

Council
18/March2026



COTSWOLD
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Members present:

Mark Harris (Chair)	Ray Brassington (Vice-Chair)	
Claire Bloomer	Laura Hall-Wilson	Andrea Pellegram
Nick Bridges	Joe Harris	Tony Slater
Patrick Coleman	Paul Hodgkinson	Lisa Spivey
Daryl Corps	Angus Jenkinson	Tom Stowe
David Cunningham	Julia Judd	Jeremy Theyer
Tony Dale	Juliet Layton	Craig Thurling
Paul Evans	Helene Mansilla	Clare Turner
Mike Evemy	Mike McKeown	Ian Watson
David Fowles	Dilys Neill	Len Wilkins

Officers present:

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	Emma Cathcart, Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit

84 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Gina Blomefield, Councillor Nikki Ind, Councillor Michael Vann, Councillor Jon Wareing and Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

85 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Members in relation to any items on the agenda.

86 Minutes

Council considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February2026.

Councillor Every proposed the approval of the minutes. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stowe, put to the vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 23 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Voting record:

23 For, 0 Against, 3 Abstentions.

Councillor Daryl Corps and Councillor Jeremy Theyer did not vote.

To APPROVE the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February2026 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 23 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.		
For	Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	23
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	David Cunningham, Paul Evans and Andrea Pellegram	3
Carried		

87 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive

The Chair welcomed the newly elected Councillor for The Beeches, Councillor Paul Evans, and congratulated him on securing over 50 per cent of the vote, expressing confidence in his future contribution to the Council.

The Chair also extended congratulations to Emma Cathcart, Assistant Director of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, on being awarded Female Pioneer of the Year at the Public Sector Counter Fraud Awards, in recognition of her outstanding leadership and innovation in local government.

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The Chair also recognised the achievement of Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place, who had been named one of the Women of Influence for 2026 by the Royal Town Planning Institute's official magazine, acknowledging her significant impact within the planning profession and her leadership in shaping inclusive, resilient and vibrant communities. Members joined in congratulating her on this well-deserved recognition.

The Chair reported having recently attended as a judge at the ORACY Primary Schools public speaking competition ("Look Who's Talking"), a county-wide initiative supporting the development of oracy skills among primary-aged children, and noted the high standard of participation and the wide range of topics presented.

Best wishes were extended by the Chair to Kira Thompson of the Democratic Services and Elections Team on the occasion of her maternity leave.

The Chair advised that the Council was currently advertising for the post of Head of Democratic and Electoral Services. Members were reminded that Andrew Brown had been undertaking the role on a shared basis with West Oxfordshire District Council, which had indicated its intention to retain him on a full-time basis. It was anticipated that transitional support during the recruitment period would be provided, with arrangements to be finalised.

As this was likely to be the final meeting at which Andrew Brown would be present in this capacity, the Chair invited Members to place on record their sincere thanks and appreciation for his valuable contribution and service.

The Chair then invited the Leader of the Council to make any announcements.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Every, reported that he had five brief updates for Members.

He congratulated Councillor Paul Evans on his electoral victory, noting that the Council's administration had increased its representation to 22 members, the largest it had been, and expressed his satisfaction at the continued vote of confidence in the administration.

The Leader provided an update on local government reorganisation, noting ongoing work led by the Chief Executive and regular meetings of council leaders. He encouraged Members and residents to participate in the Government consultation on proposals for the future structure of local government in Gloucestershire, ahead of the closing date of 26 March. He also advised that two identical all-member briefing sessions on LGR would be held on 14 and 17 April 2026.

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The Leader referred to a recent Government announcement regarding a £27 million support scheme for lower-income households reliant on heating oil, to be delivered through a new Crisis and Resilience Fund from 1 August 2026. He noted that, as a rural district, the area was likely to have a higher proportion of affected residents. Funding would be allocated to upper-tier authorities, with Gloucestershire County Council responsible for distribution, and local officers would work collaboratively to support delivery, although further detail was awaited.

The Leader provided an update on the Local Plan, advising that a summary of consultation responses—comprising over 3,500 individual comments from more than 2,000 respondents—was due to be published imminently.

Finally, the Leader updated Members on discussions regarding devolution and the Government's proposals for "foundation strategic authorities." He noted that Gloucestershire leaders, supported by their Chief Executives, had been considering available options following correspondence from Government. He expressed his support, and that of his administration, for the approach led by Gloucestershire County Council to pursue membership of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) as a long-term objective, alongside the submission of an expression of interest for a county-wide foundation strategic authority.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive Officer.

88 Unsung Heroes Awards

The Chair announced the Unsung Heroes Awards in the over 25 category for March 2026.

Rachel and Arthur Cunynghame were jointly recognised for their many years of dedicated and largely unrecognised voluntary service in the Chipping Campden area. Working in partnership, they were commended for providing vital support within a rural community where access to services could be limited, and for the significant and positive impact of their commitment and generosity.

Jayne Davies was recognised for her outstanding contribution to the community through her voluntary work supporting vulnerable young people, including mentoring and involvement in wellbeing initiatives. She was further commended for her creativity and dedication in raising funds to support these services, and for her selfless approach and commitment to helping others.

