



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 6 AUGUST 2026 COUNCIL – 12 AUGUST 2026
Subject	CDC NEW LOCAL PLAN 2026-2043 (DRAFT)
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Layton – Deputy Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Helen Martin - Director for Communities and Place Email: helen.martin@Cotswold.gov.uk
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Summary/Purpose	Cotswold District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the 2026 to 2043 period. This new plan will, once adopted, replace the existing plan adopted in 2018 and provide a policy framework to inform planning decisions in the district. The purpose of this report is to make a series of recommendations, principally relating to the Publication of the Local Plan for six weeks consultation in August and September 2026 and submission to the Secretary of State in December 2026 for independent examination. It is anticipated that an examination would take place during 2027 with Plan adoption expected around March 2028.
Annexes	Pack A: Refer to list at the end of the report Pack B: Refer to list at the end of the report.
Recommendation(s)	• That Cabinet submits the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 - 2043 (Regulation 19) to Council with the following recommendation:



	That Council: - Agrees the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document is published for six weeks consultation from 24 August 2026 to 5 October 2026. - Agrees that thereafter, the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document is submitted to government for independent examination. - Provides delegated authority for the Director of Communities and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to make any minor corrections prior to consultation, including for typographical and formatting purposes AND following the Regulation 19 consultation to prepare an 'Additional Modifications' Schedule for submission if required. - Notes the technical supporting evidence in preparation for publication alongside the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 for consultation.
Corporate priorities	- Preparing for the Future - Delivering Good Services - Responding to the Climate Emergency - Delivering Housing - Supporting Communities - Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The new Local Plan has been subject to extensive consultation. There have been three main stages of public consultation undertaken to date (listed below) with ongoing engagement with a wide range of statutory bodies and key stakeholders. - Issues and Options Consultation – Feb/ March 2022 - Draft Local Plan Consultation – Feb/ April 2024 - Preferred Options Consultation – Nov/ Dec 2025



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The next stage of preparing the Local Plan will consist of a further period of six weeks consultation (known as the Regulation 19 stage) and any comments received to this consultation will be shared with the Planning Inspector (s) appointed to preside over the examination into the Local Plan, who will consider all comments received.

The Council will consider any consultation responses and may recommend additional modifications, which can be submitted alongside the Local Plan, in case they may assist the Inspector (s). The Council will also continue to engage with statutory bodies and key stakeholders as necessary.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Cotswold District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the 2026 to 2043 period. This new plan will, once adopted, replace the existing plan adopted in 2018 and provide a policy framework to inform planning decisions in the district.
- 1.2** The purpose of this report is to make a series of recommendations, principally relating to the Publication of the Local Plan for six weeks consultation in August and September 2026 and submission to the Secretary of State in December 2026 for independent examination.
- 1.3** It is anticipated that an examination would take place during 2027 with Local Plan adoption expected around March 2028.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2026 – 2043, which is expected to be adopted around March 2028. This new plan, once adopted, will replace the existing plan that was finalised in 2018. It will provide a policy framework to inform decision making on planning applications and make provision for new housing, jobs and infrastructure (new services and facilities) to meet the identified needs of the district up to 2043.
- 2.2** Work has been in progress for several years and there have been three prior stages of consultation (in 2022, 2024 and 2025). The next stage will be to publish a completed version of the Local Plan for six weeks further consultation (known as the Regulation 19 stage) from 24 August to 5 October, collate the representations and then submit the plan to the Secretary of State in December this year.
- 2.3** The system for preparing Local Plans is changing and any plans using the current planning system, informed by the December 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework, not submitted before the end of December 2026, would need to start again using the new system. The new system for preparing a Local Plan is expected to take around three to four years (minimum) and so failing to submit the currently emerging Cotswold Local Plan before the end of 2026 would prevent the Council, and district, from benefiting from a new plan for several years.



- 2.4** It is anticipated the new Local Plan will be adopted in early 2028, and before the ongoing Local Government Re-organisation (LGR), where a new authority for Gloucestershire will be formed in April 2028. The new Local Plan, once adopted, will become the responsibility of the new authority, but will ensure the area has an up-to-date plan in place until a new plan can be prepared from 2028 onwards. In the event the Local Plan is not adopted until after April 2028, it would still become the responsibility of the new authority and lead to the same beneficial outcome.
- 2.5** In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, it can be expected that the 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' (NPPF December 2024 – Paragraph 11(d) the titled balance) would apply. The conditions for where the presumption applies, includes 'where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites', which is the case in Cotswold District and can be expected to remain the case until a new Local Plan is adopted.
- 2.6** Experience from other planning areas in the country where the presumption applies shows there is likely to be an increase in speculative and piecemeal development, where decision making is more restricted, the quality of development coming forward may fall below what the Council would expect and where infrastructure delivery is less effective. This can lead to harmful consequences, where development can be delivered without adequate infrastructure. The importance of delivering high-quality and sustainable development that is supported effectively by infrastructure is typically one of the most important factors raised through consultation. Realistically, the only way these outcomes can be delivered in Cotswold District is by adopting and maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan.
- 2.7** It is important, within this background section of this report, to mention the subject of housing need. New methodology for calculating how much housing is needed in any given administrative area was introduced in 2024 and this led to a significant increase in the housing need for Cotswold, and many other authorities across the country.
- 2.8** Whilst the housing need for Cotswold District increased significantly following the change to the standard methodology in 2024, there is evidence the local need for housing in the district is high. However, the planning system does provide a mechanism where authorities that are unable to meet their housing need in full, can seek to identify unmet housing need, subject to having sufficient evidence to demonstrate this is the case.



