



Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 16 July 2025

Members present:

Mark Harris (Chair)	Ray Brassington (Vice-Chair)	
Gina Blomefield	Joe Harris	Tony Slater
Nick Bridges	Paul Hodgkinson	Lisa Spivey
Patrick Coleman	Nikki Ind	Tom Stowe
Daryl Corps	Angus Jenkinson	Jeremy Theyer
David Cunningham	Julia Judd	Michael Vann
Tony Dale	Juliet Layton	Ian Watson
Mike Evely	Andrew Maclean	Len Wilkins
David Fowles	Helene Mansilla	Tristan Wilkinson
Laura Hall-Wilson	Mike McKeown	

Officers present:

Matt Abbott, Head of Communications	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy Officer	Jane Portman, Interim CEO
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Jo Symons, Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	

18 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Claire Bloomer, Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Councillor Dilys Neill, Councillor Claire Turner, Councillor Nigel Robbins and Councillor Jon Waring.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Tony Dale back after a period of absence. Members applauded Councillor Dale's return.

The Chair also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson and her husband Tom on the birth of their son, Bertie—a baby brother to Sidney.

19 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from members.

20 Minutes

The minutes of the following Council meetings were each considered:

- Full Council 19 March 2025
- Annual Council 21 May 2025 and
- Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025.

21 Minutes of Full Council 19 March 2025

Council considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 March 2025.

There were no amendments.

Councillor Every proposed the approval of the minutes, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Fowles, put to a vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 19 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Voting record:

20 For, 0 Against, 5 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillors Helene Mansilla, Lisa Spivey and Ian Watson.

To APPROVE the minutes of Full Council 19 March 2025 (Resolution)

RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 19 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Michael Vann and Len Wilkins	20
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Nick Bridges, Tony Dale, Andrew Maclean, Tony Slater and Tristan Wilkinson	5

Carried

22 Minutes of Full Council 21 May 2025

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Council considered the minutes of Annual Council held on 21 May 2025.

There were no amendments.

Councillor Maclean proposed the approval of the minutes, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Stowe, put to a vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Annual Council 21 May 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Voting Record:

21 For, 0 Against, 3 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillors Lisa Spivey, Michael Vann and Ian Watson.

To APPROVE the minutes of Annual Council 21 May 2025 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that the minutes of Annual Council 21 May 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	21
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Ray Brassington, David Cunningham, Tony Dale and Tony Slater	4
Carried		

23 Minutes of Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025

Council considered the minutes of Extraordinary Council held on 26 June 2025.

Councillor Every asked for an amendment to be made stating that the Council's priority was the efficient delivery of all services and not just waste. This amendment was made and there were no further amendments.

Councillor Nikki Ind proposed the approval of the minutes, the proposal was seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton, put to a vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

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Voting record:

22 For, 0 Against, 4 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillors Lisa Spivey and Ian Watson.

To APPROVE the minutes of Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that the minutes of Extraordinary Council 26 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Michael Vann, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	22
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Nick Bridges, David Cunningham, Tony Dale and Andrew Maclean	4
Carried		

24 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive

Chair's announcements

The Chair reminded Councillors who had not yet reviewed their Register of Interests to update it either online or by submitting a paper copy to Democratic Services for the online record to be updated.

Councillor Ray Brassington was congratulated on his appointment as Chair of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, which oversees and supports the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chair reported attendance at the following events on behalf of the District Council:

- 23 May – Visited Year 3 students at Powell's School during Make a Change Week. The students had written over 60 letters urging the Council to avoid harmful pesticide use, following their research into Rachel Carson's work. The Interim Chief Executive was asked to respond to reassure them of the Council's position. This was noted as an Action.
- 10 June – Attended the Army Engagement Event at the Royal Agricultural University, which showcased a wide range of career opportunities for young people.

