

Cabinet
05/March2026



COTSWOLD
District Council

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

Members present:

Mike Evemy	Juliet Layton
Patrick Coleman	Mike McKeown
Tony Dale	Tristan Wilkinson

Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	Frank Wilson, Managing Director (Publica)
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer	Danielle Berry, Natural, Built and Historic Environment Manager
Claire Locke, Executive Director Corporate Services	Caroline Clissold, Business Manager for Housing and Resident Services
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager
Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place	Thomas See, Homeseeker Plus Lead

204 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrea Pellegram.

205 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

206 Minutes

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

The recommendation to approve the minutes was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Tony Dale.

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve the minutes of Cabinet held on 5 February 2026. (Resolution)		
Cabinet RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 February 2026 be approved as a correct record.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

207 Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Leader.

208 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

209 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

210 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 5 March 2026.

211 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 to consider matters relating to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in the Cotswold District, and that the Committee had made no specific recommendations for Cabinet's consideration.

212 Biodiversity Action Plan

The purpose of this report was to approve the biodiversity duty report for publication. It was noted that the publication of this report was a legal requirement for all local authorities and had to be completed no later than 26 March 2026.

Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report and explained that the Environment Act 2021 had strengthened the legal duty on public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and required local planning authorities to publish a report demonstrating how that duty was being met, including performance in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain, which had become mandatory for most developments since February 2024.

The report outlined how biodiversity considerations were being incorporated across a range of Council services, including planning, green space management, climate and sustainability programmes, and partnership working with organisations such as Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and the Local Nature Partnership. The Council's performance in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was also highlighted. It was noted that between February 2024 and December 2025 the Council had discharged 24 BNG plans, the highest number among authorities in Gloucestershire.

The report identified opportunities to further strengthen the Council's approach over the next five years, including the development of a Biodiversity Action Strategy. This strategy would be informed by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the forthcoming review of the Council's Ecological Emergency Action Plan, and would seek to embed biodiversity considerations more fully within corporate decision-making, monitoring, and reporting.

Cabinet was asked to approve the Biodiversity Duty Report for publication, endorse the development of the Biodiversity Action Strategy, and delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to make minor editorial and presentation changes prior to publication.

The Leader commented that the report also highlighted two S106 agreements with significant BNG on site and invited any questions or comments.

The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) grant had been incorporated into the Revenue Support Grant as part of the Local Government

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Finance Settlement for the upcoming financial year. As a result, there would no longer be a separate, ring-fenced allocation for BNG funding from central government, and local authorities would therefore determine their own level of expenditure on BNG from the overall Revenue Support Grant.

The Deputy Chief Executive, David Stanley confirmed that the Council currently held £45,000 of previously unspent BNG funding in reserve, which could be drawn down to support related activity. Should additional funding be required beyond this reserve, officers would need to seek Cabinet approval for further budget allocation.

Councillor Tristan Wilkinson spoke to second the report and thanked Councillor Layton for her summary of the report.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve the recommendations of the Biodiversity Duty report. (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that Cabinet: 1. Approved the biodiversity duty report within Annex A for publication. 2. Delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to make presentational and minor editorial changes for publication.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

213 Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The purpose of the report was to endorse the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The report was introduced by Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

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Councillor Layton noted that the Environment Act 2021 had introduced a statutory requirement for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) covering every area of England. The LNRS for Gloucestershire had been approved by Gloucestershire County Council, which had been appointed by Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as the responsible authority. The strategy had been developed collaboratively with district, borough and city councils and key partners including the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership.

Councillor Layton explained that the LNRS functioned as a spatial planning tool identifying landscape-scale opportunities for nature recovery, including areas where habitat creation, restoration or expansion would have the greatest impact. It was emphasised that the strategy was not prescriptive but provided guidance to public bodies, landowners, farmers and voluntary or private organisations to help target action where biodiversity benefits would be greatest. The strategy also identified areas of particular importance for biodiversity, where nature recovery measures should be prioritised, and where landowners undertaking habitat creation or restoration might be eligible for grant funding or enhanced payments through national schemes.

Councillor Layton explained that local planning authorities were required under the strengthened biodiversity duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to have regard to the relevant LNRS in carrying out their functions. The strategy would therefore become an important reference point for planning decisions, policy development and wider corporate activity.