Tony King was recognised for his exceptional voluntary service as a First Responder and for his leadership of the Cirencester group. His willingness to respond to call-outs across Gloucestershire and Swindon at all hours, providing reassurance and potentially

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life-saving assistance, was acknowledged. It was noted that he was unable to attend the meeting and would receive his award by post.

At the conclusion of the item, the Chair invited those recipients in attendance to come forward to receive their certificates and lapel badges.

89 Public Questions

The Chair asked for any public questions and Ms Mary Cobbett was invited to address the Council to follow up on questions raised at the previous meeting. She expressed her appreciation for the support provided by Democratic Services and reiterated her concern regarding pensioners living solely on the state pension who may be adversely affected by recent financial changes, including increased tax liabilities and reductions in benefits. She emphasised the importance of identifying and supporting this group, particularly those not in receipt of Pension Credit, and highlighted the potential impact on their financial circumstances. Reference was also made to wider national concerns regarding similar households and the need for appropriate targeting of support schemes.

Ms Cobbett asked the following questions:

1. The number of pensioners in the Cotswold District who are living on the state pension and currently receiving Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
2. The number of people in the District in receipt of state pension and whether the Council was writing to these residents to advise them to contact the Council upon receipt of updated tax bills, in order that their benefits could be reassessed and adjusted where appropriate.

In response to the concerns raised by Ms Cobbett, the Leader, Councillor Mike Every acknowledged the concerns regarding pensioners living solely on state pensions and their eligibility for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. He emphasised that the LIFT programme would continue to support eligible residents and that officers would take urgent steps to prioritise communications and ensure residents were informed

A letter providing a full response to Ms Cobbett's questions confirming these actions would be issued by the Leader once the information had been compiled and the process finalised.

90 Member Questions

Councillor Claire Bloomer arrived at 2.25 pm.

Councillors' written questions, written responses, supplementary questions and supplementary responses can be found in Annex A attached.

91 Constitution Working Group recommendations

The purpose of the report was to present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from meetings on 7 October 2025 and 13 February 2026 regarding: disclosable interests; Standards Hearing Sub-Committee procedure rules; and committee membership.

The Leader, Councillor Mike Every, introduced the item and advised that the Constitution Working Group had presented three recommendations to Council.

1. The Group proposed strengthening the planning protocol regarding disclosure of interests, with the suggested amendments set out in Annex A.
2. The Group also recommended that improvements to the operation of standards hearings were carried out, reflecting lessons learned from the recent hearing in November, as detailed in Annex B.
3. The Group also recommended amending the constitution to allow both the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council to serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee simultaneously, noting that the previous restriction appeared historical and unnecessary.

Councillor Every asked Council to consider and approve the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group.

The Chair asked whether there were any questions for clarity.

Councillor Len Wilkins sought clarification on the process for multiple complainants speaking at standards hearings, referring to the procedure outlined at section 3.3 (page 49) of the papers, which stated that complainants should consolidate their concerns through a single speaker.

The Monitoring Officer, Angela Claridge, explained that for any future hearings, arrangements would be made in advance to identify the nominated speaker(s) and to clarify the questions to be raised. This process was intended to ensure that multiple complainants could coordinate their representation and avoid the issues experienced at the November hearing.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor David Fowles who expressed support for the changes proposed.

There was no debate on the matter.

The proposer, Councillor Mike Every was invited to sum up, but felt the matter had been adequately covered.

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The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor David Fowles.

Voting record:

27 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Did not vote Councillor Angus Jenkinson and Councillor Nick Bridges.

To APPROVE the Constitution Working Group recommendations (Resolution)

Council RESOLVED to:

1. AGREE to amend the Planning Protocol to include the new paragraphs drafted by the Head of Legal Services about the declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, as shown in Annex A.
2. AGREE to amend the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules following a review, as shown in Annex B.
3. AGREE to amend Article 5 to remove the rule that says the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council cannot both serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee.

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	27
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

92 Review of political proportionalities on committees

The purpose of the report was to review political proportionality following the outcome of two recent by-elections and the ensuing change in the political balance of the Council. Following the by-elections in The Rissingtons and The Beeches wards the Liberal Democrat Group now had 22 members, and the Leader had requested a review of the political proportionalities on committee to reflect this.

The Leader, Councillor Mike Every, introduced the report, supported by Annex A, which set out the revised proportionality and explained the allocation methodology. It was noted that the Council operated five committees: Overview and Scrutiny, Planning and Licensing, Audit and Governance, Performance and Appointments, and Appeals.

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Officers had recalculated allocations based on the updated composition; the Council now comprised two political groups, Liberal Democrat and Conservative, with two non-aligned members. Councillor Mike Every proposed the recommendations to Council and confirmed that one of the non-aligned members, Councillor Claire Turner, would continue on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the second non-aligned member, Councillor Nikki Ind would join the Planning and Licensing Committee, having previously sat on the Performance and Appointments Committee

The following members were nominated to vacant committee seats:

- Audit and Governance Committee: Councillor Craig Thurling;
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Paul Evans (replacing Councillor Nick Bridges);
- Performance and Appointments Committee: Councillor Tony Dale;
- Appeals Committee: Councillor Mark Harris (replacing Councillor Tony Dale).

There were no questions for clarity

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton who had nothing further to add.

