

Cabinet
05/February2026



COTSWOLD
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 5 February 2026

Members present:

Mike Evely (Leader)	Juliet Layton	
Patrick Coleman	Mike McKeown	Tristan Wilkinson
Tony Dale	Andrea Pellegram	

Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Peta Johnson, Head of Waste and Environment	Frank Wilson, Managing Director (Public)
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Stan Akhurst, Business Partner Health & Safety

Observers:

Councillor David Fowles

192 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

193 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

194 Minutes

The purpose of this item was to consider the minutes of Cabinet held on 8 January 2026:

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Councillor Evemy requested that the word 'potential' be removed on page 19 minute 186.

The recommendation to approve the amended minutes was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment on fees and charges item 186, the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 January 2026 be approved as a correct record.

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve the minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on 8 January 2026 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment on fees and charges item 186, the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 January 2026 be approved as a correct record		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	7
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

195 Leader's Announcements

The Leader expressed sincere thanks to Nigel Robbins, who had stepped down from the Council after nearly 13 years of dedicated service as both a County and District Councillor for the Cirencester Beeches ward.

The Leader acknowledged Mr Robbins' significant contribution during his tenure, including serving as Leader of the Council for two years and as Leader of the Audit and Governance Committee for nearly four years. He had been an active and committed member throughout his service.

On behalf of the Council, the Leader formally expressed gratitude for his work and wished him well in his retirement.

The Leader informed Members that the Government's consultation on local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire had commenced that day and would run for seven weeks.

Members were reminded that three options had been submitted for consideration. Cotswold District Council had voted unanimously in favour of a single unitary option, which was also supported by Gloucestershire County Council, Tewkesbury Borough

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Council and Stroud District Council. The two alternative proposals under consultation were the East–West split proposed by Cheltenham Borough Council and the Greater Gloucester model proposed by Gloucester City Council.

The Leader advised that the Council’s Communications Team would encourage residents and stakeholders to participate in the consultation and submit their views to Government. It was noted that the Government was expected to make a decision before the summer recess, with an anticipated announcement in July, setting out how local government in Gloucestershire would be structured from 1 April 2028.

The Leader reported that a letter had been sent to Government earlier in the week regarding the Council’s housing target. The letter requested a meeting with Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister for Housing, to discuss the matter further. The request drew on feedback from the recent budget consultation, which received nearly 2,000 responses. An update would be provided in due course.

The Leader was pleased to report positive media coverage regarding successful enforcement action taken by the Council in relation to littering. Officers had worked diligently on the case, supported by Councillor Slater, who had identified offending items that enabled the perpetrator to be traced and prosecuted.

The Leader welcomed recent positive media coverage following a successful litter prosecution. Thanks were extended to Councillor Slater, the Enviro-Crime Programmes Officer and the Counter Fraud team for their work.

The Leader reaffirmed the Council’s commitment to maintaining a clean district and confirmed that enforcement action would continue where sufficient evidence was available.

196 Public Questions

There was one public question from Mr Gorin, who stated that he and his wife had owned a small second home in Cirencester since January 2013 and that he had researched the Council’s policy to raise money for “affordable housing”.

The question related to the current 100% Council Tax Premium on second homes, as provided for in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and approved by Cotswold District Council in March 2024 and at its Revenue Meeting in February 2025.

Mr Gorin asked whether Councillors were aware that, in its first year (2025/26), 1,856 properties had been identified, potentially raising £3.66 million. However, he stated that the Council did not have a way of determining the true number of second homes and that, in any event, once Class 1 exemptions were applied, the number subject to the premium had reduced to approximately 816 properties, some 1,040 fewer than the budget prediction. He further stated that the income had fallen well below the predicted £246,000, explaining that this lower figure arose because the Council’s precept represented only 7% of the total Council Tax collected, and that this

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percentage was also applied to the premium. As a result, he suggested that fewer people were paying less revenue, estimating the amount retained by the Council to be approximately £120,000, which he argued would not fund an affordable home.

Mr Gorin asked that, when debating the second home premium for 2026/27, the Council review its decision in line with the powers contained in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to “vary or revoke a determination”. He requested that the Council seek to identify accurately the total number of second homes, review the distribution of funds between preceptors, noting that the majority of the premium was allocated to Gloucestershire County Council rather than to the District Council, and ensure that any funds raised were directed towards affordable housing before voting to re-impose what he described as an unfair and punitive tax.

