



**Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on
Monday, 3 August 2026**

Committee members present:

Gina Blomefield (Chair)	Angus Jenkinson (Vice-chair)	
Claire Bloomer	Clare Turner	Naomi Bloomer
David Cunningham	Michael Vann	Laura Hall-Wilson
Lisa Spivey	Jon Wareing	

Other members present:

Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council
Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning
Daryl Corps
David Fowles
Nikki Ind

Officers present:

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer	Simon Harper, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place	Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director- Planning	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Maxted, Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure	

OS.360 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Slater.

OS.361 Substitute Members

Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson substituted for Councillor Tony Slater.

OS.362 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Naomi Bloomer declared that they were a governor of one of the schools within the Corinium Education Trust.

OS.363 Chair's Announcements

The Chair outlined the arrangements for public participation, including the time limits for questions and the order in which speakers would be invited to come forward.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee's role was to review and make recommendations, rather than make decisions on the Local Plan proposals. She also advised attendees of the forthcoming public consultation events and future opportunities to address Cabinet and Council on the Local Plan.

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, provided context for the draft Local Plan explaining that changes to National Planning Policy had significantly increased the District's housing requirement, resulting in the Council no longer being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This had increased the risk of speculative development and reinforced the need to progress a new Local Plan. It was noted that the Government had confirmed that the Council was expected to plan for its housing target unless it could demonstrate otherwise through the examination process. The draft Local Plan had been developed following the Regulation 18 consultation and a subsequent call for sites.

OS.364 Public Questions

Question – Sustainable development

Cllr Richard Harrison from Fairford Town Council asked whether the draft Local Plan represented sustainable development, given the increased housing requirement and the absence of a wider strategic spatial strategy? Reference was made to requests to delay the Local Plan process to allow further work on housing distribution and infrastructure planning.

Answer

The Local Plan had been required to be consistent with National Planning Policy and meet the identified housing need unless there was robust evidence to justify an alternative approach. The proposed strategy directed development towards larger, more sustainable settlements, where infrastructure could be planned and delivered alongside growth. The phased housing trajectory would allow time for infrastructure provision and delaying submission of the Local Plan beyond the deadline would mean that the process would need to restart, leaving the District exposed to speculative development.

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Questions – RAF Fairford and Down Ampney

Cllr David Eglise and Cllr Adam Crawford from Down Ampney Parish Council raised concerns regarding the proposed strategic allocation at Down Ampney. They questioned whether the site represented sustainable development given its proximity to RAF Fairford. Concerns were expressed about aircraft noise, public health, aviation safety, the absence of a military airfield noise assessment, Ministry of Defence safeguarding, infrastructure capacity and the impact on the character of the village. They asked whether progression of the site should be paused pending the completion of an airfield noise map?

Answer

The proposed scale of development would enable the delivery of supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and transport improvements, and was considered capable of delivering a more sustainable pattern of development. The Ministry of Defence had been consulted on the draft proposals and had not raised objections to the Down Ampney allocation.

Questions - Driffield

Charlie Tuke-Hastings and Andrew West raised concerns regarding the proposed strategic allocation at Driffield. They questioned the evidence supporting the site's classification as a principal settlement, the robustness of the assessment underpinning the allocation, the proportionality of the proposed scale of development, and the adequacy of the transport evidence. Concerns were also expressed about the proposed decision-making process following the consultation, with a request that the final Local Plan be referred back to Council before submission for examination.

Answer

It was advised that the proposed classification as a principal settlement reflected the level of facilities expected to be provided as part of the development, which would in time make it equivalent to a principal settlement. The Regulation 19 Local Plan represented the version the Council intended to submit for examination and that, under the statutory process, it could either proceed to submission or be withdrawn, rather than amended following consultation. The Plan contained limited flexibility in housing supply due to local constraints, removing the allocation would reduce that flexibility and increase the risk to the Plan. The transport evidence had been prepared in consultation with National Highways and that engagement with statutory consultees would continue throughout the Local Plan process.

The Leader added that the Council intended to submit the Regulation 19 Local Plan by the Government's deadline at the end of the 2026 calendar year. The Plan would then be subject to independent examination, during which representations would be considered by the Planning Inspector(s), before returning to Council for adoption. If adoption had not taken place before local government reorganisation, the decision would fall to the successor authority.

