



COTSWOLD
District Council

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

Tel: 01285 623181

e-mail: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at 2.00 pm.**

Jane Portman
Interim Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

(Councillors Mark Harris, Ray Brassington, Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Len Wilkins and Tristan Wilkinson)

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

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

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

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

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes** (Pages 13 - 20)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24 September 2025.

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

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

5. **Unsung Heroes Awards**

Purpose

To announce the Unsung Heroes awards for this quarter.

6. **Public Questions**

To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than one minute each and relate to issues under the Council's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

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

The response may take the form of:

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

7. **Member Questions**

A Member of the Council may ask the Chair, the Leader, a Cabinet Member or the Chair of any Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Cotswold District. A maximum period of

fifteen minutes shall be allowed at any such meeting for Member questions.

A Member may only ask a question if:

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

An answer may take the form of:

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

The following Member questions were submitted prior to the publication of the Agenda.

Question 1:

Councillor Julia Judd to Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

CDC is currently recruiting Enforcement Officers. There seems to be an ongoing issue with recruitment and retention of staff in this department.

In January 2023, Cllr Stephen Andrews put forward the motion "Armed Forces Covenant Re-Endorsement", which I seconded and used the opportunity to talk about The Veteran's Gateway.

The Veterans Gateway offers information, advice and support for army veterans and their families. They are the first point of contact for army veteran welfare needs including employability and ongoing opportunities. If training is needed, this can be funded by The Forces Employment Charity.

I liaised with both organisations who responded enthusiastically to my suggestion that an Enforcement Officer role would be a great fit for army veterans, as it is for ex-Police, as there are many transferable skills.

I liaised with Planning Services Management and shared the information and contact details of both The Veterans Gateway and The Forces Employment Charity. As CDC is in the process of recruiting an Enforcement Officer, has this line of enquiry been pursued?

Question 2:

Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson to Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience.

I am a frequent user of the pool at Cirencester Leisure Centre and along with

many of my contemporaries with young families, we have become concerned at the lack of managerial oversight of some of the younger members of staff at the centre, culminating recently in a physical altercation between two members of staff at the side of the pool during the children's swimming lessons. I am sure you will agree that it is completely unacceptable.

In the lead up to this event, there have been several Sundays where lifeguards are overwhelmed by too many children and families trying to join the warmer teaching pool having been allowed to pay and enter the pool through reception and on many occasions the pool is simply too cold for babies to be in there for any length of time. The level of cleanliness in the wet changing areas often falls below an acceptable standard, there needs to be more proactive cleaning during the time the pool is open.

Given Cirencester is the largest centre in the district this does not reflect well on this service and presumably these issues are also prevalent at other centres.

Please can you confirm you are aware of these issues, and confirm what actions you will take to address them?

Question 3:

Councillor Tom Stowe to Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council.

Following an investigation carried out by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit a report was presented to Audit and Governance Committee in September which highlighted significant issues and irregularities regarding CDC procurement processes.

The report refers to both an "Officer" and a "Councillor" and their role in 3 specific procurement exercises and confirms there have been clear breaches of procurement rules which are specifically

designed to protect public money, ensure good value for money, prevent fraud and corruption and aid transparency and fairness for businesses supplying the council.

"Section 4" of the report details the findings on the procurement exercise surrounding "Company B" and a review of the Council's brand identity and design guidelines.

The findings of this internal investigation confirm that an unnamed Councillor "recommended" a company to be targeted to carry out this work, implying clear favouritism towards this business. This 'mystery' Councillor was clearly deeply involved in this procurement process. The report goes on to highlight several other serious concerns regarding this and other procurement processes.

You have previously publicly refused to identify the mystery Councillor referred to in the report.

From the evidence provided, there seems to be clear evidence of multiple breaches of the CDC Councillor's Code of Conduct by this mystery Councillor, as follows:-

- Rules of conduct 7 – (5) Do not use your position improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage
- Rules of conduct 7 – (6) Do not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Authority.
- Rules of conduct 7 –(9) Do promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post by leadership and example.
- Rules of conduct 7 – (10) Do not behave in a manner which brings your role or the Authority into disrepute.
- Rules of conduct 7 – (15) When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Authority: Do ensure that decisions are made on merit, particularly when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

CDC officers are refusing to pursue a formal code of conduct complaint lodged by the Conservative Group as we are unable to name the mystery Councillor in our complaint. Given the severity of the issues highlighted in this report, it is undeniably in the public interest to disclose the identity of this 'mystery' Councillor and that they are held accountable.