- 2.9** Around 80% of Cotswold District falls within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The 2024 NPPF states (Paragraph 189) 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads, and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. On this basis, it would not be unreasonable for the Council to consider, before undertaking any work, that there may be challenges in meeting a significantly increased housing need figure in Cotswold District.
- 2.10** However, it is necessary for the Local Plan to be capable of being found sound by an Independent Planning Inspector, through an examination, which means it should be consistent with national policy, guidance and legislation and supported by adequate and proportionate evidence.
- 2.11** A number of additional potential development sites were submitted to the Council during the 2025 consultation, which have been assessed along with any other sites the Council was already aware of. The assessment demonstrates that Cotswold District can meet its identified housing need, on sites that are, or can be made to be sustainable, that are relatively unconstrained and that are largely outside the National Landscape. Thus, it is considered that the identified housing need can be met, without directly harming to the Cotswold National Landscape, and on that basis, it would not be appropriate for the Council to seek to identify unmet housing need.

3. New Cotswold Local Plan

- 3.1** It is important the Local Plan provides for a consistent and comprehensive strategy for the area for the plan period, up to 2043, that is capable of being both ambitious and effective. And, for the reasons stated above, it is considered imperative that a new Local Plan for Cotswold District is progressed as efficiently and effectively as possible and should achieve a number of significant objectives:

- to be capable of being found sound at examination whilst reducing any risks, meaning that the Local Plan should be consistent with national policy, guidance and legislation
- seek to address the climate change and ecological emergencies, declared by the Council in 2019, and 2020 respectively



- support the delivery of sustainable development by maximising opportunities for the use of sustainable modes of travel and providing good access to jobs, services and facilities
- meet the identified housing and employment need, including delivering affordable housing, small homes (particularly 2- and 3-bedroom properties) and supporting businesses, through providing for sufficient land and appropriate policies
- protect and enhance the Cotswold National Landscape and other important factors that contribute to the area being as attractive and popular as it is, albeit, within the context of national policy, guidance and legislation
- create sustainable and high-quality communities, through good design and maximising opportunities for new infrastructure to be delivered alongside new development to ensure good provision of services and facilities and minimising any burden to existing provision, and
- include a comprehensive and up-to-date suite of new policies to ensure planning in Cotswold provides for high-quality development.

4. Housing Need

- 4.1** The consultants ICENI were commissioned to prepare Housing and Economic Needs evidence for all Gloucestershire authorities in 2025. This work is progressing and will be published in due course. To ensure evidence is available to be published alongside the new Cotswold Local Plan in August 2026, a standalone report was also commissioned by Cotswold District Council, that sets out the findings of the Gloucestershire wide work, for Cotswold District.
- 4.2** The Cotswold housing evidence identifies that the housing need for Cotswold District in the 2026 to 2043 period is 17,918 homes. This would equate to 1,054 homes per year if the need was delivered uniformly across all years in the Local Plan, although that is not being proposed (see below).
- 4.3** To determine the level of additional housing to be planned for in the emerging Local Plan, consideration is needed for the current completions (houses that have reached a substantial level of construction), commitments (those with planning permission) and for a windfall allowance (a level of development that we can expect to come forward that are not allocated but that would otherwise be policy compliant). The figures as at 1 April 2026 are shown by **Table 1**.



Table 1: Housing Supply as at 1 April 2026 for 2026 – 2043 Plan Period

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (April 2026 to March 2043)		17,918
Housing Completions		0*
Housing Supply	Known commitments	1,570**
	Strategic Allocations	11,302
	Non-Strategic Allocations	1,468
	Saved Allocations	2,282
	Windfalls	2,289
Total Housing Supply		18,911

*There are currently no housing completions reported as the data has a 1 April 2026 base date. Updated Housing completions for the 2026 to 2027 year may be available around May 2027, to inform the Plan before adoption.

**Updated Housing commitments for the 2026 to 2027 year may also be available around May 2027 to inform the Plan before adoption.

