

# Public Document Pack



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Friday, 23 January 2026

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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, 2 February 2026 at 4.00 pm.**

Jane Portman  
Interim Chief Executive

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

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

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

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

# AGENDA

## 1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence. The quorum for 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 5 January 2026.

## 5. **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 13 - 18)

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 one minute. 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**

There are no recommendations from Cabinet for the Committee to respond to.

**10. Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Purpose

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

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

**11. The Retail and Hospitality Sectors in the Cotswold District (Pages 19 - 42)**

4.15pm

Purpose

To report on the health of and the challenges faced by the retail and hospitality sectors in the district.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Tristan Wilkinson

Lead Officer

Paul James

12. **Budget 2026-27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy** - 5pm

Purpose

To present the Revenue Budget for 2026/27, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2026/27 to 2029/30.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance

Lead Officer

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and S151

13. **Work Plan and Forward Plan** (Pages 43 - 58) – 6.15pm

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

(END)

# Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
05/January2026



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 5 January 2026**

Members present:

Gina Blomefield (Chair)

Angus Jenkinson (Vice Chair)

Nick Bridges

Tony Slater

Joe Harris

David Cunningham

Clare Turner

Michael Vann

Officers present:

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and  
Chief Finance Officer

Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer  
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and  
Electoral Services

Officer

Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst

Andrea Thomas, ERS Officer

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer  
Helen Martin, Director for Communities  
and Place

Councillors:

Mike Emery

Patrick Coleman

Andrea Pellegram

### **OS.274 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jon Wareing and Lisa Spivey.

### **OS.275 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

### **OS.276 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Angus Jenkinson declared his role as Chair of the North Cotswold Liberal Democrats and his membership of the Upper Thames Catchment Partnership Steering Group.

**OS.277 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 1 December 2025 were discussed. Councillor Turner proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Slater seconded the proposal which was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2025.

**OS.278 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was noted that there was no update from the previous meeting, but that information regarding how the Regulation 18 housing numbers had been calculated was expected shortly.

**OS.279 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair thanked officers and Members for their support over the year and particularly the Vice Chair. The Chair confirmed that future work would include scrutiny of the next stage of the Local Plan and preparations for local government reorganisation when this was ready.

16:06 – Councillor David Cunningham arrived in the Chamber.

**OS.280 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**OS.281 Member Questions**

There were no Member questions.

**OS.282 Report back on recommendations**

There were no recommendations to Cabinet at the previous meeting.

**OS.283 Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

The Chair thanked Councillor Jenkinson for his report and comments from the Gloucester Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee. The Chair also thanked Councillor Neill for her report on HOSC, which provided useful insights into local NHS services, including the five-year plan and the ten-year national health plan, highlighting the role of technology and AI in service transformation.

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

The report was introduced by Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, and Alison Barrett, Senior Performance Analyst.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The targets used across many services were predominantly government mandated. These included both time-based targets and percentage measures, whilst other targets, such as those for waste services, were set at a service level. Overall, approximately 70% of the targets were determined by government requirements, with 30% established by individual services.
- Statutory and service targets provided a clear set of expectations, particularly for nationally mandated measures. Government-set targets were intended to ensure consistent performance monitoring across councils. Officers highlighted that LG Inform, the Local Government Association's data-sharing platform, could be used to compare the Council's performance with other authorities.
- That the "two decimal place rule" should be reconsidered to reflect best practice. It was noted that the data could be rounded if requested.
- There had been some delays in council rebates for residents. These challenges were partly due to the transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit for working-age claimants. Performance had improved significantly in the second quarter, although cumulative annual figures still reflected earlier delays.
- Given the current planning context, including the loss of the five-year land supply and the tilted balance in favour of applications, it was prudent to allocate additional funds to defend planning decisions.
- Reporting service failures as a separate measure for missed bin collections would provide clearer insight into operational performance.
- Household waste recycling figures could be negatively affected when less waste arises, which also influenced decisions around waste collection services.
- The green waste recycling rate could be misleading during a dry season during summer months. It was confirmed that green waste figures could be reported separately from general recycling and normal waste to provide insight into performance.
- The Council continued to support the Royal Agricultural University (RAU)'s Innovation Village application and officers were asked to ensure strategic-level representations to progress it through the planning process.
- Engagement with towns and parishes had included discussions on local government reorganisation (LGR) alongside the Local Plan, particularly at the November forums in Moreton-in-Marsh and Cirencester. A summer update on local government reorganisation would provide an opportunity to launch the public consultation.

- Town and Parish councils had requested more information on the proposed neighbourhood partnerships. There was a challenge in providing definitive details, as boundaries and structures would ultimately be determined by the new authority or authorities.
- The delivery of affordable homes was underachieving. The data was not yet being used to inform the Local Plan but could be used in future to support increasing affordable housing provision.
- LGR had limited the Council's ability to pursue more direct control over housing delivery, leaving the provision of genuinely affordable, socially rented homes largely dependent on the commercial decisions of developers and housing associations.

**OS.285      Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2**

The purpose of the report was to set out the second quarterly budget monitoring position for the 2025/26 financial year.