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- 12 June – Attended Home-Start Cotswolds' 20th anniversary event, celebrating two decades of support for local families. The Chair noted with pride that the Council had helped launch the organisation, which, with the help of 54 volunteers now assists over 200 children and 150 families annually.
- 2 July – Attended the launch of Cirencester Food Bank's 2025 Food Poverty Report. Although the need for such services remained concerning, the Council's targeted initiatives, especially those led by Councillor Claire Bloomer, had helped reduce demand.
- 9 July – Met with Zoey Peace, Community Relations Advisor at RAF Fairford, alongside the former Chair, Councillor Nikki Ind. Thanks were given to Councillor Ind for her efforts in building strong relationships with the air base and its personnel.
- 11 July – Attended a visit with the National Farmers Union to Barhouse Farm, which had successfully diversified into gelato production. Members were reminded of the value of supporting local farmers, and it was noted that the dairy barn approved in Chedworth was helping local farming efforts.

The Chair also paid tribute to Alan "Mac" McQuillan, a D-Day veteran who recently passed away at the age of 102. Alan was part of the RIS 3210 Servicing Commando Unit and landed on Juno Beach on D-Day, serving throughout the war.

Councillor Joe Harris was invited to speak and described Alan as a remarkable character, a strong advocate for the Armed Forces, and a passionate supporter of remembrance. Alan was also well known in his community of Kemble, continuing to deliver newspapers well into his hundreds. His passing was described as "history evaporating before our eyes" and a great loss to the community.

Condolences were expressed to his family and friends and a minutes silence was held in the Chamber.

Leaders Announcements

The Leader welcomed staff who had transferred to the employment of Cotswold District Council on 1 July 2025. It was noted that a meeting had been held in the Chamber to mark the transition.

The Leader formally welcomed Jane Portman, the new Interim Chief Executive, to her first meeting of the Council and expressed appreciation for the positive collaboration to date.

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Councillor Tony Dale was warmly welcomed back to the Chamber. The Leader highlighted the value of his wisdom and guidance, and conveyed the Council's sincere appreciation of his return.

Following the heartfelt tribute delivered by the Chair, the Leader acknowledged with deep sadness the passing of Alan McQuillan and extended sincere condolences to his family and friends.

The Leader extended sincere congratulations to Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson on the recent birth of her child and welcomed the presence of her baby, Bertie, in the Chamber.

Finally, the Leader highlighted upcoming member briefings on local government reorganisation (LGR) and devolution. These would take place on 29 July (4–6 pm, in the Chamber) and 19 August (5–6 pm, virtual session).

Interim Chief Executive

The Interim Chief Executive thanked members for the warm welcome and the kind words expressed at the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 26 June. She noted that her first weeks in the role had been positive and productive. She had met with staff, partner councils, and leaders across Gloucestershire and was encouraged by the strong collaborative relationships. She expressed confidence that this partnership working would support good decision-making for residents, businesses, and visitors.

25 Unsung Heroes Awards July 2025

The Chair announced the Unsung Heroes Awards – over 25 category, with three awards being noted for July:

- Linda Carter was recognised for over 40 years of volunteering, fostering more than 40 children, launching rural mental health drop-ins, and raising over £20,000 for Longfield's Hospice following her husband's death. Linda's lifelong compassion, resilience, and dedication were mentioned.
- Katharine Isles was honoured for over 30 years of organising the South Cerney Duck Race, tirelessly raising vital funds for local community groups such as Scouts, Guides, Brownies, and Men's Sheds.
- Eric Partington was celebrated for his pivotal role in the heart of Ampney St Mary, having led village events, supported neighbours, and cared for community spaces with unwavering dedication.

The Chair then announced the Unsung Heroes - Under 25 category, three winners were announced:

- Joshua Smith, aged 9, was recognised for his dedication to the environment, regularly litter-picking in Cirencester and helping to keep the area clean and welcoming.
- Cadet Warrant Officer William Thomas-Leah was celebrated for his outstanding leadership with the RAF Air Cadets, charity fundraising, and commitment to volunteering and community service.
- Olivia Ware, represented by Helen Sharman-Jones, was honoured for her compassionate support of young peoples' mental health and wellbeing through her work with Headspace, a mental health charity for teenagers.

All the winners present were applauded by members and officers as they received their certificates and medals.