- 4.4** The Local Plan proposes 11,302 homes across ten strategic site allocations (sites over 350 homes), there is one saved strategic allocation from the previous plan, for 2,282 homes (at the Steadings southwest of Cirencester) and 1,468 homes across thirty-three non-strategic sites (sites below 350 homes).
- 4.5** It is necessary to consider planning for some 'headroom' (i.e. planning for slightly more housing than the identified need). This assists in demonstrating the plan's soundness by providing for some flexibility and resilience and helping to ensure the Council delivers the 17,918 housing requirement over the Local Plan period and is more likely to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites into the future.
- 4.6** The Local Plan proposes 18,911 homes in total, which equates to 993 homes above the identified housing need, or roughly 5 % headroom. Planning Inspectors examining Local Plans have regularly considered the provision of some headroom in housing supply as an important factor when accessing the soundness of Local Plans.
- 4.7** As the majority of new development is proposed on strategic allocations that realistically will take some time before they are delivering housing at their optimum level, it will be necessary to propose a 'stepped' housing trajectory. This essentially means the Local Plan would support the delivery of different levels of housing in five-year periods, with less than the annualised need (for the whole plan period) proposed for the first five years, and more, in the last five years. It is proposed that



420 homes would be delivered each year for the first five years (2026 to 2031), 1,064 per year for years six to ten (2031 to 2036), and 1,500 per year for years eleven to fifteen (2036 to 2043).

- 4.8** The Planning Practice Guidance states that ‘a stepped housing requirement may be appropriate where there is to be a significant change in the level of housing requirement between emerging and previous policies and/ or where strategic sites will have a phased delivery or are likely to be delivered later in the plan period’. These points all apply to Cotswold District.
- 4.9** The annual requirement for the first five years of the Local Plan period is consistent with the existing annual requirement in the Local Plan adopted in 2018 (the 2011 to 2031 Local Plan), the second five year period has an annual requirement that is more-or-less consistent with the annual requirement for the new Local Plan period (if annualised for the whole plan period) and the annual requirement for the last five years is increased to reflect that all of the new strategic allocations will be delivering by this stage of the plan period.
- 4.10** This approach is important to ensure the overall housing requirement is met in full, and in particular:
- it will offset under-delivery against the new standard method requirement prior to Local Plan adoption, and in the early years of the plan period (where it would be impossible for delivery to meet the new requirement)
 - demonstrate a five-year housing land supply at Local Plan adoption, and
 - allows sufficient time for new Local Plan strategic allocations to come forward.
- 4.11** This is discussed in more detail in the Housing Delivery Study that has informed and is published alongside the Local Plan.
- 4.12** In addition to the headline housing requirement, the evidence identifies a need for around 328 affordable homes per year, or around 5,600 over the plan period (this is covered in detail in the Housing Needs Study). The new Local Plan policies support 40% provision of affordable homes on sites of 10 or more homes. On that basis, the need for affordable housing in the district should be met in full, within the plan period, and with at least the existing level of provision met from early in the plan period. This is important as not meeting the affordable housing need could be



expected to lead to some people on the housing register having to move away from the area, potentially losing family connections, and perhaps having implications for their employment.

- 4.13** The housing needs evidence also identifies a need for smaller homes, particularly for 2- and 3-bedroom properties. An advantage of an updated Local Plan is being able to support the delivery of a more appropriate mix of homes, in accordance with the updated policies and evidence, i.e. supporting the delivery of a higher proportion of smaller and more affordable homes, that better meet the needs of the local population.

5. Spatial Strategy

- 5.1** The spatial strategy for a rural district would be expected to focus development in the larger and more sustainable settlements and to avoid areas of particular constraint, particularly for Cotswold District, the Cotswold National Landscape. Such an approach helps to maximise opportunities for cycling, walking and wheeling and using public transport, whilst also maximising access to services and facilities. This is the case in the new Cotswold Local Plan with around 87 % of the proposed development (strategic, non-strategic and one saved strategic allocation from the 2018 Local Plan) being located at Cirencester or Principal settlements, and 13 % at Non-Principal settlements.

- 5.2** Other headline facts relating to the emerging spatial strategy, include:

- around 90 % of the proposed development is on strategic scale allocations, and only 10 % on smaller non-strategic allocations. This helps to maximise opportunities for the delivery of infrastructure (services and facilities), including improvements to cycling, walking and wheeling routes, or improvements to public transport; larger developments help to deliver more on-site facilities, such as new schools and local centres, and so reduce the need for day-to-day travelling; the approach also ensures the number of existing settlements affected by new development are reduced, or the scale of development across a larger number of Non-Principal Settlements (or smaller settlements) are reduced
- around 95 % of the proposed development is outside of the Cotswold National Landscape, with around 5 % inside, albeit, restricted to smaller non-strategic sites and only where the sites have limited landscape sensitivity. Some development within the settlements in the National Landscape is essential to protect the vitality



and viability of the communities, for example by supporting local businesses, or ensuring local schools remain viable

- five of the proposed strategic allocations encroach on the Special Landscape Areas to some extent, but these exclude the most sensitive locations and are considered capable of appropriate mitigation. However, they strike an appropriate balance between protecting the Cotswold National Landscape, and supporting development in sustainable locations
- around 21% of the development is directed to locations that have railway stations, at Kemble and Moreton-in-Marsh, which are the only two railway stations in the district, but provide good access to a range of destinations and help to improve the sustainability of the development. This figure increases to 30% if development at Mickleton is included, which is located around 3 miles from the railway station at Honeybourne, and
- around 73% of the proposed development is located in the south of the district, which is considered to represent the most sustainable location, with the majority located either in close proximity to Cirencester, where there are very good opportunities to improve connectivity via cycling, walking or wheeling, or via improved public transport, or where there is a railway station (at Kemble), or located on key movement corridors (including along the A419) between Cirencester and Swindon. There are only two strategic allocations proposed outside of this area, at Moreton-in-Marsh, that has a railway station, and Mickleton, that is around 3 miles from the station at Honeybourne.