The report was introduced by Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, and David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive. The report was introduced and the following points made:

- The financial outturn showed several positive variances, with transfers to earmarked reserves helping to mitigate future financial pressures.
- Additional income from development management fees being set aside in an appeals reserve, savings from vacancy management transferred to reserves, and additional treasury management income allocated to support longer-term financial resilience in the context of LGR and potential interest rate reductions.
- Car parking income was also reported to be performing positively, with additional income forecast at Quarter 2 and strong performance into Quarter 3.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- Vacant posts in transformation, learning and organisational development, and strategic housing had been reviewed as part of the Council's vacancy management process. The Council had appointed a Transformation Support Officer and determined that sufficient capacity existed to deliver the transformation programme before LGR. The Learning and Organisational Development roles were no longer considered necessary in the context of LGR. In relation to strategic housing, it was concluded that existing resources were sufficient. These decisions had contributed to the release of £710,000 to reserves.
- Additional costs of supporting the Corporate Plan would depend on how the LGR programme was developed and funded across the county. The £710,000 transferred to the capacity-building reserve by Quarter 2 indicated the likely scale of support required. Any additional LGR-related costs would be considered as part of the budget-setting process in February, with a detailed assessment

included in the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. £1 million over the next two financial years was the level of reserve that might be required to support service delivery.

- The refreshed Corporate Plan did not require additional resources to deliver its priorities.
- The Council reviewed how waste was collected in Bourton-on-the-Water, including considering the use of fewer but larger bins to reduce collection requirements and address areas with persistent waste issues. Work was also underway with fast-food outlets, and a pilot scheme was expected to be introduced.

Break 17:28 – 17:33

#### **OS.286      Waste Fleet Replacement**

The purpose of the report was to review the Capital Fleet Replacement Programme and identify the vehicles for replacement in 2026/27 and to agree the next steps towards the decarbonisation of the waste service.

The report was introduced by Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services, and Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place. The report was introduced and the following points made:

- The Council faced competing priorities in replacing its waste fleet, including the high capital cost, carbon reduction commitments, and the need to maintain reliable service delivery.
- Due to the age and condition of the existing vehicles, repairing them was not feasible.
- The report had proposed to look at replacing 31 vehicles, including purchasing one electric vehicle in the southern part of the district where charging infrastructure was available, with the remainder using diesel temporarily. Hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) would be used as a lower-carbon alternative to diesel where possible.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that further financial information would be provided in the February budget report, with funding available and borrowing avoided.
- The lead time for waste fleet replacement vehicles was long, creating urgency to place orders to ensure service continuity. It was confirmed that the Council was working to avoid the need for borrowing, using available balances, reserves, and projected revenue, but a definitive guarantee could not yet be provided due to uncertainties in the provisional local government finance settlement and business rates income. By the next Committee meeting on 3 February, more detailed financial information would be available to inform whether borrowing would be required for the waste fleet replacement programme.

- Placing orders for the waste fleet would involve reserving production slots up to 12 months in advance, with specifications finalised during that period. Payments would be required upfront and on delivery. Officers advised that any adjustments or cancellations to orders could be managed, but the priority remained to organise revenue and capital funding to avoid the need for borrowing.
- Concerns were raised regarding the possible inclusion of palm oil in HVO and the need for auditing or monitoring mechanisms to ensure environmental benefits. The report acknowledged these risks and indicated that the Council would develop an appropriate mechanism to monitor both the financial and climate implications of using HVO.
- The Council was not yet in a position to fully transition to electric vehicles. The Gloucestershire Waste Partnership had not yet delivered significant joint action.
- HVO costs were around 10–15% higher than diesel, amounting to approximately £71k extra per year. Officers confirmed that HVO remained in the report as a temporary measure to mitigate carbon impact while EV adoption was limited, and that planning permission and site ownership issues could affect implementation timing, which was roughly comparable to the lead time for vehicle delivery.
- £60,000 for a fuel bunker was already included in the capital programme. It was also noted that the new vehicles would include larger compartments for cardboard to improve recycling capacity.
- Specific concerns from Members included:
  - the sourcing and environmental integrity of hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) including avoiding HVO derived from crops.
  - the limited proof-of-concept testing with only one electric vehicle, and whether lessons could be drawn from other authorities already operating electric or HVO fleets.
  - the absence of operational assumptions on vehicle lifespan, payload, and range. Members commented that financial considerations appeared to be the primary driver for limiting electric vehicle deployment.
  - a limited HVO supply and potential escalating costs.
  - cancellation policies for orders.
  - detailed financial analysis.
- While the report acknowledged vehicle reliability and early replacement as positive outcomes, members felt insufficient evidence had been provided to assess alternative approaches, consider strategic county-wide solutions in the context of LGR, or fully understand the long-term implications for service delivery and environmental impact. Concerns were raised that without this information the Committee was ill-equipped to make a fully informed recommendation.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

05/January2026

Councillor Joe Harris proposed endorsing the recommendations in the report to Cabinet and Councillor Michael Vann seconded the proposal.

Voting record:

For – 2, Against – 2, Abstain - 4

As there was no majority in favour the proposal fell. No recommendations to Cabinet were proposed.

