



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 16 APRIL 2026
Subject	CREATION OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT LEAD ROLE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience Email: tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Email: helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Email: helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek Cabinet's approval of the creation of a part-time, fixed term post to drive commerciality across the culture sector in Cirencester and the wider district.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the creation of a fixed term contract post to work with visitor attractions to drive up income and reduce costs.• Endorse the principle of targets for growth over the two years and grants delegated authority to the Director of Communities and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience to set out the detailed proposals for how this is calculated and reported.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing for the future• Delivering good services



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting communities• Supporting the economy
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader, Cabinet Member, Corporate Leadership Team including S151 officer.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The cultural economy is a vital component of the local economy and of the vibrancy and vitality of our town centres. In England, every £1 generated by arts and culture catalyses an additional £1.23 in economy wide impact, creating jobs and supporting supply chains across tourism, education and retail.¹
- 1.2 Its value, however, is greater than its economic output, as the sector also plays a crucial role in shaping the fabric of our communities, enriching lives, offering inspiration and creating both a sense of identity and sense of place.²
- 1.3 As we move towards Local Government Reorganisation and unitarisation, it is incumbent on councils to ensure that services are on a sound financial footing and in the best position possible. It is even more important for non-statutory functions that are offered at the discretion of a local authority but nonetheless provide considerable social value and community benefit to be sustainable in the long term, whoever is running them.
- 1.4 The council does not own or operate all the culture offer in Cirencester or the wider district and even those facilities that it does, such as the Corinium Museum, are operated by a contracted third party. However, in terms of Preparing for the Future and ensuring CDC leaves a legacy, it is proposed that we create a fixed term role to work with such facilities in a consultative capacity to drive up income, drive down costs and ensure self-sustaining facilities for generations to come.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cotswold District enjoys a vibrant cultural scene. The area hosts some well-known cultural assets, from long established institutions reflecting the area's history, such as the Corinium Museum and the Court Barn, through to recently established institutions, such as the Cidermill Theatre in Chipping Campden and the Barn Theatre in Cirencester. The sector spans from venues to festivals and from classical to popular, with venues like the Tetbury Goods Shed and New Brewery Arts as well as events such as the Longborough Opera Festival and the Phoenix Festival.

¹ [Public Value of Arts and Culture.pdf](#)

² [CULTURE AND HERITAGE CAPITAL: MONETISING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING](#)



- 2.2 As a result of the importance of the cultural economy, the Council adopted in July 2025 the "Creative Cotswolds – a Cultural Strategy for Cotswold District".
- 2.3 Creative Cotswolds is an open partnership for local organisations engaged in creative and cultural activity. Creative Cotswolds will bring together a network of partners to realise opportunities to collaborate on events, to work together on promotion and explore opportunities to expand the reach and impact of the sector.
- 2.4 The strategy sets out several values: Sustainability, Connecting, Nurturing, Inclusive and Creativity and Freedom. Alongside these values sits an action plan with activity under themes such as leadership and coordination, sharing best practice and stimulating the local economy and tourism.
- 2.5 What the strategy and action plan stop short of however, is the resources or capacity to provide support and guidance to help ensuring the economic sustainability of the operation of partners and to enable facilities to Prepare for the Future.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The November 2025 report "The Economic Impact of Gloucestershire's Visitor Economy 2024"³ shows that in 2024 Cotswold received 543,000 staying visitor trips and 5,369,000-day visits. This equates to a total visitor related spend of £380 million. In the region of 12% of this spend is on attractions and entertainment. So, whilst many of these visitors may not have spent their time and money on our local cultural venues and events, it does demonstrate the scale of the untapped potential. If even a small percentage of these day-visits became overnight stays the impact on the economy would be significant.
- 3.2 There is also an increasing body of evidence that links engagement in culture and heritage with health and wellbeing. It has been shown to help prevent, treat and manage physical and mental health problems.⁴ So, the whole system impact of a vibrant cultural sector is significant.
- 3.3 There is a real scope for CDC to take leadership in this space in the two years the council has remaining and the scale of that impact will be proportionate to the scale of its ambition.

³ [PowerPoint Presentation](#)

⁴ [CULTURE AND HERITAGE CAPITAL: MONETISING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING](#)

- 3.4 Therefore, it is proposed that the Council seeks to engage an experienced commercial professional who knows the cultural landscape, has sector contacts and can engage with funders and relevant organisations such as the Arts Council to grow the sector.
- 3.5 This individual would work in collaboration with existing operators of all assets and to support them to grow income and drive down costs. Whilst the role would work across the district, an immediate priority will be to ensure that the Corinium Museum is on a sound financial footing.
- 3.6 They would also be tasked with looking at creating new or expanding existing events and activities to attract new and repeat visitors and ensure a longer dwell time.
- 3.7 It is not intended to overly prescribe what the role could do but they would be set several deliverables and KPIs to be measured against (for example, number of organisations supported). Over the two years a target could be set for increased cultural revenue, stepped targets of £30k per quarter rising to circa £500k by the end of year 2. It is envisaged that over time this role would in effect pay for itself. For instance, if the public subsidy to the museum could be reversed.
- 3.8 The post holder would report to the Director of Communities and Place and work closely with the Economic Development and tourism teams as well as Freedom Leisure.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative option is not to approve the creation of this post. Creative Cotswold Partnership will continue but without the resource to support venues to grow income and reduce costs.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report sets out the business case to establish a new post; Commercial Development Lead, on a part-time basis for a fixed term period of two years to support culture and heritage at the Corinium Museum and more widely across the District.
- 5.2 A fixed term contract is the preference. Market testing would need to be undertaken to establish the average salary and once the job description is agreed this would need to be evaluated.



- 5.3 If recruiting to a fixed term contract is not successful in attracting the right skill set and the post were recruited to on an agency basis it is estimated that the annual cost would be £600 per day x 130 days = £78,000 (£156,000 in total).
- 5.4 Whilst the report indicates this post over time would be self-funding, there is no guarantee that this outcome will be achieved. Therefore, members should consider the creation of the role as an additional cost to the council and not anticipate additional income or cost reduction in their decision.
- 5.5 Assuming the post was recruited on a substantive basis for two years, funding would need to be provided from either the 'Building Capacity Fund' or from identifying savings elsewhere in the Council's budget.
- 5.6 Depending on the recommendations made by the lead there is the potential for future financial asks to support increased marketing and promotion. This cannot be confirmed at this time and would be the subject of further approvals.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As for all recruitments, this temporary post will need to be advertised openly for fairness in processes.

7 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not acting risks ongoing subsidy by the council and loss of additional revenue into the economy to the detriment of the sustainability of businesses and events.
- 7.2 The success of the post will be dependent on the buy in of the various visitor attractions to work in collaboration. This role is to provide industry experience and knowledge, guidance and advice rather than to provide additional capacity per se. The other organisations will need capacity to action and deliver the changes needed and will have finite financial resource to do so.
- 7.3 There is also a risk that the proposed actions recommended by the lead will require input from other Council services (such as the Communications team) to highlight and showcase the activity, and this marketing and promotion will potentially incur not only officer time but also budget.



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8 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 No issues identified.

9 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

(END)