

Cabinet
06/August2026



COTSWOLD
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 6 August 2026

Members present:

Mike Evemy (Chair)	Juliet Layton	
Patrick Coleman	Paul Evans	Andrea Pellegram
Tony Dale	Mike McKeown	Tristan Wilkinson

Officers present:

Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Assistant Director Planning Services - Geraldine LeCointe
Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place	Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer	Andrew Maxted, Head of Planning, Policy and Infrastructure

Observers:

Councillor Gina Blomefield and Councillor Jon Wareing

265 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

266 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Andrea Pellegram declared, for reasons of transparency, an interest in Agenda Item 5 arising from her position as a retired professional planner and a director of Andrea Pellegram Limited, a planning consultancy. She advised that this interest was recorded in her Register of Interests and that the company provided planning services to a range of clients, including town and parish councils.

Councillor Pellegram acknowledged that there could be a perception of overlap between her professional role and her responsibilities as a Cabinet Member. She confirmed that she maintained a clear separation between those roles, did not use her

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position as a councillor to promote the interests of her company or its clients, and did not use or disclose confidential Council information for business purposes.

She informed the Cabinet that, in relation to the draft Local Plan, her company had provided planning support to Honeybourne Parish Council during the Regulation 18 consultation. Honeybourne Parish Council, whilst outside the Cotswold District, was a statutory consultee. She advised that the work had been undertaken by another consultant within the company and that she had had no involvement in preparing or submitting the representations or in seeking to influence their consideration by the Council.

Councillor Pellegram further confirmed that neither she nor her company held any land interest affected by the draft Local Plan or any financial interest dependent upon its outcome. Having considered the matter carefully and taken advice from the Monitoring Officer, she advised that she had also agreed with her business partner that her company would not accept any commission from within Cotswold District to prepare representations on the draft Local Plan.

Councillor Pellegram confirmed that she had spoken with the Monitoring Officer and was satisfied she did not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or any other interest requiring her to withdraw from the meeting and therefore remained in the meeting, participated in the discussion and voted on the item.

The Leader of the Council invited any further declarations of interest. No further declarations were made.

267 Public Questions

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, opened the public questions session by acknowledging the anxiety and concern caused by the publication of the proposed Local Plan on 24 July 2026. He recognised that the proposals had come as a surprise to some communities and anticipated that these concerns would be reflected in the public questions.

Those present were reminded that the Council was required to respond to Government-imposed housing targets, which had increased from fewer than 500 homes per year to 1,054 homes per year. As a consequence, the Council's existing Local Plan housing policies were considered out of date, creating a presumption in favour of development until a new Local Plan was adopted.

Councillor Evemy explained that he had written to three Government Ministers requesting that the housing target be reconsidered, with support from members across political groups and evidence submitted through the Regulation 18 consultation. However, the Government had confirmed that the target would remain unchanged. Cabinet was also reminded that Full Council had unanimously agreed twelve months earlier to prepare an updated Local Plan, noting that an adopted Local Plan was the

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principal means by which the Council could resist speculative planning applications.

Recent planning appeals where decisions to refuse speculative developments had been overturned were referred to, emphasising the importance of progressing the Local Plan before opening the floor to public questions.

1. Councillor Adam Crawford – Down Ampney Parish Council

Councillor Adam Crawford referred to a question he had previously raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding military aircraft noise associated with RAF Fairford and the potential impact of USAF (United States Air Force) operations on proposed development sites. He asked whether the Council's discussions with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) had specifically considered the noise impact of B-1B Lancer aircraft operating from RAF Fairford, given the proximity of the proposed development to the take-off flight path.

He further asked, in light of the fact that independent assessments of aircraft noise, health impacts and aviation safety had not yet been completed or published, what evidence the Cabinet had relied upon in concluding that the proposed Down Ampney allocation represented sustainable development.

The Leader of the Council deferred to the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure who confirmed that the Ministry of Defence had been consulted and would be expected to advise the Council on any operational concerns relating to proposed development. While the MOD had raised issues regarding some sites, it had not identified concerns relating to this proposal. Officers confirmed that engagement with the MOD and other statutory consultees would continue throughout the plan-making process.

The Leader acknowledged the concerns raised and confirmed that representations submitted during the Regulation 19 consultation would be fully considered. Should further evidence from the MOD identify a fundamental issue, this would be addressed through the Local Plan process.