26 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

27 Member Questions

Members' written questions, written responses, supplementary questions and supplementary responses can be found in Annex A attached.

28 Recommendations from Constitution Working Group

The purpose of the report was to present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from a meeting on 24 June 2025 in relation to:

- The Appeals Committee
- Representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council introduced the report, and summarised it's key points, which addressed two substantive matters: the establishment of an Appeals Committee for statutory officer disciplinary appeals and changes to submission procedures for the Planning and Licensing Committee.

It was moved that the Appeals Committee be established in accordance with the Local Government Association's model procedure. The Committee would be politically balanced with five members: three from the Liberal Democrats: Councillor Helen Mansilla, Councillor Tristan Wilkinson and Councillor Tony Dale and two from the Conservatives; Councillor David Fowles, Councillor Tony Slater.

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Members were also asked to consider the introduction of a submission deadline for the Planning and Licensing Committee, requiring all papers and representations to be submitted no later than 48 hours (2pm two working days) before the meeting. This change was suggested to prevent last-minute submissions, allowing members sufficient time to review information. Councillor Mike Every emphasised the importance of providing Committee Members with adequate time to review submissions.

The resolution was formally moved and opened for questions.

There was one question for clarity regarding late responses from statutory consultees, such as Highways and environmental bodies, potentially delaying decisions. Councillor Mike Every confirmed that officers would manage communication with consultees to meet deadlines, adding that the Council could determine applications without certain responses if necessary.

There were no further questions for clarity.

Councillor Len Wilkins seconded the recommendations and spoke, noting that all proposals had been carefully considered.

The Chair moved to the debate – there was no request to speak in debate.

Councillor Mike Every then summed up and confirmed that the deadline proposed was reasonable and would ensure that members of the Planning Committee would have adequate time for consideration. .

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Len Wilkins.

Voting Record:

27 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillor Tony Dale.

**To APPROVE the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group
(Resolution)**

RESOLVED that Council:

1. AGREED to the establishment of an Appeals Committee with responsibility for considering appeals by the Council's statutory officers about disciplinary action taken against them, in accordance with the Local Government Association's Model Procedure;
2. AGREED that the Appeals Committee will be a politically balanced committee comprising 5 Members, including one Member of Cabinet, who are not members of the Performance and Appointments Committee, with a quorum of 3 Members;
3. APPOINTED Councillors Dale ,Fowles, Mansilla, Slater and Wilkinson to the Appeals Committee;
4. Authorise the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include the Appeals Committee within the Constitution;
5. NOTED that further proposals relating to Statutory Officer employment rules will be considered by the Constitution Working Group.
6. AUTHORISED the Director of Governance and Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to include within the Planning Protocol a deadline for representations to the Planning and Licensing Committee of 2.00pm two working days before a meeting.

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

29 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review

The purpose of the report was to ask Council to consider and note the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Progress report 2024.

The report was introduced by Councillor Mike Evely, Leader of the Council.

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Council was asked to consider the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review, which followed the original challenge in October 2022 and a delayed follow-up visit in November 2023, postponed to allow for the transition of staff from Publica back to the Council.

The review, tabled as an annex to the report, was initially received in draft form in January 2025 but was not brought to the March Council due to timing constraints. The feedback commended the Council's strengthened governance and clear understanding of its financial position, while encouraging the development of robust plans to close potential budget gaps. It also referenced the first phase of the Publica transition and the context of potential local government reorganisation, which influenced the Council's decisions in March 2024 regarding Phase II of the Publica transition. The review emphasised the importance of defining leadership, operational style, and organisational culture as the Council rebuilt its in-house team. The Leader expressed gratitude to the peer review team and confirmed that the Interim Chief Executive was now leading work on organisational culture and staff integration.

There were no questions for clarity.

The Chair then moved to the debate.

