



Friday, 27 June 2025

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### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Monday, 7 July 2025 at 4.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(Councillors Gina Blomefield, Angus Jenkinson, David Cunningham, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Joe Harris and Nick Bridges)

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

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

# AGENDA

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

The response may take the form of:

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

8. **Member Questions**

A maximum period of fifteen minutes is allowed for Member questions. Questions must be directed to the Chair and must relate to the remit of the committee.

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

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

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

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

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

9. **Report back on recommendations**

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

10. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25** (Pages 13 - 52)  
– 15 minutes

Purpose

To receive the annual report of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation

That Overview and Scrutiny committee:

Recommend that the report be received by Full Council at the meeting on 16 July 2025.

11. **Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4** (Pages 53 - 100) – 30 minutes  
This report sets of the outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.

Purpose

That the Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet on 9 July 2025.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Patrick Coleman

Lead Officer

David Stanley – Deputy Chief Executive

Michelle Burge – Chief Accountant

12. **Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4** (Pages 101 - 176) – 30 minutes  
To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance.

Purpose

That the Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations it wishes to submit to Cabinet on 9 July 2025.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Mike Evemy

Lead Officer

Gemma Moring

Alison Borrett

13. **Farming Motion Working Group Update** (Pages 177 - 194) – 30 minutes

Purpose

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

14. **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees** (Pages 195 - 196) – 15 minutes

Purpose

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

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

15. **Work Plan and Forward Plan** (Pages 197 - 218)

For the Committee to note and review its work plan and to select Cabinet decisions for pre-decision scrutiny at future committee meetings.





Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
06/May2025

## **Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 6 May 2025**

### Members present:

Gina Blomefield (Chair)

Clare Turner (Vice Chair)

David Fowles

David Cunningham

Dilys Neill

Jon Wareing

Angus Jenkinson

### Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer

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

Thomas See, Homeseeker Plus Lead

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer

Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

### Observers:

Councillor Juliet Layton and Tristan Wilkinson

### **OS.176 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Slater and Councillor Michael Vann.

### **OS.177 Substitute Members**

Councillor David Fowles substituted for Councillor Tony Slater.

### **OS.178 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declaration on interests.

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2025 were discussed.

Councillor Jon Waring proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Angus Jenkinson seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2025

**OS.180**      **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Chair asked whether a point raised at the previous Committee meeting regarding remote access and a summary briefing for the 4 June Town and Parish Summit had been organised.

The Director of Governance and Development explained that invites had been sent to all Town and Parish Councils with invites to District Councillors to follow. There was encouragement for District Councillors to encourage Town and Parish Councils to engage with the event.

The Chair requested that remote access to the event and a briefing be supplied. Concern was also raised about the lack of representatives from smaller parishes at the Summit to support parishes with under 1000 residents.

**OS.181**      **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Councillors Laura Hill-Wilson and Nicholas Bridges who were elected as Councillors to the Cotswold District Council in the recent by-elections.

In the absence of former councillor Gary Selwyn, Councillor Clare Turner acted as Vice-Chair at the Committee meeting.

The Chair stated that a dedicated officer to support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been recommended by the Peer Review and should be considered.

The Chair also reported that Bromford Housing had been invited to attend a future meeting to provide an update on how they are managing their properties, improving energy efficiency, and supporting their tenants. Additionally, a forthcoming report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would examine the economic impact of recent Government tax policy changes on businesses within the Cotswold District.

**OS.182**      **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

## **OS.183      Member Questions**

There were two Member questions.

### Question 1

Councillor David Cunningham asked the Chief Executive to report on how the complaints procedure was being implemented, the frequency of complaints received, and the typical timeframes for their resolution. The Director of Governance and Development explained that the complaints process had recently undergone changes, and it might be too early to fully assess the impact of these revisions. A briefing email outlining the complaints policy, standard response times, and the types of complaints received would be circulated in due course.

### Question 2

Councillor David Cunningham asked for a status update from Ubico regarding the maintenance and replacement of street signs across the District. The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that there was currently a backlog in street sign replacements. He agreed to provide an overview of the existing system along with an update on the current status of the replacement programme.

## **OS.184      Report back on recommendations**

There were no recommendations to Cabinet arising from the previous Committee meeting.

## **OS.185      Public Toilets**

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment introduced the Public Toilets update. They raised the following points:

- Progress on previous decisions regarding the public toilets project had not met expectations.
- Some toilets had been closed where there had previously been multiple Council-operated facilities within the same town.
- Changes resulting from Local Government Devolution had affected the anticipated timelines for return on investment and capital expenditure.
- There was a shared desire to avoid imposing additional costs on Town and Parish Councils to adopt these facilities.
- Concerns were raised over the initial failure to identify that certain assets were in poor physical condition and in need of significant upgrades.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the level of support for the action plan had fallen short of the expectations of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Task-and-Finish Group. He reiterated the need for careful consideration of future

Members discussed the report raising the following points:

- Members expressed disappointment that the charge for using public toilets had not been increased towards a level that would cover the cost of providing the service. It was noted that the February Budget meeting had recommended that the charges for most discretionary services should be cost neutral . A question was raised as to why the charge had not been adjusted accordingly. The installation of digital card readers had been intended to facilitate easier payments by the public. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment agreed that the service should operate on a cost-neutral basis and confirmed that the introduction of card readers would support the implementation of this approach.
- Members inquired about the costs associated with reopening the public toilets at Mangersbury Road Car Park for the Horse Fair, as well as the implications for future facilities if such assets are disposed of. The Parking Manager confirmed that there would be a cost incurred for reopening the Mangersbury Road toilets for the five days of the fair. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that it was Council policy to recover costs for discretionary services through appropriate fees, including for public conveniences. Before implementing wider adjustments to the standard fee structure—particularly introducing charges at previously free locations—data on the impacts of such changes should be collected and assessed.
- Members reflected on a key finding from the Task and Finish Group, noting that many residents were unaware that the provision of public conveniences is a discretionary service offered by the Council. A Member emphasised the importance of clearly communicating this to the public.
- Members reflected on a key finding from of the Task-and-Finish Group to improve the toilet facilities. It was emphasised that, in order for the payment system to operate effectively, access points must first be secured and made fit for purpose. This should then be followed by the introduction of a user-friendly payment system.
- Members noted that several hospitality venues within the District had expressed frustration over visitors using their toilet facilities without making a purchase. It was highlighted that this placed a financial burden on businesses.
- Members observed that, with the potential transition to a unitary authority model, the future management of public convenience assets would likely fall to local councils. They stressed the importance of providing adequate time and

detailed financial information to enable Town and Parish Councils to assess their capacity to assume such responsibilities.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment agreed that a clear business case should be developed and presented to Town and Parish Councils. He also emphasised the need for transparency regarding the consequences of non-adoption, noting that facilities could be at risk of closure if local councils chose not to take them on.

- A Member queried whether there was any fundamental reason why necessary maintenance work could not be commissioned and carried out by an external contractor. It was suggested that outsourcing the work or bringing in additional expertise incurred significant expense, it would be necessary to assess whether the cost could be recouped through a return on investment.
- Members inquired about resident feedback regarding the closure of public toilets. The Parking Manager explained that seven complaints had been received concerning the closure of toilets for the 2024/25 period.
- The Member also raised concerns about usage data following the increase in charges, suggesting that higher fees may have led to misuse of nearby areas, break-ins, or attempts to bypass the payment systems. The Parking Manager confirmed that usage had increased compared to the previous year.

The Committee commended the open approach of the Cabinet Member and officers and expressed their thanks for the comprehensive report.

The Committee RESOLVED to submit the following recommendation to Cabinet:

That the Council gives a higher priority to implementing the recommendations from the Public Conveniences Working Group that were agreed by Cabinet on 1 February 2024.

Proposer by Councillor David Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Angus Jenkinson.

## **OS.186      District Homelessness Update**

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the District Homelessness Update and reported that, as of April, approximately 30 individuals—including both adults and children—were in temporary accommodation within the district. The Cabinet Member also presented the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which aimed to shift the Council's approach from reactive responses to a focus on prevention.

Key challenges identified included delays in returning empty properties to use and a lack of sufficient enforcement mechanisms within the current system.

The Strategy's key themes included enhanced data monitoring and integration, tackling long-term empty homes, and promoting collaborative working with other councils, health services, the police, training providers, and voluntary sector organisations. Briefings and training sessions for Town and Parish Councils were planned as part of this initiative.

Members discussed the report raising the following points:

- Members raised concerns about the challenges involved in securing support for identified rough sleepers. The Officer explained that members of the public were encouraged to report sightings through StreetLink, which served as the initial point of contact. The aim was for outreach teams to visit the reported location within 24 hours to assess and engage with the individual concerned.
- Members acknowledged the Strategy's recognition of the need to reduce bureaucracy and to identify barriers within service delivery that hinder support for individuals at risk of homelessness.
- Members questioned how the reported number of homelessness cases was determined. The Officer explained that the data was based on the number of rough sleepers reported to the County's rough sleeper outreach contact.
- Members enquired about how the grant of £365,327 would be allocated to support the delivery of service priorities. The Deputy Chief Executive and the confirmed that a breakdown of how the funding for 2025/26 would be utilised would be provided.
- A Member raised concerns about the disconnect between housing affordability and local income levels. The Member questioned whether the current proportion of affordable housing was sufficient to meaningfully address the widening gap between average earnings and house prices.
- A Member questioned the extent to which less visible forms of homelessness were prevalent within the district and how these cases were being addressed. They also highlighted that many individuals experiencing homelessness faced complex challenges, including mental health issues, and requested further details on how the Council collaborated with other agencies to support those with more complex needs.

The Homeseeker Plus Lead explained that the Council worked with a range of partner organisations across Gloucestershire to provide support for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Council aimed to offer flexible and appropriate housing solutions where possible. The discussion also covered the various pathways into homelessness and the different approaches required to address them effectively.

- Members discussed the operation of the StreetLink system in identifying individuals experiencing homelessness. The discussion also covered the training provided to support effective engagement and assistance for rough sleepers.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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- Members discussed the need to improve public understanding of how housing is allocated through the HomeSeeker Plus system. The discussion highlighted the importance of clear communication to ensure transparency and manage expectations around the housing allocation process.
- Members discussed the relationship between the funding received and the costs associated with delivering homelessness services. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Council's approach to valuing outcomes was guided by its Corporate Business Plan. The Homelessness Reduction Grant was intended to be used for preventative measures and emergency placements.
- The Chair inquired whether organisations that build homes specifically for rental would be a partnership worth exploring. Additionally, a request was made for a breakdown of the waiting list numbers across the three categories of housing need.

The Committee commended the team for the important work they carry out and the positive impact they have on people's lives. The Committee also expressed thanks to the HomeSeeker Plus Lead who had stepped in and responded to questions at short notice.

### **OS.187**      **Progress Review - Task & Finish Group IHT Farming**

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group provided an update on the working group's progress regarding the impact of proposed inheritance tax changes on farms. The group had held one online and one in-person meeting where the terms of reference had been agreed. A strong set of questions for an online questionnaire were to be refined.

The Stakeholder invitation list was still being developed due to the breadth of the topic.

The aim was still to produce a constructive, solution-focused response to government, not simply for or against. A report was expected by July for Council consideration.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task-and-Finish Group for their time and effort in the production of a response.

Councillor David Cunningham left at 17:45

### **OS.188**      **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

There had been no meetings of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) or the Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committee (GCCSC) since the last Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

The Chair updated the Committee on changes to the Work Plan.

It was noted that the item on the ecological emergency was deferred to September due to the busy schedule in July.

The July discussion on the Local Plan was noted to be an update rather than the final version however, the Committee anticipated close scrutiny and questions. The importance of the Local Plan was strongly emphasised.

Members expressed concern that the number of July reports would be difficult to fully scrutinise and questioned if the Publica Transition would be brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services discussed the reports proposed for the July meeting. There was further discussion about the challenges in moving reports to earlier in the year but suggested considering the possibility of holding two meetings in July, depending on the scale and substance of the forthcoming Local Plan report. Due to the lack of performance reports, it was suggested to cancel the June Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 6.05 pm

Chair

(END)





**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 8 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 – Current O&S Work Programme Annex D – Farming Motion – Task & Finish Group
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



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Exempt	NO
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. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1** The relationship between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet is important to the overall governance arrangements of the Council.
- 8.2** Overview and Scrutiny performs an important role of checking the authority of Cabinet and providing an accountability mechanism for community issues.
- 8.3** 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.
- 8.4** 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.
- 8.5** In doing so, the Committee demonstrates its ability within the Council to provide constructive and insightful work within the decision-making processes.

## **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1** 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.



**9.2** Council can refer any Constitutional matters regarding scrutiny processes to the Constitution Working Group if any such concerns arise.

**10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**11.1** There are none arising from the report.

**12. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**12.1** None.

**13. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**13.1** Not applicable to this report.

**14. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**14.1** 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.

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**15.1** None.

(END)



## **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.

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## 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
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**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
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<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
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## Annex B

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

Recommendation	Agree (Y/N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
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<b>Publica Detailed Transition Plan – 7 May 2024</b>				
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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



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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
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### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Call in**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any "call-in" of a decision that has been made but not yet implemented. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision made is appropriate given all relevant information (but not because it would have made a

different decision). It may recommend that the Cabinet, a Portfolio Holder or the Council should reconsider the decision. (It should be noted that Cabinet does not have to change its decision following the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>Monday 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 Evemy	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		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 - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Long term empty homes/second homes strategy update	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning - Cllr Juliet Layton	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk

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>		
Economic Performance Indicators	Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk

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## **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

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**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 10 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q4 2024/25</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:patrick.coleman@cotswold.gov.uk">patrick.coleman@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Email: <a href="mailto:david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk">david.stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer Email: <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	This report sets of the outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.
Annexes	Annex A – Capital Programme Outturn Annex B – Non-Treasury Management Prudential Indicators Annex C – Summary of Earmarked Reserves
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and notes the outturn financial position set out in this report.</li> <li>2. Review and note the Non-treasury Prudential Indicators in Annex B.</li> <li>3. Approve the transfer to and from reserves as set out in paragraph 2.9 to 2.12 and 6.1 to 6.6 and Annex C.</li> <li>4. Approve the carry forward of unspent capital budget included in paragraph 6.5 of £0.565m into the 2025/26 Capital Programme.</li> <li>5. Note the change in provisions as set out in paragraph 2.8</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Good Services</li> </ul>



Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** This report provides members with the outturn position statement for the 2024/25 financial year and should be viewed in the context of the [2025/26 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) report approved by Council in February 2025.
- 1.2** This reports updates members on the significant budget variations identified in the quarterly financial reports considered by Cabinet during the 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.3** Section 2.9 – 2.12 and 6.1 to 6.6 of this report proposes transfers to and from earmarked reserves, with Section 6 requesting approval of capital slippage to be carried forward and included in the 2025/26 capital programme.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1** This report sets out the outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year and will be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 07 or 08 July 2025.
- 2.2** The revenue outturn position is a positive variation of £0.262m. This represents an improved financial position for the year and is a marked improvement on the Q3 forecast (adverse variation of £0.081m). This provides the opportunity additional financial sustainability over the MTFS-period.



**Table ES1 – Revenue Budget Outturn**

	2024/25 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Q3 2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Movement from Q3
<b>Revenue Budget</b>					
<b>Subtotal Services</b>	<b>17,848</b>	<b>18,004</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>(296)</b>
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,865)	(1,797)	68	0	68
<b>Revised Subtotal Services</b>	<b>15,983</b>	<b>16,207</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>(228)</b>
Corporate Income & Expenditure	203	(283)	(486)	(370)	(116)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	5	5	0	5
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>16,186</b>	<b>15,929</b>	<b>(258)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(339)</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>					
Council Tax	(6,597)	(6,597)	0	0	0
Retained Business Rates	(6,139)	(6,139)	(0)	0	(0)
Government Funding - Grants	(3,206)	(3,214)	(8)	0	(8)
Government Funding - NHB	(287)	(287)	0	0	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	(473)	(469)	5	0	5
<b>TOTAL Funding</b>	<b>(16,702)</b>	<b>(16,706)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Budget shortfall/(surplus)</b>	<b>(516)</b>	<b>(778)</b>	<b>(262)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(343)</b>



**Table ES2 – Revenue Budget – Reconciliation of variations**

	Positive variation (£'000)	Adverse Variation (£'000)	Q3 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Movement from Q3 (£'000)
<b>Variations at a glance</b>				
<b><u>Service Variations</u></b>				
Fees & Charges	(106)	109	35	(32)
Car Parks (Fines and Permits)	0	82	87	(5)
Car Park (EVCP income)	(16)	0	(14)	(2)
Car Park (duplicates refunded)	0	20	0	20
Car Park Expenditure	(71)	36	(35)	0
Commercial Property - Rental income shortfall (risk)	(31)	201	176	(6)
Elections	0	93	88	5
Development Management Fees	0	(68)	(47)	(21)
Development Management Appeals	0	(25)	(20)	-5
Forward Planning Consultancy	0	39	25	14
Trinity Road, service charges and utilities	(130)	32	(65)	(33)
Ubico Forecast	0	62	71	(9)
Mobilisation costs - rezoning of Waste and Recycling	0	50	50	0
Consultancy - rezoning of Waste and Recycling	0	61	0	61
Recycling Income - Scrap	0	18	18	0
Recycling Income - Thamesdown	(30)	0	0	(30)
Recycling - Minor Contracts	(32)	0	(38)	6
Garden Waste - Printing	0	16	16	0
Street Naming	0	13	0	13
Scrap Vehicle receipts	(26)	0	0	(26)
South Cerney Depot - Repairs	0	35	12	23
Cotswold Crowdfund	(30)	0	(30)	0
Public Conveniences (Cleaning Contract)	0	18	18	0
Housing Strategy Role	0	42	41	1
Communications - Cotswold News	(15)	0	(15)	0
Legal	(11)	0	(24)	13
ICT	(69)	0	(60)	(9)
Corporate Finance Subscriptions	0	12	18	(6)
External Audit (Accounts and Housing Benefit)	0	52	38	14
Housing Benefit overpayments recovered	(236)	0	0	(236)
Postage and Printing	0	79	0	79
Court Cost Income (Council tax and Business Rates)	(45)	0	0	(45)
Discretionary Pension Payments	0	8	8	0
Other service variations	(73)	0	53	(126)



	Positive variation (£'000)	Adverse Variation (£'000)	Q3 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Movement from Q3 (£'000)
<b>Variations at a glance</b>				
<b>Non-Service/Corporate Variations</b>				
Publica underspend (net of savings target)	(277)	0	(182)	(95)
Publica annual leave accrual returned	(42)	0	0	(42)
Contingency	0	(175)	(200)	25
Street Service savings (included in Service)	0	150	150	0
Treasury Management income	(342)	0	(402)	60
Publica Review - Phase 1 - provision	0	182	182	0
Less: Vacancy Management Saving	0	(50)	(50)	0
Less: Other Vacancy Savings (net of Agency)	(227)		(160)	(67)
Add: Planning Agency Costs (net of vacancy)	0	112	102	10
Add: Recruitment Costs	0	78	78	0
Add: Communications Services	0	11	12	(1)
Add: Rebranding	0	17	20	(3)
Unbudgeted grant income (Transparency Grant)	-8	0	0	(8)
Increase in Bad Debt Provision/Release of Legal Provision associated with challenge to Local Plan housing requirement.	-100	105	0	5
MRP: lower than forecast as a result of lower level of capital expenditure.	-7		0	(7)
Correction of depreciation reversal error	0	67	0	67
Transfer to Reserves (TM, Planning Appeals, Cotswold Crowdfund)	0	180	125	55
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>(1,924)</b>	<b>1,662</b>		
<b>Net Outturn Variation</b>		<b>(262)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(343)</b>

**2.3** Members should note that whilst the outturn has improved since the quarter three forecast, there remain concerns around financial performance in certain service areas – particularly services where the Council’s net revenue budget is dependent on income from fees and charges.

**2.4** Whilst the focus of this report is on the 2024/25 Outturn, it is important members continue to review and challenge service financial performance. As set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code, performance reporting is important for the Council to remain financially sustainable. Members must receive timely information on its financial and operational performance so that corporate priorities are delivered within budget. Early information about emerging risks to financial sustainability are key to



ensuring the Council can take effective decisions and carefully consider an effective response.

- 2.5** Ahead of the Q1 Financial Performance Report (due to be considered by Cabinet at the September meeting), Heads of Service should take steps to identify management action(s) that will address underperformance and discuss these with the finance team and the relevant Director. Financial Performance Reports for 2025/26 will include options and recommendations for corrective action where underperformance against the budget has been identified, and options for improving financial performance even if the service is achieving income and expenditure targets.
- 2.6** A key aspect of this will be to explain financial performance in the context of service performance and outcomes. There is a risk with the current performance framework that aspects of service performance may be reported as on or above target, with little or no reference to financial performance. During 2025/2026 the Finance team will work with the Business and Intelligence unit to consider how best to review and report finance and service performance.
- 2.7** Updated material variations are outlined below with further details in Section 4 of this report.
- **Income variations** – underachievement: Public Conveniences (£33k) Land Charges (£17k), Cemeteries (£30k), Building Control (£29k). Additional Income: Bulky Waste (£46k), Green Waste (£46k), Licensing (£13k)
  - **Car Parks** income – underachievement of fines and permit income (£82k) and accrual for refund of £20k of potential duplicate payments caused by fault in the pay and display machines.
  - **Development Management fees** - overachievement of planning fees by £64k (increase of £21k from Q3).
  - **Commercial Property** rental income and vacant property costs (£170k adverse variation)
  - **Elections** – Overspend of £93k due to expenditure with Civica on the trial of tablets that cannot be claimed through the parliamentary expenses scheme, overspend



due to Chesterton by-election and higher than budgeted postage and canvassers fees.

- **Trinity Road Offices** – higher than budgeted income from service charges to tenants and lower than forecast business rates and energy costs (£98k)
- £62k of overspend in respect of vehicle hire, premises and insurance costs as part of the **Ubico Waste and Recycling contract**.
- £61k additional consultancy expenditure associated with **Waste and Recycling rezoning** in July 2024.
- **Miscellaneous Waste and Recycling** related variances – under achievement of income sale of scrap materials (£18k), expenditure associated with landlord obligations for South Cerney depot (£35k), reduced cost of recycling material contract (£32k), receipts from scrap sale of waste and recycling vehicles (£25k) and overachievement of recycling credits (£30k).
- **Postage and Printing costs**, costs exceeded budget, £59k overspend within revenues service and underachievement of postage savings target of £19k. (£78k)
- **Income from Court Costs (Council tax and Business Rates)** income achieved exceeded budget by £45k.
- **Housing Benefit overpayments recovered**, amounts recovered exceeded budget by £236k.
- Net underspend on the **Publica contract sum** (net of savings target) of £192k.
- **Contingency** Budget is forecast to remain unutilised (£175k underspend) which mitigates costs associated with the Waste and Recycling rezoning and overspend on Ubico contract.
- Cost reduction associated with the **Street Services** are shown in Table 5 of the report (net underspend of £0.098m) and to avoid double counting the savings target is shown as an adverse variation of £0.150m.
- **Treasury Management** and interest receivable performance (£0.342m positive variation), movement from Q3 of £60k due to interest in respect of Cottsway Housing Association Loan is payable in 2025/26 when loan converts to a secured loan. £1.125m (£1.00m budgeted and an additional £0.125m) to be transferred to the Treasury Management Reserve.
- **Publica Review** impact (part-year) of £0.182m included as a provision.



- Less: **Vacancy Management** underspend (Director of Communities and Place) £50k
- Less: Other vacancy savings (net of Agency costs) £227k
- Additional costs of **Planning Agency Costs** (net of vacancy) £112k
- Additional costs of **Communications** service (net of vacancy managements underspend of £40k) – £11k net adverse variation
- Additional **recruitment costs** of £78k for Phase 1 posts (Director of Communities and Place and senior Development Management roles.)
- Expenditure associated with the rollout of the **refreshed corporate branding** of £17k.
- Return of provision set aside in Publica budget for **annual leave accrued** and not taken. (£42k positive variation).
- Underspend on **Publica contract** (net of savings target) (£277k positive variation)
- Correction of accounting error in budget (reversal of impact of capital charges on General Fund results in adverse impact of £67k)

**2.8** With the improvement in the outturn position at year end and recognising the need to set aside balances to mitigate risk and uncertainty, the following changes to provisions have been made:

- Bad Debt provision – Increase in sundry debtor provision of £105k.
- No longer required - Provision of £100k included in respect of Legal costs associated with challenge to Local Plan housing requirement.

**2.9** Financial Sustainability Reserve – The outturn position enables the budgeted transfer of £0.516m from the General Fund to the Financial Resilience Reserve to be made. This will increase the balance on the reserve to £2.943m and provides one-off reserve funding to mitigate the budget gap identified in the MTFS and enable the Council to maintain financial sustainability over the MTFS-period/until 2027/28.

**2.10** Transformation Reserve– It is proposed that the additional surplus from the General Fund (£0.262m) is transferred to the Transformation Reserve. The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding to support the Council's Savings and Transformation programme. It is proposed that reserve funding is utilised more broadly to address





potential financial pressures arising from Local Government Reorganisation, to provide further one-off/up front funding (pump priming) on an Invest-to-Save basis.