5.3 The Spatial Strategy, set out in Chapter 4 in the Local Plan, is underpinned by seven core (strategic) policies that provide an important and overarching framework to inform the remainder of the Local Plan. These are:

- **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change**
Sets out criteria for developments to ensure they respond to the challenge of climate change appropriately
- **Core Policy 2: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District: Strategic Sites**
Specifies the scale and location of new strategic housing
- **Core Policy 2a: Stepped Housing Trajectory**
Sets out the level of housing delivery for different parts of the plan period to ensure annual housing delivery is realistic and achievable
- **Core Policy 3: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District: Non-Strategic Sites**
Specifies the scale and location of non-strategic housing



- **Core Policy 4: Settlement Hierarchy**

Classifies the settlements in Cotswold District according to their role and service function as well as ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations

- **Core Policy 5: Meeting Business and Employment Needs in Cotswold District**

Specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across Cotswold District in appropriate locations

- **Core Policy 6: Infrastructure Delivery**

Ensures that new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

6. Proposed Allocations

6.1 There are ten proposed strategic allocations, which are listed by **Table 2** and thirty-three non-strategic allocations, which are listed in Chapter 4 of the accompanying Local Plan document. Appendices 1 and 2 of the Local Plan provide much more detail of the proposed allocations. Appendix 1 of the Local Plan sets out the Site Development Frameworks for the proposed strategic allocations, that include indicative framework plans for the sites, along with their policy requirements that include what infrastructure they need to provide for. Appendix 2 sets out the Site Development Templates for the proposed non-strategic allocations, that provide similar information to the frameworks referred to above, but with a more proportional level of information given the sites are much smaller.

6.2 The Local Plan supporting documentation is of relevance and importance. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) sets out a high-level assessment of all potential development sites and considers their availability and suitability for development. This informs the Site Selection Topic Paper which considers the suitability of these sites for potential inclusion in the Local Plan and provides an assessment, whereby the further a potential site gets through the process, the more detail is considered. Finally, the proposed allocations are also subject to detailed testing through a comprehensive suite of technical evidence (including for example, transport assessment, flood risk assessment, landscape assessment, etc). These will all be published alongside the plan for consultation and are available for Councillors to review.



Table 2: Proposed Strategic Allocations to be included in the new Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043.

Settlement	Site Name	Housing Allocation to 2043	Longer Term Potential (Approximate Figure)
Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area			
Cirencester	Strategic extension to the south of The Steadings	585	779
Cirencester	Strategic extension to the east of Kingshill Lane	613	0
Preston	Strategic extension to the south of Preston	1,368	0
Siddington	Strategic extension to the south-west of Siddington	372	0
South Cotswold Area			
Down Ampney	Strategic extension to the north, east and south of Down Ampney	1,658	0
Fairford	Strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford	1,141	0
Kemble	Strategic extension to the south-west of Kemble	1,020	0
New settlement	New settlement to the south of Driffield	1,090	1,132
North Cotswold Area			
Mickleton	Strategic extension to the north and west of Mickleton	1,238	0
Moreton-in-Marsh	Strategic extension to the South and East of Moreton-in-Marsh	2,217	0
Totals		11,302	1,911

- 6.3** An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) was undertaken, which incorporates a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which adds a further and independent layer of assessment to the development options and proposed allocations, along with the draft Local Plan itself. The SA includes consideration of what are known as reasonable alternatives (for example, different ways of considering how the Local Plan could deliver the identified housing need). Finally, of particular note here, is the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) that considers if the plan may have any impact on any environmentally designated sites.



- 6.4** It is not intended to summarise this wealth of evidence in this report other than to highlight the supporting documentation that will accompany the consultation, and that has helped to inform the Local Plan. Overall, it is considered the evidence is appropriate and proportionate and so consistent with the requirements of national policy.
- 6.5** The following paragraphs provide an introductory overview of the proposed strategic allocations.

Cirencester and Surrounding Villages

- 6.6** There are four proposed strategic allocations at, or in close proximity to Cirencester, which is by far the largest and most sustainable settlement in the district. It is important to note that the allocations include buffers between the surrounding villages and new the development, as far as possible, to minimise their impact. These sites contribute around 2,938 homes, although one site (South of the Steadings) has potential to continue to deliver some housing beyond the plan period (i.e. after 2043).
- 6.7** In addition to the four proposed strategic allocations mentioned above, there is one strategic allocation (The Steadings – south-west of Cirencester) that was allocated in the previous Local Plan adopted in 2018, which is for 2,282 homes. This site is an existing allocation, but is clearly an important consideration, and the assessments informing the Local Plan have included any potential for cumulative impacts as well as the holistic infrastructure needs for the area.
- 6.8** Key requirements for these sites include the provision of good quality cycling, walking and wheeling connections to Cirencester, improvements to public transport, generous provision for open space and green infrastructure, including where this is needed to mitigate any impacts on nearby designated sites (referred to above in relation to the HRA), some on-site employment provision, new schools, including a new secondary school on the site to the south of Preston, that will meet the needs of the new development in the area, complement that already provided in the town, but avoid negatively impacting existing schools, along with providing local centres that will include for both local retail provision as well as community facilities.
- 6.9** One of the overall aims for these proposed allocations is to focus development in one of the most sustainable locations in the district, avoid any impact on the