Members discussed the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review, noting improvements in governance, transparency, and scrutiny processes, with the Constitution updated and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny being more focused. Concerns were raised about the significant budget gap and the need for robust financial plans, particularly following the transition of services from Publica. It was highlighted that while the review was valuable, some elements were now outdated due to changes including Phase II of the Publica transition, the publication of the LGR White Paper, and the appointment of a new Leader, Chief Executive, and Cabinet. Members stressed the importance of addressing organisational culture, staff engagement, and preparing for local government reorganisation. Progress made under the current administration was praised, emphasising improvements in governance, financial management, staff culture, and public trust, while acknowledging that further work remained to be done.

There was no further debate.

The Chair confirmed that no vote was required as the recommendation was that Council resolved to note the report at Annex A.

RESOLVED that Council NOTED the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress report 2024.

30 Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Member(s)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval to appoint members of the public to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, which is responsible for assessing and making recommendations to Council on the allowances paid to Councillors.

Councillor Joe Harris declared a possible interest in that he had recommended one of the candidates. The Director of Governance and Development, Angela Claridge considered the facts and advised that Councillor Joe Harris was able to take part in the decision as he had played no part in any of the interview process or decision-making around the recommendation for appointment.

The report was introduced by Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council who reminded members that the setting of councillor allowances required advice from an Independent Remuneration Panel.

It was reported that one panel member had resigned, reducing the panel to two members, prompting the Monitoring Officer to initiate a recruitment process in February. As a result of this process four new candidates—Graham Russell, Nick Craxton, Nicky Clark, and David Hindle—were interviewed and proposed to Council as suitable IRP members, offering a balance of experience and backgrounds.

Members noted that a mid-term review of the allowances scheme, requested by Council in May 2023, would commence once the Panel was appointed, with a report expected in the autumn.

Councillor Every proposed that the mid-term review agreed at Council in May 2023 be carried out by the IRP and that the review be considered at the November Full Council meeting.

There were no questions for clarity.

Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the resolution and spoke, commenting that the Panel was a strong one with excellent experience.

The Leader confirmed that former Panel Member, Jane Winstanley, would be formally thanked for her service, and it was confirmed that this had been or would be done.

Members asked for details regarding the key characteristics required of the new Independent Remuneration Panel members. The Director of Governance and Development explained that recruitment had involved three campaigns since February to secure candidates with the right skills and experience, including analytical and questioning abilities, HR knowledge, and diverse professional backgrounds. The importance of recognising the seriousness of appointing panel members was emphasised.

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Councillor Mike Every then summed up and confirmed that some or all of the IRP members would be invited to Council when their allowances report was considered.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting Record:

28 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To APPROVE the IRP appointments (Resolution)		
Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of Nikki Clark, Nick Craxton, David Hindle and Graham Russell to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).		
For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Michael Vann, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

31 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2024/25

The purpose was to receive the annual report of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/2025.

Councillor Gina Blomefield, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee extended her thanks to Officers Andrew Brown and Julia Gibson for compiling a comprehensive Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25, which outlined the Committee's work over the past year and the recommendations submitted to Cabinet. She noted the appointment of several new members to the Committee, including Councillor Joe Harris, former Leader of Cotswold District Council, Councillor Nick Bridges, who was elected in May, and Councillor Lisa Spivey, newly elected Leader of Gloucestershire County Council. She welcomed them to what she described as a strong and capable team, alongside returning Committee Members.

In addition to the matters detailed in the report, Councillor Gina Blomefield welcomed the recent clarification of the protocol between Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet. Members were advised that, in view of this, Councillor Blomefield and the Vice Chair,

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Councillor Angus Jenkinson, would be meeting in the autumn with the Leader and a representative of Cabinet to explore ways of strengthening the working relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The improvements in the Committee's performance as acknowledged in the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge report were highlighted, and the recognition of the Committee's growing effectiveness was welcomed.

Councillor Gina Blomefield outlined key areas of scrutiny for the coming civic year. These included the Council's preparations for the transition under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the development of the new Local Plan. It was also confirmed that the Committee had invited Bromford, the district's main housing association, and Freedom Leisure, which operated local leisure services, to report to the Committee in the year ahead.