**2.11** The 2024/25 revenue budget includes a net transfer from earmarked reserves of £0.301m to fund future commitments and make provisions for future financial pressures and risks – predominantly around Business Rate Income and Treasury Management income. The latest net budget has increased this figure to a net transfer to earmarked reserves of £2.146m (excluding transfer of surplus outlined in 2.9 and 2.10 above)

**2.12 Annex C** details the reserves held by the Council at 31 March 2025 and the proposed movements to/from and between reserves. The largest of these which affects the outturn position is a transfer of £1.125m (including £0.478m surplus on the Business Rate pool and S.31 grant which will be utilised in 2025/26 and 2026/27 to fund forecast business rate income deficit) to the Business Rate Risk Reserve.

**2.13** A summary of the Capital Programme outturn forecast is shown in the table below.

**Table ES3 – Capital Programme Outturn**

Capital Programme	2024/25 LAB (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Q3 2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Movement from Q3 (£'000)
Leisure & Communities	1,491	1,451	1,451	(40)	12	(52)
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	2,643	2,516	2,516	(127)	(66)	(61)
Environment	1,606	1,339	1,339	(267)	(85)	(182)
ICT, Change and Customer Services	150	138	138	(12)	0	(12)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	752	752	752	0	0	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	216	216	82	0	82
Land, Legal and Property	517	499	499	(18)	79	(97)
Transformation and Investment	257	211	211	(46)	(45)	(1)
<b>TOTAL Capital Programme</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>7,122</b>	<b>7,122</b>	<b>(428)</b>	<b>(105)</b>	<b>(323)</b>

**2.14** The 2025/26 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report approved by Council in February 2025 provided members with an



updated capital budget for the financial year and is shown in the table above. Movements from Q3 includes the following:

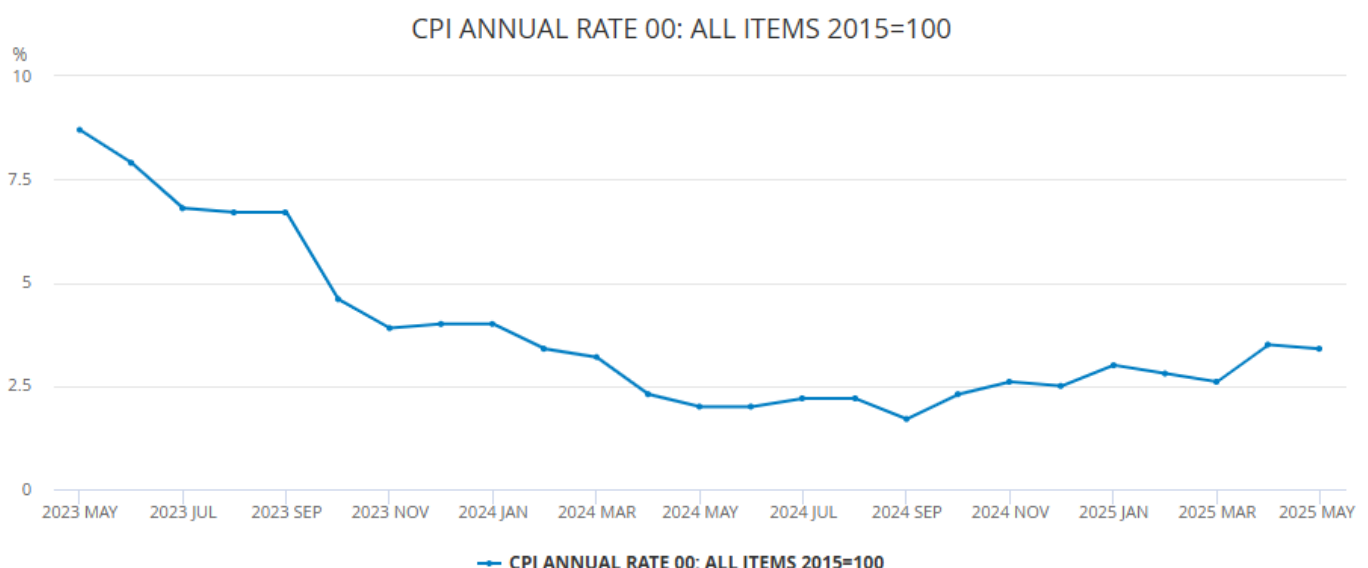
- **Trinity Road, Carbon Efficiency works** (Solar PV), underspend of £126k to be carried forward in 2025/26 to the Asset Management Strategy capital budget.
- **On Street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS)**, expenditure of £0.182m (previously reported at Q3 as £0.170m) delayed to Q1 of 2025/26 due to delays experienced with the supplier and the distribution network operator. (Cost for Council expected to be £93k)
- **Private Sector Housing Renewal Grants (Disabled Facility)**, budgeted expenditure of £127k to be carried forward to the 2025/26 capital budget. (£0.066m reported at Q3).

### 3. EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

#### Inflationary Pressures

- 3.1** The level of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, for May 2025 is 3.4% (down from 3.5% in April 2025). Although it is not the Government's preferred measure of inflation, the Retail Prices Index is 4.3% (4.5% in April 2025). Core inflation (as defined by the Office for National Statistics as the CPI Rate excluding energy, food, alcohol, and tobacco) rose to 3.5% (3.8% in April 2025).

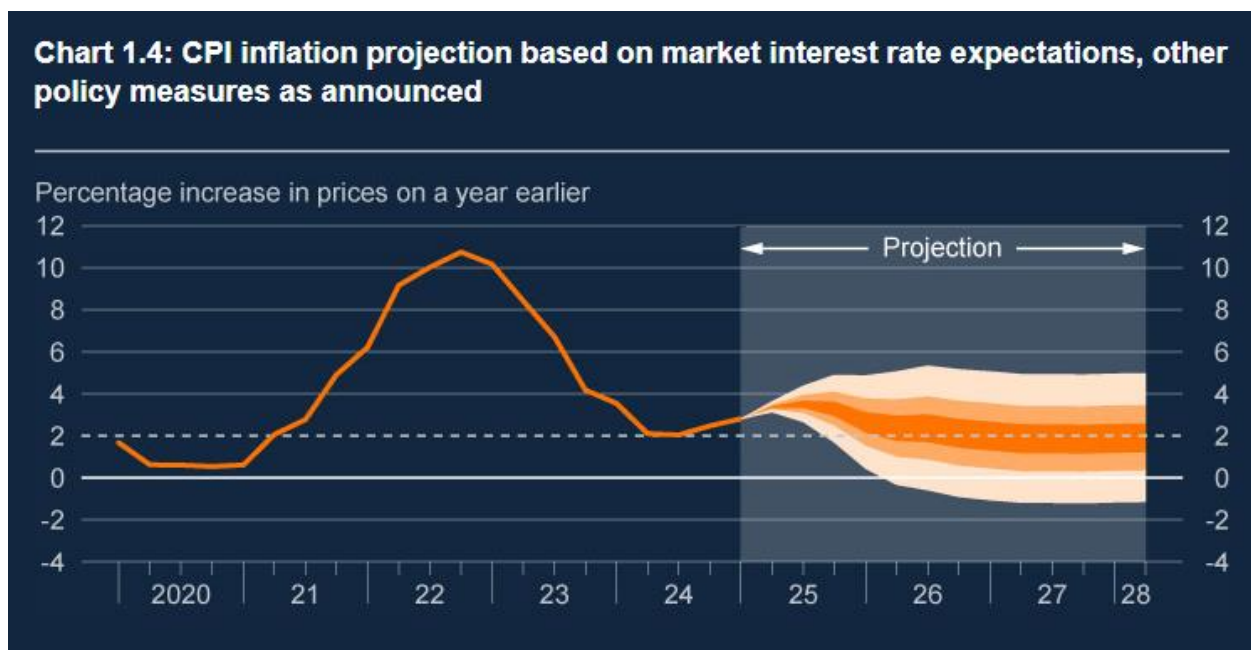
#### Graph A – CPI Inflation





- 3.2** In the May 2025 Monetary Policy Report, the Bank of England indicated the rate is likely to remain above the 2% target during 2025 (peaking at 3.5%) as the impact from energy price increases and other utility increases comes through. The graph below shows the different CPI forecasts that are published in the quarterly Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee report (May 2025).

**Graph B – Bank of England Fan Chart - Inflation**



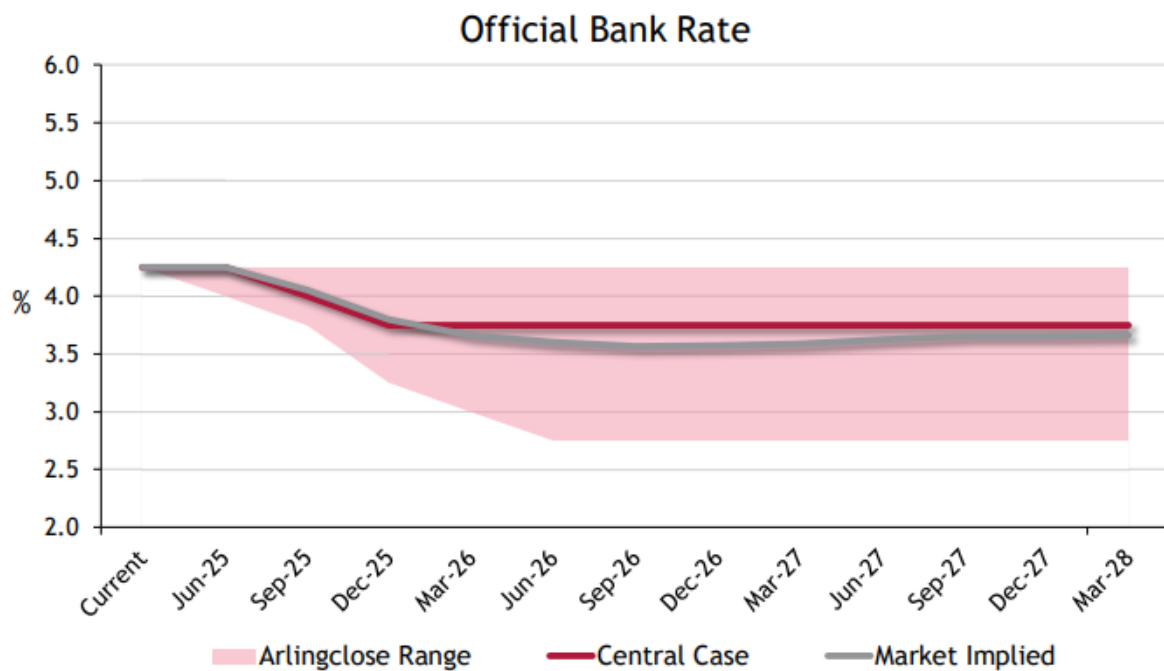
### Interest Rates

- 3.3** The Bank of England reduced the Base rate in May 2025 by a further 0.25% in response to a slowing down of price rises taking the base rate to 4.25%. At the June MPC meeting the decision was to hold the base rate at 4.25%. The council's treasury management advisors have forecast that the rate will continue to reduce, but more slowly and by less. Uncertainty in the global economy (trade policies, escalating tension in the Middle East) may reduce the likelihood of further interest rate changes in the immediate short-term.



- 3.4** Up until June, the expectation has been for further rate reductions during 2025 (aligned to the publication of the Monetary Policy Report each quarter) to a low of 3.75%.

**Graph C – Interest Rate Forecast**



- 3.5** The Council has limited and reducing internal resources to support the capital programme (capital receipts, earmarked reserves). Unless further capital receipts are received as a result of asset disposals, the Council will need to undertake prudential borrowing.



#### **4. 2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST**

- 4.1** The Revenue Budget was approved by Council at their meeting on 21 February 2024 with no adjustments made during the financial year to date.

**Table 1 – Revenue Budget reconciliation**

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>
Original Budget (Council, 21 February 2024)	15,061
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
Adj:	
<b>Latest Budget</b>	<b>15,061</b>

- 4.2** The revenue budget has been in a state of flux during the financial year as budgets are amended to reflect the transfer of services from Publica to the Council in Phase 1 of the Publica Transition. Whilst the net budget position (£15.061m) has not changed, the composition of the budget (i.e. subjective split between Pay and Non-Pay budgets) and net service budgets has been amended.
- 4.3** As of 31 March 2025 (Q4) the Council is reporting net expenditure (excluding Funding and Parish Precepts) of £15.929m against the latest net budget of £16.186m. The budget is adjusted to reflect technical accounting adjustment such as depreciation and movements to/from reserves. These adjustments have no overall impact on the net budget. Funding from Council Tax, Business Rates and Government Grants received is £16.706m against the latest budget of £16.702m (original budget of £15.577m adjusted by £1.125m to reflect additional Business Rate income transferred to the Business Rate Reserve), £0.004m more than budgeted
- 4.4** The revenue outturn for 2024/25 results in a in an underspend of £0.778m – an improvement of £0.342m against the Q3 forecast. A positive variation of £0.262m is reported against a budgeted surplus of £0.516m. Table 2 provides members with an overview of the significant outturn variations that have been forecast across services with Tables 3 and 4 providing detail on the non-service revenue expenditure and income budgets.



**Table 2 – Revenue Budget Outturn Summary**

	2024/25 Latest Net Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Q3 2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	Movement from Q3
<b>Revenue Budget</b>					
Environmental & Regulatory Services	614	653	39	54	(15)
Business Sup. Svcs - Finance, HR, Procurement	1,288	1,300	12	42	(30)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,421	2,328	(93)	(60)	(33)
Assets, Property & Regeneration	808	706	(102)	(49)	(53)
Publica Executives and Modernisation	123	122	(0)	0	(0)
Revenues & Housing Support	893	646	(246)	0	(246)
Environmental Services	4,629	4,676	48	17	31
Leisure & Communities	2,257	2,219	(38)	(5)	(32)
Planning & Strategic Housing	846	1,053	207	143	64
Democratic Services	1,150	1,245	95	85	10
Retained and Corporate	2,820	3,055	235	226	9
<b>Subtotal Services</b>	<b>17,848</b>	<b>18,004</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>(296)</b>
Less: Reversal of accounting adjustments	(1,865)	(1,797)	68	0	68
<b>Revised Subtotal Services</b>	<b>15,983</b>	<b>16,207</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>(228)</b>
Corporate Income & Expenditure	203	(283)	(486)	(370)	(116)
Provisions and Risk Items	0	5	5	0	5
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>16,186</b>	<b>15,929</b>	<b>(258)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(339)</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>					
Council Tax	(6,597)	(6,597)	0	0	0
Retained Business Rates	(6,139)	(6,139)	(0)	0	(0)
Government Funding - Grants	(3,206)	(3,214)	(8)	0	(8)
Government Funding - NHB	(287)	(287)	0	0	0
Collection Fund (surplus) / Deficit	(473)	(469)	5	0	5
<b>TOTAL Funding</b>	<b>(16,702)</b>	<b>(16,706)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Budget shortfall/(surplus)</b>	<b>(516)</b>	<b>(778)</b>	<b>(262)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(343)</b>

**Table 3 – Corporate Income and Expenditure**

	2024/25 Revised Budget (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
<b>Corporate Income and Expenditure</b>			
Other non-service savings	(7)	(7)	0
Contingency, other non-service income and expenditure	208	47	(161)
Savings & Transformation Items	(714)	(811)	(97)
Treasury Management - Interest Payable	9	8	(1)
Treasury Management - Interest Receivable	(1,458)	(1,679)	(221)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	12	5	(7)
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	2,147	2,147	0
	<b>203</b>	<b>(283)</b>	<b>(486)</b>



### **Key Variations**

- 4.5** As outlined in paragraph 2.2 the forecast outturn position is a net underspend/favourable variance of £0.262m which increases the level of budgeted surplus in-year.
- 4.6** The outturn allows for the planned transfer to the Financial Resilience Reserve (FRR). It is proposed that the additional surplus from the General Fund (£0.262m) is transferred to the Transformation Reserve. Members should take into consideration the financial performance of certain service areas (i.e. services which are more reliant on income from fees and charges as outlined in Section 2 and Section 4 of the report). The net outturn for these services is a cause for concern and represents a weaker financial position than would otherwise have occurred. This is not a desirable outcome and management action will need to be taken by the Council, Publica and Ubico should the weaker financial performance continue in 2025/26.
- 4.7** The material items which have had an impact on the Council's revenue budget are summarised at **table ES2** with narrative explaining the reasons(s) for the variation in the paragraphs that follow.
- 4.8** Following changes to **Waste and Recycling** rounds in July 2024, Ubico have confirmed through financial reporting that the part-year efficiency saving of £0.375m has been achieved.
- 4.9** The cost reduction of £0.150m included in the 2024/25 revenue budget for the **Street Cleaning** service has not been achieved in full this financial year. Initial scoping work has identified cost reductions and service efficiencies which is shown as a net underspend (£0.098m). in **Table 5** of the report. A wider review of service options is being undertaken to ensure service standards are clearly defined with corresponding cost reductions. Further analysis will be undertaken on the scope and delivery of cost reductions for consideration by Cabinet in 2025/26.



- 4.10** Where income shortfalls have been reported, it is expected that Business Managers and Assistant Directors evaluate options for corrective action in 2025/2026 and the medium term to avoid a detrimental impact on the Council's finances over the medium-term. The evaluation must include an assessment of the service cost and income, market positioning, and unit cost and benchmarking data analysis. Options should outline, if possible, how the service can be financially sustainable.
- 4.11** Income from **Land Charges** is below budget with net income received £18k below budget at the end of the financial year. The income budget was reduced for the year by £19k (from £0.208m to £0.189m) recognising the downward trend on income in 2023/24 in part to the rise in free unofficial Personal Searches (through Personal Search Agents).
- 4.12 Building Control** – Market share is averaging 65% in Q4 with 137 applications processed. There has been an 8 per cent increase in market share since Q1 and a 9 per cent increase compared to the same period last year. Expenditure was on budget but an income shortfall of £29k is reported. The team have invested in software and handheld devices for site use which is expected to make officers time on site and the service more efficient. Considering the budget shortfall, the building regulation fees have been increased for the 2025-26 financial year to better reflect the costs of running the service. The service has also identified an opportunity to increase market share.
- 4.13 Public Conveniences** – income shortfall due to reduced footfall of £33k. The service is also reporting an overspend (£18k) in its cleaning costs following a contract renewal because of inflationary pressures. The service was subject to a review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Public Conveniences Review Group) and the review and recommendations were reported to Cabinet in January 2024. This report made a series of recommendations and recognised the financial pressures of the service needed to be reduced but that a fully cost recoverable service was not achievable. A reduction in facilities where there were multiple facilities in towns or villages was agreed and toilets have now been closed in both Cirencester and Stow-on-the-Wold as a means of mitigating cost pressures.





**4.14** Further options will need to be considered during 2025/26 to ensure the net subsidy required to operate the Public Conveniences can be minimised or reduced entirely.

**4.15 Cemetery fees** – shortfall in income of £30k due to lower service provision.

**4.16 Green Waste** and **Bulky Waste** fees have achieved £92k more income than budgeted by the end of the financial year.

**4.17** The Council has not received the budgeted level of commercial rental income from **Investment Properties** given the challenging economic conditions across retail and office sectors and downward pressure on rents. A combined income shortfall and empty property costs of £170k is reported.

**4.18** An overspend of £93k is reported on **Elections**. This is due to expenditure with CIVICA on the trial of Tablets at the Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2024 and the General Election in July 2024. These costs cannot be claimed through the national election expenses scheme. Trials have been undertaken to assess whether the use of Tablets and software would streamline the election process by reducing the opportunity for polling station errors and streamlining the count process with ballot paper accounts reconciled through the Tablet and software. Other overspent election costs including postage and canvassers fees were reviewed and increased for the 2025/26 budget. Whilst the use of tablets can be seen as contributing to delivering a safe and efficient election process, it is too soon to quantify the value of any cost reduction of efficiency in the wider count process.

**4.19** Income from the Council's **Car Parks** remained positive in Q4. Income from Car park permits, and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is below target for financial year and is underachieved by £82k in 2024/25. Income budgets for 2025/26 were reduced to reflect current financial performance and ensure the budget estimates approved by Council in February 2025 were robust. However, the service will need to develop an



action plan setting out options to address the financial performance including a review the car park strategy and approach to enforcement.

**4.20 Recruitment Costs** - £78k of additional spend not covered through vacancy management. These costs cover the cost of recruitment for the Director of Communities and Place and three senior planning roles. The recruitment and appointment of the above roles will reduce reliance on expensive interim(agency) staff.

**4.21 Rebranding** – costs of £17k associated with the corporate refresh of branding which is funded from cost savings/additional service charge income at Trinity Road.

**4.22 Communications** service is overspend by £11k. Following the transfer of services in Phase 1, the Communications service has been reviewed with additional interim support provided by an external communications agency (Conteur). Whilst there was an underspend on staff costs (£40k) the total cost of external support was £51k.

**4.23 ICT** – £69k underspent during 2024/25 predominantly because of lower than budgeted IT licence and equipment costs following careful management and negotiation of licence renewals.

**4.24 Postage and Printing** is overspent by £79k. Although the budget has been increased by a further £30k in 2025/26, further overspends are anticipated. Additional analysis will be required in 2025/26 to better understand spend and explore potential cost saving opportunities.

**4.25 Housing Benefit overpayments** recovered amounts recovered exceeded budget by £236k.

**4.26 Ubico Contract** – the Council's Environmental (grounds maintenance, street cleaning, domestic waste collection, recycling collections etc) are provided by Ubico Ltd. The contract with Ubico for 2024/25 of £8.738m with an outturn reported of £8.425m – a net underspend of £0.313m This is predominantly due to the savings achieved of



£0.375m from the rezoning but is offset by additional costs of £62k due to higher than estimated vehicle hire, premises insurance and property lease costs.

**4.27** The Council also incurred additional expenditure of £50k for communications and customer service support in relation to the **mobilisation of the Waste and Recycling rezoning** and £61k of consultancy costs which will be partly funded from the £92k contingency balance held in relation to Ubico cost.

**4.28** The table below provides members with an overview of the financial performance of the Ubico Contract (table 5). The net variation on the contract excluding the rezoning saving is an overspend of £62k.

**Table 5 – Ubico Contract Outturn**

<b>Waste, Recycling, Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Services</b>	<b>Ubico Contract Costs OB (£'000)</b>	<b>Ubico Contract Costs CS (£'000)</b>	<b>Outturn (£'000)</b>	<b>Outturn Variance (£'000)</b>
Car Parks GM [CTW668]	77	77	68	(9)
CCM001 Cemetery/Churchyards GM [CTW688]	188	188	165	(23)
RYC002 Garden Waste Collection [CTW634]	1,423	1,423	1,302	(121)
WST001 Household Waste [CTW611]	1,722	1,722	1,756	33
RYC001 Recycling [CTW633]	3,089	3,089	2,977	(111)
RYC003 Refuse/Recycling/Food Waste [CTW635]	661	661	679	18
STC001 Street Cleaning [CTW666]	1,558	1,558	1,461	(98)
Trinity Road Offices GM [CTW668]	20	20	17	(2)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,738</b>	<b>8,738</b>	<b>8,425</b>	<b>(313)</b>
Less: Rezoning savings				375
<b>Net variation on contract (excluding Rezoning)</b>				<b>62</b>

## **Treasury Management**

**4.29** Dividends from the Council's longer-term investments (Pooled funds and Real Estate Investment Trusts) of £0.503m were received in the twelve months to the 31 March 2025 year achieving a return of 4.85%. Interest from short term cash deposits including the Debt Management Office (DMO) was £1.109m due to interest rates remaining at a



higher level than assumed in the budget and MTFS and cash balances remaining higher than anticipated.

**4.30** It is not expected that the current interest rate level will be maintained over the MTFS period, as set out in Section 3 of this report, with expectations of investment income in 2025/26 reducing to around £1.1m with a further reduction to £0.5m by 2027/28.

**4.31** The level of investment income achieved for the year is a result of the performance of both short-term investments (Money Market Funds, deposits with the DMO) and dividends from the long-term investment. The table below provides members with a high-level overview of the Council's Treasury Management investments on 31 March 2025.



**Table 6 – Treasury Management Investments**

<b>Investment type</b>	<b>Balance invested at 31/3/25 (£'000)</b>	<b>Investment Income received to 31/3/25 (£'000)</b>
Bank of England DMDAF	2,570	622
<b>Money Market Funds</b>		
Federated Money Market Fund	3,000	144
DGLS Money Market Fund	3,000	135
Insight Liquidity Money Market Fund	2,160	89
Lloyds Instant Access	50	36
Royal Bank of Scotland Call Account	0	2
Other Short-term deposits	0	81
<b>Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT)</b>		
Fundamentum Housing REIT	690	30
<b>Cash Plus Fund</b>		
Federated Cash Plus Fund	1,213	N/A
<b>Pooled Funds</b>		
CCLA Property Fund	2,195	109
Shroders Income Maximiser Fund	862	60
CCLA Cautious Multi Assets FUnd	933	31
M&G UK Income Fund	1,847	102
Ninety-One Investec Diversified Fund	1,808	91
Columbia Threadneedle Bond Fund	1,929	80
	<b>22,257</b>	<b>1,612</b>

**4.32** As Treasury Management investment returns were significantly above the budgeted level, £1.125m (£1.00m budgeted and an additional £0.125m) has been transferred to the Treasury Management Risk earmarked reserve to manage higher borrowing costs and potential reduced investment income from lower interest rates in the short-term and to mitigate any potential realised losses from pooled funds were they to be disposed.



**4.33** Council approved the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy) at their meeting on 21 February 2024. Audit and Governance Committee have responsibility for reviewing and monitoring treasury management arrangements in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and receiving performance reports. The Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

**4.34** The CIPFA Code was updated in 2021 and includes the new requirement, mandatory from 01 April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are expected to be included in the Council's usual revenue and capital monitoring reports. Section 7 and **Annex C** of this report provides members with an overview on the non-treasury position.