He further stated that the inequity of the current methodology was illustrated by the Council’s decision not to apply the premium to second homes in the Cotswold Water Park, on the basis that they were not suitable or available for permanent occupation and would not bring additional accommodation into the market. He argued that it was anomalous that, where the purpose of the premium was to raise funds for affordable housing, certain second homes were not required to contribute.

In response, the Leader advised that, as former Portfolio Holder for Finance, he was familiar with the matter and would respond in the first instance.

It was noted that, at the time the legislation was introduced, representations had been made to Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Member of Parliament for North Cotswolds, regarding the absence of any requirement for owners to self-identify second homes. However, this provision had not been included in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

The Leader stated that, while the Council sought to identify second homes wherever possible, estimating the number eligible for the premium had been challenging. It was noted that, although approximately 1,800 properties had initially been identified, exemptions and prudent assumptions regarding collectability had reduced the forecast number subject to the premium to around 810 properties. It was further confirmed that only 7% of the total Council Tax collected, including the premium, was retained by Cotswold District Council, with the majority allocated to Gloucestershire County Council, the Police and parish and town councils. The distribution of the precept was fixed in law and could not be varied by the District Council.

Addressing the point regarding Cotswold Water Park properties, the Leader explained that these were designated holiday homes and not suitable for permanent occupation. As the purpose of the premium was to encourage the availability of residential properties, the rationale for applying the premium did not extend to such designated

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holiday accommodation. It was confirmed that these properties paid 100% Council Tax but were not subject to the additional premium.

The Leader added that the decision to apply the premium was taken annually as part of the budget-setting and Council Tax process.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), David Stanley, further advised that, although around 1,800 second homes were recorded, the Council was required to take a prudent view when setting the Council Tax base, including exemptions and assumptions about collectability, which had resulted in an estimated 810 properties being subject to the premium in 2025/26.

He reported that, in preparing the tax base for the forthcoming financial year, the number was closer to 1,800, reflecting validation work undertaken during the year. This had included working with parish and town councils and ward members to draw upon local knowledge. He reiterated that efforts to introduce a mandatory national register of second homes had not been included in the legislation, although representations had been made.

He concluded by noting that continued dialogue with residents would inform the annual review of the premium and support Members in considering future decisions.

In response to the explanations given Mr Gorin stated that he appreciated the complexities involved and had largely expected the explanation provided. He welcomed the indication that the Council was identifying more second homes, but reiterated his concern about the limited proportion of the premium retained by the District Council and the relatively small amount directed towards affordable housing, which he felt had been presented as a key justification for the policy.

He referred to the stated intention of the premium as a "disincentive" and suggested that it was intended to discourage second home ownership and return properties to the market. He explained that he and his wife had purchased their property with the intention of retiring to the area, but that family circumstances had delayed that move. He noted that they would continue to pay approximately £500 per month rather than £250 and expressed a wish for reassurance that the additional funds were directly supporting affordable housing.

The Leader thanked Mr Gorin for his comments and reiterated that the distribution of Council Tax was fixed in law and could not be altered by the District Council. The financial pressures facing Gloucestershire County Council were noted and it was explained that the policy had been introduced not only to raise funds but also to address the impact of high levels of second home ownership on the sustainability of local communities.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, added that the Council's share of approximately £130,000 was being used strategically to support affordable housing delivery, including officer resource to work with registered providers to bring forward sites within the district.

The Leader thanked Mr Gorin for attending and raising his questions.

197 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

198 Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members

No delegated decisions had been taken by the Leader and/or Individual Cabinet Members since the publication of the agenda for Cabinet on 8 January 2026.

199 Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance

Cabinet noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met earlier in the week and had pre-scrutinised the item on Retail and Hospitality Sectors in the Cotswold District. As a result of this scrutiny five recommendations were made. The recommendations and the Cabinet's response are set out in a [supplementary paper](#).

Councillor Wilkinson, portfolio holder for Economy and Council Transformation stated that the proposal was the result of significant work undertaken in response to a rapidly changing environment for high street businesses. He observed that businesses across the country, including within the Cotswold District, were facing increasing pressures from rising costs, including business rates, increases in the National Minimum Wage and National Insurance contributions. Concern that the current approach to business rates was arbitrary and disproportionate was expressed, and support for writing to local Members of Parliament to seek reform was confirmed.

The importance of vibrant high streets, particularly in rural areas with limited access to services, was emphasised, along with a caution that the loss of shops could undermine community sustainability. It was noted that many smaller settlements relied on a small number of local businesses.