There was no debate on the matter.

The Chair invited Councillor Every to sum up.

Councillor Every clarified that the proposal included two changes as well as two proposals to fill existing vacant seats on Committees.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting record:

28 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Councillor Julia Judd did not vote.

To AGREE political proportionalities and appoint to vacant seats on committees (Resolution)		
Council RESOLVED to: 1. Agree the political proportionalities as set out in Annex A. 2. Appoint to any vacant seats on committees in accordance with the wishes of the political group to which the seat has been allocated, as expressed at the meeting		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy	28

	Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

93 Appointment of Independent Members to the Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor Helene Mansilla, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, introduced the item and provided an overview of the report, explaining that the item concerned the appointment of independent members to the Audit and Governance Committee. It was noted that two independent members had been in place since September 2020–23 and that their external expertise had strengthened the Committee’s oversight over financial and non-financial matters. Councillor Mansilla acknowledged the recent resignation of John Chesshire, recording thanks for his contribution, and proposed the appointment of Nick Craxton as his replacement. Councillor Mansilla also proposed extending the tenure of the other independent member, Christopher Bass, until 31 March 2028, aligning with the abolition of the Cotswold District Council.

The Chair invited questions for clarity. Members raised queries regarding the experience of Nick Craxton and the processes followed during the recruitment exercise. Members noted that while Mr Craxton had previously been involved in independent panels, further details on his suitability for the Audit and Governance Committee could be provided. Clarification was also sought on whether independent members had opportunities to meet collectively for support and guidance. Angela Claridge confirmed that there was a thorough recruitment process and provided information on existing collaborative support structures for independent members.

The Chair then sought a seconder for the proposal. Councillor Len Wilkins seconded the proposal and spoke in support, noting confidence in Nick Craxton’s suitability based on prior engagement.

The Chair moved to the debate. During the debate, members expressed general support for the recommendation while highlighting the importance of future opportunities to engage directly with candidates. No objections to the proposal were raised, and there was no extended debate.

The Chair invited the proposer, Councillor Helene Mansilla, to sum up. Councillor Mansilla reaffirmed the recommendations and thanked members for their comments.

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The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Helene Mansilla and seconded by Councillor Len Wilkins.

Voting record:

28 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

To APPROVE the appointment of Independent Members to the Audit and Governance Committee (Resolution)

Council RESOLVED to:

1. Appoint Nick Craxton to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee commencing immediately, until 31 March 2028
2. Extend Christopher Bass' appointment to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee until 31 March 2028.

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Jeremy Theyer	1
Carried		

94 Community Governance Review

Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, reminding members that Council had agreed to undertake a community governance review in November in response to requests from a number of parish and town councils. He explained that the report before members summarised the consultation outcomes, feedback from ward members, and recommendations for council decisions.

Councillor Every outlined the recommendations:

- Cirencester and Preston/Siddington boundaries – No changes were proposed. While differences of opinion existed between Cirencester Town Council and the relevant parish councils, consultation responses indicated that residents in the affected areas preferred to remain in their current parishes. The report concluded that boundary changes at this time were premature, noting pending strategic developments.

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- Cutsdean Parish Council – The proposal to become a parish meeting was supported, with the change scheduled to take effect no later than 1 October 2026.
- Fairford Town Council – The request to increase councillor numbers was supported.
- Moreton-in-Marsh – No boundary changes were proposed, as any adjustment was considered premature.
- Southrop Parish Council – The proposal to increase councillor numbers was supported.
- Tetbury Town Council – The proposal to establish wards was supported by the town council and reflected the majority consultation preference.

The Chair invited questions for clarity. Councillor Len Wilkins sought confirmation on whether the Cutsdean changes could take effect sooner due to operational challenges. Councillor Every confirmed awareness of the October 2026 timeline, and that the change would come into effect no later than the 1st of October 2026 once all the legal requirements had been put in place. Councillor David Fowles commented on the active role of Southrop Parish Council and sought clarification regarding the loss of precept powers when a parish council becomes a parish meeting, the loss of precept was confirmed by officers. Councillor Patrick Coleman raised a query regarding population versus electorate numbers for Fairford and Southrop, which officers agreed to clarify post-meeting. Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson requested a good communications approach to ensure residents understood the changes, which Councillor Every confirmed would be coordinated with Tetbury Town Council and officers.

Several members expressed views during the debate:

Councillor Joe Harris emphasised the long-standing resident preference for Siddington residents to remain within their parish, reflecting community pride.

Councillor Ian Watson and Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson supported clear communications for affected residents, particularly in Tetbury.

Councillor Patrick Coleman and Councillor Helene Mansilla endorsed the recommendations for Fairford and Moreton-in-Marsh, noting alignment with council guidance on size and representation.

Councillor Paul Evans welcomed the decision to respect residents' wishes in Siddington and requested clarification of consultation responses, which Councillor Every provided in the summing-up.

Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the proposal, expressing support for residents' views in Siddington.

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Mike Every summed up, confirming that 90 consultation responses had been received regarding Siddington, with the majority expressing a desire to remain in Siddington. He noted that Fairford and Moreton-in-

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Marsh had declined warding proposals, while Tetbury's warding arrangement was supported for better local representation. The recommendations regarding the status quo for Cirencester, Preston, and Siddington, as well as other proposed changes, were confirmed as appropriate.