**OS.287      Work Plan and Forward Plan**

This item was not considered as the meeting had exceeded the 3-hour time limit.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.07 pm

Chair

(END)

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Action	Officer	Response
5 January 2026 meeting		
Number of outstanding Enforcement Cases	Helen Martin	<p>The most up to date figures are as in the report.</p> <p>For context, The Enforcement Team recently completed a review of its structure and capacity, which resulted in a small restructure introducing a new administrative role and an additional Enforcement Officer post. Two recruitment campaigns have since concluded, and we have successfully appointed to the administrative position, with the new starter joining week commencing 12 January 2026, and to the Enforcement Officer role, who is expected to start in late February or early March. A further recruitment exercise is underway for the Senior and Principal Enforcement Officer roles, with adverts closing on 20 January. These posts are historically challenging to fill, so in the interim, two contractors are covering these positions until the end of February.</p> <p>Alongside completing permanent recruitment and maintaining interim cover where necessary, the team are reviewing internal systems and processes to improve efficiency and streamline case handling. We are also updating the Enforcement Plan to ensure it provides clear service standards, and we are reviewing the website with the aim to improve access to information. These measures, combined with the additional posts already secured, will help the team manage its growing workload more effectively.</p>
Separating missed bins from service failures for rubbish collections	Alison Borrett	We are looking into how best this can be represented but will look to add this detail moving forward to the quarterly reports.



Separating green waste from other recycling waste and normal waste	Alison Borrett	We are looking into how best this can be represented but will look to add this detail moving forward to the quarterly reports.																														
Planning appeals – what is the make up of those that go to appeal – large dev, single houses etc.	Helen Martin	<p>In total, we had 15 allowed appeals, with 9 coming in June and July. This represents 37.5% of appeals being allowed throughout this time period, but this drops to just 20% in Q4. We received 3 allowed costs appeals, all of which related to highways issues.</p> <p>The majority of appeals therefore related to 'Minor Other' development types, typically comprising industrial or more commercial development, and householder schemes. The vast majority were delegated decisions and written representations appeal types.</p> <table> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>No.</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Minor Other</td> <td>5</td> <td>33.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Householder</td> <td>5</td> <td>33.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smallscale Major</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Minor Dwellings</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LBC</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Change of Use</td> <td>2</td> <td>13.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Delegated</td> <td>14</td> <td>93.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Committee</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Written Reps</td> <td>8</td> <td>53.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		No.	%	Minor Other	5	33.3	Householder	5	33.3	Smallscale Major	1	6.7	Minor Dwellings	1	6.7	LBC	1	6.7	Other Change of Use	2	13.3	Delegated	14	93.3	Committee	1	6.7	Written Reps	8	53.3
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		<p>Written Reps (Fast</p> <table> <tr> <td>Track)</td><td>4</td><td>26.7</td></tr> <tr> <td>Hearing</td><td>3</td><td>20.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Inquiry</td><td>0</td><td>0.0</td></tr> </table>	Track)	4	26.7	Hearing	3	20.0	Inquiry	0	0.0
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Inquiry	0	0.0									
Property searches – is the target 10 or 40 days?	Alison Borrett	For Land Charges, the target response time is 10 working days, as set by the Local Land Charges Institute. However, due to higher-than-usual volumes of search requests and an existing backlog, the service is currently advising customers of a more realistic turnaround time of 40 days to help manage expectations. This updated timescale has also been reflected on the website to acknowledge the current workload.									
Culture Support Officer - appointed and how many hours will they be working and how will they be seeking to develop creative Cotswolds action plan?	Joseph Walker	The Leisure and Culture Support Officer was appointed w/c 17 November, and started in post on 20 January. The post is 29.6hrs (4 days) per week. Having this officer in post boosts our capacity to monitor both the leisure and culture contracts held with Freedom Leisure, and gives us additional capacity to convene a wider cultural partnership, through setting up and helping host meetings, and providing a resource to drive forward council owned actions.									
Compost - measuring how much compost we're producing and the amount of carbon that is being captured in it and its contribution to biodiversity?	Peta Johnson	The Council collected 9,331 tonnes of garden waste from households in 2024/25. This material is delivered to Hills. The Council pays for the material to be composted by Hills. Hills produce a product, compost, which they then sell to a range of suppliers. Hills have produced the following data sheet that describes the range of products that they produce: <a href="https://www.hills-waste.co.uk/hubfs/Documents/Compost_Datasheet.pdf">https://www.hills-waste.co.uk/hubfs/Documents/Compost_Datasheet.pdf</a>									



		<p>It is difficult to say the contribution that this makes to biodiversity as it depends on the type of compost that is produced, and its end use.</p> <p>Metrics that describe the carbon emissions of a range of treatment options for garden waste are available. These are currently being reviewed and will be released following review.</p>
Car parking enforcement – Status of enforcement cover across the week and sites.	David Stanley/Maria Wheatley	Parking enforcement cover is across all days of the week including Saturdays and Sundays on a rota. This enforcement covers all car parks.
Trinity Road - how much of the income received from the solar PV as opposed to rent from the tenanted areas. What is the split of that income?	David Stanley	

## Government's calculation of the number of homes needed in Cotswold District as of December 2024

The government calculates the minimum number of homes needed in each local planning authority area in England using a formula – known as the Standard Method. This is set out in the [Planning Practice Guidance on Housing and economic needs assessment \(MHCLG, December 2024\)](#).

It is a mandatory requirement for all councils to use the Standard Method. The government removed the previous 'exceptional circumstances' for using an alternative method when it updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. The district also does **not** have any of the 'special circumstances' for using an alternative method listed within paragraph 14 of the Planning Practice Guidance (these relate to a limit number of specific circumstances, including where the strategic policy-making authorities do not align with local authority boundaries – e.g. National Parks – or the data required for the Standard Method are not available).

The government last published the [Standard Method housing need calculation](#) for all local planning authorities in December 2024 alongside the updated NPPF. This increased Cotswold's housing target to **1,036 homes per year**.