Questions - Mickleton

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Councillor Kevin Fletcher from Mickleton Parish Council and Andy Crump from Mickleton Against Inappropriate Development (MAID)

raised concerns regarding the proposed strategic allocation at Mickleton. They questioned whether the necessary infrastructure would be delivered in advance of development. They noted the impact of the scale of growth on the sustainability and character of the village, and asked whether alternative highway arrangements had been considered to reduce traffic through the village? Concerns were expressed about the consultation process and questions were raised on whether the absence of a Regulation 18 consultation on the revised proposal could affect the soundness of the Local Plan?

Answer

There was no statutory requirement to undertake a Regulation 18 consultation on specific site allocations before progressing to Regulation 19. Delaying the Local Plan would prevent submission within the Government's timetable and leave the district exposed to speculative development. A Local Plan provided the strongest mechanism for securing infrastructure alongside development and the sustainability of the Mickleton allocation had been assessed in the context of its location, opportunities for new services and infrastructure, and proximity to larger settlements and employment.

Questions – Moreton-in-Marsh

Cllr Eileen Viviani from Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council and William Hathaway asked whether the scale of development at Moreton-in-Marsh was appropriate in the absence of a wider strategic spatial strategy for the future unitary authority? There were concerns regarding the proposed transport strategy, including the alignment and purpose of the proposed link road, and whether sufficient evidence demonstrated that the preferred route represented the safest and most deliverable option. They enquired what status the adopted Local Plan would have following local government reorganisation and whether it would remain binding on the successor unitary authority?

Answer

The proposed alignment of the link road shown in the draft Local Plan was indicative. Design work, including the precise alignment, would be undertaken at a later stage through the planning process. The illustrative masterplan could be refined as further evidence became available.

The Leader said that, if adopted before local government reorganisation, the Local Plan would be inherited by the successor unitary authority and used to determine planning applications within the former Cotswold District. If adoption had not taken place before reorganisation, responsibility for adopting the Plan would pass to the successor authority.

Question - Driffield

Lisa Collins from Driffield questioned the capacity of wastewater infrastructure, the potential impact on groundwater protection and flood risk, and the resilience of the

local road network. She asked whether appropriate assessments had been undertaken and requested that a Grampian condition be included to prevent occupation of new dwellings until sufficient wastewater treatment capacity had been confirmed?

Answer

Additional infrastructure improvements would be required alongside development could proceed. No strategic sites would be expected within the first five years of the Plan and that the policy wording was intended to ensure that development could not proceed unless supported by the necessary infrastructure. Officers agreed to review the policy wording to ensure this intention was clear.

Questions – Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Doug Crook from Ampney Crucis asked whether the Infrastructure Delivery Plan had been published and questioned whether the proposed stepped housing trajectory was likely to be accepted through the Local Plan examination process? He also requested that the supporting documentation be published in smaller, more accessible sections to improve usability.

Answer

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan formed part of the supporting evidence for the Local Plan and would be available alongside the consultation documents, with documents published separately by topic to improve accessibility. The proposed stepped housing trajectory was consistent with national planning policy and had been adopted by other authorities. It was considered an appropriate approach given the District's constraints and was intended to provide the best prospect of securing a sound Local Plan through examination.

Question - Driffield

Catherine Kilworth from Driffield questioned the evidence supporting the proposed Driffield allocation. She highlighted perceived inconsistencies between the site selection and transport assessments on the site's sustainability and accessibility. Concerns were also raised about the evidence relating to site promotion, land ownership and deliverability, with a request that the Council clarify the position and confirm the arrangements in place to support delivery of the site.

Answer

The transport assessment considered both the existing situation and the impact of the proposed mitigation measures, and that the conclusions should be read in that context. The information regarding the promotion and delivery of the Driffield site was not considered inconsistent, as strategic sites were not expected to come forward until later in the Plan period, allowing time for detailed planning, site promotion and infrastructure planning prior to development.

OS.365

Member Questions

Question – Employment land in Moreton-in-Marsh

Cllr Daryl Corps, District Councillor for Moreton-in-Marsh West and County Councillor for Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold and the Rissingtons, noted that the proposed location for employment land was not shown on the indicative masterplan.

He asked how the deliverability of the proposal could be assessed without this information and sought clarification on where the employment land would be located and when this would be confirmed?

Answer

References to a dedicated employment allocation were included in error and would be corrected before the consultation was published. Although no specific employment land was proposed, the development would include a range of mixed-use elements and supporting infrastructure that would generate employment opportunities.

Question – Spine road in Moreton-in-Marsh

Cllr Corps sought clarification on the proposed multi-modal spine road at Moreton-in-Marsh, including its estimated cost, the proposed funding arrangements and whether sufficient developer contributions would be available to deliver the required infrastructure. He enquired whether there was evidence that the proposed spine road would reduce existing traffic congestion, rather than just serving the proposed development?