Cotswold National Landscape that is located to the north of Cirencester, carefully manage any impacts on the Special Landscape Area, and ensure they deliver high-quality development, that importantly provides necessary infrastructure effectively to minimise any potential impacts on the town and/ or existing services and facilities

South Cotswold Area

- 6.10** There are four strategic allocations proposed in the south of the district, outside the area immediately close to Cirencester, albeit some of the sites are still reasonably close to the town.
- 6.11** The two largest sites are located on the A419 route south of Cirencester, with good access to the town, but are also well connected to the wider route between Cheltenham and Swindon, that will see a major boost in 2027 with the A417 gap (known as the missing link) to the east of Cheltenham set to be completed. These sites, at Down Ampney and at Driffield, are of a scale consistent with Garden Villages and have potential to achieve a high degree of sustainability in their own right, even though they are also well located, and have good wider connectivity.
- 6.12** The site at Driffield has potential to continue to deliver housing beyond 2043 and has potential to deliver larger scale on-site employment and significant areas of open space and green-infrastructure, including areas of open space that will be designed to help mitigate impacts on the nearby designated site (North Meadow SAC) that complements the SAC Management Plan in deterring visitors to the protected areas. There are also very good opportunities for effective cycling, walking and wheeling connections to Cirencester and with improved public transport. The site is located close to the Army Barracks at South Cerney that has recently been awarded significant investment and will help to reduce the relative isolation of the existing Army site, that will also benefit from the improved local facilities and improved connectivity.
- 6.13** Strategic development is proposed at Kemble, which is one of only two locations in the district with a railway station, but is also located close to the important employment site at Cotswold Airport and is still relatively close to Cirencester. The site will provide extensive areas of open space/ Green Infrastructure, ensuring that nearby Ancient Woodland is unaffected and appropriately buffered from development, and that there is a generous buffer between the proposed development and existing settlement to avoid impacting its conservation area.



- 6.14** Strategic scale development is proposed to the east of Fairford. This site will include a new through road that will help to reduce impacts on the settlement centre and provide a range of new services and facilities, including a primary school and for retail. Whilst not a factor in preparing the Local Plan, the recent announcement of significant investment in the nearby military base, will ensure the new development is well placed to help meet the housing needs associated with this investment and by providing increased local services and facilities.

North Cotswold Area

- 6.15** There are two strategic allocations proposed in the north of district. The larger of these is at Moreton-in-Marsh, which is one of the more sustainable settlements in the district, that contains a good range of services and facilities, including a railway station, but is also located outside of the National Landscape.
- 6.16** 2,217 homes are proposed to the south and east of Moreton-in-Marsh, along with a comprehensive package of infrastructure, including a new road through the development, linking the A429 (to the south) and A44 (to the east) and a new secondary school.
- 6.17** The proposed new road helps to reduce traffic using the settlement centre, although it doesn't function as a complete link road, as a connection would also be needed to the north (linking back to the A429 to the north). There is a balance needed between how much development can come forward and how much infrastructure could be supported. The level of development proposed in this plan (around 2,217) wouldn't be sufficient to deliver a road linking around the east of the settlement from the south to the north. Land is safeguarded to help support the delivery of such a road in the future, subject to sufficient funding being available to do so. Land is also identified that could support around 1,100 homes to the north of the settlement in the future, albeit that would need to be coordinated with ensuring the northern section of a road could be delivered, along with other necessary infrastructure.
- 6.18** The proposed new secondary school at Moreton-in-Marsh will reduce the need (over time) for pupils to travel out of the settlement to access secondary education at Chipping Campden, and that also provides more capacity (over time) to accommodate other development in the area (i.e., at Mickleton –, Mickleton is significantly closer to Chipping Campden than Moreton-in-Marsh is, i.e., where secondary age pupils are currently travelling to).



- 6.19** It is considered prudent to plan for some housing and infrastructure in this new Local Plan, where the evidence demonstrates it would function successfully. The new road would have a positive impact on traffic using the settlement centre. The potential for further development, and further infrastructure, could be considered through a future Local Plan.
- 6.20** The final proposed strategic allocation is at Mickleton. This is currently a smaller settlement in the north of the district, albeit it is relatively unconstrained and located outside of the National Landscape. Mickleton is located within 3 miles of Chipping Campden, the railway station at Honeybourne, and established employment at Meon Vale/ Long Marston, although the last of those two are just outside the district.
- 6.21** The scale of development proposed at Mickleton does provide an opportunity to deliver sustainable development, where the sustainability of the existing settlement would be substantially improved, and a range of new infrastructure would be provided, including primary school, local centre, open space/ green infrastructure and improvements to public transport. The detailed master-planning work also proposes appropriate buffers to soften the edge of development and minimise any potential impacts on the wider landscape.

