



Notification of Draft  
Decisions Thursday, 16 April 2026

**Notice of Draft  
Decisions of Cabinet -  
Thursday, 16 April 2026**

**3. Minutes**

The purpose of this item was to consider the minutes of Cabinet held on 5 March 2026.

The recommendation to approve the minutes was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 March 2026 be approved as a correct record.

Voting record:  
6 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

**9. Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3**

The purpose of this item was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance for Q3 2025 -26.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, highlighting that high-performing front-line public services were critical to supporting residents, businesses and communities. He explained that the service performance report was intended to identify variations from expected performance at the earliest opportunity to enable targeted intervention and improvement.

The report updated Members on key service activity and performance during the period, including progress on the Council's response to the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals, the establishment of the Climate Board, installation of electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks, the capital fleet replacement programme, the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation, and positive outcomes from the leisure contract.

Cabinet NOTED the overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2025-26 Q3 (October-December 2025).



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## **10. Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 3**

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

Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, which set out the Q3 outturn forecast for the financial year. The report showed a favourable variance of £0.045m and confirmed that the Council remained in a financially sound position without the need for borrowing. Councillor Coleman noted that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 April 2026. Members were advised of strengthened financial management during the quarter, including enhanced vacancy controls, income improvements, and the continued transfer of underspends to earmarked reserves to support financial resilience, local government reorganisation, and future budget pressures. The report also highlighted a £0.719m forecast underspend in the capital programme. The final 2025/26 outturn position would be reported to Cabinet in July 2026.

Cabinet REVIEWED and NOTED the financial position set out in the report.

## **11. Strategic Risk Register Q3 2025-26**

The purpose of the report was to set out the current Strategic Risk Register for the Council.

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and noted that the Strategic Risk Register presented had been reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) during Q4 of the financial year.

Members received the Strategic Risk Register alongside the Council's performance and financial reports and noted that it had previously been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee earlier in the month. The report highlighted key strategic risks, including preparedness for civil contingencies and the robustness of business continuity arrangements, which were confirmed to be under active review and update. Members also noted the escalation of a new strategic risk relating to compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), following review by the Corporate Leadership Team, and that further mitigation work was ongoing to achieve compliance.



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Cabinet REVIEWED and NOTED the Strategic Risk Register and mitigation measures.

## **12. Discretionary Rate Relief policy**

The purpose of this item was to ask Cabinet to consider proposed changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy following recent government announcements and to note the policy which underpins these schemes, as appended to the report.

Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report and explained that under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Localism Act 2011, the Council was required to grant mandatory rate relief in certain circumstances and had discretion to award additional relief where it supported local priorities. Members were advised that the policy reflected previous arrangements and incorporated recent Government business rates initiatives. These included the introduction, from 1 April 2026, of a new 100% business rate relief for a ten-year period for standalone electric vehicle charging points and electric vehicle charging forecourts, and a 15% business rates discount for eligible pubs and live music venues for the 2026/27 financial year. It was noted that the cost of the pub and live music venue relief would be shared between Central Government, the District Council, and the County Council. Members were informed that the relevant reliefs had been applied to 2026/27 annual business rates bills, and that businesses could contact the Council's Revenues service if they believed they were eligible but had not received the relief.

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

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the amendments to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as detailed within the report;
2. Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, any future amendments to the Policy in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Electric Vehicle Forecourts

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7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.



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**13. Publica Business Plan 2026-28**

The purpose of the item was to seek Cabinet's consideration of the Draft Publica Business Plan 2026–28 and to ask that Cabinet recommend that the Leader, as Shareholder Representative, approve the Plan.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and explained that Publica's Articles of Association include twelve reserved matters requiring Shareholder Council approval, among them the adoption or amendment of the Business Plan. The Draft Business Plan 2026–28, prepared by the Publica Board in consultation with Directors and Shareholders, set out a two-year programme aligned to the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) timetable through to Vesting Day on 31 March 2028. The report outlined Publica's proposed priorities and service delivery arrangements. Members noted that the Business Plan had also been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Publica was recognised as being a key service delivery partner for the Council, and the Plan focused on supporting the organisation, its services, and its workforce through a period of change, including preparation for Local Government Reorganisation, while continuing collaboration with partner councils across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Tony Dale.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Endorse the Publica Business Plan 2026-2028
2. Ask the Leader, as shareholder representative, to recommend its adoption to the Board

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**14. Review of Publica Governance Agreement and Extension of Service Agreement**

The purpose of this report was for the Cabinet to consider proposals for amendments and an extension to governance arrangements following the conclusion of the Publica Review. The report also sought delegated authority to make any



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minor adjustments to the Publica specification in the run-up to Local Government Reorganisation should it become necessary.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and explained that it reflected the significant changes to the Publica shared service arrangements following the Publica Review, including revised governance structures and reduced service provision. Members noted that the updated arrangements clarified roles and responsibilities and aligned service specifications with current delivery, while supporting preparation for potential Local Government Reorganisation. It was noted that amendments would be implemented primarily through deeds of variation to existing agreements to minimise cost, with delegated authority granted for minor amendments as required. The changes applied to the Articles of Association, Members' Agreement, Service Agreements and Service Specifications, and included the extension of Service Agreements to October 2030, while retaining flexibility for service exit with appropriate notice.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Tony Dale.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve in principle the changes to the governance agreements set out in section 3.
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise and enact through appropriate legal documentation, the detailed changes to the agreements, in line with the principles agreed.
3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to approve minor amendments to the scope of services delivered by Publica to Cotswold District Council in advance of Local Government Reorganisation.

