



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 10 SEPTEMBER 2026 COUNCIL – 23 SEPTEMBER 2026
Subject	ESTABLISHING A JOINT/STATUTORY COMMITTEE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer Email: jane.portman@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report seeks approval for Cotswold District Council to establish and participate in a Joint Committee with the other Gloucestershire councils to oversee and co-ordinate the transition to the new single unitary Gloucestershire Council, due to become operational on 1 April 2028. The committee will provide a formal governance framework for local government reorganisation, enabling councils to work collaboratively on implementation planning, governance arrangements and key transition decisions while ensuring Cotswold District Council is actively represented and able to influence the process.
Annexes	Annex A – MHCLG's Letter dated 16 July 2026 Annex B – Joint Committee Draft Terms of Reference
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Approve the establishment of a Joint Committee for the area identified to form Gloucestershire Council in MHCLG's letter dated 16 July 2026 (attached at Annex A). 2. Approve delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with Leader of the Council, to agree the terms of reference for the Joint Committee, in accordance with the



draft terms of reference as set out in Annex B, to include that:

(i) the Joint Committee takes the form and is authorised to undertake such functions as are expected to be required of a joint committee established under a Gloucestershire (Structural Changes) Order (SCO), as made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, together with such other functions as may be agreed with the other existing Gloucestershire Councils by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and

(ii) the Joint Committee is in place until such time as the SCO comes into force, from which point onwards the Joint Committee shall continue and undertake responsibility for those functions as may be specified in the SCO, until the day following that on which the Gloucestershire Council holds its first meeting in shadow authority form.

3. Approve the nomination of one representative and one substitute as the Council's representatives to the Gloucestershire Council Joint Committee
4. Approve delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to agree any other matters to support the establishment, operation and decision making in support of the Gloucestershire Council Joint Committee

That Cabinet recommends to Council the:

5. the establishment of a Joint Committee with the other seven Gloucestershire Councils noting Cabinet's approval to delegate functions in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012"; and
6. Appointment of Councillor Mike Every as the Council's representative and Councillor Tristan Wilkinson as substitute



COTSWOLD

District Council

	representative to the Gloucestershire Council Joint Committee
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	Leaders of the seven principal local authorities in Gloucestershire Corporate Leadership Team Alice McAlpine –LGR Programme Lead for Governance & Legal



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Following the Government's decision on 16 July 2026 to establish a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire, the seven existing councils are required to work together to oversee the implementation of local government reorganisation and the creation of the new Gloucestershire Council. The new authority is expected to become operational on 1 April 2028.
- 1.2** Government implementation guidance expects councils to establish a Joint Committee ahead of the Structural Changes Order coming into force. Creating the committee at this stage will provide a formal governance framework to coordinate transition activity, develop implementation plans, oversee key decisions and ensure effective collaboration across all Gloucestershire councils during the first phase of reorganisation.
- 1.3** The report seeks approval to establish the Joint Committee, delegate authority for finalising the Terms of Reference, and appoint a Council representative and substitute member. Participation will ensure that Cotswold District Council is fully engaged in shaping the future governance, organisational arrangements and implementation programme for the new Gloucestershire Council, helping to support a coordinated and effective transition while protecting the Council's interests throughout the reorganisation process.

2. BACKGROUND & MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** On 16 July 2026, the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP, wrote to the Leaders of Gloucestershire's councils confirming the Government's decision to proceed with the creation of one new unitary authority for Gloucestershire. A copy of the letter is attached at Annex A.
- 2.2** The new authority will be known as Gloucestershire Council and will replace Gloucestershire County Council and the six district, borough and city councils: Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, Stroud District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. The new council is expected to become fully operational on 1 April 2028.
- 2.3** Now that the Government has made its decision, the proposals for reorganisation will be implemented by way of a Structural Changes Order (SCO). The SCO will provide the legal basis for local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire,



including the abolition of the existing councils, the establishment of Gloucestershire Council, transitional arrangements, elections to the shadow authority and the responsibilities of the current and successor councils in implementing local government reorganisation.