The work of the task and finish group examining the impact of Inheritance Tax on Cotswold farmers was also mentioned. Special thanks were offered to Councillor Angus Jenkinson, for leading the group's work during Councillor David Cunningham's absence due to holiday. She noted the group's considerable efforts, the volume of research, meetings, and interviews conducted with stakeholders in the farming community. She concluded by commending the final report as a significant piece of work which she hoped would receive broad support.

There were no questions for clarity.

Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Gina Blomefield for presenting the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and for her leadership of the Committee. The value of the Committee's pre-decision scrutiny work and constructive recommendations was acknowledged, along with its positive impact on governance and the Committee's contribution to the Council's overall effectiveness, as reflected in the recent peer review report.

Former Councillor Gary Selwyn was formally thanked for his service as Vice Chair over the past four years.

RESOLVED that Council NOTED the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for 2024/25.

32 Report Back from British Farming Motion Task and Finish Group

To receive a report from the British Farming Motion Task and Finish Group on the evidence gathered from stakeholders during its inquiry into the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax (IHT) for farmers, and to consider the recommended messaging for inclusion in the Council's representations to Government.

Councillor David Cunningham introduced the report, explaining it followed a motion raised by Councillor Julia Judd concerning local farming community concerns over proposed changes to Inheritance Tax (IHT). A second motion had referred the matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the local impacts and inform a fuller Council response, including a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

A cross-party task and finish group, chaired by Councillors David Cunningham and Angus Jenkinson, met several times, consulting local farmers, the NFU, landowners, rural organisations, and tax experts. The group acknowledged that while the government sought to close misuse of Agricultural Property Relief (APR), the proposed reforms lacked distinction between genuine farmers and speculative investors and risked unintended negative consequences.

The report highlighted four key risks:

1. Failure to address tax loopholes enabling non-farmers to use land for tax avoidance;
2. Undermining of environmental progress by penalising farms engaged in land-use transition aligned with national and international climate goals;
3. Disruption to family farming, especially around succession planning;
4. Lack of reinvestment, with no strategy to direct revenue into sustainable agriculture or food security.

The group recommended the letter to the Chancellor request:

- Clear distinction between active farmers and investors;
- Protection for farms contributing to environmental goals;
- Adequate lead-in time for any changes;
- Integration with broader rural policy and reinvestment into sustainable farming.

Councillor Angus Jenkinson seconded the proposal, noting farming's central role in the Cotswolds' economy and landscape. He supported the group's balanced approach and emphasised the risks to working farmers and the environment.

Councillors widely supported the report, praising the cross-party work and thorough stakeholder engagement. In their supporting speeches they highlighted the vulnerability of asset-rich, cash-poor family farms and the importance of national food security. Members also agreed that the delay in sending the letter had allowed a stronger, evidence-based submission.

One member opposed the letter, supporting the principle of aligning APR with relief for other small businesses. They questioned whether it was appropriate for a district council to intervene on national tax policy and suggested that broader systemic reforms were needed to address the tax burden on small businesses, which are often disadvantaged compared to large corporations.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the recommendation of the Task and Finish group, proposed by Councillor David Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Angus Jenkinson.

Action: Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council, to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, incorporating the group's findings. The Leader also agreed to share the draft with the task group leads and to copy in local MPs and relevant partners, including the Cotswolds National Landscape organisation.

Voting Record:

26 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillor David Fowles.

To APPROVE the recommendation of the British Farming Motion Task and Finish Group (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that Council REQUESTS that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that the proposed changes to Inheritance Tax rules as they relate to farms will have unintended consequences that could have far-reaching implications for the viability of the farming sector of the Cotswolds.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Michael Vann, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	26
Against	Andrew Maclean	1
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

33 Local Plan Update Report

The purpose of the report was to confirm the way forward for the Local Plan.

The item was introduced by Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council, who noted that in December 2024, the Government had imposed new housing targets on the Cotswold District, increasing the annual requirement from 420 to 1,036 homes. This significant rise had placed the district—80% of which was designated as national landscape and held the highest level of protection—at serious risk. The revised targets

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reduced the Council's housing land supply from over seven years to just 1.8 years, undermining the Council's ability to resist speculative applications on Greenfield sites and weakening the effectiveness of its current local plan.