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

## **15. Retention Strategy 2026-28**

The purpose of this item was to present the Council's Retention Strategy for approval.



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Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the Strategy, developed to ensure the organisation continued to attract, develop and retain a skilled and resilient workforce to deliver the Corporate Plan 2025–28. The Strategy, aligned to the Local Government Association's "Six Ps" framework, set out a values-based approach to workforce planning, leadership development, engagement, inclusion, career progression and employer appeal. It responded to ongoing recruitment and retention pressures, including skills shortages, increased competition for talent, rising costs and the uncertainty associated with potential local government reorganisation. Members noted that the Strategy promoted a positive organisational culture and strong leadership, supported by a measurable action plan to reduce workforce risks; improve stability and wellbeing; and support current and future service priorities. Any financial implications arising would be managed within existing budgets.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Andrea Pellegram.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the Retention Strategy

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Councillor Patrick Coleman left the Chamber after the vote.

## **16. Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy**

The purpose of this item was to presents the Council's Advertising, Sponsorship and Endorsement Policy for approval.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the Policy, which established a clear and consistent framework for managing commercial partnerships and promotional activity. It was noted that the Policy ensured compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including the Local Government Act 1986 and the Publicity Code, safeguarded the Council's reputation and mitigated for conflicts of interest or undue influence.



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Members noted that the Policy set out governance arrangements, and formalised a consistent approach to assessment, approval and monitoring, strengthening governance and ensuring alignment with the Council's values and priorities

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

## **17. Artificial Intelligence Adoption Strategy**

The purpose of this item was to consider a strategy for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across council services that protects residents and service users whilst enabling them to access the benefits that AI can offer. The report also recommended the adoption of a policy to guide use of AI for employees and councillors.

Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital, introduced the report on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy and AI Adoption Strategy. Members were advised that the Policy and Strategy established a clear governance framework for the responsible adoption and use of AI across the Council and its key delivery partners, supporting service improvement, efficiency and digital transformation while ensuring transparency, accountability, data protection and human oversight. It was noted that the Strategy set out objectives, an action plan and ethical principles, including the establishment of an AI Oversight Board to manage risk, scrutinise proposals and drive appropriate adoption, while the accompanying Policy defined the rules, boundaries and mandatory requirements for AI use. The approach was intended to enable the Council to adopt AI safely and confidently, support officers and improve outcomes for residents and businesses, while strengthening organisational resilience and preparing for potential Local Government Reorganisation.



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The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike McKeown and seconded by Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the AI Usage Policy at Annex A
2. Approve the AI Adoption Strategy and Roadmap at Annex B.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

## **18. Creation of a Commercial Development Post**

The purpose of this item was to seek Cabinet's approval of the creation of a part-time, fixed term post to drive commerciality across the culture sector in Cirencester and the wider district.

Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience, introduced the report on strengthening commercial leadership of the cultural and visitor economy. Members noted the importance of the cultural sector to the local economy and its wider social and place-shaping benefits, including its contribution to the visitor economy, and recognised the need to place non-statutory cultural assets on a more sustainable financial footing in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. It was noted that many cultural facilities were delivered through third-party organisations and required targeted, specialist support to improve resilience, efficiency and income generation. The report proposed the creation of a fixed-term post to work with cultural and visitor attractions to drive income growth and reduce costs, with growth targets to be set over a two-year period, and delegated authority granted to the Director of Communities and Place to develop appropriate measurement and reporting arrangements.

The second recommendation in the report was divided to present the delegation as a separate recommendation. The revised recommendations were proposed by Councillor Tony Dale and seconded by Councillor Andrea Pellegram.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the creation of a fixed term contract post to work with visitor attractions to drive up income and reduce costs.



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2. Endorse the principle of targets for growth over the two years and
3. Grant delegated authority to the Director of Communities and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience to set out the detailed proposals for how this is calculated and reported.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

**19. UBICO Business Plan 2026-27**

The purpose of this item was to ask Cabinet to consider the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27, produced by Ubico in consultation with its directors and shareholders, and to endorse that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approve the plan.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026–27. It was noted that the Plan had been shaped through a consultation process and reflected the transition from Ubico’s previous five-year strategy to a refreshed 2026–2031 roadmap, focusing on improving efficiency, strengthening service resilience, and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation. Cabinet noted that the Plan set out operational and strategic priorities for 2026–27, including enhanced emissions reporting, implementation of Simpler Recycling requirements, decarbonisation of the fleet alongside delivery of core waste, recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services. Cabinet were asked to note the inclusion of Ubico’s proposed expansion of services to Wiltshire from August 2026.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Andrea Pellegram.

Cabinet RESOLVED to:

1. Note the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27; and
2. Endorse that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, would sign the written resolution to approve the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27.

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

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**Closing Date for Call-In: 24 April 2026**  
**Action Embargoed until: 27 April 2026.**