- 2.4** It is currently anticipated that the SCO will be laid in Parliament in 'Winter' 2026 and will be made in March 2027. Once made it is expected that the SCO will make provision for the establishment of a formal Joint Committee, with elected-member representation from all seven existing Gloucestershire councils, to oversee preparations for the new authority until the shadow authority is elected.
- 2.5** However, the MHCLG published Local Government Reorganisation: Implementation Guidance for the first transition period is clear that that councils are expected to set up a Joint Committee on a voluntary basis before the SCO comes into effect. This is to allow the Joint Committee more time to develop the implementation plan and proposals for the new authority to be considered.
- 2.6** As well as the implementation plan and proposals, the Joint Committee will be expected to oversee other key implementation activity, including the transfer of functions, property, rights and liabilities from the existing councils to Gloucestershire Council; the development of proposals for governance arrangements, including a code of conduct and constitution for the shadow authority; the arrangements for interim statutory officer appointments, including the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer; the approach to member allowances; and preparations to ensure a smooth transition for civic, ceremonial and other operational matters.
- 2.7** In a further letter from MHCLG on 20 July 2026 the Government has confirmed that the Joint Committee will comprise 12 councillors: six members from Gloucestershire County Council and one member from each of Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, Stroud District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. The nominations for members from Gloucestershire County Council will be required to be politically proportionate in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 as there will be more than three appointments to the Joint Committee.
- 2.8** The implementation programme will also be supported by a dedicated officer team drawn from the existing councils led by the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire County



Council as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and a deputy SRO from one of the borough, city or district councils.

- 2.9** Elections to the shadow authority are expected to take place in May 2027. The shadow authority will then be responsible for taking the key decisions required to establish Gloucestershire Council ahead of the new council becoming operational on 1 April 2028 and will replace the Joint Committee.
- 2.10** Until vesting day, all seven existing councils will continue to deliver their services and discharge their statutory responsibilities.
- 2.11** As the council operates a Leader and Cabinet/Executive model it is necessary in accordance with both Local Government Act 1972 (Section 101(5)) and the Local Government Act 2000 (Section 9E) that this decision is taken by both Cabinet and Council as both executive and non-executive functions will be delegated to the Joint Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from recommendations in the report.
- 3.2** There will be some expenditure incurred by the servicing and expenses of the Joint Committee. Any agreed costs will be met from the existing resources by individual councils.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The establishment of the Joint Committee will provide a lawful governance mechanism through which the seven Gloucestershire councils can collaborate on local government reorganisation ahead of the creation of the new Gloucestershire Council. The Committee will be established under the powers available to local authorities to discharge functions jointly, pending the coming into force of the Structural Changes Order (SCO), which will provide the statutory framework for the transition arrangements and establishment of the new unitary authority.
- 4.2** This cooperation will not fetter Cotswold District Council's ability to make its own autonomous decisions within the LGR context, until the coming into force of the Structural Change Order.
- 4.3** As Cotswold District Council operates executive arrangements, the delegation of both executive and non-executive functions to the Joint Committee requires



approval by both Cabinet and Council in accordance with Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000. The proposed Terms of Reference and any subsequent delegations must clearly define the Joint Committee's powers and responsibilities to ensure decisions are made within the scope of the Council's legal authority. Ongoing legal advice will be provided throughout the transition programme to support compliance with statutory requirements and the implementation of the future Structural Changes Order.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** The establishment of a Joint Committee will support effective governance and decision-making during the transition to Gloucestershire Council. The principal risks associated with proceeding relate to the additional demands on member and officer capacity and the need to ensure clear governance arrangements across all participating councils. These risks will be managed through agreed terms of reference, appropriate delegations and ongoing legal and governance support.
- 5.2** The risks of not establishing the Joint Committee are considered greater. Failure to participate could reduce the Council's ability to influence key decisions regarding implementation planning, governance arrangements and transitional matters associated with local government reorganisation. It could also delay preparatory work and increase the risk of an inefficient transition to the new authority.
- 5.3** Overall, the proposed approach is considered to mitigate strategic, governance and operational risks by establishing a coordinated and accountable framework for joint decision-making during the first transition period, ensuring that the predecessor councils can collectively oversee and prepare for the implementation of local government reorganisation.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1** The recommendations in this report relate solely to the establishment of governance arrangements to support local government reorganisation. They do not directly affect service delivery or have any identified adverse impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2** Any future proposals arising from the reorganisation programme that may affect residents, service users or staff will be subject to appropriate equality impact assessment and consultation.



COTSWOLD
District Council

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The recommendations in this report relate to the establishment of governance arrangements to support local government reorganisation and do not, in themselves, have any direct climate or ecological impacts. No changes to service delivery, land use, buildings, transport arrangements or operational activities are proposed as part of this decision.
- 7.2** The Joint Committee will oversee preparations for the establishment of the new unitary authority, and future decisions taken through the local government reorganisation programme will be subject to separate consideration of any climate and ecological implications where relevant.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1** None.

(END)