The Chair moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting Record:

29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To APPROVE the recommendations of the Community Governance Review: (Resolution)

Council RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the final recommendations in relation to the Community Governance Review for Cirencester, Cutsdean, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh, Southrop, Tetbury, as set out in the table at para. 5.1.
2. Authorise the Head of Legal Services to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance order to implement the changes agreed by Council.

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	29
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

95 Change to Full Council meeting date

Councillor Mike Every introduced the item and explained that the proposal was to change the date of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting from 17 June to 12 August at 6:00 pm. He advised that this change was requested to allow additional time for officers to complete work on the Local Plan following the Regulation 18 consultation, which had received over 2,000 responses and approximately 200 new site submissions. Councillor Every emphasised that the additional time would enable officers to prepare a robust plan for Regulation 19 consultation and for submission to the Planning

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Inspectorate, with the aim of achieving a sound Local Plan by 2027. He acknowledged the inconvenience of an August meeting but stressed the importance of ensuring the plan was robust and deliverable within statutory timeframes.

Councillor Mark Harris, in the Chair, asked whether the date change was requested by officers. Councillor Evemy confirmed that officers had advised the Council that additional time was needed to give the Local Plan the best chance of being found sound, and that the proposed date change would accommodate this without impacting the overall consultation timeline.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions for clarity. There were no additional questions.

The Chair sought a seconder for the proposal. Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the proposal and reserved the right to speak.

The Chair moved to the debate, no debate ensued.

Councillor Layton, who had reserved her right to speak then spoke in support of the recommendations, emphasising the need to follow officers' advice and ensure the Local Plan was robust for Regulation 19 consultation and subsequent inspection. Councillor Layton highlighted the importance of giving officers sufficient time to meet deadlines and ensure the plan contained all necessary material for consultation and inspection.

The Chair invited the proposer, Councillor Mike Evemy, to sum up. Councillor Evemy reiterated that the proposed date change was intended to give officers sufficient time to prepare the plan, maximise the chances of it being found sound, and ensure timely consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate before Christmas. Councillor Evemy also noted that the proposed August meeting would still allow the Regulation 19 consultation to commence in the summer and run into September and October, providing ample opportunity for public engagement.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting record:

28 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To APPROVE a change to the June 17 Full Council meeting date (Resolution)		
Council RESOLVED to:		
1. Agree to move the date of 17 June 2026 Full Council meeting to 12 August 2026, at 6.00 pm.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl	28

	Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	
Against	Joe Harris	1
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

96 Notice of Motions

The Chair invited Councillor Angus Jenkinson to speak. Councillor Jenkinson proposed the motion on climate and ecological transformation in the Cotswold District and noted that the motion addressed serious and critical issues while remaining modest in scope, asking the Council to do what it could within its remit. Councillor Jenkinson highlighted that the Council had previously declared climate and ecological emergencies and emphasised the importance of considering these issues as the district moved towards a unitary authority structure.

He referred to a recent government report, released under the Freedom of Information Act, which indicated that all ecosystems in the UK were on a trajectory toward failure. He stressed that agriculture and farming were central to addressing climate, ecological, and food security challenges and that the Council had an opportunity to support a resilient local food system. Councillor Jenkinson concluded his introduction by noting the rural nature of the district and the significance of the issues, urging the Council to consider actions that could make a meaningful difference locally and globally.

The motion requested that the Chief Executive explore practical measures the Council could take to support sustainable food and farming practices, strengthen short supply chains, and contribute to ecological transformation within the district.

The Chair moved to the debate. Councillor Juliet Layton noted that the district council had limited powers over farming practices and highlighted wider challenges in nature recovery and sustainable agriculture. She questioned the potential influence of a new unitary authority under local government reorganisation (LGR) on these issues, noting constraints such as the lack of local abattoirs and historical government policies that favoured intensive farming.

Councillor Angus Jenkinson responded that while statutory powers were limited, the Council could leverage convening and influence to support sustainable farming. He

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cited examples from advisory groups, catchment partnerships, and initiatives in Wales demonstrating the impact of coordinated action on food sourcing and health outcomes. He also emphasised the importance of cultural change and the wider food chain in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Councillor Claire Bloomer suggested closer collaboration with town and parish councils, which manage allotments and local food projects, to engage communities in sustainable practices. Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson queried the level of consultation with farmers and farming organisations in preparing the motion. Councillor Jenkinson explained that the motion was informed by broad engagement with advisory groups, DEFRA, catchment partnerships, and conferences, reflecting widespread farmer perspectives.

Other members raised points on historical and regenerative farming practices, with Councillor Jenkinson noting correspondence with MPs and party leadership to advocate for greater recognition of food and farming in policy.

Councillor Mike McKeown spoke as seconder of the motion and noted that the Council had focused on supporting residents and businesses in reducing emissions through measures such as energy retrofitting, solar installation, and EV charging infrastructure. He emphasised that similar support should be extended to the agricultural sector, highlighting the importance of including food and farming in the planning of the new unitary authority under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Councillor Mike McKeown stated that climate action required ongoing attention and that coordinated support could help farmers overcome economic and practical challenges. He cited a local example where the Council had collaborated with landowners and developers to address flooding, demonstrating the Council's ability to achieve practical outcomes. Councillor McKeown concluded that the motion aimed to ensure farmers and landowners were engaged, that the LGR programme included food and farming as a key track, and that collaboration with organisations such as Climate Leadership Gloucestershire would support effective implementation.