As a result of the changes in housing targets, developers might more easily appeal refused applications, with increased chances of success and heightened financial risk to the Council. Councillor Mike Every stated he would be writing to the Deputy Prime Minister to outline the district's unique circumstances and question whether the new targets were proportionate.

The report laid out that the best and only way to respond effectively was to proceed at pace with a full update of the district's Local Plan, which would strengthen the Council's position on speculative development, allow for meaningful public consultation, support the delivery of socially rented homes and essential infrastructure, and ensure sustainable, locally guided growth. A revised Local Plan would also provide a robust planning framework ahead of local government reorganisation. Councillor Every thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and planning officers for their contributions and urged members to support the recommendations to move forward swiftly with the work.

The Chair invited questions for clarity.

Members thanked officers for the recent five-year housing supply briefings attended by both councillors and town and parish representatives. The risk of speculative development if no action was taken emphasised the importance of local decision-making and infrastructure delivery, while acknowledging the district's housing shortage, particularly in social rented homes.

A member raised a query on behalf of a town councillor, asking whether parish and town councils with approved neighbourhood plans should begin reviewing them in light of the Local Plan review, and whether a new referendum would be required. They requested that clear guidance be provided to those Town and Parish Councils who had an approved Local Neighbourhood Plan in place.

Councillor Mike Every welcomed the comment about the importance of infrastructure and ensuring it was in place first. It was important that decisions were made around site allocations and the necessary infrastructure. He also drew attention to the fact that the government had withdrawn funding for new neighbourhood plans, and new plans were not being invited, though those already in progress could continue.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer reported that several strong neighbourhood plans had already been made across the district, with others currently in development. They noted that the Council's loss of its five-year housing land supply resulted in housing supply policies becoming out of date. However, the remaining local plan policies,

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including those within neighbourhood plans, continued to inform planning decisions. It was emphasised that neighbourhood plans remained valuable for providing locally specific policies and enhancing local democratic input. Despite the current planning balance favouring the granting of housing applications, neighbourhood plan policies still carried weight and contributed to securing high-quality development. It was suggested that Town and Parish Councils consult the planning department if uncertain.

There were no further questions for clarity.

Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the resolution and explained that the Council was asked to support merging two planning projects—the partial local plan update and the development strategy and site allocations—into a single comprehensive Local Plan update. This consolidation aimed to regain local control over planning following government-imposed housing target changes. The approach was described as practical, cost-effective, and ambitious, saving up to £400,000 and enabling the Council to meet the government's December 2026 deadline.

Much groundwork was already completed, and a strong governance structure, including the re-establishment of the monthly oversight board chaired by the Council Leader, was being established to ensure transparency, accountability, and momentum. Public consultations were planned for autumn and spring, with comprehensive community engagement. A dedicated project manager would be allocated to deliver against a detailed project. The updated plan focused on sustainable development, affordable housing, and infrastructure, aiming to reduce housing targets and avoid costly government interventions and appeals. It was confirmed that the Council would align its work with the emerging Gloucestershire strategic plan to ensure a smooth future transition into a new unitary authority.

The Chair then moved to the debate.

The critical importance of the local plan was emphasised by Councillor Tony Dale who urged members to fully support and accelerate its progress. The urgent need for affordable homes for young people was also highlighted and it was stressed that without a strong local plan, such homes would not be built. Attention was also drawn to supporting the local economy by ensuring that the plan would include suitable sites for new businesses to thrive. Members were urged to prioritise these issues and work to get the plan right before LGR and unification.

Councillor Tom Stowe stated that the Council was in a difficult position due to the government-imposed housing targets, which he described as poorly planned and harmful to rural areas like the Cotswolds. He emphasised the urgent need to fast-track the local plan update and supported the report's recommendations. He noted the rise in planning applications for previously unsuitable locations and the increased risk and cost of appeals. Despite some outdated planning tools, he urged decisions to be based on remaining relevant policies to protect residents and the landscape. He called for

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reassurance on funding to complete the local plan and handle appeals. Councillor Tom Stowe proposed an amendment to the resolution, requesting the addition of an opposition member to the Local Plan Oversight Board. Councillor Stowe was advised that the amendment would have to be no more than seven words long or it would have to be written down and circulated.