Employment

- 6.22** The Council commissioned the consultants ICENI to prepare an updated Employment Land Review, which identifies a need for 68.5 ha for employment land, encompassing the needs for office and research and development and for industrial uses. This report will be published alongside the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation and is available for Councillor review.
- 6.23** The proposed supply is shown by **Table 3** and demonstrates that the Local Plan meets this need (there is currently a less than one hectare shortfall). Very few employment sites were proposed for consideration, and the majority of the proposed new supply will be through mixed-use allocations where some of the strategic housing sites also include some employment provision. These are shown by **Table 4**.



Table 3: Cotswold Employment Requirement and Supply 2026 to 2043.

Category		Employment Land (Ha)
Employment land requirements for the full plan period (April 2026 to March 2043)		68.5
Employment Completions		0
Employment Supply	Known Commitments	13.7
	Strategic Allocations	31.8
	Saved Allocations	16.7
	Pending Applications	5.4
Total Employment Land Supply		67.6

6.24 There are five new proposed strategic employment site allocations (**Table 4**), which form part of five of the proposed housing sites, thus ensuring they provide for some mixed-use development. These relate to the South of the Steadings site and the site South of Preston, which are both close to Cirencester. The Driffield site, which is also close to Cirencester, but is well located on the A419 between Cheltenham and Swindon, that is discussed earlier in the report, will benefit from the completion of the A417 gap to the east of Cheltenham being completed in 2027.

6.25 The other two strategic sites where specific employment is proposed are the Fairford and Kemble sites. The employment on the Kemble site is well related to Cotswold Airport and so provides opportunities for complementary development in the longer term. The inclusion of some employment at Fairford helps to meet a need in that part of the district and to help make the site more sustainable in a broader content.

6.26 It is important though to remember that the other strategic housing sites will include schools, local centres, community facilities, care and health facilities and the potential for community hubs (that support remote working etc) that all provide for employment, even though they do not include dedicated land for specific office, research and development and, or industrial uses.



Table 4: Local Plan Proposed Strategic Employment Allocations

Site Name	Type of Site / Use Class*	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area		
Steadings southern extension	B2, B8 and E(g)	2.5
Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston	B2, B8 and E(g)	5.6
South Cotswold Area		
Strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford	B2, B8 and E(g)	4.2
Strategic extension to the south-west of Kemble	B2, B8 and E(g)	8.6
New settlement to the south of Driffield	B2, B8 and E(g)	10.9
North Cotswold Area		
Totals		31.8

*B2=General Industrial/ B8=Storage or Distribution/ E(g)=Commercial, Business or Service for selected office, research and development and industrial processes.

Climate Change

6.27 Climate change represents one of the most significant challenges that we face, and the Local Plan seeks to make significant contributions to combatting it. **Core Policy 1** (also mentioned earlier in this report) ensures development considers a holistic approach to addressing climate change, and there are a number of specific policies in Chapter 8 of the Local Plan that relate to more detailed requirements. These are designed to ensure that new development achieves the highest possible standards of carbon reduction and include:

- **Core Policy 26: Future-Fitting and Decarbonisation of Existing Buildings**
- **Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings**
- **Core Policy 28: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission**
- **Core Policy 29: Wind Energy Development**
- **Core Policy 30: Roof-Mounted and Ground-Mounted Solar Panels**
- **Core Policy 31: Community Renewable Energy Schemes, and**
- **Core Policy 32: Low Carbon Heat Networks**



6.28 These policies are informed by the latest evidence, which benefit from work done by a range of authorities who have successfully adopted climate change policies, including work undertaken recently by Essex County Council to assist Local Planning authorities across Essex to develop similarly effective policies. It is understood that Gloucestershire wide evidence is now being prepared that is expected to be available as additional supporting evidence in the future. The policies included in the Cotswold Local Plan are amongst the more ambitious of Local Plan climate change policies in the country, from those that have been successfully adopted.

Environmental and Design Policies

6.29 In addition to the dedicated climate change policies, there are also a wide range of policies that provide protection for the environment, including for example, policies relating to Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Managing Flood Risk, Water Management Infrastructure, Pollution and Contaminated Land, Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands, and Green and Blue Infrastructure. These, along with other policies, ensures the Local Plan is 'green to the core' and supports a wide range of other initiatives, including for Local Nature Recovery.

6.30 The plan sets out detailed design policies and requirements, for development in general, but especially for the proposed allocations. The proposed strategic allocations are supported by illustrative masterplans and detailed policy requirements, ensuring they are planned for comprehensively to deliver quality places and communities.

Transport and Infrastructure Provision

6.31 The proposed site allocations will support the delivery of significant infrastructure provision and the policy requirements for the sites set out these requirements in detail. The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, that will be published as part of the consultation and is available for councillors to review, along with transport assessments and a wealth of other detailed information.

6.32 The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to plan for and deliver a comprehensive suite of infrastructure in a coordinated way, that is much more difficult where development comes forward as piecemeal and speculative proposals (in the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan). This will include improvements to cycling, walking and wheeling routes and to public transport, along with education, health and



community facilities, as well as for utilities and for extensive open space and green infrastructure provision.