The Standard Method formula follows two steps:

### Step 1 - Setting the baseline

- Calculated using 0.8% of [existing dwelling stock](#) for the area
- Cotswold had 46,213 homes in 2024

### Step 2 - Adjustment to account for affordability

- Applies an adjustment factor (specified in the Planning Practice Guidance), which is based on the average [ratio of median house prices vs median gross annual workplace-based earnings](#) over the last 5 years. This is summarised below.

$$\text{Adjustment factor} = \left( \frac{\text{five year average affordability ratio} - 5}{5} \right) \times 0.95 + 1$$

- Cotswold is one of the least affordable areas in the country and, averaged over the last five years, the median house price is 14.49 times the median wage.

The two steps are applied below:

- Step 1:** 0.8% of 46,213 = 369.704 homes
- Step 2:** Five year average of affordability ratio = 14.49  
Adjustment Factor =  $((14.19 - 5) / 5) \times 0.95 + 1 = 2.8023$
- Local Housing Need** =  $369.704 \times 2.8023 = 1,036 \text{ homes per year}$

Given the Cotswold District Local Plan Update runs from 2025 to 2043 – a period of 18 years – this district has a total housing target of 18,650 homes (i.e. 1,036 x 18 years).

## **Government's calculation of the number of homes needed in Cotswold District as of December 2024**

The Standard Method housing need figure is updated at least twice a year to reflect new household estimates and housing affordability figures. The housing need figure for the district is currently being reassessed in the Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, which is expected in spring 2026.

Although it is mandatory to use the Standard Method to calculate the minimum number of homes needed in the district, **the final housing requirement figure used in the Local Plan can be lower than the Standard Method figure**. For example, constraints such as the Cotswolds National Landscape may limit land availability to deliver the government's target. The government's calculation of the minimum number of homes needed in the district is therefore only the starting point for determining the Local Plan housing requirement figure.

Despite this, until the new Local Plan is adopted, **the Standard Method figure must be used to measure the Council's five year housing land supply and Housing Delivery Test score**.

# Agenda Item 11



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2 February 2026</b>
Subject	<b>The Retail and Hospitality Sectors in the Cotswold District</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tristan Wilkinson Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">tristan.wilkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Email: <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To report on the health of and the challenges faced by the retail and hospitality sectors in the district.
Annexes	Annex A – Town Centres Initiative report by Heartflood. .
Recommendation(s)	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the contents of this report.</li> <li>2. Make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member or Cabinet to consider further.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the Economy</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Senior management, legal, finance, selected businesses in the retail and hospitality sectors, Cotswolds Tourism, Cirencester Growth Hub.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The retail and hospitality sectors are a crucial part of the local economy, employing many thousands of workers, providing significant economic value and making up a large part of the district's town and village centres, which act as local hubs for goods, services and community life.
- 1.2** These sectors have faced multiple challenges in recent years, which are documented in more detail later in this report. Despite the challenges, our town and village centres have remained healthy in relative terms, although there is no room for complacency and, indeed, the Council, along with relevant town councils, has started an initiative to tackle vacant units in the three towns with the highest vacancy rates – Lechlade, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury. This initiative has also included a thorough independent assessment of both the current challenges and opportunities within each location.
- 1.3** This report therefore explores the challenges faced by these sectors, the health of the town centres in the district and invites the committee to consider what recommendations it may wish to make in order to support businesses operating within these sectors.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested a report be presented to the committee, setting out the challenges faced by the retail and hospitality sectors in the district, the health of our town centres and what the Council and its partners are doing or can do to support these sectors.
- 2.2** Retail and hospitality are two very important, and interlinked, sectors which provide significant employment and generate considerable value as part of the local economy. Both sectors have been experiencing multiple pressures in recent years and particularly since the Covid pandemic. Some of these pressures are shared between both sectors; others are specific to each of them.
- 2.3** Common to both is the reduction in town centre footfall since the pandemic as a result of changing consumer behaviour, particularly through an increase in online shopping, and more people working from home for at least part of the week. It is acknowledged that not all retail and hospitality businesses are based in town and village centres, but they are the focus of this report. In-person retail needs to offer



more of an "experience" to stand out from its online competitors. The same can be said of town centres in order to attract footfall, whether that is by putting on markets and events, providing a cultural and heritage offer (such as museums, theatres etc), accessing services including health-related functions and ensuring the physical environment is attractive to visitors.

- 2.4** Both sectors have been faced with increases to the minimum wage and increased Employers' National Insurance (NI) contributions, as well as higher energy costs as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Many retail and hospitality businesses are affected not just by the increase in the headline rate of Employers' NI contributions but by the reduction in the level at which NI is payable, from £9,100 to £5,000 from April 2025, as many such businesses rely disproportionately on part-time and casual staff.
- 2.5** Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rate Relief, introduced during the pandemic, was scaled back from 75% to 40% in April 2025 and in the most recent Budget the relief was ended completely as of 1 April 2026. In its place, as part of the wider Business Rates revaluation, the 'multiplier' for retail and hospitality businesses will be reduced permanently by 5%, but unfortunately many businesses will still see increased bills. A transitional relief scheme and a cap on increases are being introduced by the Government to phase in these higher bills and support is available from the Business Rates team to help businesses understand their liability.
- 2.6** At the time of writing, the Government has signalled that it is preparing to alter its position in relating to business rate changes for pubs. Full details are still to emerge and it appears this relates purely to pubs rather than the hospitality sector more widely.
- 2.7** According to the trade body UK Hospitality, "Even when factoring in a lower multiplier – or tax rate – for the sector and transitional relief.... in 2026/27, the average hospitality property in England will pay £23,961 in rates – an increase of £3,126 (15%) on the current average of £20,835." That figure, according to their analysis, will rise to an average increase of £10,014 in 2027/28 and £19,574 in 2028/29. UK Hospitality are calling on the Government to increase the discount on the multiplier to 20% rather than 5%.
- 2.8** It is estimated that around 100,000 jobs have been lost in the UK hospitality sector since the Budget of 2024. A survey by UK Hospitality showed that a third of



hospitality businesses are operating at a loss, 76% had increased their prices, 63% had reduced the working hours of staff, a third had restricted opening hours and 40% had reduced investment. The conversations Officers have had with businesses of this type in the district indicate that many have, reluctantly but unavoidably, taken these steps.

