will continue to operate within a legal framework, where planning judgements need to be justified / evidenced. This is often where the costs and resources sit."*
- 6.6** In February 2025, Cabinet resolved to add a further £250,000 to the Local Plan earmarked reserve. This was to ensure the next stages of the Local Plan preparation could be delivered following the update to the NPPF in December 2024.
- 6.7** In March 2025, the Council was awarded £227,962.50 of grant funding from the MHCLG's Local Plans Delivery Fund (Regulation 18). This funding was contingent on the Council submitting its Local Plan for examination by December 2026. The purpose of this funding is also to accelerate the delivery of the Council's Local Plan in response to the increased housing target.
- 6.8** In March 2025, the Council was awarded a further £70,000 of grant funding from the MHCLG's Green Belt Review Fund. A review of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Green Belt, which extends into Cotswold District, is now underway.
- Estimated costs of accelerating the delivery of the Local Plan Update*
- 6.9** The estimated costs for the Plan are provided in Table 2 below. Currently the Local Plan reserve stands at approximately £1 million and the projected spend on the Full Local Plan Update comes broadly within this allocation. This excludes any contingency and does not account for any additional spend resulting from needing to undertake stage 2 of the Moreton-in-Marsh Feasibility Study, which is currently estimated at £215,000.
- 6.10** Costs have been included in the Local Plan budget reserve for additional fixed-term posts to ensure the Plan can be developed at pace. This includes additional hours for



part-time staff in the team; administrative support and the reprovision of hours for other posts. The budget for any permanent posts will come from the existing establishment budget as part of a growth bid; within this we will seek to engage the services of an experienced full-time Project Manager, an Urban Designer and an additional Principal Policy Officer to secure the strategic sites and ensure we can progress the Plan at pace.

**Table 2:** Estimated remaining costs of delivering Full Local Plan Update

Evidence costs	£566,946*
Regulatory Consultations & Examination	£327,000
Additional staffing	£217,075
<b>Local Plan Total</b>	<b>£1,111,021</b>
Other including Cirencester Masterplan	£61,762
<b>Local Plan + Other Total</b>	<b>£1,172,783</b>
Income – Funding	£229,463
<b>Total minus income</b>	<b>£943,320*</b>
<b>LOCAL PLAN RESERVE</b>	<b>£1,004,827</b>
Expenditure 2020 to date	£761,782
Additional costs required if Moreton Feasibility Study Stage two is required	£215,000

\*N.B. Awaiting further costs on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Assessment

Note, figures exclude any contingency, and any additional expenditure required to progress a Gloucestershire Strategic Plan, as this is unknown to date.

**6.11** The use of the Local Plan reserve will be kept under review to ensure sufficient funds are set aside to deliver the Local Plan. In doing so, as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process, the Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer will identify further one-off funding (following the review of earmarked reserves) to be held as a contingency should additional resources be required to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan to meet the December 2026 submission deadline. In the event of the contingency budget being required, this will only be released subject to the agreement of the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Director of Communities and Place.



## **6.12**

*Costs of not having an up-to-date Local Plan and no five-year housing land supply*

- 6.13** As noted in paragraph 4.1(d) above and 7.2 below, the Government has introduced new interventionist powers if a Plan is not progressed quickly enough. The Secretary of State can now prepare the Local Plan for the Council or direct the Council on the preparation of its Local Plan. In either case, this would almost certainly have an increased cost compared to the Council preparing its Local Plan in-house, and the Council would be required to foot the bill of the intervention (e.g. the use of consultants rather than officers to deliver the Local Plan).
- 6.14** It is estimated that the Local Plan Update will be adopted in December 2027, and it is likely that the Council will also regain its 5YHLS at this point. There will therefore be a period of around two and a half years when the Council does not have an up-to-date Local Plan or a 5YHLS. During this period, the Council can expect to receive an increase in speculative planning applications for new homes and appeals and this will incur additional costs for the Council.
- 6.15** Whilst there will be a corresponding increase in planning application fee income, there is expected to be an overall net resource and financial cost to the Council. This is both in terms of uplift in workload for the Development Management team to manage the increase in applications and appeals (e.g. this may require more agency workers), as well as the increased financial cost of appeals (e.g. the need for representation by specialist planning consultants, Counsel to defend the Council's decisions, and the risk of the Council being ordered to pay the appellant's costs).
- 6.16** The cost of appeals can vary depending on the issues being contested and whether a public inquiry is required. For comparison, there is currently a non-residential appeal relating to the Steadings which is likely to cost between £10-12,000. However, as an example; three appeals in Tewkesbury Borough, where the 5YHLS was contested, cost Tewkesbury Borough Council £500,000<sup>11</sup>.
- 6.17** The last time Cotswold District Council did not have a 5YHLS in 2014, the Council was in danger of going into special measures due to the number of appeals lost. At that time, it was confirmed that there had been 11 planning appeals in the district during

---

<sup>11</sup> [BBC article: Gloucestershire will struggle to stop housing developments' \(8 October 2023\)](#)



2012 and 2013 with the total cost amounting to £257,368.<sup>12</sup> Although the Council re- gained its 5YHLS in April 2015 appeals continued as developers successfully argued that the Council did not have an up-to-date local plan in place. It was not until 2018 when the Plan was adopted that the appeals stopped.