During the debate, members expressed broad support for the motion while noting that the council's role was primarily one of facilitation and influence, rather than direct delivery of farming initiatives. Several councillors highlighted that, although agriculture was not a statutory responsibility, the Council could act under the general power of competence to support local farmers, champion sustainable practices, and influence wider climate and ecological outcomes.

Members referenced the Council's previous initiatives in energy retrofitting, electric vehicle infrastructure, and community engagement as examples of how local action could achieve meaningful impact, emphasising that similar approaches could be extended to the agricultural sector. Councillors also noted the economic and

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environmental challenges facing farmers, including changing markets, climate impacts, and the need for access to advice, support, and collaborative opportunities.

Some speakers cautioned that competing priorities and the ongoing local government reorganisation presented practical constraints, and stressed the importance of early planning, engagement with farmers, landowners, and academic experts, and collaboration with organisations such as Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to ensure effective implementation. It was noted that embedding food and farming within climate and ecological strategies could support public health, food security, local economic resilience, and sustainable land use, and that the creation of a new unitary authority presented a unique opportunity to plan for these issues strategically.

The debate concluded with agreement that the motion would help ensure food and farming were considered in the planning and future operations of the new council, with clarity on leadership, priorities, and potential partners, while engaging the local farming community in shaping decisions that affect them.

The Chair invited Councillor Jenkinson to sum up.

In summing up, the proposer thanked members for their support and acknowledged the contribution of farmers and local stakeholders who had informed the motion. Councillor Jenkinson highlighted the potential of agriculture to mitigate climate change, including natural flood management, soil carbon capture, and improving food and health outcomes, noting the urgency of embedding these considerations into the planning of the new unitary authority. He also emphasised that the motion sought to use the Council's existing powers and competencies to influence outcomes and engage partners effectively. The proposer concluded by urging members to support the motion, stressing that timely action could make a meaningful difference for the local community, the agricultural sector, and the wider environment.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Angus Jenkinson and seconded by Councillor Mike McKeown.

Voting record:

20 For, 0 Against, 6 Abstentions.

Councillor David Cunningham, Councillor Julia Judd and Councillor Len Wilkins did not vote.

To APPROVE the recommendations of the Climate and Ecological Transformation in the Cotswold District and Gloucestershire Motion (Motion)
Recognising the significant potential of local agriculture to contribute positively to climate and ecological recovery, and the need for coordinated local and regional support to enable this,

Council RESOLVED to:

1. Request that the Chief Executive and the Leader propose the following when representing the Council on the work to prepare for local government reorganisation:
 - a. That the LGR Programme formally adopts Food and Farming as an active element within its climate planning work - whether as its own strand or as a sub strand as officers determine as most effective; and
 - b. That the LGR Programme uses Climate Leadership Gloucestershire's Food and Farming track as a convening mechanism.
2. Request that the Chief Executive and the Leader report back to the July 2026 meeting of the Council with an update on the development of the Future Operating Model(s) of the new unitary council(s) and how Food and Farming is being considered within them and including the following:
 - a. who will take ownership of it (political and officer leads),
 - b. what the early priorities are, and
 - c. which partners could be involved (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, catchment partnerships, Environment Agency, National Landscapes, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, National Farmers Union, and others as appropriate).

For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Every, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Lisa Spivey, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner and Ian Watson	20
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Daryl Corps, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe and Jeremy Theyer	6
Carried		

97 Next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council was confirmed as being on Monday 20 May at 6:00 pm. It was noted that this would be Annual Council.

The Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 4.46 pm

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Member Questions for Full Council – 18 March 2026

#	Questioner	Question	Response
1	Cllr Tom Stowe to Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Please could you confirm the current number of open Planning Enforcement cases and does the current level of staffing and resources within the Planning Enforcement team allow Cotswold District Council to deliver an effective and timely service?	There are currently 684 live planning enforcement cases as of 09/03/2026, with 420 of these designated as backlog, originating from 31/12/2024 or earlier. The team has recently been re-structured, including the creation of 2 additional roles, resulting in a team of 6. Four of the six roles are currently filled following recruitment in January (including 2 agency staff). A further role will be filled on 30/03/2026 following a successful recruitment campaign and we anticipate the final role to be filled when an officer returns from long term sick in late March/early April. As such, it is hoped in the coming months the team will return to 100% staffing and will have capacity to tackle the backlog. It should be noted that the nature of planning enforcement means that there will always be cases outstanding as formal action may be required if matters cannot be resolved through negotiation or a new planning application. Formal action, by its nature, is often lengthy and usually comes at the end of an unsuccessful dialogue.