Councillor Mike Every explained that two recent changes had been made to the Oversight Board terms of reference at the recent Cabinet meeting and an updated version had been tabled at the meeting reflecting the changes made by Cabinet. The included the addition of the Deputy Chief Executive to the membership of the Board. The Leader did not agree with the opposition group amendment to add an opposition member to the Local Plan Oversight Board, clarifying that the board was a Cabinet group, to oversee the delivery of the local plan, not a cross-party working group. The Board was established to steer the project, with delivery being the Cabinet's responsibility and accountability maintained through Council and Overview and Scrutiny.

Clarification was sought as to what the disadvantages of having an opposition member on the Board might be. The Leader clarified that the Cabinet-led Local Plan Oversight Board, while not a decision-making body, would exclude opposition members to allow private, efficient discussions with officers. He confirmed Cabinet accountability for delivering the project within 18 months and asked Council to note the circulated terms of reference.

Clarification was also sought regarding the status and terminology of the Local Plan Oversight Board. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Cabinet had approved the establishment and terms of reference for the Board at its meeting the previous week. It was confirmed that the structure was constitutionally appropriate. The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services noted that the updated terms of reference reflected Cabinet's agreement, and any proposed amendment—such as the addition of an opposition member—should be considered as a separate resolution.

The Chair moved to the vote on the additional resolution proposed by Councillor Tom Stowe and seconded by Councillor David Fowles which was

REQUEST Opposition Member on Oversight Board membership.

Voting Record:

12 For, 15 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Did not vote: Councillor Ray Brassington.

The amendment fell.

REQUEST Opposition Member on Oversight Board membership. (Amendment)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer and Len Wilkins	12
Against	Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Every, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Lisa Spivey, Michael Vann, Ian Watson and Tristan Wilkinson	15
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Rejected		

The Chair then moved to the debate on the substantive recommendations.

Councillors expressed strong support for progressing the Local Plan, acknowledging the significant pressures placed on planning officers and the challenges posed by government-imposed housing targets. Particular thanks were given to officers, especially Principal Planning Policy Officer, Matt Britton, for their efforts. Concerns were raised about the unrealistic nature of national housing targets given the local landscape, construction capacity, and developer-driven delivery models. Members stressed the need for robust communications and early engagement with residents to avoid backlash, citing previous examples such as Chesterton and Moreton. They supported the creation of the Oversight Board and requested regular reporting on progress, clear contingency planning, and early investment in the necessary resources to ensure timely delivery of the plan.

Councillor Mike Every summed up and acknowledged the challenging position posed by government-imposed housing targets and reaffirmed support for the Local Plan process. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning reiterated that delays were due to external factors such as the pandemic and not a reflection on officers, who were thanked for their continued hard work. Assurance was given that communications would be strengthened, with the Head of Communications already engaged to ensure residents were kept informed. The purpose of the Local Plan Oversight Board was clarified as a mechanism to keep the project on track, identify issues early, and provide necessary support and resources. Members were reassured that the Section 151 Officer was confident existing funding was sufficient but that any additional resource requirements would be addressed promptly. The importance of delivering genuinely affordable homes, particularly for young people, was emphasised, and all members were encouraged to support the resolution.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Every and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting Record:
28 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To AGREE to the merger of the two Local Plan projects (Resolution)

Council is recommended to AGREE to merge the two ongoing Local Plan projects:

1. the partial update of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031);

and

2. the Development Strategy and Site Allocations Plan, into a single comprehensive Full Local Plan Update in conjunction with incorporating work of the Gloucestershire Strategic Plan, where appropriate, with a view to submission in 2026 and adoption in 2027.

For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Every, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Michael Vann, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

34 Notice of Motions

No Motions were received ahead of the meeting.

35 Next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24 September 2025, starting at 6.00pm.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.00 pm
(END)