- 6.33** The infrastructure supporting the proposed Local Plan allocations will come forward in parallel with the development, will help to minimise impacts on existing facilities, but be available for existing residents as well as for new ones.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1** This Report provides an overview of the emerging new Cotswold Local Plan and sets out recommendations for its consideration by Council for six weeks consultation in August and September 2026 and submission to the Secretary of State in December 2026.

- 7.2** The Local Plan seeks to meet a number of key objectives, that are discussed under Paragraph 3.1

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The cost of preparing and submitting the Local Plan has to date been funded from the Council Priorities: Local Plan earmarked reserve and from specific grant funding from MHCLG. At the end of the last financial year (31 March 2026), a balance of £0.986m was available providing sufficient funding to support continued activity up to and including the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in December 2026.

- 8.2** However, there is a projected shortfall in funding of around £0.420m in relation to anticipated expenditure associated with the examination stage. Subject to further due diligence and challenge on the post submission cost estimates, the Council will need to allocate additional resources to support the examination and subsequent adoption of Local Plan.

- 8.3** It is likely the Local Plan will be a material budget pressure for the forthcoming financial year and members will need to determine the level of resources required and appropriate financing options. More detailed cost estimates for the examination stage (e.g. project management support, appointment of legal counsel support) will be prepared over the coming weeks as part of the 2027/28 budget setting process.



9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council has a legal duty to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as modified by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023; the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England regulations 2012 and relevant national planning policy including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Not maintaining a Local Plan will lead to a number of significant risks to the Council and district, which are discussed in the main body of this report.

9.2 As set out in this report, in preparing the Local Plan, the Council is required to:

- Follow the prescribed procedures, including public consultation.
- Ensure that the Local Plan is evidence based.
- Undertake a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements.
- Undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment where required.
- Consider the Public Sector Equality Duty.

9.3 Failure to comply with applicable statutory requirements could result in the plan being found legally non-compliant or unsound at examination, requiring further work, modifications, additional consultation, or withdrawal (see risks below).

9.4 Following adoption, the Local Plan may be subject to legal challenge in the High Court.

9.5 The main issues associated with not maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan, are covered by the Risks section (see below).

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 The headline risks associated with not progressing the Local Plan quickly is that the district would be likely to experience an increase in speculative and piecemeal development. It can be expected that the 'Presumption in favour of sustainable development' would apply 'where there are no relevant plan policies, or the policies where are most important for determining the application are out-of-date', including 'where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of



deliverable housing sites'. This is currently the case in Cotswold District and is likely to remain so until a new Local Plan can be adopted.

10.2 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, it is likely that development will continue to come forward in a piecemeal basis, with the Council having less control or consideration over infrastructure delivery. There is anecdotal evidence that key stakeholders (Education Authority/ Health Providers) consider that planning for new infrastructure on the basis of unplanned and piecemeal development is much more difficult. There may be a cumulative impact of multiple small piecemeal developments each making a modest contribution to infrastructure that is inadequate for the collective level of growth.

10.3 As discussed in the main body of this report, changes to the way Local Plans are prepared, means that any plans not submitted before the end of December 2026, will have to follow the new approach. The new Cotswold Local Plan, if submitted to Government before the end of 2026, will be examined under the current planning system, including the December 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework. The new approach to preparing Local Plans is expected to take around three to four years to complete (minimum) and so failing to submit a Local Plan before the end of 2026 would prevent the Council from adopting a new Local Plan for several years.

10.4 It is reasonable to consider that if the new Local Plan is submitted before the end of 2026, it could be adopted in early 2028 and so before Local Government Reorganisation. It is possible that the formation of a new authority would lead to some further delay to plan making and so the time the Cotswold area would be without an up-to-date Local Plan could be longer than four years.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

11.1 The Local Plan is informed by an Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA) Report, which incorporates an Equalities Impacts Assessment and Health Impacts Assessment, along with other matters, including Sustainability Appraisal. This report is available within the background papers (see below). Headline recommendations that informed the Local Plan, include:

- the provision of new schools, community facilities, local centres, and healthcare infrastructure across strategic allocations to deliver sustainable



communities and facilitate access to services and amenities which support residents' quality of life

- integrating accessible housing standards, specialist accommodation provision and inclusive design requirements into new development areas to generate positive equalities effects by helping to meet the needs of a diverse range of households and protected groups, and
- supporting opportunities to deliver open space and recreational areas through new development areas that will have positive health and equalities outcomes during the plan period. This includes through enhancing multi-functional green infrastructure networks which support active lifestyles and accessibility for all residents and strengthen community cohesion.

12. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Local Plan includes a series of policies to ensure new development achieves high environmental and climate change standards and requirements. These include policies to achieve net zero carbon development, which reflects the most ambitious successfully adopted policies included in other Local Plans and ensures Cotswold is at the forefront in its approach to tackle climate change.