			Together with officers, I will be attending a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the coming months to discuss and answer questions about planning enforcement .
1b.	Supplementary question	Can you provide a realistic timeframe for when the backlog of planning enforcement cases will begin to reduce, and when the caseload is expected to return to a manageable level?	We are currently experiencing a high volume of enforcement cases, averaging nearly one new case per day, which continually adds to the backlog. The team is in the process of being fully resourced through recruitment, backfill, and agency support, and we expect to have a complete team shortly. However, enforcement cases vary greatly in complexity—some can be resolved in a few months, while others take years and involve planning, conservation, and legal teams. Because of this variability, it is not possible to give a precise timescale for when the backlog will start to reduce or when caseloads will return to a manageable level. The process is careful and deliberate, prioritising compliance through engagement rather than immediate enforcement action. When the team is fully staffed and embedded in the summer, we should have a clearer view as to its capacity to clear the backlog and deal with day-to-day management of new cases.
2.	Cllr Tony Slater to Cllr Mike Evemy,	Following the O&S briefing on the latest LGR position I am concerned that the LGR	Members will be aware that three of our officers (Matt Abbot, Helen Martin, and David Stanley) were appointed as



	Leader of the Council	work is taking too much time from our senior officers, who as a result cannot dedicate their service to Cotswold District Council. CDC seems to have more of its officers leading workstreams and programmes of work than other district and city councils. While it is pleasing that our officers have the advanced skills to be picked for this important work, it distorts the fair share of costs between the other contributors. As with the Publica transition, the estimated costs of £1.5m (already equivalent to around 900 band D taxpayers) do not account for the significant officer time, and the taxpayers of the Cotswold's are therefore paying more than their fair share for the reorganisation, and at the same time losing out on service that should be provided. Please can you explain how these role allocations are weighted for fairness, and what additional backfill costs are envisaged to fill the void when officers are working on LGR?	programme leads supporting the LGR transition work across Gloucestershire over the next 24 months. 50% of each programme lead's time will be spent on LGR activities. The LGR Transition budget will reimburse host Councils on this basis (i.e. 50% of the salary cost of each officer will be claimed back from the LGR Transition budget) and this was agreed by Leaders of all the Gloucestershire Councils. This funding will be available to support any backfill arrangements that are required. The Council has also established two specific earmarked reserves to support LGR and to ensure residents will continue to receive the vital/valued services right up until the end of March 2028: • £1m has been allocated to the Council Priority: Capacity Building reserve • £2m has been set aside in the Council Priority: LGR Transition reserve. On a wider point, the cost associated with LGR and the transition are shared across all the Councils in Gloucestershire. As set out in Section 5 of the Budget report to Council in February, the County Council is funding 55% of these costs
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			with each District Council funding an equal amount of the remaining 45%. I therefore don't agree with you that these arrangements are in any way unfair to Cotswold DC. Indeed, the prominent role played by the three officers together with our CEO in this work means that our officers will be playing a big role in developing the new council(s) which in my view is advantageous for the Council and Cotswold residents. The CEO will be monitoring the arrangements and I'm confident she will ensure that the interests of this Council will be safeguarded.
2b.	Supplementary Question	Can you please outline what measures are in place to ensure that senior officers are not overburdened when balancing their day-to-day responsibilities alongside the additional demands of LGR?	Senior officer workload has been carefully considered. The Chief Executive has worked with each of the individuals concerned to agree how their responsibilities will be managed alongside LGR commitments. In practice, this includes redistributing up to 50% of their existing workloads through tailored arrangements within their teams. The Chief Executive retains overall responsibility for managing staff capacity and is satisfied that these arrangements are sustainable. In addition, funding associated with the LGR programme will be used to provide backfill, including the recruitment of additional staff to take on displaced duties.



			Further support is already being put in place, with additional staff starting to help alleviate pressures. The CEO undertook to share a summary of these arrangements with Members for reassurance.
3.	Cllr Tom Stowe to Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council	Does Cotswold District Council own a camera drone? If so, how much did it cost and what ongoing/recurring costs to the council are there?	The council does own a drone. This was purchased in January 2023 by the shared Communications team (Publica), at a cost of £764. The Communications team and the drone transferred to the Council in November 2024 as part of Phase 1 of the Publica Review. The drone was purchased to assist in delivering better quality and more engaging communications for residents, and to avoid the cost associated with hiring drone operators. Since then, the Council has been able to undertake certain video work in-house, saving significantly more in outsourcing than it paid for the drone. Much of this footage has been used on multiple occasions. The drone was fully insured and operated in line with Civil Aviation Authority guidance, including having the relevant internal policy, operating procedures and privacy notice. However, in January 2026, the CAA further tightened regulations around drone use. This included requirements



			around every user/pilot obtaining a flyer ID, the council being registered as a drone operator, remote ID being retrofitted to the drone and more. The Council is in the process of fully understanding what steps it needs to take to ensure full compliance with these new regulations and what investment this might require. This isn't considered a priority for the communications team at this time, and until such time that the Council has taken the various and significant steps to be fully compliant, the drone is not in use for any form of council work. This means there are currently no recurring costs to the Council.
3b	Supplementary Question	What were the recurring costs of the drone while it was operational, how many flights did it undertake, and where can the resulting footage be accessed by the public?"	The drone was procured to support the work of the communications team and was used as intended while operational. Due to changes in legislation, it is no longer in use. Officers can provide details on the flights undertaken and associated costs. Not all footage may be publicly available, but a summary of usage can be supplied.
4.	Cllr Tony Slater to Cllr Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services	Litter along our roads and lanes has become intolerable and is particularly visible in the winter months when the vegetation is dormant. Please can the Member outline what steps are being taken to rid our	The district covers a large geographical area with an extensive road network, including highspeed routes. This means that litter-picking must be carefully planned and delivered by Ubico, our environmental services partner, with appropriate traffic management and safety measures in place to protect crews while they work.