- 6.18** Recent research indicates that between 2010 and 2017, there were at least 28 appeals, 18 of which were allowed, and two Judicial Reviews where the lack of a 5YHLS and / or an up-to-date local plan was a significant determining factor. The Council was required to pay the appellant's costs on several occasions.
- 6.19** In contrast, since the Local Plan was adopted in 2018, the Council's 5YHLS has not been challenged at appeal. A landmark appeal<sup>13</sup> also found that, despite a development proposal being acceptable in all other respects and having considerable benefits, the Council having an up-to-date Local Plan and a 5YHLS meant the conflict with the adopted Local Plan development strategy and the plan-led approach was sufficient for the Inspector to uphold the Council's decision to refuse the application. The Council has subsequently received little challenge in this regard. Having an up-to-date Local Plan and a 5YHLS also provides a strong basis to refuse planning applications where there are other issues that weigh against granting planning permission.
- 6.20** If it is left to the new Unitary authority to produce the Council's Local Plan, it could be five further years from vesting day until the district has an adopted Local Plan (so over eight years in total from July 2025). During this extended period, the Council and the new Unitary Authority would continue to be open to speculative planning and an ongoing pipeline of appeals. It would be speculative to provide a cost estimate but, suffice to say, it is likely the cost would be much larger in the long-term than if the Council were to adopt its Local Plan as soon as possible.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.wiltsglosstandard.co.uk/news/11036676.cotswold-district-council-spends-250000-on-planning-appeals-in-the-district-over-the-last-two-years/>

<sup>13</sup> Outline planning application for residential development of up to 40 dwellings (including details of access to be determined) at Moore Land, Collin Lane, Willersey,  
Page 162



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

WR12 7PE (application ref: 17/04765/OUT; appeal ref: APP/F1610/W/19/3229031)



- 7.1** It is a statutory requirement for the Council to produce a Local Plan and keep it up to date<sup>14</sup>. Local Plans, prepared by a local planning authority in consultation with its community, set out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area. Once in place, Local Plans become part of the statutory development plan. The statutory development plan for the area is the starting point for determining local planning applications.
- 7.2** The Government has made clear the intention to make rapid progress towards universal local plan coverage both through support and using Government's powers of intervention when needed. Within the new planning reforms<sup>15</sup>, the Government introduced new powers for government intervention where progress on local plans is not being made, bringing in government officers and attributing the bill to the council in question. By not undertaking an update of the Plan quickly enough, the Council runs the risk of reputational damage through government intervention, being overrun with unplanned development and appeals, and the and the risk of intervention from the government.





**COTSWOLD**

District Council

- 14 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – Section 19
- 15 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 – Section 27



## 8. RISK ASSESSMENT

### Risk Assessment for progressing a Local Plan at pace.

Risks to take account of when progressing the Local Plan								
ID	Key risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Action to mitigate risk	Perceived mitigated likelihood	Perceived mitigated impact	Perceived mitigated risk score
LPR01	Local Plans can take a long time to progress and time and risks will have to be carefully managed to ensure we meet the submission date of December 2026	4	4	16	The reserved budget accounts for additional resource inc. a Strategic Planning and Engagement Project Manager. In addition the project plan provides for contingency. Working with PINS and PAS to ensure we have an effective and efficient project plan.	3	4	12
LPR02	The Government may introduce new guidance or legislation which we may have to take account of	4	4	16	The reserved budget accounts for additional resource and any change in government regulations may provide a different route for the Council secure the local plan.	4	3	12
LPR03	Consultants delaying in the production of evidence	4	4	16	The reserved budget accounts for additional resource inc. a Strategic Planning and Engagement Project Manager. In addition the project plan provides for contingency.	3	4	12
LPR04	Issues with our major infrastructure providers which means we cannot provide the necessary infrastructure to progress our housing sites	3	5	15	Early engagement and the employment of the Strategic Planning and Engagement Project Manager will reduce the impact of this.	3	4	12
LPR05	Unresolvable objections from our major stakeholders of Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England	3	4	12	Early engagement and the employment of the Strategic Planning and Engagement Project Manager will reduce the impact of this.	3	3	9
LPR06	Reg.18 responses may raise issues with the development strategy.	3	3	9	Going out to consultation early and dealing with responses as and when they are received.	3	2	6
LPR07	Reg.19 responses raising issues with regard to soundness issues or legality for evidence or the plan	3	3	9	Early meeting with PINS and PAS and regular contact with Counsel. Allowing additional contingency time prior to submission.	2	2	4
LPR08	Either we cannot agree with developers or multiple developers cannot agree with each other on the way forward to progress a strategic site	3	3	9	Adding contingency time within the Local Plan project plan and to agree Statements of Common Ground with developers which will acknowledge disagreements. The Inspector will have to recommend a way forward.	3	3	9