Answer

Indicative cost estimates were set out in the evidence base and the proposal was considered deliverable, supported by viability evidence, developer contributions and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Detailed work would continue as the Local Plan progressed.

The evidence indicated the proposed spine road would provide some improvement to existing traffic conditions. However, a more significant reduction in congestion would require a more extensive link road, which could not be delivered through the current level of development. The safeguarded route would allow for future extension should additional development come forward.

OS.366

Local Plan

Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Cabinet Member introduced the report, outlining the purpose of the Regulation 19 Local Plan, the proposed consultation and subsequent submission for independent examination. It was noted that the Plan would provide the policy framework for development to 2043 and reflected previous consultation and updated evidence. The importance of meeting the Government's submission timetable and the implications of national planning reforms and increased housing requirements were also highlighted.

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Recommendations

That Cabinet submits the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 - 2043 (Regulation 19) to Council with the following recommendation:

That Council:

- i. Agrees the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document is published for six weeks consultation from 24 August 2026 to 5 October 2026.
- ii. Agrees that thereafter, the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document is submitted to Government for independent examination.
- iii. Provides delegated authority for the Director of Communities and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to make any minor corrections prior to consultation, including for typographical and formatting purposes AND following the Regulation 19 consultation to prepare an 'Additional Modifications' Schedule for submission if required.
- iv. Notes the technical supporting evidence in preparation for publication alongside the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 for consultation.

Members asked a series of detailed questions relating to the content of the Plan, including the impact on individual settlements across the Cotswold District, provision of infrastructure, housing supply and Regulation 19 consultation process. These reflected concerns raised by local residents.

In addition, members identified a number of issues that were associated with the Plan but not related to its content –

- Concern regarding the housing target set by the Government
- Failure of Thames Water to provide resilient water supplies and sewage treatment capacity across the Cotswold District.
- Repeated difficulties encountered with housing management companies on new developments.

Responses were provided by the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, the Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure and Assistant Director–Planning Services.

Summary

Local Plan benefits

- Whilst progressing the Local Plan involved difficult choices, the absence of an up-to-date Plan would leave the District more vulnerable to speculative development and would reduce the Council's ability to secure infrastructure, affordable housing and other planning objectives. There was no evidence to suggest a future unitary authority would be required to plan for a lower level of housing, and an adopted Local Plan would provide the strongest framework for managing development and supporting infrastructure delivery.
- The Local Plan's design policies and proposed design code would seek to ensure high-quality, attractive developments that also took account of designing out

opportunities for antisocial behaviour through the development management process.

- Infrastructure providers, including health providers, preferred a plan-led approach, enabling them to plan service provision and infrastructure in advance and secure developer contributions to support future growth.
- The settlement hierarchy reflected National Planning Policy by directing development towards the larger, more sustainable settlements while limiting development in smaller settlements. This approach was consistent with that adopted by other local planning authorities and was considered appropriate for the Local Plan.
- The proposed level of housing supply included a modest level of headroom above the identified housing requirement to provide flexibility. This reduced the risk of the Local Plan being found unsound should any allocated sites prove undeliverable and assisted in maintaining a five-year housing land supply.

Regulation 19 consultation

- The Regulation 19 consultation would seek to maximise accessibility by using accessible venues, improving the presentation of consultation material and working with Town and Parish councils to reach those less able to engage online. Additional support, including translation, could be provided.
- Responses received from residents during the Regulation 19 consultation would be submitted to the Planning Inspector, who would determine how the representations would be considered during the independent examination, including the issues to be explored and the conduct of the examination process.
- The Regulation 19 Local Plan represented the version the Council intended to submit for examination. Following publication, only minor additional modifications could be made by the Council, with any substantive changes to the Plan being a matter for the Planning Inspector through the examination process and subsequent consultation. More substantive changes affecting the soundness of the Local Plan would be matters for the Planning Inspector to consider through the examination process.

Infrastructure

- Whilst the masterplan was indicative, the infrastructure requirements set out was not.
- The Local Plan could include a requirement for strategic sites to be supported by a multi-agency gateway agreement to provide greater certainty that infrastructure would be provided alongside development.
- Whilst delivery of some infrastructure relied on external organisations, development would be expected to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure could be provided in order to comply with Local Plan policies.