### **Corporate Income and Expenditure, Provisions, and Risk**

**4.35** As outlined in Tables 3 and 4 there are variations reported across the Corporate Income and Expenditure budgets. These budgets support the General Fund Revenue budget and are typically the non-service items such as Treasury Management, financing, contingency budget, and provisions for risk.

**4.36** A contingency budget is held centrally to mitigate any in-year cost pressures from inflation or other unforeseen events. This is reported as uncommitted (£53k) to in-part offset the recruitment and Publica transition additional expenditure highlighted in the paragraphs below.

**4.37** Savings and transformations are forecast to be overachieved by £127k because of a forecast underachievement of Street Cleaning savings (£150k) and underspend from Publica of £386k against target saving of £109k (£277k).



**4.38** As outlined earlier in this section, the performance of the Council's Treasury Management Investments is a result of higher than anticipated interest rates and surplus balances to invest. £1.125m (£1.00m budgeted and an additional £0.125m) has been transferred to the Treasury Management Risk earmarked reserve to manage higher borrowing costs in the short-term and to mitigate and to mitigate any potential realised losses from pooled funds were they to be disposed.

**4.39** As outlined in section 5 below, forecast additional expenditure of £0.182m (£436m for full year impact) for Phase 1 of the Publica transition was included as a risk provision in the Q3 outturn forecast. This provision should be considered against the following.

- Underspend from the vacancy of the Director of Communities and Place (£50k).
- Communications service costs including vacancy management underspend (£42k) and £53k overspend for interim support (£11k net overspend)
- Planning Agency costs of £288k against vacancy savings of £176,000 (£112k net cost)
- Planned saving from other vacancies where roles transferred to the Council under Phase 1 of the Publica transition net of Agency expenditure (£227,000 underspend).

**4.40** The actual net cost of Phase one of the Publica Transition in 2024/2025 is £27k, after adjusting for savings from vacant post expenditure, pay award, and agency costs.

**4.41** Recruitment Costs - £78k of additional spend not covered through vacancy management. 3 x senior planning roles, Director, and Head of Waste and Environment role. These can be partly offset against the forecast underspend of £50k as a result of the vacancy within the Director of Communities and Place role. The recruitment and appointment of the above roles will reduce reliance on expensive interim(agency) staff.

## **5. PUBLICA REVIEW**

**5.1** Following reports from Human Engine (November 2023) and Local Partnerships (March 2024), Council approved the Detailed Transition Plan ("DTP") report at its



meeting on 31 July 2024. This set out the process that would be followed to return the majority of services to the Council with an initial transfer of services taking place in November 2024.

- 5.2** The DTP and covering report provided members with an initial estimate of additional cost of Phase 1 (enduring impact) and the one-off costs (provision for redundancy).
- 5.3** These cost estimates have been monitored and reviewed, with members receiving updates in the November 2024 and December 2024 financial reports.
- 5.4** The table below provides members with a reconciliation between the financial implications set out in the July 2024 DTP and the current estimate (February 2025). This report includes the actual outturn costs incurred since November 2024 for Phase 1, with the full year estimate included in the 2025/26 revenue budget and MTFS remaining unchanged.

**Table 7 – Reconciliation of Phase 1 Cost Estimate (February 2025)**

<b>Reconciliation of movement in additional cost</b>	<b>July 2024 DTP (£'000)</b>	<b>November 2024 update (£'000)</b>	<b>December 2024 update (£'000)</b>	<b>Change (£'000)</b>
Phase 1 Baseline Cost	3,674	3,616	3,701	27
Sharing + Pension Impact	326	318	321	(5)
New Roles	553	619	663	110
<b>New Model Total</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>4,686</b>	<b>132</b>
Publica Savings (Direct)	(240)	(240)	(221)	19
Indirect Savings	(283)	(282)	(282)	1
<b>Enduring Impact</b>	<b>4,030</b>	<b>4,031</b>	<b>4,182</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Indicative Annual Increase / (Decrease)</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>125</b>

- 5.5** There have been no changes to the cost estimate for Phase 1 since the February 2025 update. It should be noted that the table above only covers Phase 1.





- 5.6** Phase 2 financial reporting will be provided during 2025/26 following the transfer of services and staff on 01 July 2025.

## **6. GENERAL FUND AND EARMARKED RESERVES**

- 6.1** **Annex C** details the reserves held by the Council at 31 March 2025 and the proposed movements to/from and between reserves. The Council's general fund balance remains at £1.760m. Earmarked revenue reserves has increased by £2.924m to £12.912m.
- 6.2** Financial Sustainability Reserve – The outturn position enables the budgeted transfer of £0.516m from the General Fund to the Financial Resilience Reserve to be made. This will increase the balance on the reserve to £2.943m and provides one-off reserve funding to mitigate the budget gap identified in the MTFS and enable the Council to maintain financial sustainability over the MTFS-period/until 2027/28.
- 6.3** Transformation Reserve– It is proposed that the additional surplus from the General Fund (£0.262m) is transferred to the Transformation Reserve. The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding to support the Council's Savings and Transformation programme. It is proposed that reserve funding is utilised more broadly to address potential financial pressures arising from Local Government Reorganisation, to provide further one-off/up front funding (pump priming) on an Invest-to-Save basis.
- 6.4** The 2024/25 revenue budget includes a net transfer from earmarked reserves of £0.301m to fund future commitments and make provisions for future financial pressures and risks – predominantly around Business Rate Income and Treasury Management income. The latest net budget has increased this figure to a net transfer to earmarked reserves of £2.146m (excluding the transfer of surplus outline in 6.2 and 6.3 above).



- 6.5** **Annex C** details the reserves held by the Council at 31 March 2025 and the proposed movements to/from and between reserves. The largest of these which affects the outturn position is a transfer of £1.125m (including £0.478m surplus on the Business Rate pool and S.31 grant which will be utilised in 2025/26 and 2026/27 to fund forecast business rate income deficit) to the Business Rate Risk Reserve.
- 6.6** In setting the budget for 2025/26 a review of reserves was undertaken to assess whether the levels were appropriate considering the needs and risks of the organisation. The movements between reserves detailed in **Annex C** reflect transfers to/from reserves budgeted for in 2024/25 and transfers between reserves as proposed in the 2025/26 Medium-term financial strategy. Other movements are summarised in table 8 below.



**Table 8 – Earmarked Reserves Movements versus Budget**

<b>Summary of Revised Budget Movements</b>	<b>£</b>
BR Pool Surplus	478
S31 Business Rate Relief Grant to set aside for future business rate deficit funding.	392
Business Rate levy payable lower than estimated, underspend set aside to support future business rate deficit.	255
Additional Treasury Management income	125
Revenue grants and contributions received but not spent, carried forward to 2025/26	448
Underspend earmarked as future contingency	112
Sc111 HRA contributions	97
Use of Local Plan reserve	-153
Use of revenue grants and contributions in 24/25	-42
GDASS Rural Domestic Abuse Champion Network Contribution funded from earmarked grant	-41
Cotswold Connected Community and Food Network expenditure funded from reserve	-60
Council contribution from Climate Change reserve to Retrofit engagement programme	-18
Community Safety Expenditure funded from earmarked reserve (grants and contributions)	-41
RAU PPA consultancy funded from Planning Reserve	-33
Publica Review and Redundancies	-363
CIL contributions set aside to finance administration costs (5% of contributions)	158
Net Income from Cotswold Tourism Partnership (Accommodation Guide contributions) set aside to fund future expenditure.	101
Other transfer (from)/to reserves and balance sheet review (dr/cr balances)	154
	<b>1,571</b>
<b>Variance to Budgeted</b>	
Cotswold Crowdfund - underspend	-30
Posts funded from reserves due to vacancies	-66
Homeless roles not required to be funded from reserves due to funding via HPG	-41
Roles funded from grants held within Receipts in advance.	-75
Roles funded from underspend	-32
CIL resource costs now funded from 5% CIL contributions	-30
	<b>-274</b>



## 7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 7.1** Council approved the revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 at their meeting on 24 February 2025. The Capital Programme has been updated to reflect adjustments as set out in Table 9 below.
- 7.2** The revised capital programme for 2024/25 is £7.550m with a total net spend at £7.122m for the 2024/25 financial year.

**Table 9 – Capital Programme budget reconciliation**

<b>Capital Programme Reconciliation</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>
Original Budget (Council, 21 February 2024)	6,813
ORCS Grant Scheme (Council, 15 May 2024)	383
Slippage from 2023/24 (Cabinet 25 July 2024)	1,513
Disabled Facilities Grant (Cabinet 7 November 2024)	800
CLC Decarbonisation Work Swimming Pool Support Fund (Cabinet 7 Dec 2024)	208
Revised Capital Programme (Council, 24 February 2025)	(2,405)
Disabled Facilities Grant (Proposed Cabinet 3 April 2025)	238
<b>Latest Budget</b>	<b>7,550</b>

**Table 10 – Capital Programme Outturn**

<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>2024/25 LAB (£'000)</b>	<b>2024/25 Outturn (£'000)</b>	<b>2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)</b>	<b>Q3 2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)</b>	<b>Movement from Q3 (£'000)</b>
Leisure & Communities	1,491	1,451	(40)	12	(52)
Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing	2,643	2,516	(127)	(66)	(61)
Environment	1,606	1,339	(267)	(85)	(182)
ICT, Change and Customer Services	150	138	(12)	0	(12)
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	752	752	0	0	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	216	82	0	82
Land, Legal and Property	517	499	(18)	79	(97)
Transformation and Investment	257	211	(46)	(45)	(1)
<b>TOTAL Capital Programme</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>7,122</b>	<b>(428)</b>	<b>(105)</b>	<b>(323)</b>



**7.3** The outturn for 2024/25 is an underspend of £0.428m (£0.105m at Q3).

**7.4** The Capital Programme was significantly revised in the budget papers considered by Council at their meeting on 24 February 2025. The significant variations on the Capital Programme are:

- **Additional Electric Vehicle Charge points** are being installed through the On Street Residential Charge points Scheme (ORCS), underspent by £0.042m due to installation at certain sites having specific constraints that cannot be addressed within the current deadline. Delays from the supplier and the distribution network operator contributed towards the postponement of the work. The unspent budget and deferred expenditure of £0.183m will be carried forward into the 2025/26 financial year budget to complete the installations. Due to delays, the Council has had to request further extension to the deadline for claiming the grant funding for this scheme. Consequently, there is a continuing risk that the Council may be required to finance the £0.090m originally forecast to be grant-funded through its capital receipts reserve.
- **Private Sector Housing Renewal Grants (Disabled Facility)** – underspend of £0.127m against revised budget due to timing of work.
- **Investment in Leisure Centres** – additional expenditure of £0.071m due to requested expenditure approved by S.151 officer for accessible fitness equipment and gym bikes.
- **Asset Management Strategy** – overspend of £0.095m against revised budget due to additional costs for Trinity Road roof repairs and ancillary expenditure in respect of Old Station prior to sale of asset (financed from UKSPF capital funding).
- **Trinity Road Agile Working** –underspend of £0.045m due to timing of expenditure which will be carried forward to 2025/26.

**7.5** This report recommends to members that £0.565m of the unspent capital budget is carried forward into 2025/26 as detailed below:

- Spa Pool, Bourton Leisure Centre (£0.034m)
- Cotswold Crowdfund (£0.030m)
- Disabled Facility Housing Adaptions (£0.127m)
- Provision for financing of Ubico vehicles (£0.019m)



- Off Street Residential Charge point Scheme (£0.183m)
- Trinity Road Carbon Efficiency Works and Agile project underspend to allocate to the 2025/26 Asset Management Strategy Budget (£0.172m)

**7.6 Annex A** sets out the detailed outturn with commentary from budget holders and is summarised in table 9 above.

**7.7** At their meeting on 31 October 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Capital Programme should be kept under review to ensure the revenue impact of capital expenditure and financing decisions were fully considered.

### **Capital Receipts and Disposals**

**7.8** There were no asset disposals during the 2024/25 financial year. However, the Council received £25,000 from the scrap sale of Ubico vehicles. Members should note that three asset disposals have been pursued, with capital receipts of £0.322m received in Q1 of 2025/26 from the sale of the former Visitor Information Centre in Bourton-on-the-Water and the Old Station. The sale of Memorial Cottages in Cirencester is expected to complete in Q2 of 2025/26

**Table 11 – Capital Financing Forecast**

	2024/25 LAB (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)
<b>Capital Financing Statement</b>			
Capital receipts	3,628	3,421	(207)
Capital Grants and Contributions	3,507	3,406	(101)
Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	0	0	0
Community Municipal Investments (CMI)	415	295	(120)
Prudential Borrowing		0	0
	<b>7,550</b>	<b>7,122</b>	<b>(428)</b>



- 7.9** The Capital Financing position set out in the table above has been reviewed by the s151 Officer as part of the financial year end closedown process to ensure a balanced use of capital resources and mitigation of current and future interest rates.

## **8. NON-TREASURY MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

- 8.1** The CIPFA Code was updated in 2021 and includes the new requirement, mandatory from 01 April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are expected to be included in the Council's usual revenue and capital monitoring reports.

### **Prudential Indicators**

- 8.2** The detailed Non-Treasury Management prudential indicators are included in **Annex B** with the commentary below providing members with a high-level summary.
- 8.3** Whilst there is no underlying need to borrow until 2026/27 with the Capital Programme being financed through internal resources and external grants and contributions, any additional capital expenditure proposed during in the future will need to consider the availability and cost of capital financing. The outturn Treasury Management report to Audit and Governance Committee in July will set out the wider impact on the Capital Financing Requirement.

## **9. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES**

- 9.1** The reported financial outturn for the 2024/25 financial year remains provisional, pending completion of the external audit by Bishop Fleming. As part of their review of the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts, there remains a possibility that the final financial position may be subject to audit adjustment



## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1** This monitoring report presents an update on the Council's financial position. As the report sets out, an underspend of £0.262m for the 2024/2025 financial year. The outturn allows for the planned transfer to the Financial Resilience Reserve (FRR). It is proposed that the additional surplus from the General Fund (£0.262m) is transferred to the Transformation Reserve
- 10.2** Members should note that whilst the outturn position has improved, there remain concerns around financial performance in certain service areas – particularly services where the Council's net revenue budget is dependent on income from fees and charges. The report has provided reference to mitigation or actions that will be discussed with service leads to address and agree management actions.
- 10.3** In some instances, income budgets for 2025/26 have been adjusted downward to reflect historic underachievement of income. However, this should not be seen as a desirable outcome – more that it recognises in setting the budget for the forthcoming financial year the estimates need to be robust in the context of current financial performance. During 2025/26 the Business and Intelligence unit will support the quarterly finance reporting process and will work with service leads to identify potential mitigations and resolutions to improve performance.
- 10.4** Heads of Service should take steps to identify management action(s) that will address underperformance and discuss these with the finance team and the relevant Director. Financial Performance Reports for 2025/26 will include options and recommendations for corrective action where underperformance against the budget has been identified, and options for improving financial performance even if the service is achieving income and expenditure targets.
- 10.5** A key aspect of this will be to explain financial performance in the context of service performance and outcomes. There is a risk with the current performance framework that aspects of service performance may be reported as on or above target, with little or no reference to financial performance. The Section 151 Officer is in the process of reviewing the financial reporting and performance reporting with a view to integrating





data from the Business and Intelligence Unit into the quarterly Financial Performance reports.

- 10.6** As set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code, performance reporting is important for the Council to remain financially sustainable. Members must receive timely information on its financial and operational performance so that corporate priorities are delivered within budget. Early information about emerging risks to financial sustainability are key to ensuring the Council can take effective decisions and carefully consider an effective response.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1** The detailed financial implications are set out in the report.

## **12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1** Under Part 2 Local Government Act 2003, the Council must, from time to time during the year review the calculations it has used to set its budget. The Council's Chief Financial Officer is required to report to the Council on the robustness of estimates made for the purposes of calculating the annual budget, and on the adequacy of proposed financial reserves. Members must have regard to that report when making decisions about the calculations in connection with which it is made.

## **13. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 13.1** Section 8 of the report set out the risks and uncertainties.

## **14. EQUALITIES IMPACT**



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

**14.1** None

**15. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**15.1** None

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**16.1** None

(END)

Annex A- Capital Programme 2024/25 - Q.4							
Capital Programme by Service Area	2024/25 Budget [Incl. 23/24 slippage] (£'000)	2024/25 Schemes approved in-year (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget [Council Feb 25'.] (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q.4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	C/Fwd to 2025/26	Commentary
<b>Leisure and Communities</b>							
Investment in Leisure Centres	1,150	0	1,119	1,190	71	0	Main projects complete. Capital expenditure includes additional costs for accessible fitness equipment and gym bikes. Additional spend was requested and authorised by S.151 officer.
CLC Pool Works	110	0	80	80	0	0	Scheme to address flaking paint from the steel structural support in the Cirencester Leisure Centre pool area. Freedom Leisure [FL] agreed to incorporate these works into their capital scheme, using the same contractor[s]. Recharge included in invoices for the main scheme above.
CLC Decarbonisation works [Solar PV and Triple Glazing]	0	208	208	161	(47)	0	Project complete and fully operational. The triple glazing part of the scheme was discounted as it wasn't financially viable.
Spa pool - Bourton Leisure Centre	0	0	34	0	(34)	34	Scheme commenced in May 2025. There are delays due to a leak underneath the ground where the existing Spa Pool was located. Investigatory and restorative works currently underway.
Crowdfund Cotswold	50	0	50	20	(30)	30	The spring round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 9th April, with 5 to 6 project proposals being verified before they launch on the platform. There was a project creator workshop held in February that was well attended and generated several ideas expected to be put forward in future rounds.

Capital Programme by Service Area	2024/25 Budget [Incl. 23/24 slippage] (£'000)	2024/25 Schemes approved in-year (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget [Council Feb 25'.] (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q.4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	C/Fwd to 2025/26	Commentary
<b>Housing/Planning and Strategic Housing</b>							
Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant (DFG)	700	800	1,938	1,811	(127)	127	The decision by Gloucestershire County Council [GCC] to use external occupational therapy [OT] agency to clear the waiting list for adaptations had led to an influx of new referrals. Expenditure hit £1.8m this financial year. Additional funding was drawn down from the centrally held Bettercare Fund at GCC. There was also £199k of additional in-year funding transferred to Cotswold from GCC. The underspend will be carried forward to 2025/26.
Affordable Housing - Davies Road MiM (S106)	291	0	291	291	0	0	First 50% 'Start on Site' tranche grant was transferred to Cotsway Housing Association last year [2023/24]. The remaining 50% has now been transferred following notification of completion.
Cotsway Housing Association Loan	840	0	414	414	0	0	Lower net amount borrowed due to grant received by Cotsway Housing being used to repay loan. Loan balance of £1.897m to be converted to secured loan within Q2 of 2025/26.
Bromford Joint Venture Partnership	720	0	0	0	0	0	Planning consent was granted on the 12 March, However Bromford need to resolve issues around drainage which is delaying the commencement of the work. This may delay commencement of works until 2027 unless Thames Water will bring their upgrade plans forward. Budget was carried forward to future years as part of 2025/26 budget setting process.
<b>Environment</b>							
Waste & Recycling receptacles	80	0	80	57	(23)	0	Rolling budget for the purchase of waste receptacles due to growth in properties or replacements.
Provision for financing of Ubico Vehicles	1,660	0	1,169	1,150	(19)	19	This budget is to fund the Capital Fleet Replacement Programme for Ubico. One panel van and five garden waste collection vehicles delivered to date. There is one Street Cleansing vehicle due for delivery in Q.4, and a vehicle ramp for Packers Leaze Depot workshop. Delivery and installation of the vehicle ramp will be in Q.1 2025/26. Underspend will be carried forward to 2025/26.
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	188	0	79	79	0	0	Installations at Rissington Road and Trinity Road are now complete. Costs reduced from original estimates due to changing supplier.

Capital Programme by Service Area	2024/25 Budget [Incl. 23/24 slippage] (£'000)	2024/25 Schemes approved in-year (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget [Council Feb 25'.] (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q.4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	C/Fwd to 2025/26	Commentary
On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS)	0	383	225	0	(225)	183	Installation of charging points commenced during 2025/26 at Mangersbury Road [Stow-on-the-Wold] and Old Market Way [Moreton-in-Marsh], Brewery [Cirencester] and West Street [Tetbury]. This scheme will provide 24 electric vehicle charging points [EVCP's]. Underspend of £0.042m due to installation at certain sites having specific constraints that cannot be addressed within the current deadline. Delays have also been experienced due to the supplier and the distribution network operator. Three sites completed in Q1 of 2025/26 with further delays at Brewery (progressing with metering and final commissioning). The Expenditure of £183k will fall into 2025/26 and the budget carried forward. £93k to be paid by the Council and £90k financed through the ORCS grant.
In cab technology (Street Cleaning)	60	0	0	0	0	0	Project slippage. Budget carried forward to 2025/26 as part of 2025/26 budget setting.
Public Toilets - Card Payment (bc)	34	0	0	0	0	0	No works planned to date. Any future proposals will be subject to a Cabinet report. Budget carried forward to 2025/26 as part of 2025/26 budget setting.
Changing Places Toilets	53	0	53	53	0	0	All schemes now complete.

Capital Programme by Service Area	2024/25 Budget [Incl. 23/24 slippage] (£'000)	2024/25 Schemes approved in-year (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget [Council Feb 25'.] (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q.4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	C/Fwd to 2025/26	Commentary
<b>ICT, Change and Customer Services</b>							
ICT Capital	150	0	150	138	(12)	0	Expenditure on networking equipment and the ongoing laptop replacement programme.
Planning Documents and Scanning Solution	200	0	0	0	0	0	Scheme to replace or upgrade of the IDOX system used by Development Management and is likely to be subject to a detailed options appraisal following the transfer of the Development Management service to the Council as part of Phase 1. No expenditure during the current financial year. Budget carried forward to 2025/26 as part of 2025/26 budget setting.
<b>UK Prosperity schemes:</b>							
UK Rural Prosperity Fund Projects	752	0	752	752	0	0	All funding has now been allocated to the following grant schemes: Community Infrastructure Grants; Active Travel and Heritage and Cultural Buildings Grant; Business Grants. An additional years funding of £229,240 has been allocated to the Council for 2025/26
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Projects	134	0	134	216	82	0	Funding has been split over 14 projects, across three themes – Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. Reported overspend is funded fully from UKSPF capital allocation. Additional years funding of £327k has been allocated to the Council for 2025/26.
<b>Land, Legal and Property</b>							
Trinity Road Carbon Efficiency Works (Council March 2022)	370	0	370	244	(126)	0	Solar PV installation complete. Further works will now be reviewed as part of a wider assessment of decarbonisation of the Councils Estate. Underspend to carry forward to the Asset Management Strategy 2025/26 budget (see below).
Asset Management Strategy	497	0	147	242	95	172	£123k expenditure for timber repairs, render and other ancillary works required at Old Station prior to sale of the asset. £119k expenditure on Trinity Road roof repairs. £84k of overspend will be financed from UKSPF grant. Carry forward of £172k relates to underspend on Trinity Road Carbon Efficiency works [£126k] and Agile Working [£46k]
<b>Transformation and Investment</b>							

Capital Programme by Service Area	2024/25 Budget [Incl. 23/24 slippage] (£'000)	2024/25 Schemes approved in-year (£'000)	2024/25 Revised Budget [Council Feb 25'.] (£'000)	2024/25 Actuals to Q.4 (£'000)	2024/25 Outturn Variance (£'000)	C/Fwd to 2025/26	Commentary
Trinity Road Agile Working (Council March 2022)	274	0	257	211	(46)	0	Scheme complete. Tenants now starting to occupy the agile work space.
Trinity Road Roof Repairs	13	0	0	13	13	0	Works complete, additional work of £119k funded from Asset Management Strategy budget line.
	8,326	1,391	7,550	7,122	(428)	565	

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## ANNEX B

### NON-TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

#### ANNEX B: Non-Treasury Prudential Indicators

##### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing and commercial and service investments with reference to the following indicators. It is a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis

##### 2. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

- 2.1** Cotswold District Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

Capital Expenditure	2023/24 actual (£)	2024/25 outturn (£)	2025/26 budget (£)	2026/27 budget (£)
General Fund services	5,654,676	7,121,500	4,592,000	7,744,000
Capital investments	328,000	0	0	0

(2025/26 budget assumes carry forward of 0.565m approved)

- 2.2** The main General Fund capital projects to date have included investment in Cirencester Leisure Centre, expenditure in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants, purchase of Ubico Vehicles, Trinity Road Agile Working Project and Carbon Efficiency works.

##### 3. CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT

- 3.1** The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and capital receipts used to replace debt.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	2023/24 actual (£)	2024/25 outturn (£)	2025/26 budget (£)	2026/27 budget (£)
General Fund services	70,969	360,000	469,000	4,618,000
Capital investments	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL CFR</b>	<b>70,969</b>	<b>360,000</b>	<b>469,000</b>	<b>4,618,000</b>

##### 4. GROSS DEBT AND THE CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT

- 4.1** Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

## ANNEX B

### NON-TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

	31/03/2024 actual (£)	31/03/2025 outturn (£)	31/03/2026 budget (£)	31/03/2027 budget (£)
<b>Gross Debt and CFR</b>				
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	357,255	260,000	16,000	5,000
Capital Financing Requirement	70,969	360,000	469,000	4,618,000

#### 5. DEBT AND THE AUTHORISED LIMIT AND OPERATIONAL BOUNDARY

- 5.1** The council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum Debt Q2 2024/25 (£)	Debt as at 31/03/2025 (£)	2024/25 Authorised Limit (£)	2024/25 Operational Boundary (£)	Complied? Yes/No
<b>Debt, Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary</b>					
Borrowing	10,000,000	260,000	10,000,000	5,000,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	0	0	0	0	Yes
<b>TOTAL Debt</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	

- 5.2** Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

#### 6. NET INCOME FROM COMMERCIAL AND SERVICE INVESTMENTS TO NET REVENUE STREAM

- 6.1** The Council's income from commercial and service investments as a proportion of its net revenue stream has been and is expected to be as indicated below.

