



**Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on
Monday, 2 March 2026**

Members present:

Angus Jenkinson (Chair)	Clare Turner (Vice-Chair)	
David Fowles	Jon Wareing	Laura Hall-Wilson
Tony Slater	Michael Vann	Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	

Observers:

Councillor Mike Evely and Juliet Layton

OS.301 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Gina Blomefield and David Cunningham.

OS.302 Substitute Members

Councillor David Fowles substituted for Councillor Blomefield and Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson substituted for Councillor David Cunningham.
Councillor Angus Jenkinson Chaired the meeting with Councillor Clare Turner acting as the Vice-Chair.

OS.303 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interests were made.

OS.304 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 2 February 2026 were discussed. Councillor Tony Slater proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Jon Wareing seconded the proposal which was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2026.

OS.305 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was noted that the response regarding compost required clarification and additional detail.

An update was requested on the supplementary solar PV information from David Stanley regarding installation costs in relation to projected savings.

OS.306 Chair's Announcements

The Chair updated the order of the agenda items to allow visiting speakers to attend additional Scrutiny meetings within the County.

OS.307 Report back on recommendations

There were no comments regarding the recommendations.

OS.308 Public Questions

Councillor Stephen Andrews, Chair of Kempston Parish Council, raised concerns that planning enforcement had declined since it was last reviewed. Referring to a recent Ombudsman report, he urged the Committee to set a clear timeframe for reviewing enforcement and reporting back.

OS.309 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

OS.310 Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer, Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place and Matt Abbott, Head of Communications, gave an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- Further information regarding the terms of reference for the technical, digital and customer, and property and assets workstreams was offered.

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- Redundancy costs within the programme were sensitive and complex, with some redundancies expected. Posts would need to be reviewed, evaluated, and costed.
- The government's current election timetable showed Shadow elections scheduled for May 2027, with vesting day on 1 April 2028.
- The figure of approximately 1,100 public engagements from the public consultation referred to all councils across Gloucestershire.
- The invite to the Town and Parish webinar had been sent to all 360 clerks across Gloucestershire to forward to their councillors.
- The Government would use consultation responses to inform its decision. The local programme's role was to ensure residents across the County had every opportunity to participate.
- Individual consultation responses would not be published. Following the closure of the consultation, the Government would provide a summary overview.
- Risk management would be overseen by the Portfolio Board. A risk register would be reviewed fortnightly, with any risks requiring political input escalated to the Steering Board.
- The future operating model workstream was where systems planning and interdependencies between work programmes were being considered.
- Identity and culture work was a key part of the People and Culture workstream, with arrangements in place to support staff transitioning from the existing councils to the new council(s).
- The Programme Board currently included representatives from Town and Parish Councils. Beneath the Board, various project groups would operate, with potential for broader membership. Some groups may specifically involve the voluntary sector or town and parish councils to support delivery.

A request to share material before the meeting was made by the Chair.

17:55 – Councillor Jon Wareing left the Chamber.

OS.311 LGR - Joint Scrutiny arrangements

The options for the proposed joint scrutiny options were presented to the committee by Rob Aliffe, Programme Sponsor for LGR Governance and Legal and Alice McAlpine, Programme Lead for LGR Governance and Legal.

They explained that the task was to deliver and prepare for LGR across the county and provide effective scrutiny. An overview of the 4 options was shared with the Committee and their views requested on the various options with the preferred option being number 4 – a Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel would have two principal roles: to hold the joint programme arrangements to account across the seven authorities, and to contribute to policy development. Members were invited to comment on their level of support for the

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proposed model and to suggest how the Panel could operate effectively to inform the drafting of its terms of reference.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The seven councils would seek to reach a consensus on the preferred scrutiny model and host authority. The chosen host council would formally establish the Panel, and each of the seven authorities would appoint its representatives in accordance with its constitution.
- The Scrutiny Panel model would allow flexibility to involve town and parish councils. This could include representation from the Association of Parish and Town Councils or inviting parish and town councils to attend specific sessions to give evidence.
- Initially there would be a single Scrutiny Panel. This was because the programme operated as a single programme requiring a unified approach. If the government decided Gloucestershire should have two (or three) unitary councils, there may be some divergence to scrutinise the different council areas separately, but joint scrutiny of the overall programme would remain necessary.
- Scrutiny Panels often generated stronger and more effective recommendations than formal committees, despite lacking call-in powers.
- The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel would be determined by the scrutiny function itself.

In summary, the Committee expressed the following views:

- Option 4 or an alternative panel format was considered.
- Concerns were raised that a panel would lack formal authority, which a committee possessed.
- Private meetings would conflict with the ethos of scrutiny, with public transparency being important for engagement and trust.
- It was suggested that political membership be divided equally rather than proportionally.
- Communication processes were noted as needing transparency.

The Scrutiny Panel's focus would cover 11 workstreams across seven councils to ensure the Local Government Reorganisation programme met its timeframe, with particular attention to timing, finance, and legal compliance on vesting day.

There was little appetite for Options 1–3.

The Chair thanked the guests and commented that it would have been helpful to have seen the presentation in advance.

OS.312 Infrastructure Funding - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy

The purpose of the report was to seek delegated authority for the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to implement a programme of enhancements.

The report was introduced by Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, and Helen Martin, Director for Communities and Place, who highlighted the following points:

- The annual bidding window previously ran from March–May with bids assessed by an officer panel using a scoring framework.
- The proposed enhancements were to:
 - Extend the bidding window to year-round, with bids considered October–December.
 - Improve transparency and communication with towns, parishes, community groups, and infrastructure partners.
 - Strengthen the assessment process against clear strategic criteria.
 - Enhance monitoring and reporting to demonstrate impact.
- Cabinet asked to delegate authority to Assistant Director of Planning Services, in consultation with portfolio holder, to implement changes.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The current CIL value held was approximately £5 million.
- Further details on the type of funds that could be applied for was requested.
- Accountability for CIL funding was through legal agreements, requiring recipients to use the money as intended. Financial due diligence was carried out before funds were released to ensure organisations could deliver the project. The Council team would maintain ongoing contact with recipients to ensure funds were spent within agreed timeframes and on approved purposes.
- CIL funding was allocated via a legal agreement to the body delivering the infrastructure. County Council functions were applied for by the County Council, and Parish or Town Council functions were applied for by the relevant Parish or Town Council.
- There was currently no definitive approach for handling funding post-LGR.
- The current team had the skills and resources to implement the proposed changes. Whilst the team was currently busy with the Local Plan, the extended bidding and assessment periods made the enhanced engagement manageable.
- CIL funding was intended for local community infrastructure and could not cover major strategic projects, which fell under Section 106 agreements in collaboration with Gloucestershire County Council.
- A clear framework and scoring mechanism was in place to prioritise bids, considering factors such as wider community benefit, match funding, and deliverability within a reasonable timeframe.

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- The CIL scoring mechanism reflected policy priorities, and any redesign of the scoring framework would reassess those priorities. Council-determined priorities could be embedded in the scoring matrix through question selection and weighting.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and officers and did not wish to submit any recommendations to Cabinet.

19:02 – Councillor Tony Slater left the Chamber.

OS.313 **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

A review of security measures and Gloucester County Council was underway, and district councillors attending meetings would be issued with passes for access. It was noted that the Cirencester Growth Hub was now being used by the Royal Agricultural University, and that government funding had supported its construction.

OS.314 **Work Plan and Forward Plan**

This item was not considered because the 3-hour maximum duration had been reached.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.09 pm

Chair

(END)