### Risk Assessment if a Local Plan is not progressed at pace.

Risks to take account of <i>not</i> progressing the Local Plan								
ID	Key risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Action to mitigate risk	Perceived mitigated likelihood	Perceived mitigated impact	Perceived mitigated risk score
NLPR1	Costly appeals	5	5	25	To develop a Local Plan at pace and make it a priority for the Council	5	3	15
NLPR2	Unplanned development in inappropriate locations	5	5	25		4	3	12
NLPR3	Lack of investment in infrastructure	5	5	25		4	3	12
NLPR5	Special measures	5	5	25		2	4	8
NLPR6	Government intervention with costs to the Council	5	5	25		1	2	2
NLPR7	Reputational damage	5	5	25		1	1	1
NLPR8	Judicial review	5	5	25		1	1	1



## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** The policies of the Plan will require an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is to ensure we comply with the law, taking account of equality, human rights, children's rights and socioeconomic disadvantage (poverty) implications when making decisions. It also ensures decision makers are fully informed, at a formative stage in the decision making process.
- 9.2** This process will allow us to critically assess whether a 'proposal' has wider impacts beyond its intended outcomes and if it impacts differentially on different groups in our communities.

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

- 10.1** The Council has declared a climate change emergency, which commits it to preparing an action plan to show how it will support the district to become carbon neutral. It has also declared an ecological emergency. The Council has also committed to make the Local Plan green to its core. An update to the Local Plan will directly support local communities and businesses to mitigate and adapt to climate change, whilst also making a positive response to the ecological emergency.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[National Planning Policy Framework \(December 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

Full Council Report (24 January 2024): Cotswold District Local Plan Update

(End)

## **LOCAL PLAN OVERSIGHT BOARD – TERMS OF REFERENCE (JULY 2025)**

The purpose of the Local Plan Oversight Board ("the Board") is to oversee the update of the Council's Local Plan, and to address any emerging programming issues.

### **Terms of reference:**

#### **1. Strategic management**

- A. Understand the project plan for updating the Cotswold District Local Plan;
- B. Receive updates on, and monitor progress against, the project plan, key tasks and critical paths;
- C. Agree remedial actions to be taken in the event of any slippage against the project plan;
- D. Receive updates on and results of key pieces of evidence.
- E. Act as a sounding board for any specific issues requiring Member input prior to the submission of formal reports to Cabinet;
- F. Oversee and report to Cabinet on progress made; and
- G. Make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to work programming.

#### **2. Accountability**

The Board is accountable to Cabinet where it will be represented by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning.

#### **3. Performance management**

The Board will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing performance against the Council's Local Plan project plan. This will also include an oversight of risks.

#### **4. Financial management**

The Board will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Local Plan budget in line with the project management plan. This will also include an oversight of risks.

#### **5. Membership**

The Board will comprise:

##### *Cotswold District Council Members*

- Chair: Cllr Mike Every, Leader of Cotswold District Council, Liberal Democrats Group.
- Cllr Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader of Cotswold District Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, Liberal Democrats Group
- Two additional Cabinet members, Liberal Democrats Group: Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services;

## **LOCAL PLAN OVERSIGHT BOARD – TERMS OF REFERENCE (JULY 2025)**

and Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation.

### *Cotswold District Council Officers*

- Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure (Project Lead)
- Assistant Director – Planning Services (Accountable Officer)
- Director of Communities and Place (Project Sponsor)
- Chief Executive Officer
- Strategic Planning Project Manager
- Specialist Officers who are required on an ad-hoc basis

### **6. Arrangements for meetings**

- A. Board meetings will be held monthly as appropriate.
- B. The Board is not a decision making body;
- C. Administrative support (minutes and booking meetings) will be provided by Committee Services; and
- D. Project support will be provided by the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure and the Strategic Planning Project Manager.