	2023/24 actual (£)	2024/25 outturn (£)	2025/26 budget (£)	2026/27 budget (£)
Total net income from service and commercial investments	491,778	237,992	380,000	390,000
Proportion of net revenue stream	3.46%	1.42%	2.60%	2.80%

- 6.2** The 2024/25 outturn is lower than the £380,000 budgeted due to additional costs in respect of vacant properties (vacated Wilkinson property, Old Memorial Cottages and Bourton on the Water Visitor Information Centre) and in-year rental fluctuations.

#### 7. PROPORTION OF FINANCING COST TO NET REVENUE STREAM

- 7.1** Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue.

## **ANNEX B**

### **NON-TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

- 7.2** The net annual charge is known as financing costs, this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, Business Rate, and general government grants.

	<b>2023/24 actual (£)</b>	<b>2024/25 outturn (£)</b>	<b>2025/26 budget (£)</b>	<b>2026/27 budget (£)</b>
Financing costs (£)	14,000	13,447	40,000	53,000
Proportion of net revenue stream	0.10%	0.08%	0.27%	0.48%

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Annex C General Fund and Earmarked Reserves					
	Balance 31/03/2024 (£'000)	Budgeted transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer between (MTFS review)	Balance 31/03/2025 (£'000)
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>(1,760)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,760)</b>
Council Priorities	(2,959)	(63)	270	0	(2,753)
Financial Resilience Reserve	(2,512)	(219)	(212)	0	(2,943)
Risk Mitigation	(550)	(1,100)	(1,307)	0	(2,957)
Ringfenced Earmarked Reserves	(57)	0	0	0	(57)
Other Revenue reserves	(2,151)	291	(583)	0	(2,443)
<b>Subtotal Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(8,228)</b>	<b>(1,091)</b>	<b>(1,833)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(11,152)</b>
<b>TOTAL GF Balance + Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(9,988)</b>	<b>(1,091)</b>	<b>(1,833)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(12,912)</b>
Reserve Type	Balance 31/03/2024 (£'000)	Budgeted transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer between (MTFS review)	Balance 31/03/2025 (£'000)
General Fund Balance	(1,760)	0	0	0	(1,760)
<b>Corporate Priorities/Investment</b>					
Council Priorities Fund - Allocated	(151)	55	14	0	(82)
Council Priority: Transformation and Change	(200)	(118)	(262)	0	(580)
Council Priority: Publica Review	(471)	0	363	0	(108)
Council Priority: Climate Emergency	(250)	0	18	0	(233)
Council Priority: Housing Delivery	(750)	0	0	250	(500)
Council Priority: Local Plan	(908)	0	153	(250)	(1,005)
Council Priority: Regeneration/Infrastructure	(200)	0	0	0	(200)
ICT/Digital	(30)	0	(15)	0	(45)
	<b>(2,959)</b>	<b>(63)</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,753)</b>

Reserve Type	Balance 31/03/2024 (£'000)	Budgeted transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer between (MTFS review)	Balance 31/03/2025 (£'000)
<b>Risk mitigation</b>					
Financial Resilience Reserve (MTFS)	(2,512)	(219)	(212)	0	(2,943)
Business Rates Risk	0	(954)	(1,125)	0	(2,079)
Elections	0	(46)	0	0	(46)
Asset Management & Property	(350)	0	(32)	0	(382)
Treasury Management Risk	(150)	(100)	(125)	0	(375)
Housing Benefit	(50)	0	0	0	(50)
Planning Appeals	0	0	(25)	0	(25)
	<b>(3,062)</b>	<b>(1,319)</b>	<b>(1,519)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,899)</b>
<b>Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>					
Business Rates s31 Grants	(496)	0	0	0	(496)
COVID/COMF Reserves	(203)	0	21	0	(182)
New Burdens	(143)	193	0	(50)	(1)
Homelessness	(190)	0	0	0	(190)
Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit	(100)	0	3	0	(97)
Planning	(13)	0	(423)	0	(436)
Other	(863)	63	(78)	50	(828)
	<b>(2,008)</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>(477)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,229)</b>
<b>Ringfenced Earmarked Reserves</b>					
GCCG District schemes linked to ILP objectives (including inequalities) [COM405]	(43)	0	0	0	(43)
Local Authority Parks Improvement [MHCLG]	(14)	0	0	0	(14)
	<b>(57)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(57)</b>

Reserve Type	Balance 31/03/2024 (£'000)	Budgeted transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer (to)/from reserves	Transfer between (MTFS review)	Balance 31/03/2025 (£'000)
<b>Other Revenue Reserves:</b>					
Cotswold Tourism LVEP	0	0	(10)	0	(10)
Accommodation Guide Glos.	(142)	35	(96)	0	(204)
	(142)	35	(107)	0	(214)
	(9,988)	(1,091)	(1,833)	0	(12,912)

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**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 10 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2024-25 QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY-MARCH 2025)</b>
Wards affected	All
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	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: <a href="mailto:robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk">robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Email: <a href="mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk">democratic@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to:  1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q4 (January-March 2025).
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering Good Services</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li> <li>• Delivering Housing</li> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold District Council retained senior managers, Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.



## **1. BACKGROUND**

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

## **2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT**

- 2.1** The Council adopted Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28 ('the Plan') in January 2024. The Plan sets out the Council's Aim, and key priorities, and sets out the key measures of success.
- 2.2** Progress on key actions identified in the Corporate Plan for Q4 (January-March 2025) include:

### Delivering good services

- The comprehensive Phase 2 transition plan was presented to Cabinet and Full Council in March, where it received full approval. Formal consultation with employees affected by Phase 2 commenced in April, with their transfer to Council employment scheduled to take effect from July.

### Responding to the climate emergency

- The first draft of the Electric Vehicle Taxi Policy has been completed and is currently under officer review. Following this, it is expected to be brought forward for committee consideration in the first half of 2025–26.
- A proposal to establish a Climate Board has been drafted.
- The Council continues to actively support community energy initiatives across the district, including its ongoing partnership with Thames Head Community Energy—a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society based in the Cotswolds. The organisation focuses on developing local renewable energy projects that deliver environmental and community benefits. The Council's support has included policy



backing, financial contributions via Crowdfund Cotswold, and engagement in regional efforts such as the Community Energy workstream under Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.

- Cotswold Home Solar is being actively promoted and delivered, with 27 households having already installed solar panels. Additionally, 18 more households have placed deposits for installation.
- The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service, live since January 22nd. The service provides energy efficiency plans, vetted installers, and project management. To date, 7 households have requested plans. CDC has also employed a Retrofit Engagement Officer, who will offer community events and free home visits until September 2025 to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy installations. Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) will provide free energy advice for low-income households through the Warm and Well Scheme for the next five years.

#### Delivering Housing

- Planning consent for the zero-carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney was granted on 12th March, but Bromford needs to address issues with the surface water drainage design and coordinate with Thames Water on infrastructure upgrades. These factors may delay the start of work until 2027, unless Thames Water accelerates their upgrade plans. Negotiations are also ongoing with Bromford regarding the CDC land transfer and S106 agreement.
- Work is ongoing to support all refugees, whether through a resettlement scheme or dispersed asylum. In addition to ensuring that families and individuals are properly housed, continuous wraparound support is being provided to aid with resettlement and foster community cohesion.
- The Cotswold Housing First project is widely recognised across the county as an exemplary model for projects of this type. Its success rates exceed national averages, and the Housing Team continues to collaborate closely with Bromford and P3 to ensure its ongoing success. Currently, 6 individuals are accommodated through Housing First, with external funding awarded to P3 to extend the service to an additional 2 clients, bringing the total number of spaces to 8. Referrals are currently being considered.



### Supporting communities

- The first two of fourteen 'Strengthening Communities' events took place over February half term, bringing together statutory and community organisations to promote services in the district's larger settlements. These events focus on empowering residents to engage in positive local activity, with strong support from health partners. The team also worked with partners to secure the local Digihubs contract for the Churn and Cotswold Friends, ensuring continued digital inclusion support across the district.
- The Spring Round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 9th April, with 5 to 6 project proposals currently being verified before launch on the platform. The February project creator workshop was well attended and generated several ideas expected to come forward later this year or early next.
- Round three of the Unsung Heroes Awards received strong submissions, with winners recognised at the Council meeting in January. Due to the County Council elections and the Council's Annual General Meeting in May, the next round will take place in July. A new 'Young Hero' category is being considered to celebrate the contributions of young people to their communities.

### Supporting the economy

- Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital, and sustainable aviation, to promote employment opportunities. Discussions with key stakeholders about promoting apprenticeship opportunities are ongoing, and a campaign is planned once the new government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
- The final version of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2025.
- 14 projects have been allocated funding by the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant scheme for village halls. A number have been completed and others are at various stages of delivery.
- The outline planning application for the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village is currently progressing through the process. Officers and representatives from the RAU and its advisers have met to resolve outstanding issues, including comments from consultees.
- Officers meet monthly with representatives from the RAU and Growth Hub to monitor progress, with performance currently on track to meet targets. Cirencester Growth Hub remains one of the most successful in the network by



several measures. Outreach Navigators continue to operate across the district, holding well-attended events and discovery meetings at the Moreton Area Centre. Cabinet has approved a further year of funding for 2025–26

- 2.3** Off-target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at the end of Q4 (January-March 2025) are detailed below. Whilst this report is a retrospective account of progress in Q4, where possible, the current status is also included for assurance.

Delivering good services

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

**Q4 update:** A backlog in sign replacements remains, but an update on progress and a forward plan is currently being agreed with Ubico.

Responding to the climate emergency

**Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy**

**Q4 update:** Delivery of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme-funded Electric Vehicle charge points across four sites is progressing well. An extension to the original 31st March deadline has been granted due to delays by the Distribution Network Operator, Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE). Two sites—Market Way (Moreton-in-Marsh) and Maugersbury Road (Stow-on-the-Wold)—are expected to be connected mid-April, while connection dates are still awaited for Brewery (Cirencester) and West Street (Tetbury).

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

**Q4 update:** The Cotswold Design Code is now half-way through being updated. Draft Design Codes have been shared with the council for comment. The national planning policy consultation meant work had to be temporarily paused. Consideration is now being given to the new national planning policies and the implications these have on the Design Code.

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

**Q4 update:** A consultation was held on the draft masterplan between 1 Feb 2024 and 7 Apr 2024. Following the consultation, it was decided that a master plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is required. Work is currently ongoing to draft the SPD ahead of a final consultation, ahead of adopting the SPD by September 2025. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery



of the SPD. CDC continues to work closely with Cirencester TC to align the SPD with their emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.

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

**Q4 update:** The finalisation of the Housing Strategy has been passed to the Strategic Housing Manager. It is being updated in light of the emerging options review, the Govt National Planning Policy Framework consultation outcome and will be coordinated with other related strategies/policies (e.g. Homelessness/Empty Properties etc)

Supporting communities

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

**Q4 update:** Design work is underway, but implementation is dependent on resolving issues with the bridge. UK Shared Prosperity Funds earmarked for the project were reallocated to other initiatives to meet the year-end spend target and ensure local benefits.

**Commence development of the cultural strategy**

**Q4 update:** The strategy will be restructured into a Plan, focusing on short-term actions and joint working between partners to achieve positive outcomes amid the longer-term uncertainty of LGR. A stakeholder meeting is scheduled for late May to move the work forward and review the draft plan, which will be presented to members in the summer.

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

**3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive. Highlights include strong results in Gym Memberships, visits to the Leisure Centres and customer satisfaction. Planning determination times, with all application types remain strong and Inspections of high-risk food premises exceed target. However, processing times for Council Tax Support new claims and the delivery of affordable homes are showing a negative trend.

**3.1** Service performance above target:

- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (4 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.31% against a target of 0.35%)



- Customer Satisfaction (98% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (83% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (88% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (21% against a target of 30%)
- Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Number of gym memberships (4,441 against a target of 4,000)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (159,862 visits against a target of 145,000)

**3.2** Service Performance near target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (98.18% against a target of 99%)
- Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected (97.45% against a target of 99%)

**3.3** Service Performance below target:

**Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (23 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (5 days against a target of 4 days).**

Previous Quarter: In Q3, processing times for both Council Tax Support New Claims and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances did not meet the targets, with processing taking 21 and 7 days, respectively.

Q4: Although the Council is currently above the 20-day target for processing new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims, with an average of 22.82 days in Q4 2024/25, performance remains stable and shows steady improvement compared to the peak of over 30 days in Q1 2023/24 and the high of 47 days during 2021/22. The slight increase in Q4 processing times can largely be attributed to two factors: the temporary shutdown of the Council offices over Christmas, which created a backlog, and a spike in customer phone enquiries, which tend to peak during Q4 and required the redeployment of staff resources.

Despite these pressures, the service has effectively managed workloads, and turnaround times remain significantly improved compared to pandemic-era levels. Continued stabilisation of processing times is expected as operational pressures ease and service adjustments take effect.



It is also important to note that the volume of Housing Benefit (HB) change of circumstances has significantly declined, as applications are progressively transitioning to Universal Credit under the managed migration process. As a result, delays in processing HB applications now have a more pronounced impact on average processing times.

**Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (86% against a target of 90%)**

Previous Quarter: During Q3, the Council continued to exceed its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days with 95.77% completed within target timeframes.

Q4: During Q4, the Council fell slightly below its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days, achieving just under 86%, down from 96% in Q3. This dip in performance is primarily attributed to increased workloads and operational challenges. However, the Council has taken proactive steps to improve the situation. Efforts to strengthen communication and collaboration with the answering teams have proven successful, enhancing workload management and enabling team members to handle tasks more efficiently. These improvements are expected to contribute to higher productivity moving forward.

Additionally, the Council has begun working on the HMLR (His Majesty's Land Registry) project, which aims to establish a national local land charges service. While still in its early stages, this initiative is expected to help accelerate the land charge search process and improve overall service delivery in the future.

**Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) (56 delivered against a target of 100).**

Previous Quarter: During Q3, no affordable homes were delivered within the District, bringing the total to fifty for April–December 2024.

Q4: During 2024–25, a total of 56 affordable homes were delivered across the district with 6 delivered in Q4, falling short of the 74 initially forecasted by Registered Providers (RPs). The shortfall is primarily due to delays caused by project re-phasing, which have pushed some planned completions into the 2025–26 financial year. A notable example of this is the Down Ampney site, where 22 affordable homes were originally expected to be completed in 2024–25. However, 18 of these have been re-phased for delivery between April and December 2025.

The delivery of affordable housing is subject to fluctuations, as most developments take over a year to complete and often progress in multiple phases over several





years. Early over-delivery at the beginning of the current strategy has also contributed to the dip in recent annual outputs, as the early years set a higher baseline.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, the district has delivered a total of 886 affordable homes, averaging 126 homes per year. Despite the recent dip in completions, this continues to reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to delivering affordable housing and meeting long-term housing needs in the area.

**Missed bins per 100,000 Collections (101 against a target of 80).**

Previous Quarter: During Q3, the Council exceeded its targets despite a notable reduction in missed bin collections, recording 94 misses against a target of 80.

Q4: The rate of missed bin collections rose to 101 per 100,000 collections—exceeding the target of 80. This increase was primarily driven by operational challenges, including staffing shortages and the prolonged absence of a narrow access vehicle, which was off the road for two months. These issues particularly affected properties on routes that require specialist vehicles. Recruitment efforts are actively underway, with recent interviews held to address the staffing gap and improve service resilience. Additionally, flooding in January caused temporary disruption to collection schedules, further contributing to the spike in missed bins during the period.

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

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

This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2025. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to Cabinet.

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

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



**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** Contained in this report.

**8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1** None

**9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1** Contained in this report.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1** None

(END)

Our Cotswolds, Our Plan: Action Plan 2024 Update - Progress by end of Q4 2024-2025

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

Objectives	Priorities	Actions	Commencement	Target Date	Cabinet Member, Lead officer(s)	RAG Rating	Comment for Q4
Delivering good services	Ensure our workforce can deliver for the council and our community	Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability	Nov-23	Projected timeframe of two years, until 2025	<div>Cllr Mike Evemy</div> <div>Robert Weaver</div>	On Target	The comprehensive Phase 2 transition plan was presented to Cabinet and Full Council in March, where it received full approval. Formal consultation with employees affected by Phase 2 commenced in April, with their transfer to Council employment scheduled to take effect from July.
		Lease spare office space at Trinity Road	Dec-23	Jul-24	<div>Cllr Patrick Coleman</div> <div>Claire Locke Suzanne Barton</div>	Complete	Completed
	Ensure effective oversight of our services, to ensure value for money and good standards	Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal	Dec-23	Jun-24	<div>Cllr Andrea Pellegram</div> <div>David Stanley</div>	Complete	Completed
		Continue to ensure that the Council's MTFS five year strategy reflects economic conditions and the government's funding settlement	Feb-24	Reviewed annually	<div>Cllr Patrick Coleman</div> <div>David Stanley</div>	Complete	MTFS approved by Council 24/02/2025
	Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets	Implement the Council's new asset management strategy and asset plans	Apr-24	Review April 2025	<div>Cllr Patrick Coleman</div> <div>David Stanley</div>	Complete	Completed
		Instigate second phase of activity to replace worn and damaged street nameplates	Feb-24	Feb-25	<div>Cllr Mike Evemy</div> <div>Claire Locke</div>	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	There remains some backlog in the replacement of signs. An update on progress and a plan for future replacements is being agreed with Ubico.
	Play our part in maintaining and enhancing the public realm across the district						
	Reduce CO2 from Transport: We will actively encourage and support				Cllr Mike McKeown		Delivery of ORCs funded EVCPs across four sites is progressing well, although an

the climate emergency	the transition to EVs and increased use of public and sustainable transport such as cycling and walking.	Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy	Jan-24	Jul-24	Claire Locke	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	extension to the original 31st March completion has been agreed due to delays with connection by the DNO, Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE). Two sites should be connected mid-April (Market Way, Moreton in Marsh and Maugersbury road, Stow on the Wold) with two further sites awaiting connection dates (Brewery, Cirencester & West Street, Tetbury).
		Work with partners to implement the Sustainable Transport Strategy	Adoption as part of the Local Plan - projected June 2025	Apr-28	Cllr Mike McKeown Jon Dearing Matthew Britton	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
		Taxi Transition - explore the opportunity for the creation of an EV Taxi policy	Apr-24	Jun-25	Cllr Mike McKeown  Jon Dearing Mandy Fathers	On Target	First draft of Policy has been written and officers reviewing. Aim to have draft updated and discussed with Portfolio Holder during Q1 2025/2026 and put on Committee forward plans towards the end of Q1, beginning of Q2 2025/2026
	Cut Council Carbon Footprint, implementing sustainable practices in all council operations, emphasising energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, across our buildings, fleet and suppliers.	Create a Climate Board, agree governance arrangements and key outcomes.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target	Proposal for creation of a Climate Board has been drafted and is due to be presented to May 2025 Cabinet meeting.
					Olivia McGregor		
	Increase renewable energy generation within the district, ensuring local benefit	Support and promote community owned renewables initiatives	Dec-23	Review June 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown  Olivia McGregor	On Target	Cotswold District Council has been actively supporting community energy initiatives within the district, including Thames Head Community Energy. This not-for-profit Community Benefit Society (CBS) organisation, based in the Cotswolds, aims to develop local renewable energy projects to benefit the community and the environment. CDC's support has included policy backing, financial contributions through Crowdfund Cotswolds, and participation in broader regional initiatives such as Climate Leadership Gloucestershire's Community Energy workstream.
		Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on Council owned assets.	Jan-24	Jul-24	Cllr Mike McKeown Claire Locke	Complete	Completed
		Implement the new requirements around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Jan-24	Review July 2024	Cllr Juliet Layton Geraldine LeCointe	Complete	Completed
	Champion initiatives to address the ecological emergency and nature recovery, focusing on reducing CO2 and conserving and enhancing the district's biodiversity and natural beauty.						
		Continue to promote and deliver Cotswold Home Solar in partnership	Jan-23	Review July 2024	Cllr Mike McKeown	On Target	Cotswold Home Solar continues to be promoted and delivered. 27 households have

	<b>Reduce CO2 from Buildings: Foster community-led climate action, supporting residents and businesses adopting renewable heating and improving energy efficiency.</b>	Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen	Jan-23	Review July 2024	Olivia McGregor	On Target	now installed solar. A further 18 have put down a deposit.
		Consider the business case on optimising the delivery of high quality retrofit advice and support	Jul-24	Jul-25	Cllr Mike McKeown Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service which has been live since 22nd January. This service offers energy efficiency plans, project specifications, vetted installers, and installation management. To date 7 households have requested energy efficient house plans. Additionally, CDC has employed a Retrofit Engagement Officer who is engaging communities and providing retrofit advice until September 2025. She is delivering community events and offering free home visits to identify opportunities to install renewable energy and make energy efficiency improvements. Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) are the chosen contractor to deliver free energy efficiency advice for low-income households through the Warm and Well Scheme for the next 5 years.
					Olivia McGregor		
	<b>Ensure our planning policies deliver our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure</b>	Subject to proposed legislative changes, complete full review of the Local Plan	Jan-24	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	CDC is currently partially updating its adopted Local Plan to make it green to the core. A consultation was held on the draft Local Plan policies between 1 February 2024 and 7 April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered and further supporting evidence is being produced before a final version of the Local Plan will be consulted on early in 2025. The Local Plan update will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate before June 2025 for an Independent Examination in Public led by a government appointed Inspector.
					Geraldine LeCointe Matt Britton		
		Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds	Sep-23	May-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	City Science have been commissioned to help deliver the new Cotswold Design Code (note guide!). A draft Design Code has been shared for comment. The final Design Code is currently being worked up.
					Geraldine LeCointe Matthew Britton		
		Work with Cirencester Town Council on the coordination of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan policies	Jan-24	Sep-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	A consultation was held on the draft master plan between 1 February 2024 and 7 April 2024. Consultation responses are currently being considered, which will inform a more detailed version of the masterplan. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the masterplan. CDC has also been working with Cirencester TC on their Neighbourhood Plan policies and comments have been provided on the draft NDP policies.
					Geraldine LeCointe Matthew Britton		
<b>Delivering Housing</b>	<b>Working with our partners to</b>	Explore innovative approaches to housing delivery	Feb-24	Aug-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	CDC Strategic Housing Manager developing strategies and options for a more interventionist Housing Delivery approach including collaborations with landowners, developers and Registered Providers.
					Robert Weaver Alan Hope		

	explore innovative routes to deliver more affordable homes	Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney	Dec-23	Apr-28	Cllr Juliet Layton	On Target	Planning consent was granted on 12 <sup>th</sup> March, however Bromford need to resolve issues with the surface water drainage design and are discussing the timeline for Thames Water Infrastructure upgrades to accommodate the development. This may delay commencement of works until 2027 unless Thames Water will bring their upgrade plans forward. Heads of Terms for the CDC land transfer and the S106 are being negotiated with Bromford.	
	Understanding everyone's housing needs	Support refugees to retain adequate housing	Jul-23	Review March 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold/ Paula Massey	On Target	Work is ongoing to support all refugees whether on a resettlement scheme or dispersed asylum. In addition to working to ensure the families and individuals are adequately housed there is ongoing wraparound support being provided to assist with resettlement and community cohesion	
		Continue to monitor housing needs, using Homeseeker Plus, to inform housing strategy and implementation	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold	On Target	The Housing Team prevent homelessness for an average of 50 households per quarter. By preventing homelessness before it occurs, this reduces the number of families who need to be accommodated in expensive B&B accommodation, which can also be outside of the district. This approach minimises both disruption for our clients, and reduces the cost burden on the local authority. The Housing Team also have a strong approach to rough sleeping ensuring that when it does occur, it is brief and non recurring. CDC continue to report low to zero rough sleeping in the district.	
		Continue to build on the success of the Housing First Project with a new county wide approach	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton Jon Dearing Caroline Clissold	On Target	The Cotswold Housing First project is recognised accross the county as being an exemplary example of how projects of this type should be approached. Successful outcomes are above national averages and the Housing Team continue to work closely with Bromford and P3 to ensure the continued success of this project. There are currently 6 individuals accommodated in Housing First, however external funding has been awarded to P3 to extend the offer to a further 2 clients, giving us 8 spaces in total. Referrals are currently being considered.	
		Adopting and implementing our new housing strategy	Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy	Dec-23	Jun-24	Cllr Juliet Layton Alan Hope Matthew Britton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	The finalisation of the Housing Strategy is being updated in light of the emerging options review, the Govt NPPF consultation outcome and will be coordinated with other related strategies/policies (e.g Homelessness/Empty Properties etc)
	Supporting communities	Strengthen our links with town and parish councils and key stakeholders	Continue the annual programme of Town and Parish Council Forum engagement events	Jan-24	Jan-25	Cllr Mike Every Angela Claridge	On Target	Plans for the Summit are progressing well with a confirmed dated of Wednesday 4th and keynote speakers confirmed including Jackie Weaver. Invites to be sent w/c 7th April.
		Address the challenges of flooding and water quality and sewerage discharges	Identify opportunities to influence policy and host a sewage summit with the outcome being reported to the Council in May.	Jan-24	Oct-24	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson Matthew Britton	Complete	Completed
			Identify gaps and bolster the			Cllr Tristan		