2. Councillor Richard Harrison – Fairford Town Council

Councillor Harrison stated that Fairford Town Council had identified significant issues within the published assessments and proposals, particularly regarding bottlenecks on the A417. He asked whether the Cabinet acknowledged these concerns and whether amendments could be made before submission of the Local Plan, including consideration of a short delay to allow detailed evidence to be provided.

The Leader advised that the timetable for preparing the Local Plan was constrained by Government deadlines and that amendments could not be made before publication. He encouraged Fairford Town Council to submit detailed representations during the Regulation 19 consultation, which officers would consider.

The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure advised that the evidence supporting the Local Plan was considered proportionate and appropriate for the stage reached. Engagement with statutory consultees, including the Highway Authority, would continue throughout the process, and modifications could be proposed where

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necessary. The Planning Inspector would ultimately determine whether any changes to the Plan were required.

3. John Forshaw – Driffield Parish Council

Speaking on behalf of Councillor Norris, Mr Forshaw referred to correspondence requesting withdrawal of the proposed new settlement south of Driffield from the Regulation 19 Local Plan. He argued that the proposal represented a substantial urban extension rather than a genuine new settlement, had not been consulted upon during Regulation 18, and that residents and the Driffield and Harnhill Parish Council had therefore been denied an opportunity to comment at an earlier stage. He asked whether the Cabinet would withdraw the allocation pending further consultation and reassessment.

The Leader confirmed that Councillor Norris would receive a written response to his correspondence, noting that it raised legal matters requiring advice before a detailed reply could be issued.

He advised that Cabinet did not intend to withdraw the Driffield allocation. He explained that, while the site had entered the process following Regulation 18, time constraints prevented undertaking a further Regulation 18 consultation before the Government's submission deadline. He confirmed that the proposal would instead be tested through the Regulation 19 consultation, during which residents would be able to submit representations. Public engagement sessions would also be arranged for Driffield residents.

Mr Forshaw posed a supplementary question, expressing concern that residents were effectively required to prove why the allocation should be removed once it had entered the Regulation 19 Plan.

The Leader explained that the Regulation 19 consultation formed part of the statutory planning process. Representations received would be considered by the Planning Inspector during examination of the Local Plan. He acknowledged local opposition but confirmed that the Council was required to follow the prescribed planning process.

4. Richard Gunner

Mr Gunner asked why climate change and environmental protection were not more prominent throughout the Local Plan, despite the Council having declared a climate emergency. He also asked whether the Council recognised that the proposed Very Light Rail project sought only protection of a future transport corridor rather than Council funding.

The Leader advised that climate considerations were embedded throughout the draft Local Plan, including policies promoting zero-carbon housing, sustainable development, public transport and active travel. He encouraged respondents to suggest further improvements during consultation if they considered additional measures necessary.

Regarding Very Light Rail, Councillor Every confirmed that an amendment would be proposed to Policy CP14 to safeguard a corridor for a potential Very Light Rail connection (or successor technology) between Kemble and Cirencester.

5. Katharine Kilworth

Ms Kilworth asked whether the transport evidence supporting the proposed Driffield allocation assessed only development planned to 2043, representing approximately half of the ultimate proposed allocation, and whether the Cabinet considered this sufficient to satisfy the tests of soundness.

She further asked what assessment had been made of the risk that unresolved transport evidence could result in the Local Plan being found unsound, similar to the experience of Stroud District Council.

The Leader invited the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure to respond. He explained that development beyond 2043 would be considered through future Local Plans and that further opportunities would exist to assess longer-term growth. It was also advised that, should preparation of a new Local Plan become necessary, the process would take a minimum of approximately four years, with a Gloucestershire-wide plan expected around 2033.

6. Tony Berry – Cotswold Community Railway

Mr Berry advised that, following earlier confirmation that the proposed amendment safeguarding the Very Light Rail corridor would be included within the Local Plan, he no longer wished to ask a substantive question. He thanked the Cabinet for its support and expressed sympathy regarding the housing targets imposed by Government.

The Leader thanked Mr Berry for his comments.

7. Henry Kilworth

Mr Kilworth asked whether the Council held written confirmation from National Highways confirming satisfaction with the cumulative highway assessment relating to the A417 and A419, including the full Driffield housing allocation, and whether this information could be made available before Council considered the Local Plan.

He also asked how the proposed new settlement south of Driffield identified in the draft Local Plan as a principal settlement could be justified within the settlement hierarchy given that at the recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee officers had indicated that it might be more appropriately classified as a non-principal settlement and that its designation could be reviewed in a future plan.