		beautiful countryside of this menace, as it is a poor advertisement for the Cotswolds?	Coordinating litter-picking with the mowing schedule is another operational challenge, as both activities need to be timed to ensure maximum effectiveness while minimising disruption. Alongside routine cleansing, we are considering preventative steps to reduce the problem at its source, for example the installation of targeted signage to discourage littering, particularly in known hotspot areas. We are developing closer ties with volunteer groups across the district, supporting them with equipment and logistics to help facilitate community litter-picking activities, where it is safe to do so.
4b	Supplementary question:	Can Cllr Pellegram please indicate how many staff are currently dedicated to keeping the district clean, and could this team be bolstered using savings from the communications team seconded to LGR?	We agree that littering is an important issue, and the Head of Waste has reviewed the district, noting most areas are in reasonable condition, with specific concerns addressed directly. The main waste team is not involved in LGR, and additional support comes from other officers and our supplier, Ubico. Current actions include working with Keep Britain Tidy, supporting community litter picks, conducting detailed studies in tourist areas, auditing bins, exploring improved bin



			configurations with parish councils, and developing joint protocols with neighbouring councils to improve accountability, particularly ahead of LGR. Members are welcome to discuss ideas directly with the Head of Waste.
5.	Cllr Jeremy Theyer to Cllr Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services	There will soon be an order being placed for the new bin truck fleet – what flexibility is there with these new vehicles once they are in operation to adapt for changes in recycling and waste collection legislation which may be imposed in the future by government?	There are two types of changes that could impact the design of vehicles: 1. An increase to the range of recycling materials collected at the kerbside. This change is currently in effect and is being planned for. The change stems back to the Resource and Waste Strategy 2018 which led to Simpler Recycling requiring a set range of materials to be collected from 1st April 2026 (The Council is compliant) and the additional collection of flexible/ soft plastics by 1st April 2027 (this is being planned for in the specification of the replacement recycling vehicles). Future changes are likely to have a similar long lead time or reflect the constraint of vehicles having a long operational life. 2. Changes to the composition of waste. This is a change that happens not in a step change way, as is the case with Simpler Recycling, but due to long-term behaviour change (e.g. reduced distribution and therefore recycling



			of newspapers, or increased cardboard due to home deliveries), or legislation hitting the supply chain. Extended Producer Responsibility and Deposit Return Schemes are both examples of these changes. We are modelling potential impacts of these to inform vehicle design and understand risk. And we are carrying out sensitivity analysis on the projected levels of materials we may get in the future. Ultimately, where levels of recycling go beyond expectations in the future, this could lead to a requirement for more recycling vehicles. The cost of which would be offset, to some extent, by a potential reduction in refuse vehicles, an increase in revenue for recyclables, and a decrease in the cost of disposal of waste (which would be a direct cost saving in a unitary authority structure, with combined collection and disposal responsibilities)
5b	Supplementary question	With the anticipated population and housing growth in Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds, and the increased capacity from the new bin fleet, will lay-by bins be reintroduced and incorporated into collection routes?	The Head of Waste is currently procuring new vehicles and carrying out waste flow modelling, taking into account population growth, changes in behaviour, shopping patterns, and legislation. This includes sensitivity testing to inform vehicle specifications and route configurations, rather than simply using larger lorries. Additionally, services will be harmonised as part of Local Government Reorganisation. Lay-by bins will not be reintroduced at this time.



6.	Cllr Len Wilkins to Cllr Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	Cotswold residents have supported CDC and its predecessors for over 50 years. During this time reserves have accrued, we have a duty to ensure that Cotswold Council Taxpayers get the best return and value for money from these reserves. Could our representatives during the negotiations on LGR ensure our residents' assets are protected and not lost to bail out other local councils involved in the transition?	The Council has a legal duty to agree and set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year. This was the case in February when the Council set the 2026/27 revenue budget. The budget report to Council outlined the way in which earmarked reserves would be used to support the Council's priorities (Section 7) and the longer-term considerations associated with LGR (Leaving a Legacy/Preparing for the future). I can assure members that as an administration we are mindful of the need to continue to support our residents and deliver high quality services, but also to leave our residents in the best possible position ahead of the establishment of a new unitary council. Part of this will be to pass over fully funded services and to leave the Council on a financially sustainable footing. As Cllr Wilkins will recall, the seven councils in Gloucestershire committed to handing over balanced revenue budgets to the new authority/ies due to start on 1 April 2028 in the proposals for a single unitary council and for east and west unitary councils. Those budgets will need to be balanced without the
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			use of revenue reserves. Despite its budget difficulties, Gloucester City Council has recommitted to this. All of the assets and liabilities for all seven councils in Gloucestershire will transfer to the new council(s) when they are established. Whilst Cotswold DC is almost completely debt-free and has capital receipts and revenue reserves, its asset holdings are considerably lower than several of the other councils in the county. All of these will be brought together in the new council(s).
6b	Supplementary question	Can you please tell us what assets CDC has and what your intentions are for these?	I will provide a written reply, likely referencing the Asset Management Strategy and listing physical assets, while noting that many of the council's assets are not easily quantified as physical objects. Please note that the Councils Assets register is published on its website A list of all of the Councils assets is available on the Council's website: https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/land-and-property-assets/ The Council adopted the Asset Management Strategy in May 2024. This set out the strategic approach the Council has as regards managing its physical assets (land and property).