Water supply, drainage and sewage capacity

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- Concerns were raised regarding the capacity of wastewater infrastructure and the reliance on upgrades by water companies to support the proposed level of development. The potential use of Grampian conditions to ensure that development could not proceed or be occupied until the necessary wastewater infrastructure was in place was discussed.
- The Local Plan included policies to promote sustainable water management measures, including water efficiency and surface water management, which could help reduce pressure on existing drainage infrastructure.
- Sustainable drainage and the management of surface water would be considered through the design and planning application process. Specialist consultees, including drainage and highways experts, would help ensure that new development incorporated appropriate drainage infrastructure and minimised pressure on existing wastewater systems.

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- Strategic sites would be expected to secure infrastructure primarily through Section 106 agreements, supported by viability evidence, with the CIL charging schedule reviewed following adoption of the Local Plan. Legally binding triggers would specify the infrastructure to be delivered at defined stages of the development.
- Planning obligations could only be used to mitigate the impacts of new development and could not be used to address existing infrastructure deficiencies.

Impact of tourism – notably Bourton-on-the-Water and Bibury

- The Local Plan recognised tourism as a strategic issue and included policies to address visitor impacts. Whilst the Plan sought to secure infrastructure alongside new development, there were more limited opportunities through the planning system to address infrastructure pressures arising from existing visitor demand in areas without proposed development.

Affordable housing

- The provision of affordable housing, including in the north of the District, was important to enable people to remain within their local communities and retain access to employment, family support and local services. The proposed affordable housing policies, including the requirement for 40% affordable housing on qualifying sites, were intended to meet the identified need across the District. The Plan included smaller non-strategic allocations which could increase the proportion of smaller homes. This supported the delivery of affordable housing through neighbourhood plans and rural exception sites where a local need and suitable site could be demonstrated.

Religious facilities

- No specific need for additional religious facilities had been identified through the evidence gathered to date. Should a need be identified during the planning process, it could be considered as part of the detailed masterplan and provision of community facilities for the strategic sites.

Housing management companies

- Concerns were raised regarding the transparency and operation of housing management companies. These matters needed to be addressed through the planning application process rather than the Local Plan, although further guidance to developers on the establishment and governance of management companies could be considered.

Mickleton

- The proposed scale of development at Mickleton was considered capable of supporting a more sustainable pattern of development by improving access to employment, services and education. The location benefited from access to nearby employment centres and that planned education provision elsewhere in the District could reduce travel distances for future residents.

Moreton-in-Marsh

- The cumulative impacts of traffic had been assessed as part of the evidence base. It was advised that the proposed link road at Moreton-in-Marsh was expected to provide a net positive effect on traffic conditions, although wider transport issues and the delivery of bypasses were matters beyond the scope of the Local Plan.

Recommendations and comments to Cabinet

Recommendation 1 - Tourism

Strengthen policies where tourism causes exceptional infrastructure pressure on settlements.

Comment

Bourton-on-the-Water and Bibury were cited as examples, but there are likely to be other settlements in the District facing similar pressures.

Recommendation 2 - Infrastructure

Highlight the importance of providing the infrastructure indicated in the plan for the strategic sites in a timely way, often before development begins and, where necessary, using Grampian conditions.

Comment

Infrastructure includes transport, water supply, drainage, sewage treatment, sustainable water management, healthcare, education, employment and environmental improvements, and is a fundamental aspect of building new sustainable communities.

Recommendation 3 – Transport infrastructure

Look again at the transport infrastructure in particular locations in the District, notably Moreton-in-Marsh and Fairford.

Recommendation 4 – Accessibility

Ensure that the plan is accessible to all, including the provision of information to those who cannot access web-based documents and those who would struggle to attend public meetings and exhibitions.

Recommendation 5 – Communication

Ensure that communication to the public is clear on why the Plan is necessary and the risks associated with not having a Plan.

Recommendation 6 – Multi-agency gateway agreements

In light of the risks associated with the provision of infrastructure, examine the potential use of multi-agency gateway agreements which developers could be required to sign up to before development commences.

Recommendation 7 – Thames Water

Thames Water had failed to provide resilient water supplies and sewage treatment capacity across the Cotswold District and the Committee request that this continue to be highlighted to Government.

Comment

Concern that the national targets for new homes set by the Government were simply numbers based and did not reflect the real housing needs of local communities, including the types of homes required and their affordability.

Comment

The committee thanked Andrew Maxted and the Planning Policy Team for their efforts over recent months in preparing the Plan and its supporting documents.

Proposed by Cllr Lisa Spivey

Seconded by Cllr Jon Wareing

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.57 pm

Signed by Chair