- 2.9** The importance of the retail and hospitality sectors in providing opportunities for young people to experience work and for more mature people who may have left the labour market to return should not be underestimated.
- 2.10** The cost-of-living crisis the country has been facing for some years has meant consumers have reduced disposable income to spend in retail and hospitality businesses. Businesses in these sectors have also faced challenges in recruiting staff, arguably since Brexit saw many of those who came here under EU Freedom of Movement rules return home. This is less of an issue now, given the level of job losses these sectors have experienced.
- 2.11** The hospitality sector has experienced higher food prices, which have risen by more than headline inflation since the invasion of Ukraine, not all of which they have been able to pass on to customers. An additional pressure is the increase in alcohol duty announced in the 2024 Budget, which comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> February.
- 2.12** Even weight loss treatments, like Ozempic and Wegovy, which are now quite widely-used, have impacted on the hospitality sector because they reduce the appetite of those who take them. An estimated 2.5 million people in the UK are using these medications, leading many to eat out less frequently and consume less food and alcohol when they do. In addition, many young people, for reasons of health, financial constraints and safety concerns, do not go out at night as frequently. According to a recently-published survey statistics from UK Hospitality, this is the case for 61% of respondents.
- 2.13** Hospitality businesses are having to work harder to attract customers, with many organising events such as quizzes or putting on live music to bring people into their venues, rather than relying on the draw of their food and drink offer on its own.
- 2.14** Retailers who have a strong online presence, both in terms of e-commerce and being active on social media, tend to be amongst the most resilient.
- 2.15** Retailers have faced an increase in theft, with shoplifting rising 20% in the year to March 2025 in England and Wales (ONS figures). The figure for Gloucestershire is



much lower at 5% but still shows a 50% increase since 2020. The cost of measures to reduce theft can also be considerable.

**2.16** Many retail and hospitality businesses in the Cotswold district occupy listed and historic buildings, for which maintenance costs are generally higher than for other buildings, and which can be more difficult to operate a business from than more modern buildings.

### **3. THE POSITION IN COTSWOLD DISTRICT**

**3.1** The economic statistics relating to retail and hospitality are not necessarily straightforward to break down at a district level or into neatly-defined sectors. In addition, some indicators are only updated periodically. According to 2024 figures from the South West Research Company, tourism accounts for just over 5,500 jobs (4,005 FTE), which equates to 13% of jobs and generates nearly £425 million of economic value in the Cotswold District area. The figure for jobs is down from nearly 6,500 (4,650FTE) and 16% of overall jobs in 2023, despite the economic value generated rising from £414 million. This shows the pressure the sector was under before some of the most recent measures took effect.

**3.2** The figures for retail and hospitality overall will be higher as some retail and hospitality businesses serve a primarily local market. Town and village centres in the district will vary in terms of the proportion to which they cater for the tourist market, serve a wider catchment or fulfil a more locally-based function.

**3.3** Analysis of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data shows that "Accommodation and Food Services" account for 7,250 jobs in Cotswold district and Retail for 5,000 jobs. The former is significantly above the national average in proportional terms and retail is slightly above the national average. Both sectors have grown since 2015, with Accommodation and Food Services having done so significantly.

**3.4** For the reasons outlined above, and because the Cotswold district is on the whole relatively affluent, our town and village centres perform better than the national average. The average town centre vacancy rate in the UK is 13.5% at the end of Q3 2025 (Savills). The Council monitors vacancy rates in our principal settlements, relying as far as possible on information provided by the relevant town and parish councils. Members should note that the relatively low number of units in our smaller



centres does mean the percentage can fluctuate quite significantly, with only one or two units changing status.

**3.5** Vacancy rates were as follows at the end of September 2025:

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of units at last count</b>	<b>Vacancies at last count</b>	<b>Vacancy rate</b>
Bourton-on-the-Water	74	1	1.4%
Chipping Campden	46	2	4.3%
Cirencester	333	16	4.8%
Fairford	29	1	3.4%
Lechlade	43	5	11.6%
Moreton-in-Marsh	90	8	8.9%
Northleach	11	1	9%
South Cerney	29	0	0%
Stow-on-the-Wold	97	5	5.2%
Tetbury	102	8	7.8%

**3.6** The numbers are monitored to spot any trends and, in some instances, the Council liaises with agents and landlords to encourage them to let vacant properties. The picture varies across the district. For example, Cirencester has fallen from a peak of 11% in the aftermath of the pandemic in September 2021 to just under 5% in October 2022 and has stayed at that level broadly ever since. In Lechlade, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury, the number of vacancies has been creeping up in the last few years but remain at or below the national average. Nonetheless, the Council is taking action, working with the relevant town councils, to address the issue before it becomes a larger problem. The vacancy levels in the other principal settlements have remained broadly stable in recent years. It should be noted that some of the units counted as vacant in the table in para 3.5 have either had lettings agreed or are for sale.