Continuing to "cover-up" and withhold the identity of this Councillor is causing reputational damage to CDC as well as casting a cloud over other elected members, as the Public continues to speculate over the identity of the Councillor concerned.

There are a number of serious potential implications arising from this report including reputational damage, legal challenges from suppliers who have been treated unfairly, financial risk from litigation, breach of governance and accountability and the potential for corruption.

It is crucial that the Council demonstrates complete transparency regarding this issue and the public have a right to know what role this Councillor is currently playing in Local Government. Who is the mystery councillor?

Question 4:

Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services.

At a previous Council meeting, I asked you a member question regarding the removal of all the public litter bins at the lay-bys on the public highways and whether this decision was the right one.

I requested that a review was carried out into not only the cost saving but also the fact that litter continues to be left in lay-bys and is blown across neighbouring fields which is both unsightly as well as a hazard to animals.

Please can you update me on the progress of this review?

Question 5:

Cllr Len Wilkins to Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, Juliet Layton.

Bourton on the Water and other market towns in the District are suffering from many properties being turned into Air B&B and other holiday let units, this is contributing to our young people being unable to stay in the village. Can CDC take any action to control this as part of the local plan review?

Question 6:

Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council.

I was delighted to receive the CDC organogram in August showing the structure of the council following Phase 2 of the Publica transition, this has been enormously helpful.

At the time there were a number of vacancies showing, please could you confirm the current number of employment vacancies at Cotswold District Council and confirm whether there is a policy on how to deal with vacancies which remain unfilled?

Question 7:

Councillor Tony Slater to Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council.

Now that Publica Phase 2 transition is complete and we look forward to the impending Local Government Reorganisation, please can you confirm that CDC maintains a comprehensive Asset Risk Register. Please confirm how often it is updated, monitored and reviewed. Please confirm who carries out this work and who is ultimately responsible?

Question 8:

Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience.

As a senior Portfolio Holder of this administration and a longstanding and well-respected elected member, please could you confirm what involvement you have previously had in procurement exercises on behalf of this Council? Could you confirm what training you received regarding procurement rules and processes?

Question 9:

Councillor Dilys Neill to Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation.

I have been approached by several private hire vehicle drivers in my ward who are concerned about the proliferation of vehicles from outside the district who are working in the area. There has been a particular expansion in the number of drivers who are working via Uber. Kevin Dunford has been very kind in explaining that there is a loophole which allows drivers who have personal, vehicle & operators licences with another district to work across district boundaries.

This is causing concern among local residents as well as drivers. Firstly, it is clear

that these drivers do not know the locality and even with the use of SatNavs, they can't always find the destination. Secondly, there is concern that the vehicles may be used for cross border criminal activities. Thirdly, the livelihood of drivers licenced to Cotswold District is threatened.

Is there anything which CDC can do to support our local drivers? The situation is likely to get worse with the advent of robot taxis.

8. **Appointment of a Permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer** (Pages 21 - 28)

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to approve the recommendation of the Performance and Appointments Committee that the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer is appointed on a permanent basis from 1 January 2026.

Recommendation(s):

Council is recommended by the Performance and Appointments Committee to:

1. Appoint Jane Portman to the role of permanent Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 January 2026 on an annual salary of £140,000 with an additional one-off allowance of up to £8,000.
2. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 1 January 2026.
3. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Returning Officer for the purposes of Section 35 of the Representation of the Peoples Act (1983) and Regulation 4 of the Parish & Community Meeting (Polls) Rules (1987).

9. **Mid-Term Review of Members' Allowances Scheme** (Pages 29 - 56)

Purpose:

To present to Council the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel which has undertaken a mid-term review of the Council's members' allowances scheme.