		Identify gaps and deliver the Cotswold Flood wardens programme	Jan-24	Jun-24	Robert Weaver	Complete	Completed
	<b>Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Water park</b>	Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road	Jan-24	Review in January 2025	Cllr Juliet Layton	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	Design work underway, but implementation dependant upon issues with the bridge being resolved. UK Shared Prosperity Fund earmarked for the project were reallocated to other projects to ensure the year end spend target was met, and local benefit realised.
					Joseph Walker		
		Install cycle racks, in consultation with the local community	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Complete	Installations completed
					Joseph Walker		
		Work with partners to embed the Nature Recovery Plan for Cotswold Lakes	Jan-24	Review every six months	Cllr Juliet Layton		
					Geraldine LeCointe Sophia Price		
	<b>Healthy place making through the Local Plan</b>	Embed Healthy Homes Act into the Cotswold Design Code	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
					Geraldine LeCointe		
		Introduce a requirement for Community Access Defibrillators in new developments	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
					Geraldine LeCointe		
		Focus on green infrastructure, to enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing	Jun-25	Jun-25	Cllr Juliet Layton	Not Scheduled to Start During Quarter	Workstream not scheduled to start this quarter
					Geraldine LeCointe		
	<b>Develop and deliver a District Council cultural strategy</b>	Commence development of the cultural strategy	Feb-24	Sep-24	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Off Target, but action being taken to ensure delivery	The strategy will be reconfigured as a Plan, with a focus on short term actions and joint working between partners, to ensure positive outcomes in the context of the longer term uncertainty of LGR. A stakeholder meeting is being planned for later May, to start to take work forward and sense check the draft plan which will be presented in members in the summer.
					Joseph Walker		
	<b>Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing</b>				Cllr Claire Bloomer		The first two of fourteen 'Strengthening Communities' events took place over the February half term. These events bring together a wide range of statutory

		Continue to deliver an asset based community development approach	Jan-24	Apr-28	Joseph Walker	On Target	and voluntary/community sector service providers to promote their services to local residents, across the district's larger settlements. There is a strong focus on empowering and engaging residents in positive local activity to improve health and wellbeing, and thus buy-in from health colleagues.  The Team have liaised with partners to support the local 'Dighubs' contract going to two local partners, the Churn and Cotswold Friends, which will secure a digital inclusion over for the district.
		Celebrate success - promote the work being done by partners across the district to inspire communities	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	On Target	There were some very strong submissions, to the third round, and the winners attended Council in January. Due to the GCC elections and the Council's AGM on May, the next round will be in July. We are looking at introducing a young hero category, to ensure young people's contributions are picked up by the scheme.
		Continue to promote community activity through Crowdfund Cotswold	Feb-24	Review August 2024	Cllr Claire Bloomer Joseph Walker	On Target	The deadline for the Spring Round was on 9th April. At the time of writing, project proposals were still being verified prior to launching on the Crowdfund Cotswold platform, but we anticipate 5/6 projects for the spring round. The February Project creator workshop was well attended, and identified a few project ideas which we anticipate will come forward later this year/early next.
	<b>Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages</b>	Monitor and review delivery of the District leisure contract with Freedom Leisure	Aug-23	Aug-25	Cllr Paul David Stanley Joseph Walker	On Target	Regular meetings have taken place, to review performance and to identify and mitigate any risks. These meetings have also presented an opportunity to pick up on complaints, and have prompted a timely response from the contractor.
		Continue to deliver the Healthier District and Connected Communities objectives and priorities set out in the Active Cotswolds Action Plan, and implement the Playing Pitch Strategy's action plan.	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Paul Helen Martin Joseph Walker	On Target	The Active Cotswold Support Officer has convened a number of meetings to support projects looking to address the evidenced Playing Pitch deficits identified in the PPS. The Council has also met with Sport England and representatives of the sports governing bodies to assess progress with the action plan.
		Work with partners to develop a consistent, countywide approach to identify opportunities to support to care leavers	Jun-24	Review December 2024	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson David Stanley Joseph Walker	On Target	Work is progressing with the Cotswold Youth Network, to enhance information sharing about youth voice between partners
		Continue to be a proactive member of the Cotswold Food Network		Review January	Cllr Claire Bloomer		The CFN has hosted meetings with local partner organisations to share information and promote VCSE engagement and support in the Council's



	Work with partners to ensure vital services cover the district, and offer support to our residents if crises hit	Steering Group and support initiatives under the network's umbrella	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Joseph Walker	On Target	proposed LIFT campaigns, to assist Cotswold families with the cost of living. Worrying about Money, the national leaflet has been updated as a Cotswold specific version. Copies will be online and distributed in print.
		Continue to work with the NHS Integrated Locality Partnership to support youth mental health	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	The ILP hosted a monthly subgroup focussed on Children and Young People to ensure partnership activity supporting young people's mental health is well trgeted and aligned across providers. In quarter, CDC has launched a grant scheme to allocate SLC funding alinged to the ILP, with CYP being one of the two priorities - there has been a steady stream of applications, which will be reviewed in May.
					Joseph Walker		
	Maintain a multi-service response to the cost of living crisis, and other challenges to community wellbeing	Jan-23	Review January 2025	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	A second campaign ran in Jan/Feb, to flag availability on the Warm Homes Discount. THe updated data snapshot shows a increase in take-up of Pensions Credit, but due to national demand, and processing time, it will be some months before we can see the settled picture as a result of the national and local awareness raising carried out in later 2024. Work has commencing planning the next campaigns, which, following conversation with partners are likely to address rising costs of water and fuel bills.	
				Claire Locke Joseph Walker			
	Keep residents safe, through awareness raising around domestic abuse and fraud	Continue to raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the fear of crime and ensure residents know how, and where, to get support	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	On Target	The Cotswold CSP met in late January, under the new chairmanship of Councillor Paul Hodgkinson. Good egagmenet from partners, and discussion to take forward priorities from the action plan including speeding traffic. The CCSP meets next, in person, on 15th April
					Joseph Walker		
		Denver Rural Domestic Abuse Champions programme in partnership with other rural Gloucestershire districts and	Feb-24	Mar-25	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	The Council is working with GDASS to raise awareness - for example through promotional materials at Strengthening Communities Events
					Joseph Walker		
		Train frontline staff to identify Domestic Abuse and review internal processes to recognise and support victims of abuse	Feb-24	Jul-24	Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	Local partner staff and some CDC staff undertook rural domestic abuse training in February - 2 x 2hr training to raise understanding of domestic abuse and its rural dynamic.
			Joseph Walker				
Coordinate activity under Home Office's safer Streets Fund to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and violence against women and girls	Feb-24	Review February 2025	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson/Cllr Claire Bloomer	On Target	Most activity being supported by Safer Streets has now concluded. We anticipate signing off the final projects in April.		
						Joseph Walker	
Supporting the economy	Work with partners to develop the skills of our residents	Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs, through promotion of apprenticeship opportunities	Feb-24	Apr-28	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital and sustainable aviation to promote employment opportunities. Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders about how to promote apprenticeship opportunities articles about apprenticeships have appeared in recent Business Matters newsletters. Apprenticeships are being promoted as a way of mitigating higher employers' NI contributions.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
	Deliver a programme of activities in year 3 of the Shared Prosperity Fund to help those furthest from the employment market	Apr-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	This project was delivered through Gloucestershire County Council's Employment and Skills Hub Outreach programme in partnership with The Churn Project with agreed outputs and outcomes. Cabinet has approved an additional year of funding for the project in 2025-26 working directly with The Churn Project.	
				Joseph Walker Paul James			
	Attract and manage investment to boost the local economy	Consider the results of the digital and green survey of community buildings, and enable improvements through Rural England Prosperity Fund	Apr-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	14 projects have been allocated funding by the REPF grant scheme for village halls and all are now completed. The grant scheme is now closed. There may be further opportunities for village halls and community buildings through the 2025-26 REPF funding.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		

	<b>Support local businesses and farms, to enhance the vibrancy of our towns and villages, and to manage the opportunity and impact of the visitor economy</b>	Continue to deliver against the six priorities set out in the Cotswold Tourism destination management plan	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Three UKSPF funded projects are now underway: one to identify and promote businesses as Sustainability champions; one to encourage the development of new experiences; one to bring enhancements and new functionality to the tourism website (www.cotswolds.com)
					Joseph Walker Chris Jackson		
		Continue to support the Local Visitor Economy Partnership, to ensure better coordination of tourism activity and delivery against national growth targets	Jan-24	Review January 2025	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Seven workstreams have been agreed by the partnership, each with an agreed action plan: these include two sustainability strands (one on transport & active travel, the other on business practices & biodiversity), business support and travel trade.
					Joseph Walker Chris Jackson		
	<b>Work with local and county partners to grow a strong and sustainable economy</b>	Undertake a refresh of the Green Economic Strategy	Feb-24	Apr-24	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Complete	The final version of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2025.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
		Continue to support the development of the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village	Jan-24	Jan-25	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	The outline planning application is working its way through the process. Officers and representatives from the RAU and its advisers continue to meet in order to resolve outstanding issues including comments from consultees. It is hoped the application will be able to be determined in the near future.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		
		Continue to work with The Growth Hub to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups, with a focus on the outreach provision supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund	Jan-24	Mar-25	Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	On Target	Officers meet monthly with representatives from the RAU/Growth Hub to monitor progress against outputs/outcomes and are pleased with progress against targets. Cirencester Growth Hub is, by a number of measures, the most successful Growth Hub in the network. Outreach Navigators continue to work across the district and have held a number of events and discovery meetings at the Moreton Area Centre, which are being well-supported. Cabinet has agreed another year of funding for 2025-26.
					Joseph Walker Paul James		



# COTSWOLD

## District Council

COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT

**January - March 2025**

# Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28

## Our Ambition

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

## Our Priorities



**Delivering Good  
Services**



**Responding to the  
Climate Emergency**



**Delivering Housing**



**Supporting  
Communities**



**Supporting the  
Economy**

## Executive Summary Highlights

- Cotswold Home Solar remains actively promoted and delivered, with 27 households having already installed solar panels. Additionally, 18 more households have placed deposits for installation.
- The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service, live since January 22nd. The service provides energy efficiency plans, vetted installers, and project management. To date, 7 households have requested plans.
- The installation of cycle parking concluded, with a total of 78 racks installed across the area, and across a wide range of destinations, ranging from community assets to new or established businesses.
- During the quarter, the rebranding of the Water Park to 'Cotswold Lakes' officially took place, with an event on 28th March to promote the new branding and the variety of activities the 'Lakes' offer.
- The Spring Round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 9th April, with 5 to 6 project proposals currently being verified before launch on the platform. The February project creator workshop was well attended and generated several ideas expected to come forward later this year or early next.
- The first two of fourteen 'Strengthening Communities' events took place over February half term, bringing together statutory and community organisations to promote services in the district's larger settlements. These events focus on empowering residents to engage in positive local activity, with strong support from health partners. The team also worked with partners to secure the local Digihubs contract for the Churn and Cotswold Friends, ensuring continued digital inclusion support across the district.
- The final version of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2025.

## Delivering Good Services



### The Context

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

### Actions we are taking

During the quarter, the rebranding of the Water Park to 'Cotswold Lakes' officially took place, with an event on 28th March to promote the new branding and the variety of activities the 'Lakes' offer. The installation of cycle parking concluded, with a total of 78 racks installed across the area, and across a wide range of destinations, ranging from community assets to new or established businesses.

Participating businesses have been surveyed soon after installation. This work confirms that the stands are perceived to have improved security, and consequentially have helped increase cycling levels at the destination, with some use across the week, and confirms businesses have been satisfied by the installation process. We work expect usage to pick up incrementally, as potential users become aware of their availability, and adapt/increase cycle travel to take in these destinations.

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

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



## Responding to the Climate Emergency

### The Context

The climate crisis, and the related ecology crisis, present an existential threat to all Cotswold district residents, but particularly our young people, and future generations beyond them. There is an urgent imperative to act. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have repeatedly outlined the catastrophic impacts that people and nature will face should the world warm by 2 degrees. They plead to limit global temperature rise through urgent, unprecedented, systemic change to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. Cotswold District Council's climate strategy set a 2020-2030 timeframe, reflecting the importance of this crucial 'Decade to Make a Difference'. The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 identified the Council's different spheres of influence over carbon emissions. These range from emissions under the council's control (for example emissions produced from its own operations) through to those it can have an influence over by enabling District-wide climate mitigation action. Here below is a summary of actions we are taking in response.

### 'Direct Control' actions

The Council's Climate Emergency Strategy of September 2020 contained a target to make emissions from the Council's own operations net-zero carbon as soon as possible, aiming for an 80% reduction by 2030 against a 1990 baseline, and a 100% reduction by 2045. An updated report of progress against the net zero target has been carried out which identified the Council will fail to reach net zero should remedial action not be taken. In May, Cabinet will be reviewing the recommendation to launch a Corporate Net Zero Transformation Programme overseen by a Climate Board to address the identified risk and strengthen governance arrangements in this space. A number of activities to reduce council carbon emissions are in development. A business case has been agreed and an offer has been made to New Brewery Arts for the provision of solar PV. A funding proposal has been submitted to the Waste and Resources Partnership for an waste fleet EV transition feasibility study.

### 'Indirect Control' actions

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



Part of the work to underpin this has involved the creation of a Renewable Energy Study which will be presented to Cabinet in May. This contains an assessment of existing and potential renewable energy resources (including a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment) across the district as well as an assessment of current and projected future energy demands and emissions in Cotswold District. It considers renewable energy deployment scenarios and opportunities within Cotswold District alongside the benefits and challenges of renewable energy development in relation to environmental, social and economic impacts on the local area and its assets. A suite of strategic recommendations for renewable energy development has been produced alongside specific energy policy recommendations to underpin proposals for policies in the Local Plan review and for future revisions up to 2041, to reflect the district's net zero ambitions for consideration in the current Local Plan review.

Colleagues from both planning policy and community wellbeing & economic growth teams attended a CCRI led net zero food and farming workshop in April to examine how actors across Gloucestershire can collaborate with each other and wider partners, on a policy approach that supports the transformational changes needed in the production and consumption of food.

To help building owners and tenants improve the energy efficiency and climate resilience of their buildings, the Local Planning Authority produced some guidance specifically for listed buildings, buildings located in a conservation area and those which are traditionally built. The guidance provides a general introduction to the topic, highlighting key points to consider when considering making energy efficiency and climate adaptation improvements to a building, and to provide guidance about where to go for good quality, independent advice, as well as where to find suitably qualified tradespersons.

## **'Place Shaping' actions**

### EV charging infrastructure provision

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

### Solar PV support

The Council is also working to enable residents to install solar PV by helping them to understand their options, find a reliable installer and secure a fair price through the Cotswold Home Solar scheme. The scheme continues to be promoted and delivered. As a result of the scheme 27 homes have already installed solar panels, and a further 18 have paid a deposit. Residents are on track to save nearly £450,000 across the district.

Energy efficiency support

Low carbon retrofit of the District's domestic building stock is an essential component of national emissions reduction but remains a huge challenge. The Council is undertaking significant work in this area. In partnership with all other Gloucestershire authorities, a contractor has been procured to provide a Gloucestershire-wide retrofit support offer for residents. The service launched on the 22nd of January and offers residents the opportunity of a whole house energy efficiency plan, project specification and vetted installer selection as well as an installation management service. In addition, a Cotswold District Retrofit Engagement Officer has been recruited to engage communities directly and provide a series of awareness raising events and bespoke advice between now and September 2025. In March we delivered Drive and Thrive event at the Corn Hall which provided residents with the opportunity to see feel and touch low carbon home technologies. The programme of retrofit engagement events is available to view here <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/retrofit-engagement-scheme/>. We have also reappointed Contractor Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) to deliver free energy efficiency advice service specifically for low-income households via the Warm and Well Scheme until 2027.

Net zero energy planning

The Council is also working in partnership with other Gloucestershire-based councils on Local Area Energy Planning which is vital to enabling net zero within Cotswold District since it is needed to build the case to District Network Operators for investment and expansion in electricity grid infrastructure. A contractor has been appointed to undertake the first 3 stages (of 7) required for Energy Planning and is currently carrying out stakeholder engagement exercises and energy baselining. In tandem we have launched our engagement with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs)/Distribution System Operators (DSOs), Northern Powergrid (NGED) & Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), to inform their Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) 2025 projections to ensure electricity grid infrastructure is adequate to meet our net zero ambitions.

Transport decarbonisation

Work also continues through Climate Leadership Gloucestershire on delivering the Statement of Shared Intent (SoSI) in which all seven local authorities expressed an ambition to reduce surface transport emissions by 80% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050. Gloucestershire councils are strengthening their collaboration regards EV charging infrastructure by considering opportunities for enhanced coordination. Life Cycle have been administering the Take a Stand scheme in the Cotswolds since 2022, showing the commitment of the council to encourage sustainable travel in the region. With CDC support, 78 cycle parking stands have been installed recently across a number of locations in the Cotswold District.

### Affordable housing

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

### **‘Engaging’ actions**

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

We continue to provide funding for a business net zero engagement support programme. We have also relaunched Crowdfund Cotswolds which supports and enables local communities to invest in carbon reduction technology and activity. The latest round has just closed and funding will be announced shortly. Carbon literacy training continues to be rolled out to staff and councillors. We also developed a web resource to communicate to all stakeholders on the work of the council regards climate change. Finally, a District-wide network of individuals and organisations motivated by the climate challenge has been formed, aiming to replicate the success of West Oxfordshire District Council’s ‘Green Light’ communications platform.

## Delivering Housing



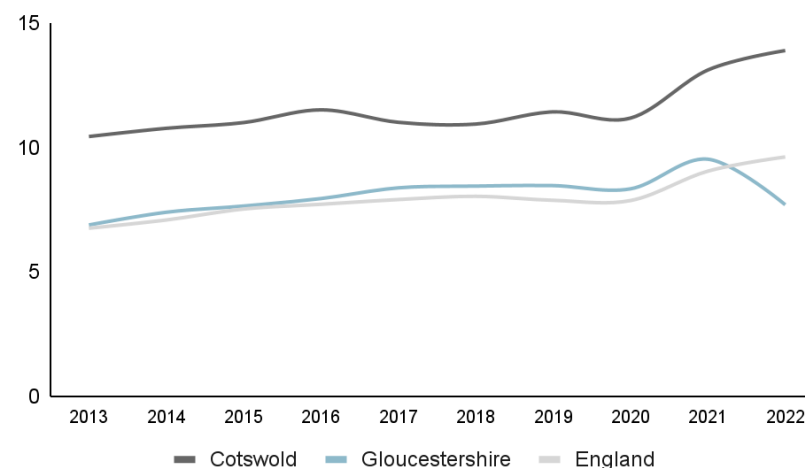
### The Context

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

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

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

Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings



### Actions we are taking

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

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

The partnership with Bromford to deliver carbon zero affordable homes at a site in Down Ampney will a vacant plot owned by CDC and a neighbouring site which has domestic garages on it, which is owned by Bromford developed with 13 social rented homes. The carbon efficiency of these dwelling means tenants will have low utility bills, with electricity generated by the roof mounted Solar PV. Planning consent was granted on 12th March, however Bromford need to resolve issues with the surface water drainage design and are discussing the timeline for Thames Water Infrastructure upgrades to accommodate the development. This may delay commencement of works until 2027 unless Thames Water will bring their upgrade plans forward. Heads of Terms for the CDC land transfer and the S106 are being negotiated with Bromford.

The Old station, Sheep street was previously assessed for service provision such as homelessness accommodation and other housing options, but the conversion was found to be unaffordable. Despite attempts to bring forward proposals for cultural and community use, no affordable scheme could be identified so in July 2024 Council took the decision to market the Old Station and Memorial Cottages for sale. The successful bidders are now engaged with the Council in the legal process to complete the sales. It is anticipated the sale will complete in April 2025 enabling the new owners to deliver plans to bring the buildings back into use.

## Supporting Communities



### The Context

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

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

### Actions we are taking

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

#### Crowdfund Cotswold

The deadline for the Spring Round was 9th April. At the time of writing, project proposals are still undergoing verification before being launched on the Crowdfund Cotswold platform. However, we anticipate that five or six projects will be confirmed as part of this round once the checks are complete.

The Project Creator Workshop held in February was well attended and proved to be a valuable opportunity to support and inspire potential applicants. Several promising project ideas emerged during the session. While these were not ready in time for the spring deadline, we expect some to come forward in future rounds—either later this year or early next year.

#### Holiday Activity and Food Programme & Strengthening Communities Events

Funding for the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme was extended for 2025 and Easter HAF plans are already in place to continue the great work alongside World Jungle and other providers. In the event that HAF would not take place we secured £50,000 through the Strengthening Local Communities fund to offer 14 events throughout 2025, equally distributed between the south and north of the district. Even though HAF is continuing we are still going ahead with the events which are multi-generational, offering activities for children, young people, and adults providing information from key support organisations and include food. We will also offer a forum for all ages to share their thoughts on what's good and what could be better in their communities. Using the Asset-Based Community Development model, we will work with local community champions to target the needs of each community. The first event took place in Moreton-in-Marsh at the Redesdale Hall on 18th February, and the second in Cirencester at The Bingham Hall on 20th February. Both events were successful and received positive feedback and good all-round participation from residents and partner organisations. The next 2 events are at Bourton Cricket Club (15/4/25) and Fairford Community Centre (22/4/25).

#### Rural Domestic Abuse Champions

Cotswold, in collaboration with Tewkesbury, Stroud, and Forest of Dean, funded a joint post to promote Rural Domestic Abuse Champions across districts. The rationale for this post is that in rural areas, victims of domestic abuse are less likely to seek help and support due to lack of transport and isolation. The post, offering training via Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS), helps identify and support individuals in abusive relationships in rural areas. There are currently 35 champions in Cotswold. GDASS continues to offer numerous training dates online, to train both Cotswold employees and staff at partner organisations.

#### Cotswold Food Network

The Council's work to improve food sustainability in the district continues to be directed through the Cotswold Food Network (CFN). The main work themes remain improving financial inclusion and cost of living support, and food provision.

Specific activity since the new year has included on financial inclusion: meeting local partner organisations to share information and promote VCSE engagement and support, in the Council's proposed LIFT-informed campaigns, to assist Cotswold families with the cost of living. Worrying about Money, the national leaflet

has been updated and in the first time, will feature as a Cotswold specific version (previously the leaflet was Stroud & Cotswold). Copies will be online and distributed in print.

Under food provision, there has been substantial progress to collect information on local organisational capacity to accept surplus food when it becomes available. This should improve the re-distribution of surplus food to local communities and reduce waste.

Cotswold Food Network since March now produces two monthly newsletters, based on the topics above. These are emailed to the relevant mailing lists. Finally Roz Savage MP, has asked to meet with Lizzie Dyer (freelance, strategic support for CFN) and Martin Hawkins (CDC Support Officer) on the topic of food sustainability activity in the South Cotswolds, which has been arranged in May.

### Community Building

The team is actively supporting the Cotswold Youth Network by enhancing mental health and youth services and fostering collaboration among organisations. Specifically, the team is working with Northleach Teen Space to implement training for their team and introduce interventions from the Ernest Cook Trust. Additionally, the team continues to support the Digital Inclusion work in communities by collaborating with the Digital Hubs Project Manager from Forest Voluntary Action Forum and Gloucestershire County Council to establish Digital Hubs in the Cotswolds – The Digi Hub work has been awarded along with funding to a joint bid by Cotswold Friends and The Churn and we will continue to work with these partners to support Digital Inclusion in the District. We are utilising the Strengthening Communities events to engage with residents on topics such as the cost of living, health and wellbeing, community enhancement, and reducing isolation and continuing collaboration with partner organisations like Citizens Advice, Cotswold Friends, The Churn Project, Glos Fire & Rescue, Falls Prevention, Foodbanks, and Carer's Hub etc. to build on the work already done in the Community Building Roadshow in 2024 where residents received valuable advice, support, and signposting, and the council gathered important feedback on how they feel about their communities.



## Supporting the Economy

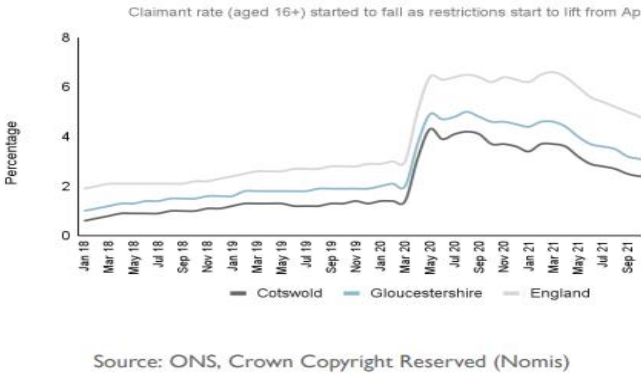
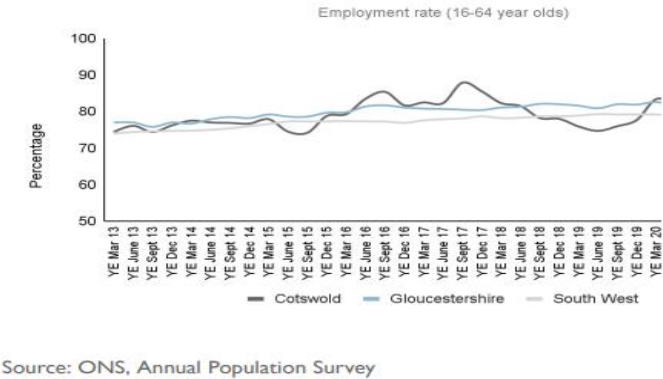


### The Context

The District supports an economically active population of an estimated 42,600 and has strengths in finance and business services, ICT including science and technology, retail, and accommodation and food services. Around 90% of businesses are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. Median wages for people working in the district are below the national average, and affordability of housing is a significant issue for the district, which can result in skill and labour shortages.

