



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY REFRESH
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation; Email: tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Philippa Lowe, Business Manager (Economic Growth & Prosperity) Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Paul James, Economic Development Lead Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To agree a refreshed version of the Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation and to note the adoption by Gloucestershire County Council of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.
Annexes	Annex A – Draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation. Annex B – Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (Summary Version)
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for a four-week period of consultation with key stakeholders and using the Council's communication channels.2. Receive a further report setting out the results of the consultation and any amendments to the strategy arising from it to enable Cabinet to consider the strategy for adoption.3. Note the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy by Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO



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Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold Economic Advisory Group All councillors



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cotswold District Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted in December 2020 to cover a four-year period. This report sets out the work that has been undertaken towards refreshing the strategy and seeks approval for the draft of the updated strategy to go to public consultation.
- 1.2 A great deal has changed in the global context to the strategy since 2020, but much of it remains relevant. In addition, the County Council has recently adopted the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, which sets out much of the context to our district strategy.
- 1.3 The approach has therefore been to create a shorter, more visual district-level strategy which covers specific key sites, sectors and projects rather than repeat what is in the county strategy. The report asks Cabinet to note the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council adopted its Green Economic Growth Strategy in December 2020 and has been working actively to deliver the strategy since that time, with regular updates being provided to Cabinet and, more recently, through Member Briefings.
- 2.2 The strategy was for a four-year period, expiring in December 2024, so it is right that a new draft document is brought before Cabinet now to approve for public consultation. A further report will be brought to Cabinet once the consultation period has closed and Officers have had the opportunity consider the comments received and make recommendations to Cabinet on any amendments required.
- 2.3 The Administration came to power following the May 2019 elections and set a priority of supporting the local economy, which was subsequently reflected in the Council's Corporate Strategy adopted in 2021, which had a theme to "enable a vibrant economy". The role of Economic Development Lead was created and filled in July 2020, giving the Council the capacity to proactively engage on economic issues.
- 2.4 A great deal has changed in the context of economic policy since 2020 – the full effect of the Covid pandemic and the resulting changes in behavioural patterns, the impact of Brexit becoming clearer, the onset of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the election of a new government being just a few examples. That said, much of the 2020 strategy document is still relevant. The objective of low environmental impact, high value jobs being created to provide career opportunities for young people is still a very valid goal. The identification of key growth sectors in agritech, cyber/digital and environmental technologies has proved accurate, with a number of businesses operating in these sectors in the district growing significantly.



3. GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND LINKS TO THE DISTRICT STRATEGY

- 3.1 The adoption of a Gloucestershire Economic Strategy also provides a more local context in which to set our district strategy. The strategy, which covers the period 2024-34, uses the tagline “Driven by innovation, built on heritage” and identifies four strategic priorities – sustainable growth, inward investment, employment & skills and business innovation & support. The strategic priorities are supported by two cross-cutting themes – Greener Gloucestershire and Inclusive Gloucestershire.
- 3.2 The document also sets out a longer-term economic vision up to 2050, as follows:
“By 2050, Gloucestershire will be a hub for the UK’s intelligence, security, and cyber agencies. We will be a centre for world-leading, sustainable businesses in the cutting-edge industries of digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and green and nuclear energy, while preserving our rich cultural and natural heritage. Gloucestershire will build on its strength as a prominent location in western England with ease of access to regional hubs in, and beyond, the Western Gateway. We will sustain our unique mix of nationally important rural landscapes and vibrant urban centres by delivering a stronger, more sustainable economy that benefits the whole county.”
- 3.3 The Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation and Officers were involved in various stages of the development of the County Strategy. The strategy was adopted by the County Council’s Cabinet in May 2024 and was considered by the Gloucestershire City Region Board at its September meeting. A summary version of the strategy is attached to this report as Annex B and Cabinet is asked to note its contents. The full version of the strategy can be found [here](#). The strategy is backed up by an evidence base of over 400 pages, a summary of which can be found [here](#).
- 3.4 Given the adoption of the County Strategy, it is not felt necessary to ‘reinvent the wheel’ or repeat information set out in that document. Instead, our strategy will set out the role we can play as a district in delivering the ambitions for the county, including site and sector-specific proposals and finer-grain issues such as the evolution of our market town centres.
- 3.5 As the Council is not starting with a blank sheet of paper, as was the case in 2020, and the Gloucestershire strategy provides much of the context, the objective has been to produce a shorter, more focused district economic strategy. with a smaller number of clearly-defined actions.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that a four-week period of consultation takes place, starting immediately, using the Council’s website and social media channels, the Business Matters newsletter and the network of key stakeholders.



4.2 It should be noted that the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group, which is made up of a number of business representatives and key economic stakeholders, has been involved in the development of the draft strategy.

5. FUTURE WORK

5.1 Following the period of consultation, the comments received will be considered and the strategy amended as necessary. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet in December or January, depending on the level of changes required.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 The Council could choose not to adopt a new Green Economic Growth Strategy and rely entirely on the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy. This is not recommended as the county strategy does not address district-level issues, including bringing forward specific sites for development.

6.2 The Council could choose to rely on the existing strategy. This is not recommended as the economic context has changed considerably since the existing strategy was adopted in 2020.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy is due to be refreshed and this report is an important milestone in the process of achieving this. The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy provides a helpful local context to the strategy.

7.2 It is therefore recommended that the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy 2025-29 is approved for public consultation and a further report is brought back to Cabinet after the consultation has taken place and the responses have been considered.

7.3 It is also recommended that the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy is noted.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All activities in the strategy will be funded from existing budgets. There are no other financial implications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 Not having a current economic strategy in place could lead to business not having the clarity and confidence needed to make investment decisions. In addition, it could make it more difficult to secure government and other external funding. There is also a reputational risk to the Council of not having a current strategy in place.

10.2 There are no other risks considered to be posed by adopting the strategy for the purposes of public consultation.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

11.1 The Green Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver inclusive growth which benefits all people within the Cotswold District.

12. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Business has a significant role to play in the journey to net zero and this strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will support businesses in the transition.

12.2 Measures to combat climate change represent an opportunity for business and the environmental technology sector is seen as a potential high growth sector for the district.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

(END)