



Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 5 January 2026

Members present:

Gina Blomefield (Chair)	Angus Jenkinson (Vice Chair)
Nick Bridges	Tony Slater
David Cunningham	Clare Turner

Joe Harris
Michael Vann

Officers present:

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst	Andrea Thomas, ERS Officer
	Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer
	Helen Martin, Director for Communities and Place

Councillors:

Mike Evemy	Patrick Coleman	Andrea Pellegram
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OS.274 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Jon Wareing and Lisa Spivey.

OS.275 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

OS.276 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Angus Jenkinson declared his role as Chair of the North Cotswold Liberal Democrats and his membership of the Upper Thames Catchment Partnership Steering Group.

OS.277 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 1 December 2025 were discussed. Councillor Turner proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Slater seconded the proposal which was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2025.

OS.278 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was noted that there was no update from the previous meeting, but that information regarding how the Regulation 18 housing numbers had been calculated was expected shortly.

OS.279 Chair's Announcements

The Chair thanked officers and Members for their support over the year and particularly the Vice Chair. The Chair confirmed that future work would include scrutiny of the next stage of the Local Plan and preparations for local government reorganisation when this was ready.

16:06 – Councillor David Cunningham arrived in the Chamber.

OS.280 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

OS.281 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

OS.282 Report back on recommendations

There were no recommendations to Cabinet at the previous meeting.

OS.283 Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees

The Chair thanked Councillor Jenkinson for his report and comments from the Gloucester Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee. The Chair also thanked Councillor Neill for her report on HOSC, which provided useful insights into local NHS services, including the five-year plan and the ten-year national health plan, highlighting the role of technology and AI in service transformation.

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance.

The report was introduced by Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, and Alison Barrett, Senior Performance Analyst.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The targets used across many services were predominantly government mandated. These included both time-based targets and percentage measures, whilst other targets, such as those for waste services, were set at a service level. Overall, approximately 70% of the targets were determined by government requirements, with 30% established by individual services.
- Statutory and service targets provided a clear set of expectations, particularly for nationally mandated measures. Government-set targets were intended to ensure consistent performance monitoring across councils. Officers highlighted that LG Inform, the Local Government Association's data-sharing platform, could be used to compare the Council's performance with other authorities.
- That the "two decimal place rule" should be reconsidered to reflect best practice. It was noted that the data could be rounded if requested.
- There had been some delays in council rebates for residents. These challenges were partly due to the transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit for working-age claimants. Performance had improved significantly in the second quarter, although cumulative annual figures still reflected earlier delays.
- Given the current planning context, including the loss of the five-year land supply and the tilted balance in favour of applications, it was prudent to allocate additional funds to defend planning decisions.
- Reporting service failures as a separate measure for missed bin collections would provide clearer insight into operational performance.
- Household waste recycling figures could be negatively affected when less waste arises, which also influenced decisions around waste collection services.
- The green waste recycling rate could be misleading during a dry season during summer months. It was confirmed that green waste figures could be reported separately from general recycling and normal waste to provide insight into performance.
- The Council continued to support the Royal Agricultural University (RAU)'s Innovation Village application and officers were asked to ensure strategic-level representations to progress it through the planning process.
- Engagement with towns and parishes had included discussions on local government reorganisation (LGR) alongside the Local Plan, particularly at the November forums in Moreton-in-Marsh and Cirencester. A summer update on local government reorganisation would provide an opportunity to launch the public consultation.

- Town and Parish councils had requested more information on the proposed neighbourhood partnerships. There was a challenge in providing definitive details, as boundaries and structures would ultimately be determined by the new authority or authorities.
- The delivery of affordable homes was underachieving. The data was not yet being used to inform the Local Plan but could be used in future to support increasing affordable housing provision.
- LGR had limited the Council's ability to pursue more direct control over housing delivery, leaving the provision of genuinely affordable, socially rented homes largely dependent on the commercial decisions of developers and housing associations.

OS.285 Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 2

The purpose of the report was to set out the second quarterly budget monitoring position for the 2025/26 financial year.

The report was introduced by Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance, and David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive. The report was introduced and the following points made:

- The financial outturn showed several positive variances, with transfers to earmarked reserves helping to mitigate future financial pressures.
- Additional income from development management fees being set aside in an appeals reserve, savings from vacancy management transferred to reserves, and additional treasury management income allocated to support longer-term financial resilience in the context of LGR and potential interest rate reductions.
- Car parking income was also reported to be performing positively, with additional income forecast at Quarter 2 and strong performance into Quarter 3.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- Vacant posts in transformation, learning and organisational development, and strategic housing had been reviewed as part of the Council's vacancy management process. The Council had appointed a Transformation Support Officer and determined that sufficient capacity existed to deliver the transformation programme before LGR. The Learning and Organisational Development roles were no longer considered necessary in the context of LGR. In relation to strategic housing, it was concluded that existing resources were sufficient. These decisions had contributed to the release of £710,000 to reserves.
- Additional costs of supporting the Corporate Plan would depend on how the LGR programme was developed and funded across the county. The £710,000 transferred to the capacity-building reserve by Quarter 2 indicated the likely scale of support required. Any additional LGR-related costs would be considered as part of the budget-setting process in February, with a detailed assessment

included in the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. £1 million over the next two financial years was the level of reserve that might be required to support service delivery.