Historically, unemployment has been relatively low but increased during the pandemic. It has fallen back significantly and now stands at just over 2% - the lowest in the county, but still slightly above the pre-pandemic level. The claimant count did see a proportionally significant rise in February 2025 of just over 100 (based on around 1000 total unemployment). This is believed to be due to businesses anticipating the employers' national insurance rise.

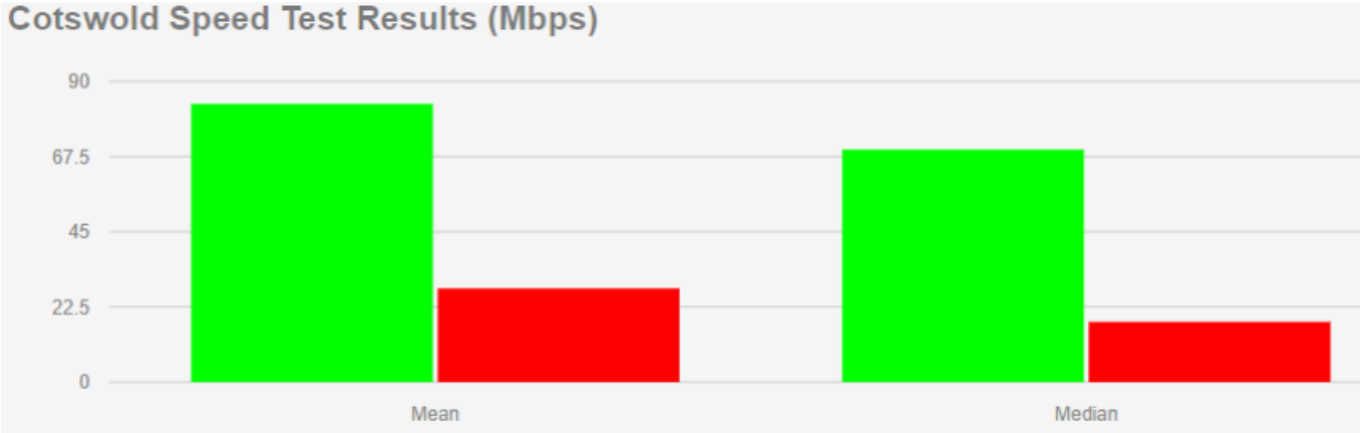
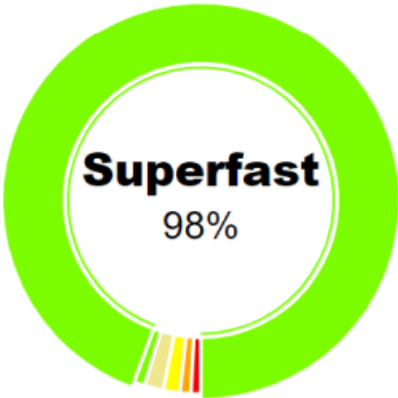
The national and global economies have faced uncertainty as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sharply rising prices, particularly for energy, fuel and food, which continues to impact on disposable income and living standards. Although energy and fuel costs, and the overall inflation rate, have dropped back, prices are still significantly higher than prior to the invasion.



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

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

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



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

### **Actions we are taking**

The refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29 was adopted by Cabinet in March 2025. It sets out the challenges and issues for the district and how they will be addressed. The strategy has been informed by the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which was approved by the County Council's Cabinet in May 2024 and was noted by the new City Region Board in September 2024.

The Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which was set up to advise, oversee and challenge the implementation of the Strategy and provide a link to the main institutions and the wider business community in the District, continues to meet regularly and provide valuable advice and assistance. The group has representation from key stakeholders including Cirencester College, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cotswold Airport, Fairford and Lechlade Business Club, the Federation of Small Businesses and Gloucestershire County Council. Most recently, the Group met at the Cotswold Lakes Brew Co and discussed business resilience, looked at the latest economic health dashboard and considered the approach to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund for 2025-26.

In 2022, the Council was awarded £1 million over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. The Council's Local Investment Plan, which sets out how the Council proposes to use the money, was approved by the government in early December 2022. The fund has three themes – Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and, in year three, People and Skills. Completed projects including 'Clean and Green' initiatives, new offices at The Growth Hub/Farm49, a feasibility study and works to the Old Station building in Cirencester, works to restore the clocktower on the Redesdale Hall in Moreton-in-Marsh, a significant contribution to bringing the former House of Fraser in Cirencester back into and a new website for the Cotswold Lakes area to reflect its change in branding from the Cotswold Water Park. Cabinet in March 2023 agreed to allocate up to £135,000 a year for 2023-24 and 2024-35 to the Growth Hub in Cirencester to provide business support. One positive benefit of this funding is that the Growth Hub has been able to expand its outreach programme across the district, particularly in the north in areas like Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Campden. The Business Navigators for the outreach programme have been using the Council's Moreton Area Office as their base when working in the area. A number of events have taken place in the north of the district.

The Council has been awarded a further £327,146 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025-26. Cabinet has already agreed to fund the Growth Hub and the initiative with The Churn Project to help people furthest away from the labour market into jobs, training and volunteering. An open application process has been run for the remaining unallocated funding of around £120,000 and decisions will be made soon after the County Council elections.

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

A further £229,240 has been allocated to the Council from the Rural England Prosperity Fund for 2025-26. A report is going to Cabinet in May to agree the approach to using this funding.

Town centres are crucial, both economically and for civic pride. The number of vacant retail units in town centres serves as an indicator of their health and reflects the Council's efforts to support their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey conducted in August 2021 revealed that Cirencester had a town centre vacancy rate of 11%, which was three percentage points below the national average. This rate improved to just under 6% in April 2022 and to just under 5% in October 2022. At the end of March 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 4.8%, with several of the remaining units either under offer or undergoing refurbishment. The former House of Fraser in the Market Place, which was the longest-standing vacant building, has now been leased to the Grace Network who have now opened under the branding of Monastery & Co. The building houses a number of social enterprises including food-related, bikes, children's clothes and second-hand furniture. A number of other new entrants have opened in the town, including The White Company, The Works and a number of independent businesses. In the smaller towns within the district, vacancy rates are generally low, though even a few vacancies can significantly impact percentages. Currently, there are no major concerns, but we remain vigilant about the pace of high street changes and the potential effects of the cost-of-living crisis. We will continue to monitor these developments closely. Additionally, the conversion of retail spaces to residential use in smaller towns is a concern as it may impact the town's 'critical mass' and its ability to attract visitors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) to bring forward their Innovation Village project. The plans include teaching and research space, incubator and grow-on business units, although the exact make-up of the development is likely to evolve as the project progresses. The Council assisted the RAU to secure £100,000 from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Strategic Economic Development Fund to assist with the cost of project management over a two-year period. A public launch of the project took place on 20 January 2023 and attracted considerable media attention. The council continues to liaise actively with the university on this project. A planning application has been submitted for the scheme in April 2024 (Ref: 24/01143/OUT). It is hoped that the application will be determined within the next few months.
- The former Mitsubishi site in Cirencester, is now renamed Watermoor Point and is home to a significant number of businesses. The office element is now over 90% let. The owners have also introduced an innovative and flexible co-warehousing solution, offering businesses a private, secure space within the warehouse, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 square feet. Businesses also benefit from shared mechanical handling equipment and an on-site qualified forklift driver. Watermoor Point has been granted planning permission to install an additional 310 PV solar panels in addition to its existing 50kWh array, demonstrating its commitment to sustainability.
- ZeroAvia, which relocated from Cranfield to Cotswold Airport in 2021, is a leading innovator in decarbonising aviation and is developing a hydrogen-electric powered aircraft. The Council has been working with the Inward Investment Team at Gloucestershire County Council to support ZeroAvia which has increased its staff numbers from 15 to 150 onsite, with the plans to continue to grow significantly. The Council and Inward Investment Team will continue to support ZeroAvia in its ongoing growth. Other sustainable aviation businesses, such as Vertical Aerospace and S&C Thermofluids, are already based at Cotswold Airport and the council is working with the airport's owners and others to promote it as a hub for such innovative businesses.
- The Fire Service College/Capita regarding the potential for a wider Centre for National Resilience at Moreton-in-Marsh.

Kier Highways are continuing to progress the A417 Missing Link project on behalf of National Highways. The project, which at around £460m, is due to complete in 2027 and is the biggest infrastructure investment in the district and indeed the whole county for a generation. It is designed to reduce congestion and improve road safety on this important link between Cirencester and Gloucester and, more widely, the M4 and M5 motorways. The value to the local economy is being tracked by Kier, who are using local suppliers and sub-contractors wherever possible.



# COTSWOLD

District Council

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:

**January - March 2025**

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# Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
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# A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking). When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. It does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

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

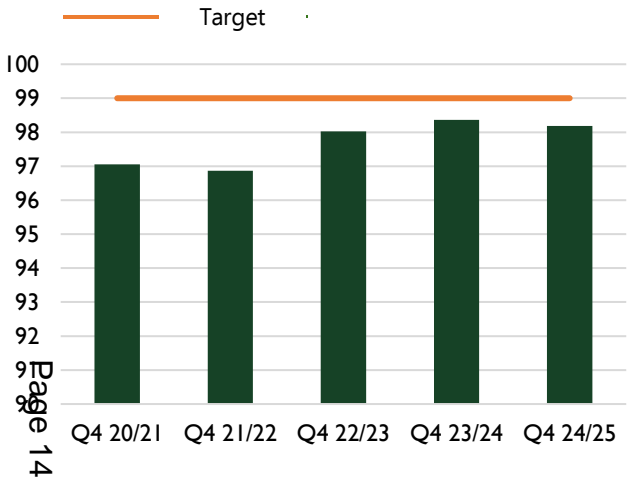
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared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

# Overall Performance

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive. Highlights include strong results in Gym Memberships, visits to the Leisure Centres and customer satisfaction. Planning determination times, with all application types remain strong and Inspections of high-risk food premises exceed target. However, processing times for Council Tax Support new claims and the delivery of affordable homes are showing a negative trend.

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

# Percentage of Council Tax Collected



### Direction of Travel

Against last Year  
Slight decrease since last year



### Higher is Good

Target	99%
Actual	98.18%

At the end of Q4, the Council achieved a council tax collection rate of 98.18%, slightly below the 2023/24 outturn of 98.36%, and just short of the 99% target. Despite this marginal decrease, performance has remained strong and consistent throughout the year, with quarterly trends reflecting the continued effectiveness of in-year collection strategies.

The Council's recovery cycle remains on track, with ongoing efforts to recover outstanding balances from previous years. This ensures that collection performance remains robust while contributing to overall financial resilience. The table below outlines the percentage of tax collected for prior years alongside the total remaining balance.

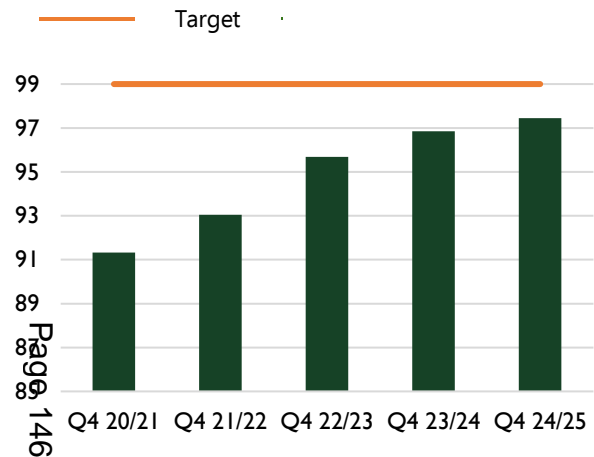
### How do we compare?

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

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

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total Outstanding
Balance at Quarter End	£460,388.95	£639,665.37	£710,551.14	£1,018,706.42	£2,829,311.88
% collected	99.48%	99.30%	99.27%	99.01%	7

# Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Year



Improved since last year

## Higher is Good

Target

99%

Actual

97.45%

## How do we compare?

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

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

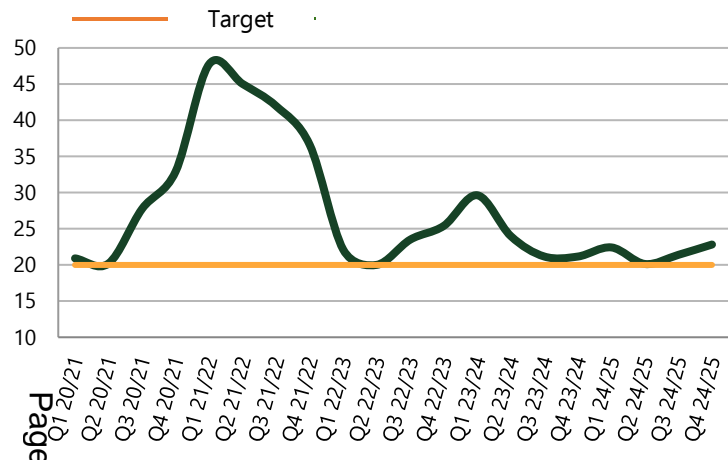
At the end of Q4 2024/25, Cotswold District Council achieved a Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) collection rate of 97.45%, marking an improvement from 96.85% in 2023/24. Although slightly below the Council's annual target, this result reflects continued recovery and a positive post-pandemic trend.

The Council remains focused on refining its in-year recovery processes and working with local businesses to manage payments efficiently, contributing to overall financial sustainability.

The table below displays the percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected in respect of previous years, along with the total outstanding amount:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total
Balance at Quarter End	£100,743.27	£219,901.23	£273,047.86	£290,955.18	£884,647.54
% collected	99.36%	99.22%	99.15%	99.16%	

# Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Increased since last quarter and last year

## Lower is Good

Target

20

Actual

22.82

## How do we compare?

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

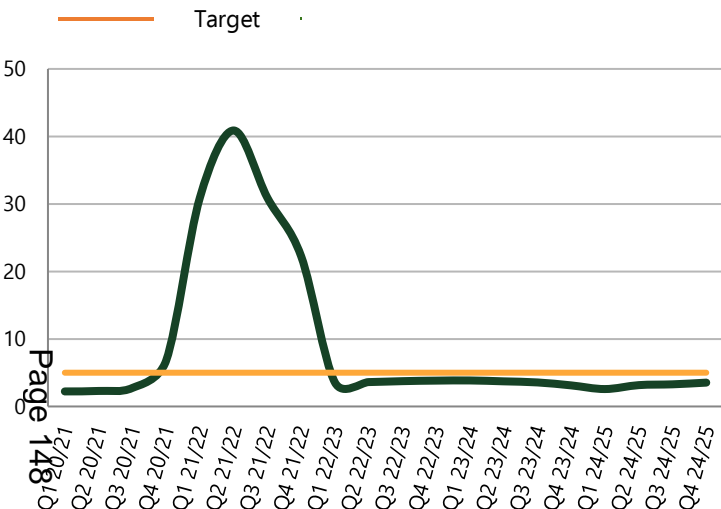
Q3 2024-25 Benchmark	Number of Claimants at end of Dec 2024	Percentage Change since Dec 2023	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank (Higher = biggest reduction)
Maldon	2,981	-4.21%	1/12
Cotswold	3,869	-0.95%	4/12
Stratford-on-Avon	3,920	-0.39%	7/12
East Hampshire	4,946	2.76%	12/12

In Q4 2024/25, Cotswold District Council reported an average processing time of 22.82 days for new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims. This is a slight increase from 21.4 days in Q3, but it still represents a significant improvement compared to the pandemic-era peak of over 47 days in 2021/22.

The minor rise in processing times was largely influenced by operational pressures, including a backlog caused by the office shutdown in December and a seasonal spike in customer phone enquiries, which are typically high during Q4. Despite these challenges, the council continues to show a positive long-term trend, demonstrating ongoing improvements in processing efficiency.



# Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Increased since last quarter  
but improved since last year

## Lower is Good

Target

5

Actual

3.53

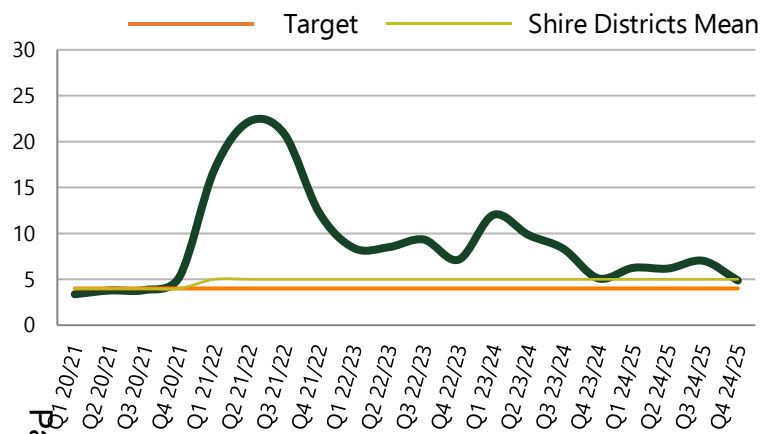
How do we compare?

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

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





# Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



**Direction of Travel**

Against last Quarter  
Against last Year

Improved since last quarter and last year

**Lower is Good**

Target  
Actual

4

4.87

How do we compare?  
Speed of processing for HB CoCs – LG Inform. Latest dataset is July – September '24 (Q2 2024-25)

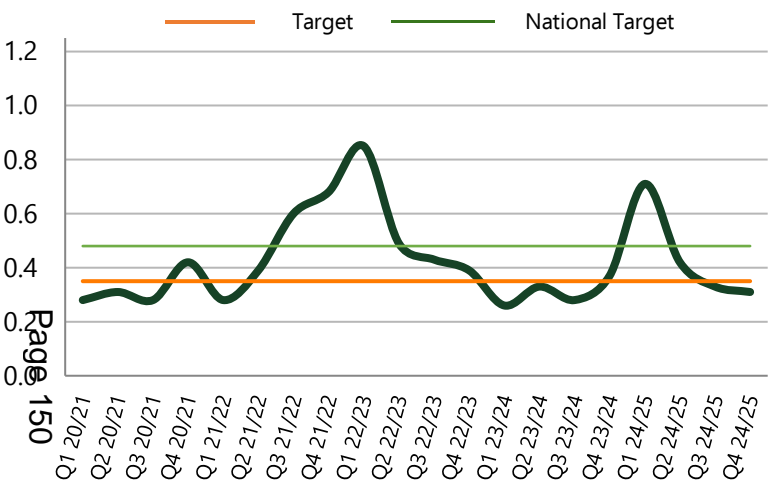
Q2 2024-25 Benchmark	Days	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	2.31	1/12	Top
West Devon	4.22	3/12	Top
Maldon	5.29	6/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>6.09</b>	<b>7/12</b>	<b>Third</b>
East Hampshire	9.43	10/12	Bottom
Malvern Hills	15.57	12/12	Bottom

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


In Q4, the Council maintained steady performance in processing Housing Benefit changes of circumstances, with turnaround times slightly above target, but reflecting a consistent improvement trend. Cotswold also ran a successful Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) campaign, helping 22 residents claim £88,000 in unclaimed benefits, with a lifetime impact of over £421,000.


The managed migration of Housing Benefit to Universal Credit began in April 2024, with some system errors identified. The expedited process may reduce the volume of changes but could increase processing times. A training session on Universal Credit batch processing is scheduled for Q1 2025/26 to address these issues.

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



**Direction of Travel**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

Lower is Good	
Target	0.35%
Actual	0.31%

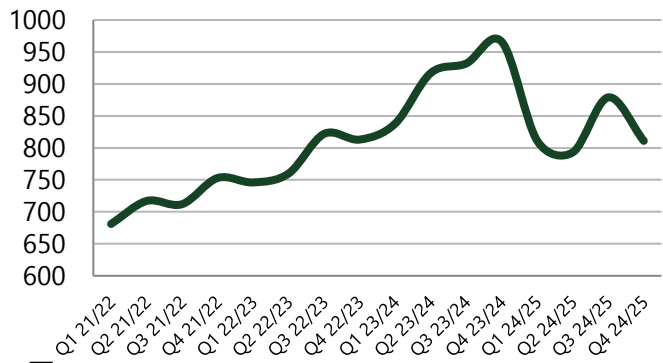
The Council sits comfortably below the national target of 0.48% and the stricter service target of 0.35%.

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

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

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# (Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



### Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year

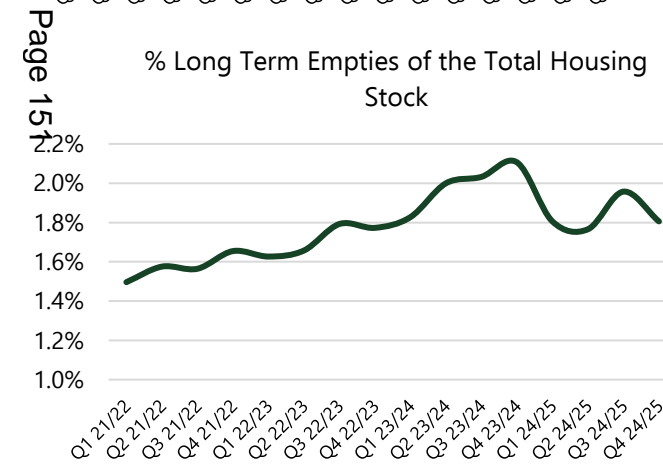


Decreased since last quarter and last year

### Lower is Good

No Target

811

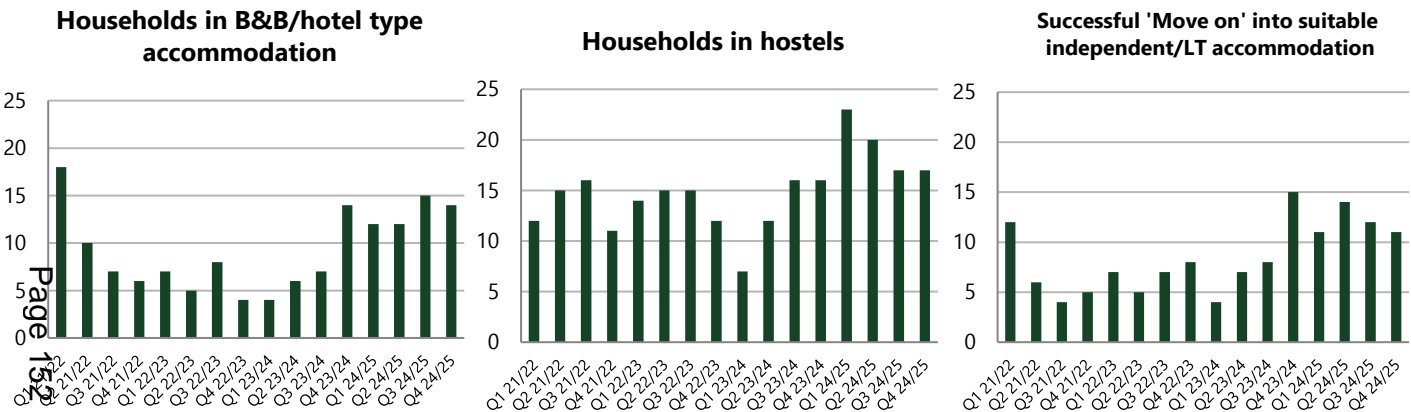


In Q4 2024/25, Cotswold District Council saw a reduction in long-term empty properties, with the number falling to 811, down from a peak of 966 in Q4 2023/24. This improvement is attributed to the proactive efforts of the Long-Term Empty Properties Officer, who has been instrumental in reducing vacant properties. The council's ongoing focus on addressing this issue has contributed to the positive shift in long-term empty property numbers.

### How do we compare?

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

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



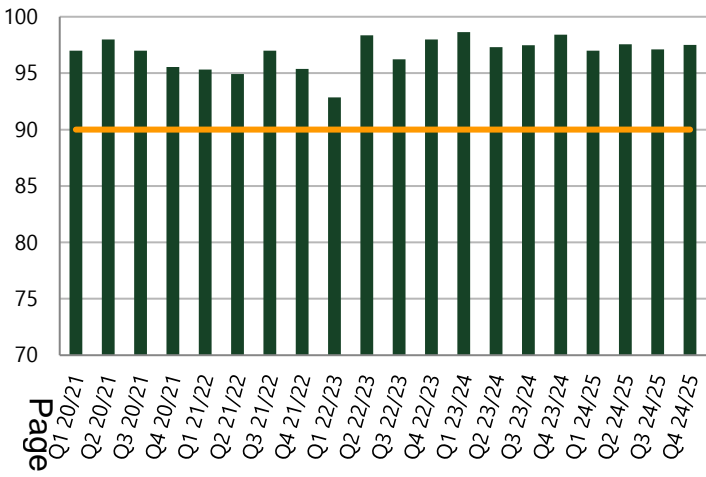
Direction of Travel		
Against Last Quarter	B&Bs/Hotels	⬇️
Against Last Year	B&Bs/Hotels	➡️
Against Last Quarter	Hostels	➡️
Against Last Year	Hostels	⬆️
Against Last Quarter	Move Ons	⬇️
Against Last Year	Move Ons	⬇️

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

Homelessness continues to present a challenge in Cotswold, though there was a slight reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation during Q4. The issue is exacerbated by factors such as full hostels, limited capacity within adult homelessness pathways, and a lack of affordable housing options beyond the social rented sector. Despite these pressures, the council has made encouraging progress in tackling rough sleeping, with consistently zero or very low numbers reported across the district.