The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure advised that the proposed settlement would become a principal settlement as services and facilities were delivered over time. He clarified that the proposed allocation was separate from the existing settlement of Driffield, which remained classified as open countryside. He further confirmed that National Highways had been engaged throughout preparation of the transport evidence and that discussions would continue as the Local Plan progressed.

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8. Neil White – Driffield Parish Council

Mr White spoke about the likely impact of the proposed development upon the existing community of Driffield, stating that it would fundamentally change the character of the village and expressed concern for residents who had lived there for many years.

Councillor Every acknowledged the strength of feeling expressed by Mr White and recognised the anxiety experienced by communities affected by the proposals. He confirmed that members understood these concerns and would take all relevant matters into account when considering the Local Plan. He noted that councillors had a responsibility to weigh all evidence carefully before reaching a decision.

The Leader thanked the members of the public who had spoken for their questions and comments.

268 Member Questions

1. Councillor Jon Wareing

Councillor Wareing began by commending officers and members for producing what was described as an infrastructure-led draft Local Plan, recognising the importance of planning, delivering and maintaining infrastructure alongside development.

He noted that many communities across the Cotswolds were already experiencing infrastructure deficits arising from previous development and argued that housing growth, economic development and tourism all created demands on infrastructure that should be planned for according to their impacts, rather than solely their sources.

He observed that, while the draft Local Plan recognised the effects of tourism in the Cotswold Lakes and included policies for managing visitor impacts in that area, it did not contain an equivalent strategic policy framework for settlements experiencing sustained visitor pressures, such as Bourton-on-the-Water and Bibury. He referred to the National Planning Policy Framework and examples from the Lake District National Park Authority, suggesting that the concept of "settlement carrying capacity" should form part of the Council's spatial planning strategy.

He therefore asked whether the Cabinet would amend the draft Local Plan by introducing settlement carrying capacity as a strategic planning consideration through a new core policy. He proposed that such a policy should establish a framework for identifying settlements experiencing exceptional and sustained visitor pressure and ensure that the environmental, physical, social and community impacts of visitor demand, together with infrastructure capacity and settlement resilience, were recognised within the District's spatial strategy, thereby providing an enduring planning framework for the future unitary authority.

The Leader thanked Councillor Wareing for his question and invited officers to respond to the technical aspects before asking the Cabinet Member for Tourism to comment.

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The Director of Communities and Place advised that the draft Local Plan already contained policies addressing tourism-related development, specifically Policies 46 and 47. The Local Plan was not the principal mechanism through which visitor activity or tourism levels could be controlled. Officers considered that the proposed policies represented the fullest extent to which such matters could appropriately be addressed within planning policy.

The Director further confirmed that the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan also contained relevant policies, including Policies CB15 and CE14, which addressed aspects of visitor management within the National Landscape. Councillor Every requested that these policies be shared with Councillor Wareing for reference.

2. Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Leisure , Culture and Visitor Experience acknowledged the significant challenges experienced by communities affected by high visitor numbers, including Bourton-on-the-Water, Bibury, South Cerney, Siddington, Fairford, Lechlade, Meysey Hampton and other settlements across the district. He advised that the planning system was not designed to regulate visitor numbers directly and that the principal challenge lay in managing the impacts of tourism rather than controlling demand.

Councillor Dale stated that officers had extended planning controls as far as was considered appropriate within the Local Plan while remaining consistent with planning legislation and the requirements of the Planning Inspectorate. He also appealed for visitors to respect local communities by parking responsibly, complying with regulations and protecting the environment, noting that further powers to manage visitor numbers would require action by central Government.

3. Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation supported the points raised, stating that although the Local Plan might not be the appropriate planning mechanism, the issue of tourism impacts should not be overlooked. He referred to the increasing pressures experienced in Bibury since the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that Fairford had also experienced increased visitor activity associated with RAF Fairford. He observed that the global profile of the Cotswolds meant visitor numbers were likely to continue increasing and that destinations could rapidly become popular through social media. He concluded that the impact of tourism on local communities should be addressed through an appropriate policy or other mechanism.

Councillor Every agreed that the issue represented a significant challenge, referring to the phenomenon of "TikTok tourism" experienced in Bourton-on-the-Water and Bibury, where locations attracted very large numbers of short-stay visitors through social media exposure. He noted that the Council had supported local research into tourism impacts through funding generated by the Bourton-on-the-Water tourism parking levy and confirmed that the Council would continue working with Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to identify possible solutions.