Continued engagement with businesses and measures to support investment in high streets, while resisting the conversion of retail premises to residential use, were highlighted as important due to the cumulative impact on parking, footfall, and long-term viability.

Cabinet support was confirmed for four of the five proposed elements and a willingness to write to Government to highlight the local impact of national policy decisions was indicated.

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200 Asbestos Management Plan

The purpose of the report was to submit an Asbestos Policy to Cabinet for approval, ensuring compliance with statutory duties and clarity regarding the Council's responsibilities as both an employer and a property owner.

Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and highlighted that need to replace existing asbestos guidance with a comprehensive policy that clearly defined the Council's responsibilities for managing asbestos and asbestos-containing materials. This was intended to support delivery of the Health and Safety Work Plan and to ensure continued compliance with statutory duties, under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation.

The Leader invited any questions or comments.

Councillors asked how staff responsible for asbestos management would gain practical experience if no asbestos was identified in the Council's buildings, and whether responsibility for social housing could be delegated to Bromford Housing.

Officers responded that the policy would be communicated across the Council and its partners via the Communications Team. Relevant staff had been identified for training through the IHasco programme, and recent in-depth sessions had been delivered by an asbestos expert. The Environmental Crimes Programmes Officer, had also been included due to potential exposure when managing fly-tipped materials.

Councillors welcomed the inclusion of operational staff in the training, noting the risks associated with asbestos and the importance of specialist handling. Councillor Pellegram expressed full support for the policy, emphasising the need for safe management and compliance as property owners and employers.

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

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To Approve the Cotswold District Council Asbestos Management Policy. (Resolution)		
Cabinet resolved to APPROVE the attached Asbestos Management Policy.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evely, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	7

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Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

201 Contract for Waste, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval to proceed with negotiations and to enter into a Common Service Agreement with Ubico Limited for the delivery of waste collection, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance services, with the new agreement proposed to replace the current contract which was due to expire on 31 March 2027.

Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment & Regulatory Services, introduced the report which described Cotswold District Council's current Service Contract with Ubico Limited for waste collection, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance which was due to expire on 31 March 2027. Ubico had proposed replacing individual contracts with a Common Service Agreement across its shareholder authorities, providing a single contractual framework while allowing for local service specifications.

Given the scale of Local Government Reorganisation and the need to maintain service continuity, the Common Service Agreement (CSA) was described as a proportionate and flexible approach, with the CSA providing a shared contractual framework across shareholder authorities while allowing locally tailored service specifications.

It was noted that the approach supported service continuity, allowed for future flexibility in light of Local Government Reorganisation, and enabled novation to a new Unitary Authority if required. Alternative delivery models were noted but, given the timing and scale of Local Government Reorganisation, continuation of the current delivery model was considered the most proportionate approach at this stage.

The Leader invited Councillors to speak.

Councillor Tony Dale stated that the proposal made considerable sense, noting his experience of the challenges faced by Ubico in managing diverse council requirements for waste collection and recycling. He commended the Chief Executive of Ubico for effectively coordinating multiple contracts and supported the move to a common services agreement, emphasising that it should benefit both Ubico and the councils involved, including the forthcoming unitary authority, by creating a more efficient and streamlined service.

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The Leader noted that the current contract would end before the council's term and that renegotiating it now would be a distraction. He agreed that a common agreement would allow Ubico and the councils to plan future services across an expanded footprint, enabling greater flexibility and efficiency while providing a foundation for the new unitary authority to develop services consistently across Gloucestershire.

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

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

To approve the contract for waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services (Resolution)		
Cabinet resolved to AGREE to :		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. enter into a Common Service Agreement with Ubico as described in this report, and2. delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services to agree the final terms of the agreement with Ubico.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evely, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	7
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

202 Revenue Budget 2026-27, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The purpose of the report was to present the Revenue Budget for 2026/27, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2026/27 to 2029/30 to Cabinet.

Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report. It was noted that the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, had been prepared in the context of ongoing financial pressures and a significant medium-term budget gap. Members noted that, while funding reforms and a three-year provisional

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settlement provided increased certainty, savings and efficiencies would be required to maintain financial sustainability.

It was noted that there was no immediate risk of the Council requiring Exceptional Financial Support or issuing a section 114 notice. The 2026/27 budget was balanced through the use of reserves, with further gaps forecast in later years.

The Council proposed to increase Council Tax by £5 for a Band D property, which had received public support through consultation. Members also noted the planned use and maintenance of reserves, the continued requirement to deliver savings and transformation, and the proposed capital programme, including investment in waste and recycling infrastructure, funded without external borrowing.