- 3.7** It should also be noted that the table above measures only by the number of vacant units rather than the overall amount of vacant space. For example, in Cirencester the former Tesco and the former Gardiner Haskins stores are large units, which represent more vacant space than a considerable number of smaller units.
- 3.8** The relatively low town centre vacancy rates should not disguise the challenge it is for many retail and hospitality businesses to remain viable and survive. Despite its relative affluence, the Cotswold district is not immune from these pressures. The number of retail and hospitality businesses in the district, according to business rates data, has declined slightly over the past year. The proportion of retail and hospitality businesses in business rates arrears has increased marginally over the same period and is slightly higher than the overall proportion of businesses in arrears. The percentage of retail and hospitality businesses in arrears in Cotswold district is lower than in many other districts.
- 3.9** Each of the towns/villages that make up our principal settlements is unique and faces different challenges. Cirencester has seen a number of national multiple retailers leave in recent years, ranging from Burtons/Dorothy Perkins to the Body Shop to Superdrug. In the case of the first two, it was due to the businesses' national position that they closed and in the case of Superdrug it is reported that they were unable to agree a new lease with their landlord. These were not retailers making a decision to leave Cirencester on the basis of the performance of the town centre. In response to some national chains exiting, there has been a growth in independent and small chain retailers, which now dominate the town's offer. A number of banks have also closed, both in Cirencester and smaller towns.
- 3.10** In smaller towns, such as Fairford and Lechlade, the loss of retail space to residential is a major issue as a result of the relaxation of planning laws and the introduction of a flexible 'Class E' use class, which allows the conversion from retail to residential without requiring planning consent. The risk is that such town centres lose the critical mass of activity needed to attract visitors. How the Council responds to this particular pressure will be considered as part of the review of the Local Plan.

#### **4. WHAT THE COUNCIL IS DOING AND CAN DO**

- 4.1** The retail and hospitality sectors are subject to many national and international factors and the extent to which the Council can influence their success is limited. Nonetheless, there are some significant initiatives the Council can point to where it



has played an important role in assisting retail and hospitality businesses and town centre in general. These include:

- Administering Covid-related grants for businesses during the pandemic and business rate relief schemes during and since the pandemic. Over £70 million of grants were distributed to several thousand businesses in the district across a number of different grant schemes.
- Running promotional campaigns and delivering small-scale environmental and public realm improvements funded by the Government's Reopening High Streets Safely (RHSS) and Welcome Back schemes. The RHSS and Welcome Back funding also supported efforts to improve the digital presence of businesses and provided one-to-one support for those who required it.
- Using the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund to support a number of initiatives including the Coffee Cabin at Cirencester College (which trains students to work in the hospitality sector), public realm improvements in Lechlade, a digital walking app and improved wayfinding in Chipping Campden, supporting the creation of The Old Department Store (TODS) in the former House of Fraser in Cirencester and assisting a new homewares and furnishings business to establish in the town centre. The UKSPF has also provided funding to the Cirencester Growth Hub, which provides support to businesses across the district, although not specifically for retail or hospitality. The ending of UKSPF and REPF funding and the lack of any successor funding (particularly the 'Pride in Place' programme) for anywhere in Gloucestershire constrains the Council's ability to support its town centres.
- The work of Cotswolds Tourism in promoting and managing the visitor economy and providing business support and training. In particular, they work to encourage visitors all-year-round and to explore towns and villages across the whole area, rather than just the tourist hotspots.
- Working with town and parish councils to provide an attractive environment and facilities for visitors, ranging from street cleaning to public conveniences to parking. Many ultra-local functions are best organised at town council level and, arguably, their importance will increase in the context of local government reorganisation.



- Putting in place Local Plan policies to prioritise town centres for uses such as retail and leisure and to protect those uses from conversion to non-town centre uses proportionately and within the context of national planning policies. A Town Centre and Retail Study will take place as part of the emerging Local Plan.
- Supporting the development of Neighbourhood Plans, which give local areas more control over how their town or village, including the centre, evolves.
- Issuing pavement licences for hospitality businesses, which can make a major difference to a venue's capacity, particularly during the warmer months. The process was streamlined during the Covid pandemic.

**4.2** The Old Department Store is a good example of how town centres are evolving. It took a former department store building, which had been vacant for over five years, and gave it a new purpose, hosting a number of social enterprises ranging from bike sales and repairs, children's clothing and toys, second hand furniture and 'pay what you can' dining. TODS has the potential to be a national exemplar on the repurposing of a large and difficult-to-convert town centre building.

**4.3** Another relevant project funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is the Town Centres Initiative, looking at vacant units in Lechlade, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury. Following a procurement process, place management experts Heartflood were appointed as consultants for this piece of work. The brief was to look at the towns in general and the vacant units in particular to understand what the barriers to them being occupied are and to come up with an action plan to address them, working with the relevant town councils and local stakeholders. Each of the town councils has committed a modest financial contribution towards the cost of the project.

**4.4** An executive summary of Heartflood's interim report is attached at Annex 1. In summary, their recommendations are to establish town centre management partnerships where there is support, improve marketing of the towns themselves, undertake a number of streetscene and public realm improvements and liaise with agents and landlords to encourage them to fill vacant units. It is interesting to note that although there are a number of vacant units in each of the towns, very few of them are being advertised online and some do not even have 'To Let' boards displayed. Research into the specific vacant units has revealed that a number of them are in the process of being sold.