It was further noted that Cotswold District Council had already begun implementing the approach, and had, working with the National Trust established a habitat bank at the Sherborne Estate aligned with the emerging LNRS measures. This work was intended to support high-quality biodiversity net gain delivery and demonstrated the Council's commitment to partnership-led nature recovery.

Cabinet noted that the LNRS had been approved by the County Council's Cabinet in January 2026 and that endorsing the strategy would ensure that the Council was aligned with the county-wide approach and able to integrate the strategy into its planning, land management and biodiversity work. Members were recommended to read the full document which was publicly available online.

The Leader thanked Councillor Juliet Layton for presenting the report and noted that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was a comprehensive document, including detail on specific species and wider habitat measures. It was noted that the strategy would assist the Council and partner authorities across Gloucestershire in identifying opportunities to enhance nature recovery.

Councillor Mike McKeown, in seconding the recommendation, welcomed the strategy as an important framework for restoring habitats and improving biodiversity across the district and county. He highlighted the role of healthy ecosystems in supporting

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climate resilience, including carbon storage and flood management, and referred to recent flooding during Storm Bert as an example of the impacts of poor land absorption. He added that the strategy was particularly significant for the Cotswolds, where the natural landscape was a key asset.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Mike McKeown

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To endorse the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that Cabinet: 1. Endorsed the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

214 Infrastructure Funding - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Project

The purpose of the report was to seek delegated authority for the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, to implement enhancements to the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding bid process.

The report was introduced by Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, who explained that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), adopted in 2019, was collected from most developments to fund strategic infrastructure to support local communities. Members were advised that 5% of receipts were used for administration, while 15% was allocated to town and parish councils without a neighbourhood plan and 25% to those with a neighbourhood development plan, with a five-year spending period for those allocations.

It was reported that the Council had operated CIL since 2019 and had completed two strategic funding rounds. A review of the process, informed by experience and stakeholder feedback, had identified opportunities to improve transparency, strategic alignment and collaboration in the allocation of funds.

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The proposed changes related to the allocation process rather than the charging schedule. The current single annual bidding window would be replaced with a year-round application process, with bids assessed by officers between October and December. The revised approach would strengthen alignment with the Council's Corporate Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, improve engagement with parishes, community groups and infrastructure partners, and introduce clearer strategic criteria for assessing bids. Monitoring and reporting would also be enhanced to better demonstrate the impact of funded projects.

Members were advised that the report sought delegated authority for the Assistant Director for Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to implement the proposed improvements in time for the next funding round.

Members discussed the proposed enhancements to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation process. Councillor Mike Every noted that the programme aimed to improve the process based on experience from previous funding cycles and ensure alignment with the Council's corporate priorities, while maintaining the distinction between CIL-funded projects and infrastructure delivered through other mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements.

The updated governance arrangements were welcomed, in particular the emphasis on community engagement. The importance of involving members and parish councils as consultees during bid assessment to ensure local input and support was noted. The Kemble to Cirencester cycle path, funded through CIL, was cited as an example of successful collaboration with strong local buy-in, contributing to sustainable transport and community benefits.

It was noted that, historically, CIL or equivalent funds had been used for village halls, but current community needs were broader, including health, wellbeing, and mental health provision, particularly for younger residents. It was emphasised that the revised governance should ensure CIL funding targeted infrastructure that delivered tangible benefits for communities.

The Director of Communities and Place, noted that consideration had been given to balancing allocations between strategic climate emergency and sustainable, healthy community projects, with the current approach focusing on weighting the scoring matrix to achieve the appropriate mix of infrastructure.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Patrick Coleman.

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To delegate authority for the implementation of the CIL Enhancement Programme (Resolution)

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Planning Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing to implement a CIL Enhancement Programme detailed at Section 3 of this report.

For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

215 HomeSeekerPlus Policy Review

The purpose of the report was to present to Cabinet an updated HomeseekerPlus Policy to replace the existing policy, which had been in place since 2016 and was last reviewed in 2022.

Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, explained that the policy had required updating in light of significant legislative changes, updated national guidance, and operational learning across the partnership. Members were advised that the proposed revisions aimed to ensure the policy remained fair, transparent, legally compliant, and aligned with statutory guidance on choice-based letting for social housing.

The review addressed new statutory duties, including those relating to domestic abuse and the armed forces, and updated case law affecting eligibility, priority need, and local connection. Officers had also proposed clearer definitions and strengthened operational processes regarding medical and welfare needs, overcrowding, under-occupation, and threatened homelessness, as well as improved verification, reassessment, and suspension procedures to maintain an accurate register.

The updated policy incorporated best practice from across the sector, strengthened safeguarding and support for vulnerable households, and was expected to remain in place until after local government reorganisation, providing stability during structural change. Members were advised that questions on the detailed policy should be directed to council officers due to the sensitive and nuanced nature of the policy.

The Leader invited questions from Cabinet Members.

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Councillor Patrick Coleman queried the emergency banding for downsizing within the HomeSeeker Plus policy, seeking clarification on whether it applied to the whole of Gloucestershire or only Gloucester City. Councillor Juliet Layton confirmed that the scheme operated across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire, in partnership with seven local authorities and social housing landlords, enabling tenants to bid for properties through a choice-based lettings system.

Councillor Mike Evemy seconded the recommendation, noting minor wording amendments to clarify that the policy would be adopted following consideration of consultation responses. He thanked housing officers, for their work supporting residents to access and maintain housing and prevent homelessness. Members were advised that the consultation would commence in May, with the revised policy subsequently adopted following consideration of responses from the partnership authorities.

Cabinet noted that the HomeSeeker Plus policy would continue to operate across all districts and boroughs in Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire, providing a consistent framework through local government reorganisation.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Layton and seconded by Councillor Mike Evemy.

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve the recommendations for the Homeseeker Plus Policy Review (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that Cabinet: 1. Approved the draft Policy amendments for public consultation. 2. Delegated authority to the Business Manager for Housing, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and the Publica Executive Director – Operations, to adopt the new policy following consideration of the consultation responses.		
For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

216 Delegated Approval to Award Contract (Parking)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of delegated authority to award the contract for pay and display machines for car parks.

The report was introduced by Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience who explained that the existing machines were increasingly outdated, required frequent maintenance, and were difficult to use, necessitating a full refresh of the parking estate.

The proposed procurement set out the types, locations, and operational requirements of new machines, including installation, commissioning, servicing, and removal of old machines. The process included a four-week tender period, with evaluations conducted by a dedicated parking and procurement team.

It was noted that authority would be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience, to award the contract for the supply, installation, and ongoing operation of the new parking machines to the most advantageous supplier.

Members were informed that the new machines were expected to provide faster, easier, and more reliable payment options for residents and visitors, enhancing the overall parking experience across the District. Councillor Dale noted that procurement had been accelerated to enable the timely replacement and operation of machines within the current budget year.

The Leader invited questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Juliet Layton welcomed the proposals for new parking machines, noting the importance of speed, clarity, and accessibility, including for users with disabilities. Councillor Tony Dale acknowledged that while no solution would have all desired features, simplicity, clarity, and speed were paramount, and emphasised that the new machines should be future-proofed to enable mobile payments and efficient maintenance. He expressed confidence in the parking and procurement teams to deliver a fit-for-purpose solution and confirmed that any compromises would be reported back to Cabinet.

Councillor Tristan Wilkinson supported the approach, praising its user-centric design and clarity of requirements, noting that this methodology could serve as a model for other Council procurements. Officers confirmed that customer feedback had informed the specification and that the evaluation team would ensure all criteria were considered.

In summing up Councillor Tony Dale welcomed the decision, noting it was timely, well-considered, and supported the early delivery of the service. Councillor Dale confirmed that he would monitor progress to ensure there were no delays.

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The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Tony Dale and seconded by Councillor Mike Every.

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

Voting record:

6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To approve delegated authority for the supply, installation and on-going services to the Districts car-parking machines (Resolution)

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience to award the contract for the supply, installation and on-going services to the most advantageous supplier.

For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

Carried

217 Next Meeting

The next meeting date of Cabinet was confirmed as 16 April 2026 at 6.00 pm.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm closed at 6.50 pm.