			Cotswold District Council - Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 9th May, 2024, 6.00 pm
7.	Cllr Laura Hall-Wilson to Cllr Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for	The report from the Town Centres Initiative has recently been published and for Tetbury one of the key recommendations is parking improvements. I hear from businesses and residents on almost a daily basis how they struggle with parking in Tetbury. Please confirm what measures you will be taking in reaction to this report, to improve the flow of cars and look at how to make parking easier for visitors to our town?	The Councils approach to supporting and improving parking provision across the district is set out in the Parking Strategy 2025 – 2028, which includes an Action Plan that sets out the measures that will be taken in each town. Whilst car park design and capacity considerations seek to improve flow of traffic within car parks, the flow of traffic through towns is a matter for GCC Highways.
7b.	Supplementary question	What further measures can the district council take to implement the recommendations from the REPF-funded report alongside the existing parking strategy, and how can we lead coordination with Gloucestershire County Council and town councils to deliver effective parking solutions for our town centres and businesses?	Parking is a key part of the portfolio, and we are aware of the challenges in towns like Tetbury, where land for additional parking is limited. Previously, officers were encouraged to work with town and parish councils to identify land for managed car parks, and positive examples exist in places like Lechlade and Fairford. We remain committed to engaging with Tetbury councillors and our parking officers to explore further opportunities and develop an action plan to address local parking needs.



8.	CLlr David Fowles to Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council	When the decision was taken to sell the memorial cottages in Cirencester, the Council gave notice to one of the tenants - the Living Memorial Historical Association - who ran their WW2 museum from one of the Cottages. A promise was made that we would help the Association to store their collection and find a new home. Since when nothing has happened. Given our armed forces are once again embroiled in another conflict, finding a home for this museum is even more relevant. Please could you update us on the current position?	The Council has supported the Living Memory Trust with time-limited funding to cover storage costs for their collection. The Council has also supported the Living Memory Trust since the decision was taken to dispose of/sell the Memorial Cottages by facilitating conversations with local agents and directly with landlords to try and seek suitable alternative space for the collection but has never promised to 'find them a new home' As far as we are aware, the Trust is continuing to look for a new home for the collection. Members may recall that the Corinium Museum hosted an exhibition in September and October 2025, commemorating the second world war. This included items from the Living Memory Historical Association.
8b	Supplementary question	Can we arrange a meeting outside this session to get an update on discussions with landlords and agents regarding potential space for the Living Memory Trust, so the museum's World War II artefacts can be made available to the public, ideally in time for the Heritage Open Day in September?	It is unfortunate that the Living History Memorial Association has not yet found a new home. While we recognise the value of their collection and will continue to offer support where possible, it is not the council's responsibility to provide permanent space. Officers will consider the options and provide assistance, but the organisation remains independent, and any accommodation must be balanced with wider council responsibilities.



9.	Cllr David Fowles to Cllr Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation.	Under the last Conservative government, Gloucestershire received considerable Government funding to invest in Growth hubs including the Growth hub at the RAU. This funding has now disappeared, and the centre is now known as The Alliston Centre. This site was intended to be the beginning of a £100m investment announced in January 2023 to create an Innovation Village on a 12-acre site at the RAU. Planning was applied for 'phase 1' in October last year. Please could you update us on when work is going to start on phase 1, the status of the Growth Hub and the overall status in terms of investment funding for the Innovation project?	The Council has funded the Cirencester Growth Hub through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund since the 2022-23 financial year. This funding runs out at the end of the current financial year. The Cirencester Growth Hub is based in the Alliston Centre building on the RAU Campus, alongside the Farm491 agritech incubator. The Growth Hub network in the county has been awarded funding from the Gloucestershire Strategic Economic Development Fund for the 2026-27 financial year, which will enable it to continue, albeit at a reduced level. The service will continue to be known as the Growth Hub. From a planning perspective, there is a live outline planning application (ref: 24/01143/OUT) relating to the development of the Innovation Village. Officers are currently waiting on further information to be submitted by the developers before making a final assessment and presenting the application to the Planning and Licensing Committee. It is not possible to comment on when works may commence at the site. The Innovation Village project will be financed through external funding. As the promoters of the scheme, it is for the RAU to secure that investment, although the Council, through its economic development function, will continue to support
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			the university in doing so. Securing outline planning consent is critical in terms of providing the level of certainty required by potential investors.
9b	Supplementary question	Can the Council confirm what steps will be taken to support the Growth Hub beyond the current 12-month funding period to ensure its continued success in our town?	Funding for the Growth Hub has been agreed for the upcoming financial year and in principle for 2027-28 through the City Region Board's strategic economic development fund, derived from business rates pooling. While we cannot commit to funding beyond that period, we recognise the value of the Growth Hub and remain committed to supporting its continued success in Cirencester and the North Cotswolds.

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