- The refreshed Corporate Plan did not require additional resources to deliver its priorities.
- The Council reviewed how waste was collected in Bourton-on-the-Water, including considering the use of fewer but larger bins to reduce collection requirements and address areas with persistent waste issues. Work was also underway with fast-food outlets, and a pilot scheme was expected to be introduced.

Break 17:28 – 17:33

OS.286 Waste Fleet Replacement

The purpose of the report was to review the Capital Fleet Replacement Programme and identify the vehicles for replacement in 2026/27 and to agree the next steps towards the decarbonisation of the waste service.

The report was introduced by Councillor Andrea Pellegram, Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services, and Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place. The report was introduced and the following points made:

- The Council faced competing priorities in replacing its waste fleet, including the high capital cost, carbon reduction commitments, and the need to maintain reliable service delivery.
- Due to the age and condition of the existing vehicles, repairing them was not feasible.
- The report had proposed to look at replacing 31 vehicles, including purchasing one electric vehicle in the southern part of the district where charging infrastructure was available, with the remainder using diesel temporarily. Hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) would be used as a lower-carbon alternative to diesel where possible.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that further financial information would be provided in the February budget report, with funding available and borrowing avoided.
- The lead time for waste fleet replacement vehicles was long, creating urgency to place orders to ensure service continuity. It was confirmed that the Council was working to avoid the need for borrowing, using available balances, reserves, and projected revenue, but a definitive guarantee could not yet be provided due to uncertainties in the provisional local government finance settlement and business rates income. By the next Committee meeting on 3 February, more detailed financial information would be available to inform whether borrowing would be required for the waste fleet replacement programme.

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- Placing orders for the waste fleet would involve reserving production slots up to 12 months in advance, with specifications finalised during that period. Payments would be required upfront and on delivery. Officers advised that any adjustments or cancellations to orders could be managed, but the priority remained to organise revenue and capital funding to avoid the need for borrowing.
- Concerns were raised regarding the possible inclusion of palm oil in HVO and the need for auditing or monitoring mechanisms to ensure environmental benefits. The report acknowledged these risks and indicated that the Council would develop an appropriate mechanism to monitor both the financial and climate implications of using HVO.
- The Council was not yet in a position to fully transition to electric vehicles. The Gloucestershire Waste Partnership had not yet delivered significant joint action.
- HVO costs were around 10–15% higher than diesel, amounting to approximately £71k extra per year. Officers confirmed that HVO remained in the report as a temporary measure to mitigate carbon impact while EV adoption was limited, and that planning permission and site ownership issues could affect implementation timing, which was roughly comparable to the lead time for vehicle delivery.
- £60,000 for a fuel bunker was already included in the capital programme. It was also noted that the new vehicles would include larger compartments for cardboard to improve recycling capacity.
- Specific concerns from Members included:
 - the sourcing and environmental integrity of hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) including avoiding HVO derived from crops.
 - the limited proof-of-concept testing with only one electric vehicle, and whether lessons could be drawn from other authorities already operating electric or HVO fleets.
 - the absence of operational assumptions on vehicle lifespan, payload, and range. Members commented that financial considerations appeared to be the primary driver for limiting electric vehicle deployment.
 - a limited HVO supply and potential escalating costs.
 - cancellation policies for orders.
 - detailed financial analysis.
- While the report acknowledged vehicle reliability and early replacement as positive outcomes, members felt insufficient evidence had been provided to assess alternative approaches, consider strategic county-wide solutions in the context of LGR, or fully understand the long-term implications for service delivery and environmental impact. Concerns were raised that without this information the Committee was ill-equipped to make a fully informed recommendation.

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Councillor Joe Harris proposed endorsing the recommendations in the report to Cabinet and Councillor Michael Vann seconded the proposal.

Voting record:

For – 2, Against – 2, Abstain - 4

As there was no majority in favour the proposal fell. No recommendations to Cabinet were proposed.

OS.287 Work Plan and Forward Plan

This item was not considered as the meeting had exceeded the 3-hour time limit.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.07 pm

Chair

(END)