12.2 The Spatial Strategy that underpins the Local Plan is designed to maximise opportunities to support sustainable development, with by far the majority of development located in locations accessible by sustainable modes of travel. This is discussed in more detail within the main body of the report

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 The Local Plan is informed by a comprehensive suite of technical evidence documents, which have been prepared in parallel to preparing the plan, through an iterative plan making process. Whilst they are extensive and comprehensive, they are also proportionate and fit-for-purpose to support a Local Plan, which is a relatively strategic document, in accordance with national policy requirements.

It is important to note that the documents supporting this report are in 'draft' format and will be finalised for the public consultation to commence on 24 August. The reports are unlikely to change other than for correcting typos or for formatting errors, but may be subject to minor corrections. The documents listed below



Pack A: Draft documents to be published on 24 July 2026

1	Cotswold District Local Plan (Draft)- Cabinet Version
2	Cotswold District Local Plan Index of Appendices – Cabinet Version itemised below
3	Appendix A: General Policy Requirements for Development Sites
4	Appendix B: Site Development Frameworks
5	Appendix C: Site Development Templates
6	Appendix 1: Climate Change Sustainability Statement Requirements Table
7	Appendix 2: Saved Policy: Strategic Site, south of Chesterton, Cirencester (Policy S2)
8	Appendix 3: Saved Policy: Vale of Evesham Heavy Goods Vehicle Control Zone (Policy INF6)
9	Appendix 5: Cirencester Central Area
10	Appendix 6: Cirencester Opportunity Areas
11	Appendix 7: Special Policy Areas
12	Appendix 9: Vacant Building Credit Calculation Methodology
13	Appendix 10: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
14	Appendix 11: Established Employment Sites
15	Appendix 12: Main Tourist Routes
16	Appendix 13: Designated Town Centres
17	Appendix 14: Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
18	Appendix 15: Local Green Spaces
19	Appendix 16: Special Landscape Areas
20	Appendix 17: Nature Improvement Areas
21	Appendix 18: Other Policies
22	Appendix 19: Former Cheltenham to Stratford-upon-Avon Railway Line
23	Appendix 20: Monitoring Framework
24	Appendix 21: Glossary
25	Local Plan Statement of Consultation (CDC, July 2026)
26	Local Development Scheme (CDC, July 2026)
27	Settlement Role and Function Study (CDC, July 2026)
28	Moreton-in-Marsh Feasibility Report (City Science, July 2026)
29	Housing Delivery Study (Iceni, July 2026)
30	Housing Density and Optimising Housing Delivery Technical Paper (CDC, July 2026)



31	Housing Needs Evidence (Iceni, June 2026)
32	Residential Land Monitoring Statistics 2024-25 (CDC, July 2026)
33	Residential Land Monitoring Statistics 2025-26 (CDC, July 2026)
34	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (RRR and CDC, July 2026)
35	Employment Land Review (Iceni, July 2026)
36	Employment Land Monitoring Statistics Report 2020-25 (CDC, July 2026)
37	Employment Land Monitoring Statistics Report 2025-26 (CDC, July 2026)
38	Retail & Town Centres Study (Nexus, July 2026)
39	Operational Energy and Carbon Evidence Base Complementary Report (Etude, July 2026)
40	Green Infrastructure Strategy (CDC, July 2026)
41	Local Green Space Evidence Paper (CDC, July 2026)
42	Recreation Mitigation Study (LUC, July 2026)
43	Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA, July 2026)

Pack B: Draft documents to be published on 31 July 2026

	Cotswold District Local Plan Appendices - Cabinet Version
44	Appendix 4 - Housing Trajectory
45	Appendix 8 - Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes
46	Effective Cooperation Topic Paper (AECOM, July 2026)
47	Sites Selection Topic Paper (AECOM, July 2026)
48	Housing Land Supply and Stepped Requirement Topic Paper (CDC, July 2026)
49	Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (CDC, July 2026)
50	Heritage Impact Assessment (Oxford Archaeology, July 2026)
51	Study of Land Surrounding Key Settlements (CDC & Planscape, July 2026)
52	Cotswold Special Landscape Area Review (CDC, July 2026) Assessment of Major Development in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CDC, July 2026)
53	Viability Report (Policy) (Quintic Advisory, July 2026)
54	Viability Report (Infrastructure) (Quintic Advisory, July 2026)
55	Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Prior + Partners, July 2026)
56	Local Plan Transport Assessment (City Science, July 2026)



57	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (JBA, July 2026)
58	Water Cycle Study (JBA, July 2026)
59	Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy & Action Plan (KKP, June 2023)
60	Planning Model Assessment of Sports Hall Provision (Sport England, May 2026)
61	Facilities Planning Model Assessment of Swimming Pool Provision (Sport England, May 2026)
62	Leisure Need Addendum (2026 Update)
63	Habitats Regulations Assessment (LUC, July 2026) including: Air Quality Assessment (LUC, July 2026)
64	Integrated Impacts Assessment (incorporating Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, and Sustainability Appraisal) (AECOM, July 2026)
65	Gypsy and Traveller Identification of Potential Sites Update (CDC, July 2026)

13.2 The documents identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 are identified within the body of the report and supporting documents.

13.3 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.cotswold.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@cotswold.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)