The Leader noted the good level of response to the public budget consultation despite it being concurrent with pre-election period and overlapped with the local plan consultation, and thanked all those who had responded to the consultation, noting that approximately two-thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the Council's general approach, including the proposed 5% Council Tax increase, consistent with previous years. The responses to two specific questions were highlighted: 57% of respondents supported transforming services to be more cost-effective and customer-focused rather than maintaining the status quo, and 65% favoured prioritising delivery of capital projects within current capacity and finances rather than pursuing additional investment.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, provided a brief update on the financial position. He noted that, as of 28 January 2026, the forecast for business rates had increased by £178,000 due to retained renewable energy schemes, and the reconciliation of Publica contract sums for 2026/27 was improving the overall position. He cautioned that the final government finance settlement, due on 9 February 2026, could pose a small risk of change, particularly regarding business rates pooling, but advised that any adjustments were unlikely to be implemented immediately and would more likely affect future years.

The Leader invited questions or observations from Members on the report. Councillors agreed that the Council's financial position had been managed exceptionally well, highlighting the prudence in business rates forecasting, the three-year settlement which reduced immediate risk, and the absence of a "cliff edge" in the budget. They welcomed the substantial capital investment of almost £8.5 million in the waste vehicle fleet, noting that it secured a high-quality, environmentally friendly service for at least six to eight years without external borrowing. The contribution from extended producer responsibility funding of £1.721 million was also acknowledged as helping to offset service costs.

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Councillors noted the positive impact of budget allocations on local residents, including continued funding for the home energy efficiency officer, and the benefits of digital transformation and AI to improve service efficiency, reduce administrative workload, and enhance resident services. They highlighted the Council's support for local micro-businesses, of which there were approximately 9,000 in the district, and the importance of initiatives such as free two-hour parking in high streets like Bourton-on-the-Water to support local shops and maintain vibrant community centres.

Councillors agreed that the Council's strong financial position reflected sustained, detailed work by officers and councillors over several years, including careful review of fees and charges, long-term planning, and management of costs to ensure financial stability while delivering quality services. They welcomed the outcomes of the recent public consultation, noting that around two-thirds of respondents supported the general approach and the proposed five percent Council Tax increase, 57% supported transformation of services, and 65% favoured focusing on delivering capital projects within current capacity. They acknowledged that some feedback was critical or misinformed, but agreed that the consultation provided valuable insight into community expectations and reinforced the Council's commitment to prudent, accountable decision-making.

Councillor Coleman summed up saying that the Council had made significant progress in rationalising its financial reserves, reducing a long list of minor reserves to nine, with eight now considered significant. These included reserves for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) transition, capacity building, the local plan, and the climate emergency, reflecting the Council's priorities and focus on strategic objectives. Members noted that simplifying and clarifying the reserves structure made financial management more transparent and effective. It was also noted that the Council remained in a strong position, with no debt issues, well-maintained social housing stock, and high recycling performance, reflecting consistent good governance over time.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Coleman and seconded by Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed by Cabinet.

Voting record:

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve the 2026/27 Budget and MTFs for recommendation to Council (Resolution)

RESOLVED that Cabinet considered the budget report and approved for recommendation to Council:

1. the Medium-Term Financial Strategy set out in Annex B
2. the Budget Pressures and Savings for inclusion in the budget, set out in Annex C
3. the Council Tax Requirement of £7,419,716 for this Council
4. the Council Tax level for Cotswold District Council purposes of £163.93 for a Band D property in 2026/27 (an increase of £5)
5. the Capital Programme, set out in Annex D
6. the Annual Capital Strategy 2026/27, as set out in Annex E
7. the Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2026/27, as set out in Annex F
8. the Strategy for the Flexible use of Capital Receipts, as set out in Annex H
9. that £2m is set aside in a new earmarked reserve Council Priority: LGR Transition through the releasing of £2m of the balance currently held in the Financial Resilience Reserve.
10. the balances and reserves forecast for 2026/27 to 2029/30 as set out in Section 7 of the report.

Cabinet approved delegation to the Council’s Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader, and Cabinet Member for Finance

11. To agree changes to the General Fund Summary arising from the Final Local Government Finance Settlement and the Business Rates Retention Scheme estimates prior to submission to Council.

For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	7
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

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203 Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date of Cabinet was confirmed as 5 March 2026.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.18pm

(END)