- 4.5** Where high street commercial properties have been vacant for more than 12 months, the Council now has the power to initiate a [High Street Rental Auction](#). This process can be fairly lengthy and has not been widely-used to date. It is hoped that positive engagement with agents and landlords can bring about action on any persistent vacant units, but this tool remains available for use if needed.
- 4.6** Some local businesses have spoken in positive terms about the support given by local councillors to businesses in their wards. Some councillors help to promote the facilities available in their areas and are a visible presence, as well as taking up issues on behalf of businesses where appropriate.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1** The Council could simply leave the functioning of town centres to the market. This approach is not recommended as, in some instances, the market alone does not deliver vibrant town and village centres.
- 5.2** The Council could have carried out the work for the town centres' initiative in-house but lacks the capacity to do so. The chosen consultant has specialist experience in town centres and place management and brings an independent perspective. They have liaised closely with the Council's Economic Development Lead.
- 5.3** Particularly in the context of local government reorganisation, a greater role for town councils in the management of town centres can be envisaged. Each of the relevant town councils has been closely involved with the work undertaken by Heartflood and will have a key role to play in implementing its recommendations.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1** The retail and hospitality sectors are hugely important to the Cotswold District in terms of providing jobs and generating economic value. Such businesses have endured a very difficult time in recent years as a result of a combination of external factors. They have proved relatively resilient within the district but there is no room for complacency. The committee may wish to consider what recommendations it makes to support these important sectors, for example whether it asks Cabinet to write to the Chancellor to ask her to reconsider the support given to hospitality and retail businesses in relation to business rates and invites our local Members of Parliament to lobby on behalf of local businesses in these sectors.



## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** The activities carried out to date have been funded by existing budgets or external sources. Funding for any further activities recommended as a result of this report will need to be identified.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**9.1** Not tackling issues relating to vacant units and the vibrancy of town and village centres risks leading to a downward spiral, making the issues larger and more difficult to tackle. Through early intervention and a proactive approach, the Council aims to avoid this.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

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

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

**11.1** There are no direct climate or ecological implications arising from this report, but having vibrant local town and village centres removes, or at least reduces, the need for residents to travel further afield to satisfy their shopping and leisure needs.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**12.1** None.

(END)

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# Cotswold Town Centres Initiative

## Executive summary

Produced by Heartflood, January 2026



Heartflood



# Executive summary

Heartflood were commissioned by Cotswold District Council in September 2025 to undertake work to support the economic health and vibrancy of Lechlade-on-Thames, Moreton in Marsh, and Tetbury town centres, particularly with regard to vacancy rates. The overall findings of the project include the following main results.

- Despite the inherent strengths of Cotswold District, businesses within each of the three centres studied are reporting significant barriers to their economic vitality
- The analysis of a range of information has identified a number of priority improvement measures which could begin to address the current challenges being experienced
- The willingness of businesses to become part of new groups to spearhead improvements in each of the town centres ranges from reasonable to encouraging

Whilst the main report contains detailed information, observation and analysis of the current circumstances with regard to each of the town centres, the overall recommendations from this piece of work are summarised on the following pages.



# Recommendation 1

Immediately enact an ongoing suite of interventions to address the key issue of reducing the number of vacant business premises within each town centre.



ESTABLISH AN ONGOING PROJECT  
TO REDUCE VACANT UNITS ACROSS  
THE THREE TOWN CENTRES



ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION  
OF ALL THREE TIERS OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND INCLUDE  
LOCAL BUSINESSES, PARTICULARLY  
PROPERTY AGENTS



GAIN THE DETAILS OF THE  
LANDLORDS OF ALL CURRENTLY  
VACANT PREMISES AND WORK  
TO BRING THE UNITS INTO  
ACTIVE USE



FORTIFY LOCAL PLANNING  
POLICIES TO PRESERVE THE  
REQUIRED CRITICAL MASS  
OF BUSINESS PREMISES  
IN EACH LOCATION



CONSIDER COMMISSIONING  
EXPERT SUPPORT TO DELIVER  
THIS SPECIFIC PROJECT

# Recommendation 2

Support new business-led town centre groups in each location, including specific activities decided by the groups around all of the following.

## Lechlade-on-Thames

Car parking improvements

More frequent public transport services

Marketing and promotion to project the town to a wider audience

More town centre events and activities

Greater lobbying, representation and championing of the town

Activities to reduce the number of empty shop units

Improvements to the appearance of empty shop frontages

Activities and events which focus on evening & night-time businesses



## Moreton in Marsh

Car parking improvements

Schemes to save businesses money on overheads

Projects to improve traffic flow through the town centre

Marketing and promotion to project the town  
to a wider audience

Social media campaigning

Greater lobbying, representation and championing  
of the town

Litter removal and cleanliness

Increased floral planting

## **Tetbury**

Car parking improvements

Activities to reduce the number of empty shop units

Marketing and promotion to project the town to a wider audience

New Christmas lights displays

Schemes to save businesses money on overheads

More frequent public transport services

More town centre events and activities

Social media campaigning

## **Recommendation 3**

Ensure that, whilst each group will be business-led, strong partnership arrangements are embedded with public sector organisations and local community groups to create a balance of input toward the improvement projects.

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## **Recommendation 4**

Establish a priority to identify and allocate a degree of staff time and financial input from the three tiers of local government to ensure that momentum can be established and maintained towards the improvements.