The council’s housing team remains committed to early intervention and prevention, having successfully prevented homelessness for approximately 200 households over the financial year. This includes 142 cases resolved within the statutory 56-day prevention period, and a further 58 cases addressed before legal duties were triggered. These figures are provisional, pending final confirmation through government reporting channels.

# Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Higher is Good

Target

Actual

Improved since last quarter but slightly decreased since last year

90%

97.51%

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

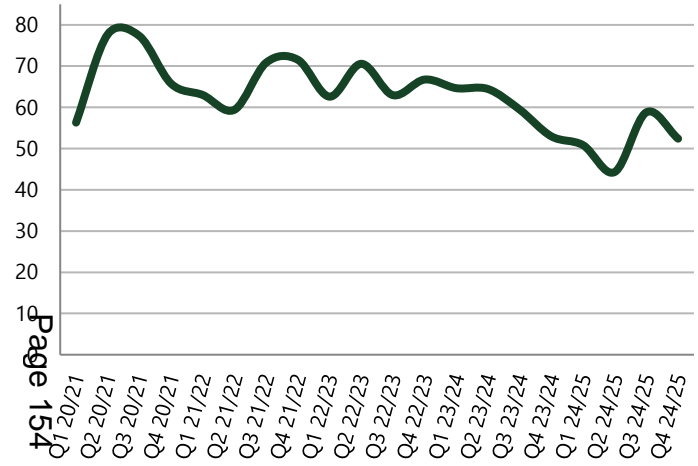
A total of 602 residents participated in the survey, of these, 587 customers reported being satisfied with the service, reflecting a high level of overall satisfaction.

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


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


	Jan Rank	Jan Net Sat.	Feb Rank	Feb Net Sat.	Mar Rank	Mar Net Sat.
Cotswold	3	95%	5	92%	2	97%
Forest	N/A	N/A	1	96%	1	99%
West	1	95%	2	94%	3	95%

# Customer Satisfaction - Email



**Direction of Travel**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

**Higher is Good**

No Target

52.4%

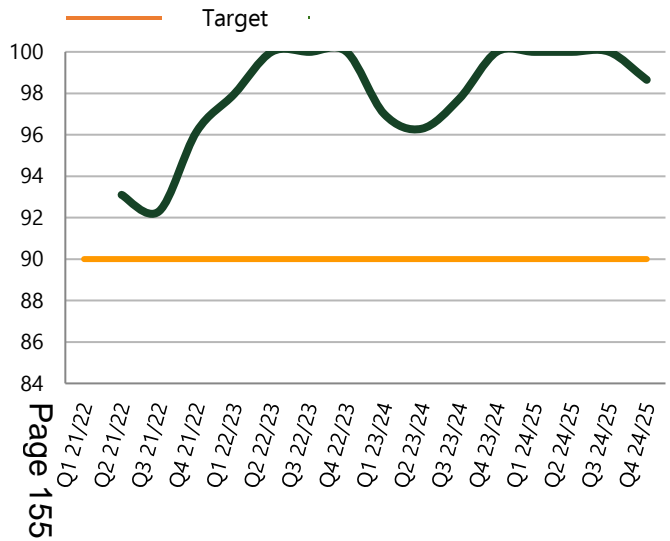
542 residents responded to the survey, of which 284 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 52.4% satisfaction for the quarter, down from 58.28% during Q3.

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


Previously, rising levels of negative feedback prompted a review to identify the underlying causes of dissatisfaction. The analysis highlighted that dissatisfaction primarily arose from service failures, such as missed bin collections, delays in container deliveries, and insufficient responses from Planning and Housing services.


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

# Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face



**Direction of Travel**

Against last Quarter 

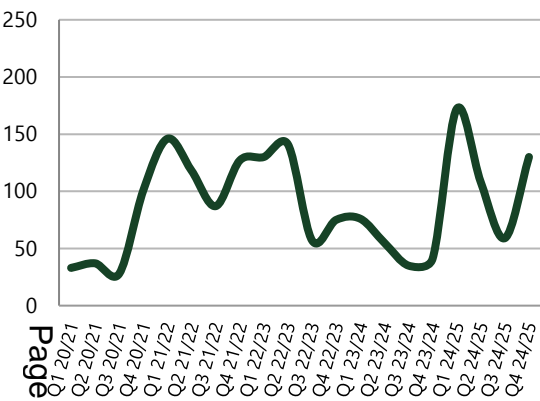
Against last Year 

Slightly decreased since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good	
Target	90%
Actual	100%

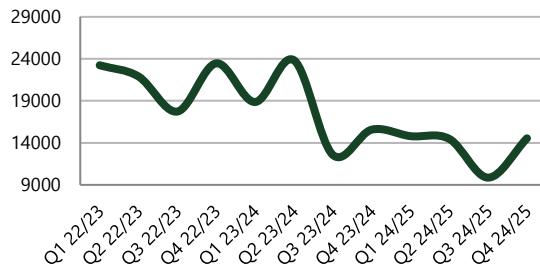
Customer satisfaction with face-to-face interactions remains consistently high, reaching 98.65% in Q4 2024/25. Of the 74 customers surveyed during the quarter, 73 reported being satisfied with the service received—demonstrating continued strong performance in delivering quality, in-person support.

# Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



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Call Volume over Time



## How do we compare?

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

## Direction of Travel

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

## Lower is Good

No Target  
130 Seconds

During Q4, average wait times increased to around 130 seconds due to a seasonal rise in demand driven by annual billing, garden waste renewals and a surge in council tax queries related to second home premiums.

The team experiences heightened demand during Q4 due to seasonal pressures, with call volumes increasing by 49% between January and March, leading to a natural rise in average wait times. The following data highlights this pattern.

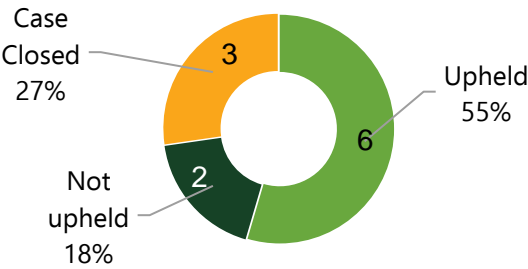
	Jan	Feb	March
Number of calls presented	854	959	1276
Average speed to answer	57	164	249

The Council continues to meet its £125,000 annual savings target from the reduction of the phone lines, and recent vacancies have now been filled, with teams operating effectively. The upgraded Alloy system went live in April, supporting further service efficiencies.




# Number of complaints upheld


## Complaints by Status



### Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter and last year

### How do we compare?

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

During Q4, the Council experienced an increase in the number of complaints received in comparison to last quarter. See the table on the following page for a breakdown of those upheld and partially upheld.

2023-24	Complaints Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Derbyshire Dales	1	0%	0	N/A	N/A	1/8	Top
Chichester	3	33%	0.8	100%	0%	4/8	Second
Cotswold	1	100%	1.1	100%	0%	6/8	Third
Wychavon	4	100%	3	N/A	100%	8/8	Bottom

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

The new process has the following stages:

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

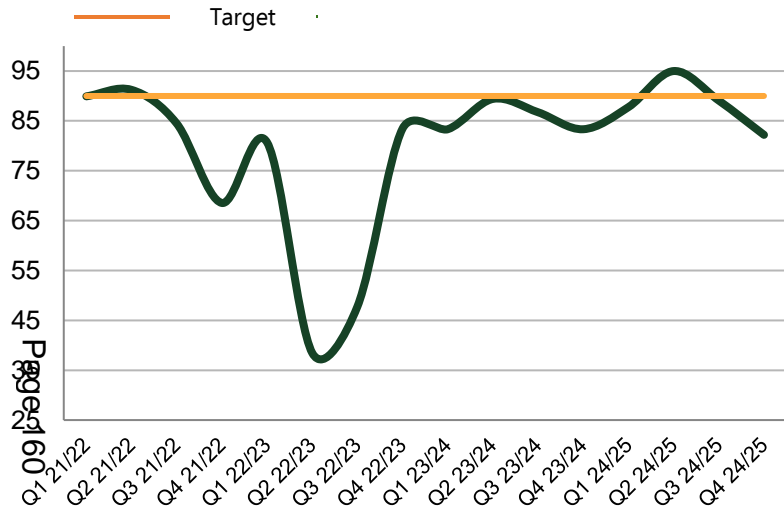
# Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Housing	Upset with treatment by staff	It was acknowledged that the staff member could have communicated more clearly with the complainant. Further training will be provided on interacting with customers with autism and an apology was extended.	Upheld	10+
Housing	Unhappy with bidding process	Although the complaints process is not intended for challenging housing decisions, it was noted that more evidence should have been requested earlier in the process. Training will be updated accordingly.	Upheld	1
Housing	Treatment by officer	Additional training will be offered to ensure staff handle customers with domestic abuse issues in a more empathetic and inclusive manner.	Upheld	10+
Revenues and Benefits	Unhappy with treatment by staff	It was recognised that a confirmation email should have been sent along with the revised bill, and an apology was offered for this oversight	Upheld	4

# Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown Contd.

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Waste	Bins constantly not being collected	The customer's address was added to a monitoring list and an apology was extended.	Upheld	1
Revenues and Benefits	Erroneous council tax calculation/call to staff	An apology was offered for the phone call that, while not the fault of the staff member, led to a dissatisfactory experience.	Upheld	1

# Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year

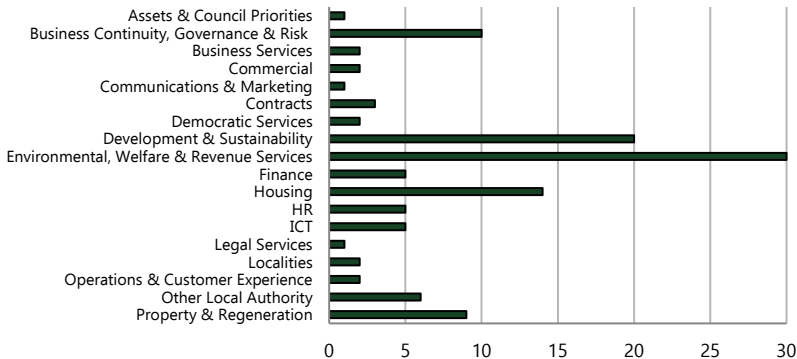


Declined since last quarter but  
steady since last year

## Higher is Good

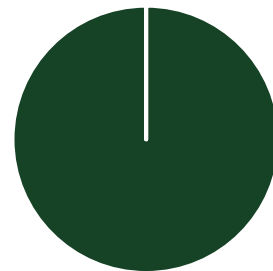
Target	90%
Q4 Actual	82.2%
2024-25 Actual	88.26%

## Requests by Service Area



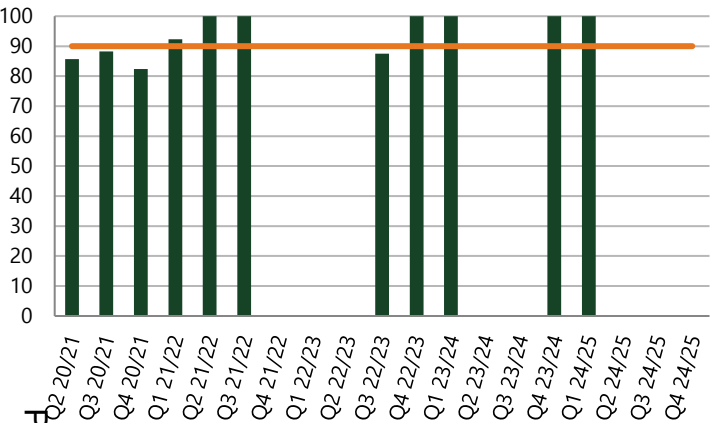
## Reasons for Delays in Responding to FOI Requests Beyond the 20-Day Deadline

Service Area  
not provided  
Information in  
time



100%

# Building Control Satisfaction



Direction of Travel		Higher is Good	
Against last Quarter	N/A	Target	90%
Against last Year	N/A	Actual	No Data
No Data			

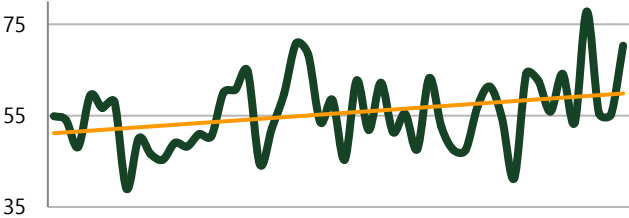
the team has used various methods to engage customers for satisfaction surveys, including paper forms, electronic forms, and phone calls. However, the response rate remains low, with no surveys returned in Q4. To address this, the team has collaborated with the Data Team to create a webform that will be emailed to customers with their completion certificate, aiming to improve the response rate.

In Q4, the market share averaged 61%, with 137 applications processed, showing an 8% increase from Q1 and a 9% rise from the same period last year. Despite this growth, Building Control's income fell short of the £260,000 target, reaching £230,781. To enhance efficiency, the team has invested in new software and handheld devices for on-site use, helping officers maximise their time and improve service delivery.

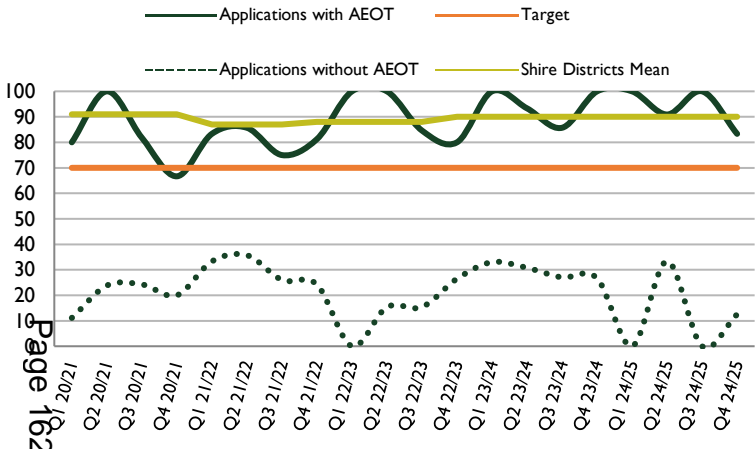
The below chart shows market share over time from April 2021

How do we compare?  
Percentage of share in the market



Jan	Feb	March	Number of Apps for Quarter
56%	55%	70%	137



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



## Direction of Travel

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

Higher is Good

Target	70%
Q4 Actual	83.33%
2024-25 Actual	93.55%

## How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is October - December '24 (Q3 2024-25)

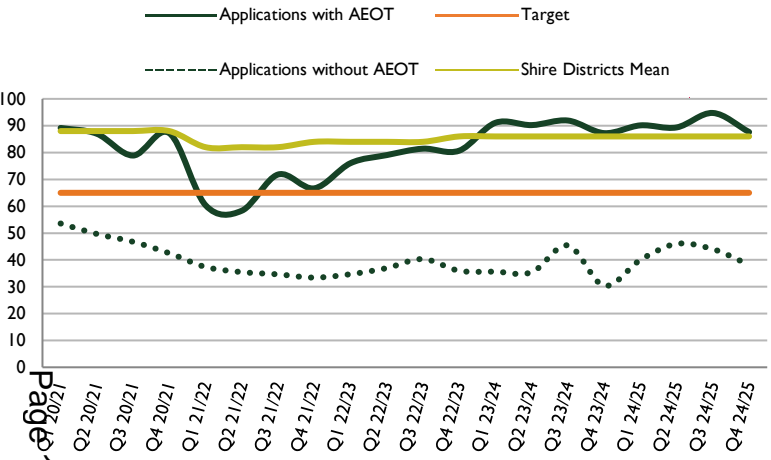
Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1/12</b>	<b>Top</b>
West Devon	100	1/12	Top
Malvern Hills	93	5/12	Second
Wychavon	85	8/12	Third
Maldon	80	10/12	Bottom
Derbyshire Dales	58	12/12	Bottom

The service has maintained strong performance in processing Major applications within the agreed timeframes.


During Q4, six major applications were determined.


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

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter but slightly improved since last year

## Higher is Good

Target	65%
Q4 Actual	87.64%
2024-25 Actual	89.94%

## How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is October - December '24 (Q3 2024-25)

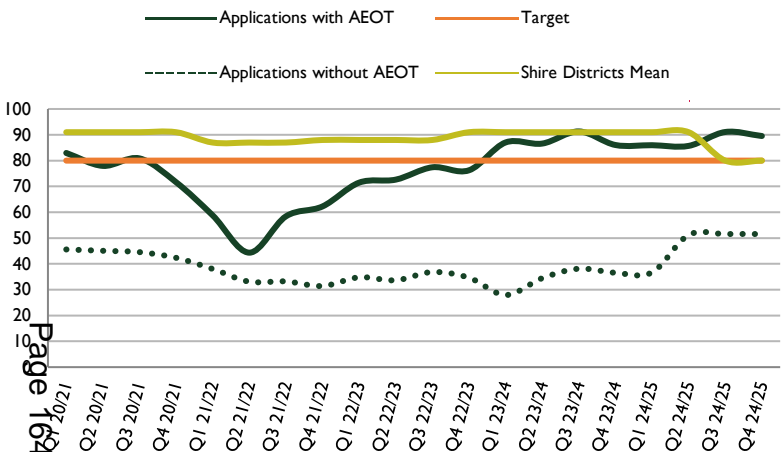
Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Lichfield	100	1/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2/12</b>	<b>Top</b>
Wychavon	87	4/12	Second
Maldon	85	8/12	Third
East Hampshire	82	10/12	Bottom
Stratford-on-Avon	77	12/12	Bottom

This quarter, the Council has continued to demonstrate strong performance in processing minor applications within the required timeframes. Focused efforts on addressing long-standing applications and optimizing workflows have resulted in significant improvements. Notably, the proportion of applications awaiting a decision beyond statutory timeframes has decreased from 51% in October to just 24% by the end of Q4.


As of Q4 2024-2025, the Council's rolling average stands at 93.55%, well above the government's 70% threshold, highlighting the service's robust performance.

In total, 89 minor applications were determined during Q4.

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly declined since last quarter but improved since last year

## Higher is Good

Target	80%
Q4 Actual	89.53%
2024-25 Actual	86.68%

## How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform. Latest dataset is October - December '24 (Q3 2024-25)

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Maldon	96	1/12	Top
Ribble Valley	95	3/12	Top
Wychavon	93	5/12	Second
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>8/12</b>	<b>Third</b>
Stratford-on-Avon	89	10/12	Bottom
Malvern Hills	79	12/12	Bottom

The Council has performed very well processing Other applications within agreed times.

Notably, the proportion of applications determined without an agreed extension of time has consistently remained at around 50%, marking a 14% increase from the previous year. This highlights the effectiveness of the improvements implemented under the Development Management Improvement Plan.

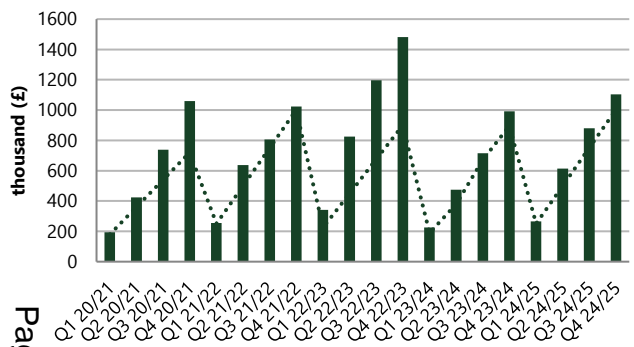
In Q4, a total of 259 Other applications were determined

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




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


**Total planning income**



## Direction of Travel


Total Planning Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Pre-Application Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

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

## Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target 1,001,877

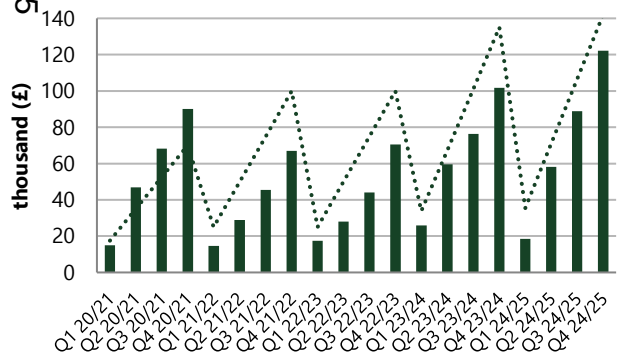
Actual 1,104,109

Pre-Application Income (£)

Target 142,000

Actual 122,202

**Pre-application income**

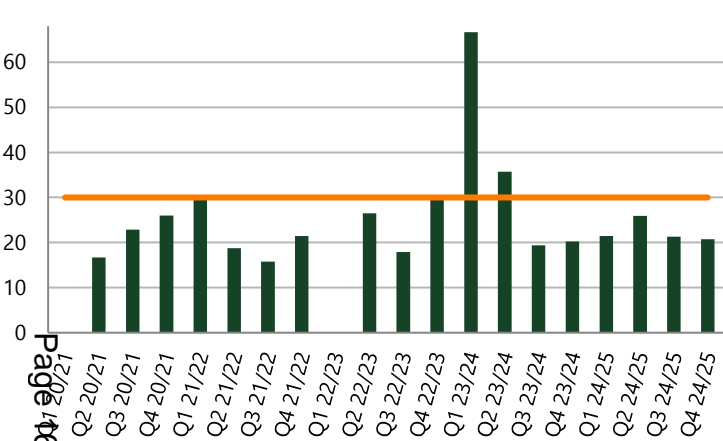


At the end of Q4, total planning income for the Council exceeded its target. Compared to Q4 of 2023-24, total planning income saw an increase of approximately £110,000, while pre-application income rose by around £20,000.

## How do we compare?

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

# Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Improved since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

Lower is Good

Target

Actual

30%

20.75%

## How do we compare?

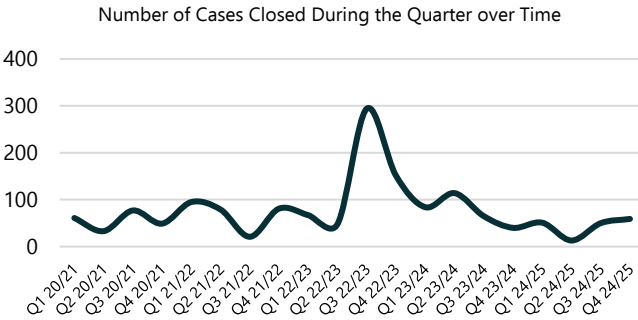
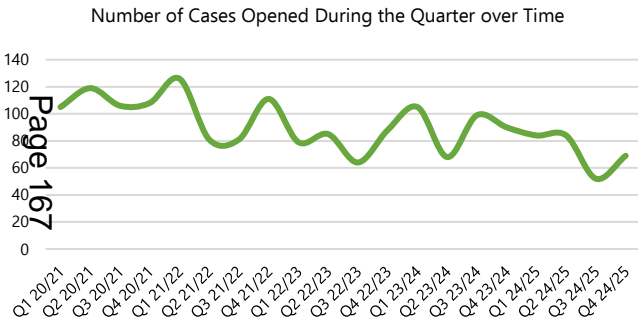
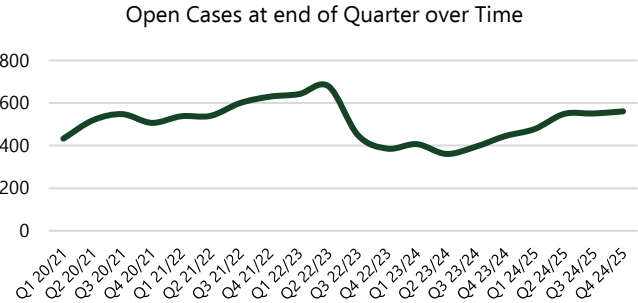
Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform. Latest dataset is October - December '24 (Q3 2024-25)

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
West Devon	17	1/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2/12</b>	<b>Top</b>
Stratford-on-Avon	26	6/12	Second
Malvern Hills	50	8/12	Third
West Oxfordshire	60	10/12	Bottom
Ribble Valley	67	12/12	Bottom

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

Between 1 January and 31 March 2025, six appeals were decided, with one allowed in favour of the applicant, resulting in a 16.67% allowance rate for the quarter. As this metric is cumulative, the end of year total stands at 53 appeals, with 11 allowed.