Recommendation(s):

That Council considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which are that:

1. The special responsibility allowance (SRA) for Leader is increased from 3.0x the basic allowance to 3.5x the basic allowance.
2. The SRA for Deputy Leader is increased from 2.0x basic to 2.5x basic.
3. The SRA for Cabinet Member is increased from 1.5x basic to 2.0x basic.
4. The SRA for Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is increased from 1.0x basic to 1.5x basic.
5. The SRA for Chair of Audit and Governance Committee is increased from

0.5x basic to 1.0x basic.

6. Any agreed increases to SRAs are backdated to 1 April 2025 (being the mid-point of the 4-year Scheme).
7. The existing allowance for Co-opted Members of £1,000 per annum is included in the Scheme.
8. That additional clarification is provided on expenses claims in the Scheme, specifically that:
 - a. The list of approved duties for which expenses can be claimed is included in the Scheme.
 - b. VAT receipts are requested for mileage claims.
 - c. Mileage claims should normally be calculated from the Councillor's home address.
 - d. Claims should be made within 3 months of the expenditure being incurred.
 - e. Mileage rates are aligned with HMRC rates to prevent the creation of taxable benefits.
9. Officers engage with town and parish councils in the New Year on the option of establishing a tiered allowances scheme to guide town and parish councils in the payment of allowances to elected town and parish councillors, to enable the Independent Remuneration Panel (as the Parish Remuneration Panel) to assess whether such guidance would be useful.
10. Note that the Parish Remuneration Panel has recommended to Cirencester Town Council that Cirencester Town Councillors (including the Chair) receive an allowance set at 20% of the basic allowance paid to Cotswold District Councillors.

10. **Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/2027** (Pages 57 - 70)

Purpose

To consider the revised Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2026/27.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet recommends that Full Council resolves to:

1. Agree the increase to income bands as detailed within paragraphs 3.2, 3.3 and Annex A of this report from 1 April 2026.
2. Agree that any balance remaining in the earmarked reserve 'Hardship Fund' be made available in 2026/27 financial year for reasons detailed in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of this report.

11. **Community Governance Review** (Pages 71 - 86)

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to request that Council approve and adopt the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review along with draft proposals.

Recommendation:

That Council resolves to:

1. Approve and adopt the terms of reference and draft proposals for consultation for the Community Governance Review.

12. **Programme of Meetings for 2026/2027** (Pages 87 - 94)

Purpose:

To set a programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2026/27.

Recommendation(s):

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree the programme of meetings from June 2026 to May 2027 as set out in Annex A and Annex B.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme of meetings in the event that there is any future decision of Council to change the committee structure or committee remits that impacts the programme of meetings.
3. Delegate authority to the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services to set the meeting dates for the Performance and Appointments Committee, member training and briefing sessions, any working groups established by the Council and any meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee (Licensing Act 2003 Matters) and the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee (if required).
4. Agree that, subject to any alternative proposals Council considers and agrees, meeting start times will be rolled forwards from 2025/26.

13. **Local Government Reorganisation Proposal - Full Proposal for Local Government reorganisation (LGR) in Gloucestershire** (Pages 95 - 788)

Purpose:

To note the two proposals for local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire that have been developed collaboratively with all seven Gloucestershire councils for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2025, Council on 26 November 2025 and Cabinet on 26 November 2025.

The options are:

- a) creating a single unitary authority for the whole county and
- b) creating two unitary authorities, based on an East / West division of existing district and city councils. The proposal for East Gloucestershire Council comprises Tewksbury Borough Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council and the associated proportion of Gloucestershire County Council. The proposal for West Gloucestershire Council comprises Gloucester City Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Stroud District Council and the associated proportion of Gloucestershire County Council.

Following engagement with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Council,

Cabinet will decide which, if any proposal should be formally submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in response to his invitation dated 5 February 2025.

Recommendation:

1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Council consider the following two proposals for local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire and make any recommendations they wish to Cabinet for their decision.
2. That Cabinet considers which, if any, of the proposals it wishes to submit to Government regarding the future of local government in Gloucestershire
3. That Cabinet resolves to treat the decision as urgent under Part D6, paragraph 4.14 of the Constitution, and therefore disapplies the call-in procedure, on the grounds that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would prejudice the Council's and the public's interests.

14. **Next meeting**

The next meeting of Council will be held on 21 January 2026 at 2.00 pm.

(END)