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## **Recommendation 5**

Share this report with businesses and stakeholders in each of the three town centres, in order to embed a sense, and approach, of shared ownership and collective effort.

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[www.heartflood.co.uk](http://www.heartflood.co.uk)

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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 2 February 2026</b>		
The Retail and Hospitality Sectors in the Cotswold District	Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation - Councillor Tristan Wilkinson	Paul James, Economic Development Lead paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk
Budget 2026-27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Monday 2 March 2026</b>		
Asset Management Strategy	Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	Alan Hope, Head of Strategic Housing, Property and Assets alan.hope@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Monday 13 April 2026</b>		
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer 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

Local Plan Update	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director - Planning Services geraldine.lecointe@cotswold.gov.uk
Update on Local Government Reorganisation.	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Jane Portman, Interim Chief Executive Officer jane.portman@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>Dates to be confirmed</b>		
Ecological Emergency Update	Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Danielle Berry, Natural, Built and Historic Environment Manager Danielle.berry@cotswold.gov.uk

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### **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)

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**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, diversity, inclusion and young people.
Juliet Layton (Deputy Leader)	Housing and Planning	Strategic housing, homelessness, forward planning, the local plan and neighbourhood plans, development management, heritage and conservation, biodiversity emergency response, Member development.
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, Cost of living support.
Tony Dale	Health, Culture and Visitor Experience	Public health, parking operations and public toilets, leisure centres, culture and museums, tourism, safeguarding and Community Safety Partnership
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/Report Author	Accountable Officer
<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 and Deputy Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) - David Stanley
Asbestos Management Plan	Yes	Open	Cabinet	5 Feb 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Amy Kemmett <a href="mailto:amy.kemmett@publicagroup.uk">amy.kemmett@publicagroup.uk</a>	Executive Director Corporate Services - Claire Locke
Agreement for Waste, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services	Yes	Open	Cabinet	5 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services - Councillor Andrea Pellegram	Peta Johnson <a href="mailto:peta.johnson@cotswold.gov.uk">peta.johnson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
<b>23 February 2026 - Full Council</b>							
Pay Policy Statement 2026	No	Open	Council	23 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Carmel Togher <a href="mailto:carmel.togher@cotswold.gov.uk">carmel.togher@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) - Angela Claridge
Budget 2026-27 and Medium term Financial Strategy	No	Open	Council	23 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:micelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">micelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) - David Stanley
<b>5 March 2026 - Cabinet</b>							
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Danielle Berry, Natural, Built and Historic Environment Manager <a href="mailto:Danielle.berry@cotswold.gov.uk">Danielle.berry@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
Biodiversity Action Plan	No	Open	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Danielle Berry, Natural, Built and Historic Environment Manager <a href="mailto:Danielle.berry@cotswold.gov.uk">Danielle.berry@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin
Infrastructure Funding - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy	Yes	Open	Cabinet Council	5 Mar 2026 18 Mar 2026	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Kim Langford-Tejrar, Infrastructure Delivery Lead <a href="mailto:kim.langford-tejrar@westoxon.gov.uk">kim.langford-tejrar@westoxon.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin
Approval to Award Contract (Parking)	Yes	Fully exempt	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager <a href="mailto:maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk">maria.wheatley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Executive Director Corporate Services - Claire Locke
Updated Public Services Agreement	Yes	Open	Cabinet	5 Mar 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) <a href="mailto:Angela.Claridge@cotswold.gov.uk">Angela.Claridge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Chief Executive Officer - Jane Portman

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
<b>18 March 2026 - Full Council</b>							
Community Governance Review	No	Open	Council	18 Mar 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Sarah Dalby, Elections Manager <a href="mailto:sarah.dalby@cotswold.gov.uk">sarah.dalby@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) - Angela Claridge
<b>16 April 2026 - Cabinet</b>							
Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	No	Open	Cabinet	16 Apr 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst <a href="mailto:Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk">Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk</a>	Chief Executive Officer - Jane Portman
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3	No	Open	Cabinet	16 Apr 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance - Councillor Patrick Coleman	Michelle Burge, Chief Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk">michelle.burge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) - David Stanley

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
CDC Strategic Risk Register	No	Open	Audit and Governance Committee Cabinet	9 Apr 2026 16 Apr 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer <a href="mailto:David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk">David.Stanley@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) - David Stanley
Local Plan Update	No	Open	Cabinet	16 Apr 2026	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Juliet Layton	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director - Planning Services <a href="mailto:geraldine.lecointe@cotswold.gov.uk">geraldine.lecointe@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin
<b>20 May 2026 - Full Council</b>							
Record of Attendance 2025/26	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) - Angela Claridge

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
Appointment of Committees 2026-27	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) - Angela Claridge
Outside Body Appointments 2026-27	No	Open	Council	20 May 2026	Leader of the Council - Councillor Mike Evemy	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk">andrew.brown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) - Angela Claridge
<b>Report Dates yet to finalised</b>							
Cotswold Business Solar	No	Open	Cabinet		Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital - Councillor Mike McKeown	Paul James, Economic Development Lead <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a> , Olivia McGregor, Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Lead <a href="mailto:olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk">olivia.mcgregor@cotswold.gov.uk</a>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Exemption Class	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/ Report Author	Accountable Officer
Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document Consultation	Yes	Open	Cabinet	Before 30 Apr 2026	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>	Director of Communities and Place - Helen Martin

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