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Councillor Wareing asked a supplementary question clarifying that his concern extended beyond tourism to the wider issue of settlement carrying capacity and the cumulative impact of increased activity on infrastructure. He referred to existing traffic pressures in settlements such as Moreton-in-Marsh and noted that planned housing growth would place further demands on the strategic north–south transport corridor. He asked that, if settlement carrying capacity was not considered an appropriate matter for inclusion within the Local Plan, how and through what mechanism such issues should be addressed.

The Leader, acknowledged that the impacts on the A429 corridor, including Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold, would form an important part of the forthcoming consultation. He agreed that the challenges faced by Moreton were particularly acute but recognised that similar issues affected a number of settlements across the district. He confirmed that officers had noted the points raised and would consider whether any additional guidance, including supplementary planning guidance or other planning mechanisms, could assist. Whilst the draft Local Plan could not be amended before consideration by Council the following week, he encouraged Councillor Wareing, local residents and the Parish Council to submit detailed representations during the Regulation 19 consultation so that these issues could be considered through the examination process.

269 Local Plan

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of a series of recommendations relating principally to the Publication of the Cotswold Local Plan at Regulation 19 for a six-week consultation from 24 August to 5 October 2026 and its submission to the Secretary of State in December 2026 for independent examination.

Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, introduced the report. It was noted that the Regulation 19 consultation represented the final consultation stage before independent examination and that the Plan needed to be complete, justified and ready for examination by a Planning Inspector.

The Local Plan would replace the 2018 Plan and provide an evidence-based planning framework for the delivery of new homes, employment land, infrastructure and environmental improvements over the coming years. It was noted that the Plan had been informed by extensive engagement and previous consultations with residents, businesses, statutory bodies and community organisations.

The timing of the submission was critical, as failure to submit the Plan by December 2026 would require it to restart under the new planning system and could delay adoption by several years. It was further noted that, without an up-to-date Local Plan and with the Council unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the district would remain subject to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, increasing the risk of speculative and fragmented development.

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Members noted the significant increase in assessed housing need following changes to the National Standard Method in 2024. It was noted that the Plan sought to identify how this need could be accommodated within the district's environmental and infrastructure constraints, while recognising that some unmet need might need to be identified.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was invited to speak and addressed Cabinet to explain the committees recommendations.

Cabinet considered the recommendations and comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included the importance of providing infrastructure identified for strategic sites in a timely manner, where possible before development commenced; further consideration of transport infrastructure; ensuring that the consultation was accessible to all; clear communication about the need for the Plan and the risks associated with not having an up-to-date plan; concerns regarding water supply and sewage capacity; and the impact of tourism on infrastructure.

[Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)

The Leader invited Member questions, there were none, and then opened the debate.

Members noted that infrastructure, including schools, roads, GP surgeries, water and sewage capacity, was a key concern in relation to planned growth. Members were advised that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan set out the infrastructure required to support sustainable growth and that further work on transport infrastructure could continue alongside the Regulation 19 consultation.

Arrangements were being made to support public engagement during the consultation, including public exhibitions and meetings, the availability of hard copies of documents at Council offices, libraries and Town and Parish Council premises, and a newsletter to be distributed to households across the district.

The concerns raised regarding the national housing targets were noted, including the view that national targets did not necessarily reflect the specific housing needs of local communities, particularly in relation to affordability and the types of homes required. It was noted that the Plan sought to provide for affordable housing and support the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure-led communities.

Members then considered a number of proposed material changes to the Plan, including amendments to housing site allocations, changes to the Cirencester Central Area Strategy, the inclusion of a corridor for potential very light rail or successor technology between Kemble and Cirencester, and amendments relating to habitat sites. The changes were published during the meeting as [Supplement E - Proposed Material Changes to the draft Local Plan - 6 August](#).

It was noted that the examination of the draft Local Plan was anticipated in 2027, with adoption of the Plan expected in March 2028. Members also acknowledged the significant work undertaken by the Planning Policy team in preparing the Plan and its supporting documents.

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The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and seconded by Councillor Paul Evans, Cabinet Member for Health and Communities.

Voting record:

8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

To APPROVE the recommendations of the draft Local Plan report (Resolution)

Cabinet RESOLVED to recommend to Council to:

1. Agree that the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document, including the [material changes](#) agreed by Cabinet (supplement E), be published for six weeks consultation from 24 August 2026 to 5 October 2026.
2. Agree that thereafter, the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 (Regulation 19) document be submitted to government for independent examination.
3. Provide 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.
4. Note the technical supporting evidence in preparation for publication alongside the Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043 for consultation.

For	Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, Juliet Layton, Mike McKeown, Andrea Pellegram and Tristan Wilkinson	8
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.40 pm