

Proposed Cabinet response to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 July 2025.

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Review & Action Plan (item 8 on O&S agenda 08.07.2025, item 12 on Cabinet's agenda).

The Committee is supportive of the resolutions presented to Cabinet but would like to highlight certain points within the report to draw Cabinet's attention to.

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
1. That ward members are key local contacts for officers to engage and interface with in terms of planning enforcement activities. <i>Section 3, item 1 (pages 82 & 93 of Cabinet's pack) "Enhance internal communication and understanding".</i>	Partly agreed	An all member briefing on planning enforcement will be held and communication to members about enforcement cases will be improved.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
2. That the Council encourages the use of existing functionality that is available but not utilised to its full capacity. <i>Section 3, item 10 (page 84 & 103 of Cabinet's pack) "Maximise digital</i>	Agreed	Fully support the help of colleagues in ICT to help maximise digital and technological innovation.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services



<i>capabilities and embrace technological innovation”.</i>				
3. That the Council prioritises recruitment to vacant posts within Planning Enforcement, notwithstanding the recruitment challenges faced by local government. <i>Paragraph 3.2 (page 87 of Cabinet’s pack)</i>	Agreed	Recruitment to the enforcement service will be treated as a priority within existing resources.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services

Local Plan Update (item 7 on O&S agenda 08.07.2025, item 13 on Cabinet’s agenda)

The Committee is supportive of the resolutions presented to Cabinet

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives timely updates as the Local Plan develops	Agreed	It is recommended that Members receive updates at key stages in the development of the Local Plan.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
2. That the Council commits to a publicly available communications and engagement strategy for both	Agreed	<i>Communications and engagement will be a critical part of developing and shaping the Local Plan.</i>	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services



Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, specifying: • What methods will be used (digital, in-person, targeted) • Clear stakeholder mapping with consideration of how hard-to-reach groups will be involved • How it will be resourced • How Artificial Intelligence (AI) summaries will be verified and validated • How the Council will lobby the government on the unrealistic housing targets		<i>Given the current planning context, which has seen our housing target doubled, leading to the loss of our five-year land housing supply - leaving us at the mercy of speculative development and minimal opportunity for residents to have their say - updating the Local Plan will enable residents to have a say, and engage on future development in the district.</i> • <i>As such, and prior to this recommendation being made, we have already started working on a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to maximise community participation.</i> • <i>That strategy will be guided by the council's Statement of Community Involvement, which is already publicly available on the website, setting out what we consult on, how we will consult, at what stages we consult, and who with. We are legally bound – as part of the Local Plan update process – to adhere to</i>	Housing and Planning	
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the terms of this statement. It is therefore unnecessary to publish anything else – but any consultation activity, requiring community participation, will be appropriately and thoroughly advertised in good time.

- *Our communications and engagement strategy will be guided by both the timelines of the Local Plan project process and the Statement of Community Involvement. I can assure everyone that it will utilise online and offline channels, ensure engagement is targeted when it needs to be, but be broad, accessible and innovative in principle, seeking to capture as many views from across our communities as possible.*
- *We also intend to engage government, to impress upon them and the Planning Inspectorate that the Cotswold's National Landscape, covering 80% of our district,*



		<i>massively impinges on our ability to deliver on the amount of housing being requested. That programme of engagement will run alongside the Local Plan process.</i> <i>In respect of using artificial intelligence to analyse consultation responses, these tools are becoming more and more sophisticated. The platform that we intend to use, Go Vocal, is reputable and has in-built AI functionality, fine-tuned for the purpose of analysing public consultation data. We plan to test a small sample of responses first – that can be sense-checked – before committing to undertake more analysis of responses via this method.</i>		
3. That the Local Plan is disseminated to Town and Parish Councils to ensure two-way dialogue on proposed site allocations and development priorities commencing June 2026 as part of the	Agreed	<i>Town & Parish Councils will be a primary stakeholder group, and we will devise a thorough programme of engagement for the district's councillors and clerks, leveraging a</i>	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services



Regulation 19 consultation on the draft plan.		<i>mixture of channels throughout the plan process.</i>		
4. That the Council considers the establishment of a Local Plan (Contingency) reserve to support the delivery and completion of the Local Plan. Cabinet are encouraged to consider this request as part of the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update due in October 2025 to ensure adequate resources are made available at the start of the Local Plan delivery timetable.	Agreed	Cabinet will consider a prudent amount to hold as a contingency budget held as an earmarked reserve (and subject to expenditure decision arrangements as set out in paragraph 6.11 of the report) as part of the early 2026/27 budget setting process. Cabinet will consider this request 'in the round' taking into account other Council priorities, financial position set out in the February 2025 MTFS, and the likely reduction in funding this Council will receive in 2026/27 as indicated in the Fair Funding 2.0 consultation document.	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
5. That consideration is given to whether the proposed resources are sufficient to meet the anticipated risks set out in the report.	Agreed	Proposed resources are considered adequate but Cabinet do note the risks as set out in the report. Establishing a contingency budget, to be held as an earmarked reserve and subject to decision making arrangement, as set out in paragraph 6.11 of the report, provides adequate mitigation	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer



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6. That the Council ensures that sufficient resources are in place to deliver the business as usual planning activity such as the management of planning applications and enforcement activity and this is considered as part of the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update due in October 2025.	Agreed	Cabinet will consider the financial performance of 'business as usual planning activity' in the quarterly financial performance reports. The Budget Setting process for 2026/27 will need to consider any request additional resources for future financial years.	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
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