# (Snapshot) Planning Enforcement Cases



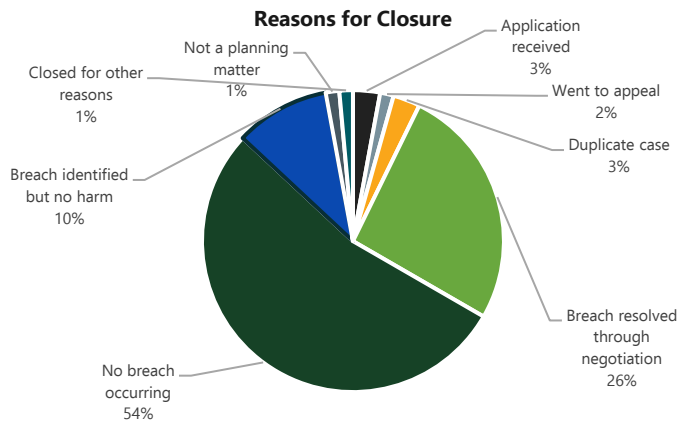
## Direction of Travel for Open Cases at end of Quarter

Against last Quarter  
Against last Year



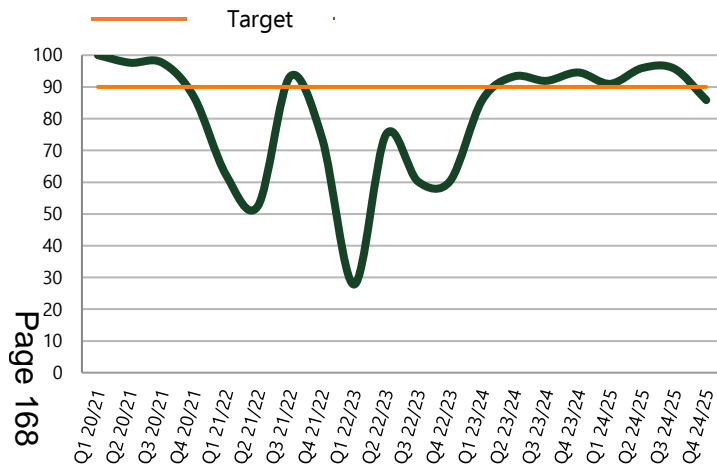
## Lower is Good

No Target  
Open Cases at End of Quarter 561



The enforcement team has faced extended staff shortages, leading to a backlog of cases. However, with staffing levels now approaching full capacity, the team is actively addressing the backlog. Efforts are also underway to update and review the enforcement plan to enhance both service efficiency and effectiveness moving forward.

# Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Steady since last quarter but improved  
since last year

## Higher is Good

Target

90%

Q4 Actual

85.85%

2024-25  
Actual

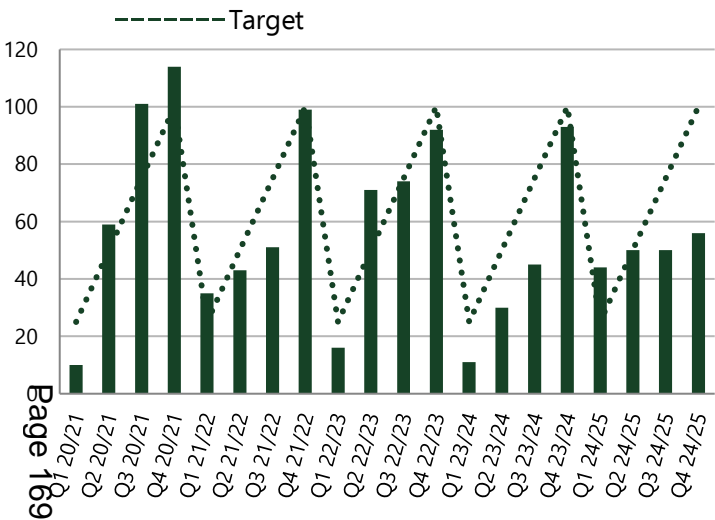
91.95%

During Q4, the Council fell slightly below its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days, achieving just under 86%, down from 96% in Q3. This dip in performance is primarily attributed to increased workloads and operational challenges. However, the Council has taken proactive steps to improve the situation. Efforts to strengthen communication and collaboration with the answering teams have proven successful, enhancing workload management and enabling team members to handle tasks more efficiently. These improvements are expected to contribute to higher productivity moving forward. Additionally, the Council has begun working on the HMLR (His Majesty's Land Registry) project, which aims to establish a national local land charges service. While still in its early stages, this initiative is expected to help accelerate the land charge search process and improve overall service delivery in the future.

## How do we compare?

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

# Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Number of completions  
increased since last  
quarter but declined  
since last year

## Higher is Good

Target

100

Actual

56

During 2024–25, 56 affordable homes were delivered across the district, compared to the 74 initially forecast by Registered Providers (RPs) at the start of the year. Delays at key sites—such as Down Ampney—due to project re-phasing have pushed some completions into 2025–26.

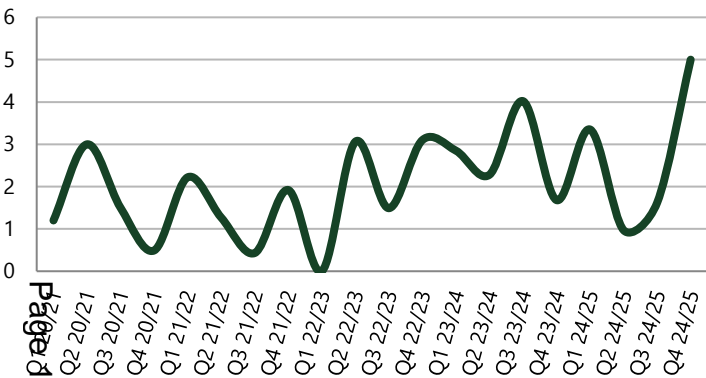
Affordable housing delivery tends to fluctuate, as most developments take over a year to complete, often progressing in multiple phases over several years. Early overdelivery at the start of the current strategy has also contributed to a dip in recent annual outputs. Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, a total of 886 affordable homes have been delivered in the District, averaging 126 per year.

## How do we compare?

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

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

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




## How do we compare?


Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is 2023-24

2023-24 Benchmark	Total Fly Tips	Total Enforcement Actions	Total FPNs	% FPNs per Fly Tip	CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Rank	Quartile
Maldon	364	392	13	3.57	1/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>5/12</b>	<b>Second</b>
Wychavon	835	192	3	0.36	8/12	Third
West Devon	346	0	0	0	12/12	Bottom


## Direction of Travel


**Number of Fly Tips**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

**Percentage Enforcement Action**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

*No Target*

Number of Fly Tips Collected

178

Percentage Enforcement Action

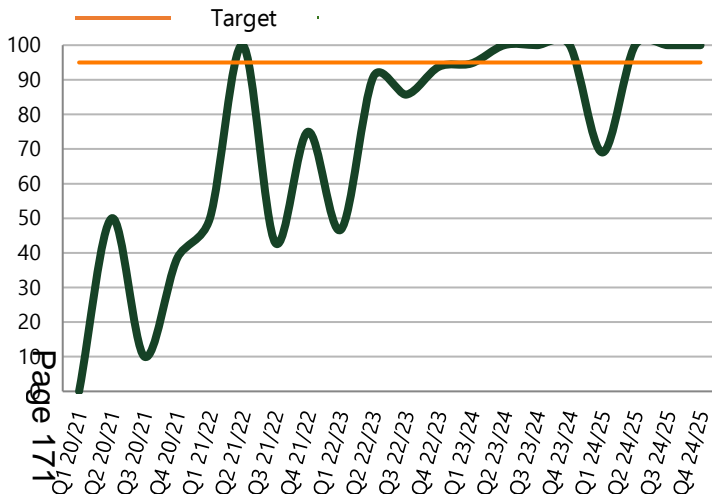
5%

Fly Tips – Increased since last quarter but decreased since last year

Enforcement Action – Improved since last quarter and last year

Fly-tipping incidents in Cotswold rose to 178 in Q4, up from 137 in Q3. While this marks a short-term increase, overall levels remain well below historic highs. At the same time, enforcement action reached 5%—the highest rate in over five years—demonstrating strengthened efforts supported by the S.C.R.A.P. campaign, 20 Fly-tipping Guardians, and £38,000 in government funding for enforcement and education.

# Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Steady since last year and last  
quarter

## Higher is Good

Target

95%

Q4 Actual

100%

2024-25  
Actual

87.07%

The Council conducted two inspections during Q4, both of which were completed within the timescale.

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

## How do we compare?

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

# % High risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter

N/A

Against last  
Year

N/A

No Data

## Higher is Good

Target 90%

Actual N/A

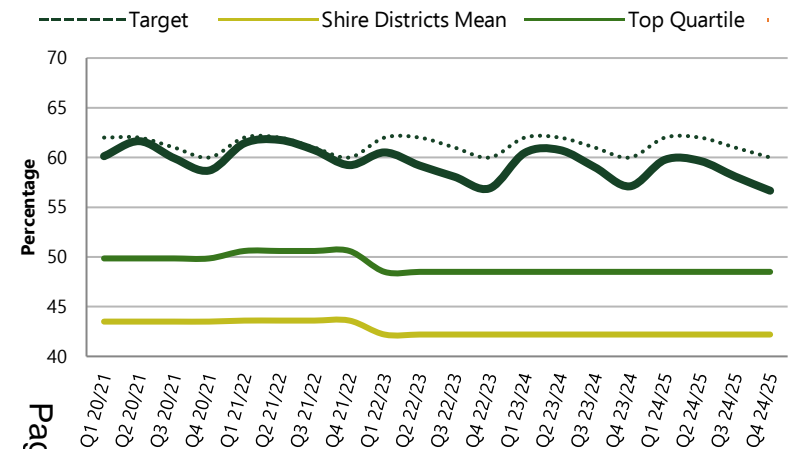
No high-risk notifications were received during Q4.

## How do we compare?

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



# Percentage of household waste recycled



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter  
↓

Against last Year  
↓

Declined since last quarter and last year

## Higher is Good

Target	60%
Actual	56.66%

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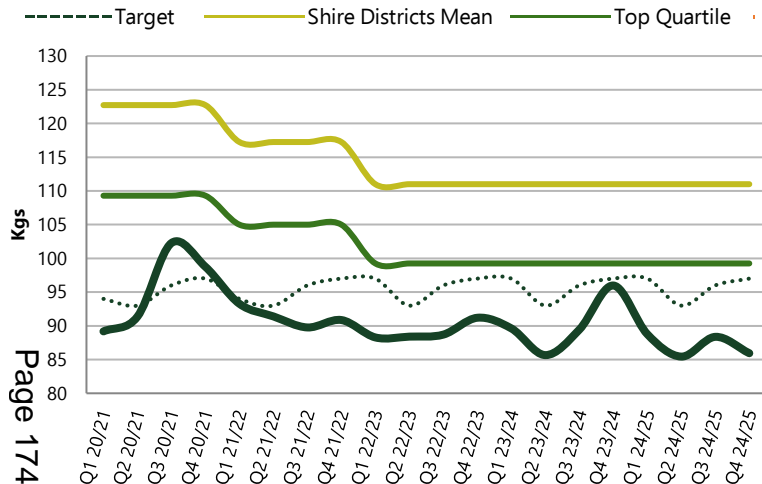
### How do we compare?

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in January-March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Stratford-on-Avon	55.18	1/12	Top
Maldon	52.47	3/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>50.73</b>	<b>5/12</b>	<b>Second</b>
Wychavon	38.14	8/12	Third
Lichfield	36.07	10/12	Bottom
East Hampshire	31.67	12/12	Bottom

The recycling rates for 2024–25 stand at 56.66%, which is approximately 0.4% lower than the same period last year. Within the quarter, rates dipped slightly in February to 47.98% after starting at 50.88% in January, but recovered strongly to 55.49% in March.

# Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



## Direction of Travel

Against last  
Quarter



Against last  
Year



Decreased since last quarter and last  
year

## Lower is Good

Q4 Target

80

Q4 Actual

85.94

2024-25  
Target

383

2024-25  
Actual

348.48

## How do we compare?

Residual household waste per household (kg/household) –  
LG Inform. The latest dataset available in January-March '24  
(Q4 2023-24)

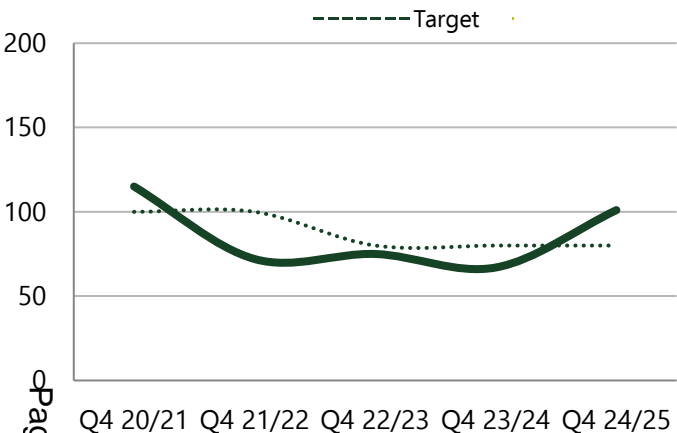
Q4 23-24 Benchmark	Kg	CIPFA Rank	Quartile
Stratford-on-Avon	79.41	1/12	Top
West Oxfordshire	85.42	3/12	Top
<b>Cotswold</b>	<b>95.27</b>	<b>5/12</b>	<b>Second</b>
Chichester	106.79	8/12	Third
Lichfield	119.37	10/12	Bottom
Ribble Valley	133.97	12/12	Bottom

Residual waste follows a cyclical pattern throughout the year, with targets set accordingly.

Residual waste per household decreased steadily over the quarter, from 31.92 kg in January to 27.50 kg in February, and 26.52 kg in March. January typically sees higher levels due to post-Christmas waste, so the downward trend that followed is in line with seasonal expectations.

Despite this seasonal fluctuation, the Council remains well within the first quartile of all English authorities, maintaining a comfortable margin of approximately 14kg.

# Missed bins per 100,000



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Increased since last quarter and last year

Lower is Good

Target

Q4 Actual

2024-25 Actual

80

101

169.7

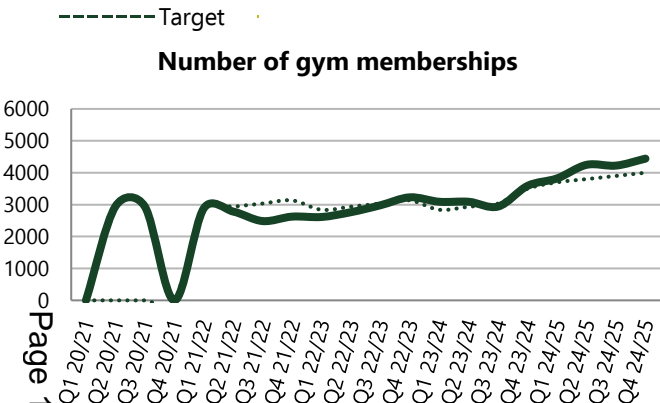
How do we compare?

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

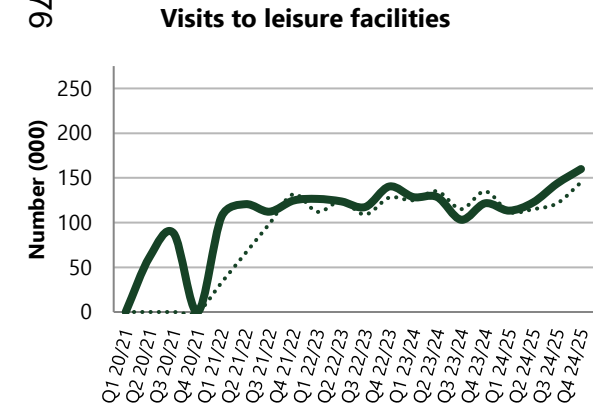
2022-23 Benchmark	Missed collections per 100,000 collections	Family Group Rank	Family Group Quartile	Whole Service Rank	Whole Service Quartile
Cotswold	109.89	12/14	Bottom	39/45	Bottom

The rate of missed bin collections rose to 101 per 100,000 collections—exceeding the target of 80. This increase was primarily driven by operational challenges, including staffing shortages and the prolonged absence of a narrow access vehicle, which was off the road for two months. These issues particularly affected properties on routes that require specialist vehicles. Recruitment efforts are actively underway, with recent interviews held to address the staffing gap and improve service resilience. Additionally, flooding in January caused temporary disruption to collection schedules, further contributing to the spike in missed bins during the period.

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



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## Direction of Travel

Gym Memberships

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Leisure Visits

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Gym Memberships – Increased since last quarter and last year  
Leisure Visits – Improved since last quarter and last year

## Higher is Good

Gym Memberships

Target

4,000

Actual

4,441

Leisure Visits

Target

145,000

Q4 Actual

159,862

2024-25 Target

493,500

2024-25 Actual

539,319

In Q4, the Council recorded strong growth in gym memberships and leisure centre usage, reflecting continued recovery and rising engagement with local facilities. Gym membership rose by 218 members to reach a record high of 4,441—surpassing the target of 4,000. Compared to the same period last year, this marks a substantial increase of 851 members, underscoring the effectiveness of recent programming improvements and facility investments.

Leisure centre visits also saw a significant rise, climbing by over 18,000 from the previous quarter to a total of 159,862. This represents the highest quarterly figure on record and exceeds the target by nearly 15,000 visits. Year-on-year, visits increased by more than 35,000, highlighting growing community participation and a return to pre-pandemic activity levels.

How do we compare?

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

The service conducts monthly site inspections, assessing areas such as maintenance, staffing, and cleanliness. Each is rated from 1 to 5, with an average site rating for Q4 of 2.99.



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 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 report back from the Task & Finish Group the 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 Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves to: Recommend to Council 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 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. "This Council resolves to:
- Agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
  - Request that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers."
- 2.3** 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.



- 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.

### **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. PROPOSED KEY MESSAGES TO THE GOVERNMENT**

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

- 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.
- UK farmers are typically price takers selling into global commodity markets
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.).
- 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.
- 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 settings and is about the management of the land for potentially decades to come.
- 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.

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

- The timing of the implementation of the changes does not provide sufficient opportunity for agricultural landowners to properly succession plan.



- 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.
- The IHT thresholds are set at a level which is on the borderline of what is an economically sustainable farm in the Cotswold District.
- The ability to pay will vary across different types of farming but the proposed IHT rules takes no account of this.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE POLICY APPROACHES**

- 1.1.** 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:

- The 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Significantly higher thresholds would be appropriate in the Cotswolds and many other parts of the UK.
- Exempting farmers whose primary source of income derives from farming.
- Exempting farmers who are on transformation pathways as recommended in COP28 towards sustainable farming that mitigates climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Providing joined up long-term support for integrated farming systems.
- Reviewing the system of roll-over reliefs whereby tax continually gets deferred.
- Considering ways to secure the next generation of farmers e.g. providing 100% exemptions where land is leased to young tenant farmers.

**6.1** It is recommended that the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking them to reconsider their proposals and to take account of the above points.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**7.1** 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.



**8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

**10. RISK ASSESSMENT**

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

**11. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**11.1** There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

**12. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**12.1** 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.

**13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**1.2.** None.

(END)



## **AGENDA**

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

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

#### Farmers Motion

Proposer: Councillor Julia Judd

Seconder: Councillor Joe Harris

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 of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 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>		

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## **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)

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## Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

A special meeting of the committee was held online on 9.6.25 to respond to concerns raised by the committee, and I should disclose led by myself.

The purpose of the meeting was to confirm that committee members deserved and needed greater clarity about the role of the new GESSC and to give it. The gist is that the committee is in response to a proposal that we should align economic strategy with the terminology and operative policy of the government, which is geared towards funding "City Region Boards". A City Region Board has therefore been created with representatives from each of the District Councils and it is the policies approved by this body that we are scrutinise.

My initial assessment is that this has relevance to the scrutiny process for local government reorganisation, to be confirmed. There is also a county economic strategy. The original county economic strategy, of which I have given reports, was not approved by all district councils. It therefore does not have a county wide approval although, as I understand it, it remains operative for the county itself. Any scrutiny of what the county is doing economically in its own right would depend on a scrutiny committee formed within the county but excluding districts. Whether this particular arrangement should continue now that there is a new political leadership and under the circumstances of local government organisation, apparently remains to be seen.

I will be able to report further after the vacation and after studying the minutes, so please consider this an interim impressionistic assessment from my notes.

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**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Call in**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any “call-in” of a decision that has been made but not yet implemented. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision made is appropriate given all relevant information (but not because it would have made a

different decision). It may recommend that the Cabinet, a Portfolio Holder or the Council should reconsider the decision. (It should be noted that Cabinet does not have to change its decision following the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

Item	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>Monday 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		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 - Cllr Joe Harris	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Long term empty homes/second homes strategy update	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning - Cllr Juliet Layton	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service Mandy.Fathers@publicagroup.uk

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>		
Economic Performance Indicators	Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment - Cllr Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk

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**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

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

**The Forward Plan**

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

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

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

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

## **Key Decisions**

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

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the authority.

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

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

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

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

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

## **Documents and Queries**

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

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



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

**Contact Details:**

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

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

**The Council's Executive Arrangements**

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

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

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

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

The Cabinet generally meets monthly; whereas decision-making by individual Cabinet Members occurs on an 'as and when needed' basis. Decisions of the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members are subject to scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mike Evemy	Leader	Executive functions and corporate plan delivery, Local government reorganisation and devolution, Town and parish council liaison, Communications, Publica and UBICO, Member development
Juliet Layton (Deputy Leader)	Housing and Planning	Strategic housing, Homelessness, Forward planning and the local plan, Development management, heritage and conservation, Biodiversity emergency response, Neighbourhood planning
Mike McKeown	Climate Change and Digital	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
Patrick Coleman	Finance	Financial strategy and management, Property and assets, Revenues and benefits, Grant funding and Crowdfund Cotswold
Paul Hodgkinson	Health, Culture and Visitor Experience	Public health, Parking operations and public toilets, Leisure centres, Culture and museums, Tourism, Community safety partnership
Claire Bloomer	Communities	Cost of living support, Liaison with third sector, Diversity, inclusion and young people, Safeguarding, Refugee and asylum response
Tristan Wilkinson	Economy and Council Transformation	Economic development, Council transformation, Business liaison, Flooding and sewage
Andrea Pellegram	Environment and Regulatory Services	Waste and recycling, Environmental and regulatory services, Street cleaning, Public realm

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>10 July 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Net zero update and action required	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital - Councillor Mike McKeown	Olivia McGregor, Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead <a href="mailto:olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk">olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst <a href="mailto:Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk">Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</a>
Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter 4	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Licenced HMO fee policy and HMO Amenity Standards policy	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Philip Measures, Service Lead Environmental Health - Food Safety & Licensing <a href="mailto:philip.measures@publicagroup.uk">philip.measures@publicagroup.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive <a href="mailto:robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk">robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
People and Culture Strategy	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Creative Cotswolds Action Plan - Culture Strategy	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities <a href="mailto:joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk">joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (09/2023) Update	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	John Llewellyn, Head of Human Resources <a href="mailto:john.llewellyn@publicagroup.uk">john.llewellyn@publicagroup.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Update	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities <a href="mailto:joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk">joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Local Plan Update	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Jo Symons, Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure <a href="mailto:jo.symons@cotswold.gov.uk">jo.symons@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
PAS Peer Review and Action Plan	No	Open	Cabinet	10 Jul 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>16 July 2025 - Full Council</b>						
Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Member(s)	No	Open	Council	16 Jul 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
						<a href="mailto:d.gov.uk">d.gov.uk</a>
<b>4 September 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Private Sector Housing and Caravan Sites, policy review and update.	No	Open	Cabinet	4 Sep 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Philip Measures, Service Lead Environmental Health - Food Safety & Licensing <a href="mailto:philip.measures@publicagroup.uk">philip.measures@publicagroup.uk</a>
Revocation of Cotswold District Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2007)	Yes	Open	Cabinet	4 Sep 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead <a href="mailto:matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk">matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) Regulation 19	Yes	Open	Cabinet	4 Sep 2025	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead <a href="mailto:matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk">matthew.britton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Consultation						<a href="http://old.gov.uk">old.gov.uk</a>
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	No	Open	Cabinet	4 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1	No	Open	Cabinet	4 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst <a href="mailto:Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk">Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</a>
<b>24 September 2025 - Full Council</b>						
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25	No	Open	Council	24 Sep 2025	Gina Blomefield, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>16 October 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document Consultation	Yes	Open	Cabinet	16 Oct 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Councillor Juliet Layton	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	Yes	Open	Cabinet	16 Oct 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>20 November 2025 - Cabinet</b>						
Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	20 Nov 2025 26 Nov 2025	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>



Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>26 November 2025 - Full Council</b>						
<b>8 January 2026 - Cabinet</b>						
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2	No	Open	Cabinet	8 Jan 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst <a href="mailto:Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk">Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</a>
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2	No	Open	Cabinet	8 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Fees and Charges 2026/27	Yes	Open	Cabinet	8 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Budget Consultation Responses	Yes	Open	Cabinet	8 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>21 January 2026 - Full Council</b>						
<b>5 February 2026 - Cabinet</b>						
Budget 2026-27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	5 Feb 2026 23 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>23 February 2026 - Full Council</b>						
Pay Policy Statement 2026	No	Open	Council	23 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	John Llewellyn, Head of Human Resources <a href="mailto:john.llewellyn@publicagroup.uk">john.llewellyn@publicagroup.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
<b>5 March 2026 - Cabinet</b>						
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst <a href="mailto:Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk">Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</a>
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>18 March 2026 - Full Council</b>						
<b>16 April 2026 - Cabinet</b>						
<b>20 May 2026 - Full Council</b>						
Record of Attendance 2025/26	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
						<a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Appointment of Committees 2026-27	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Outside Body Appointments 2026-27	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Every	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>Key decisions delegated to officers</b>						
UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund update	Yes	Open	Cabinet Chief Executive Officer	11 Jan 2024 6 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Councillor Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Rural England Prosperity Fund	Yes	Open	Cabinet Chief Executive Officer	17 Jul 2023 19 Mar 2024	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Cllr Tony Dale	Paul James, Economic Development Lead <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Disposal of Property in Bourton on the Water	Yes	Open	Cabinet Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer)	9 May 2024 Before 31 Dec 2025	Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Finance - Cllr Mike Evemy	Jasmine McWilliams, Estates Manager <a href="mailto:jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk">jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk</a>  David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer <a href="mailto:David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk">David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>

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