



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 10 JULY 2025
Subject	COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2024-25 QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY-MARCH 2025)
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Note overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2024-25 Q4 (January-March 2025).
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering Good Services• Responding to the Climate Emergency• Delivering Housing• Supporting Communities• Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cotswold District Council retained senior managers, Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** A high-level commissioning statement was approved by Cabinet in January 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica must ensure that it provides the necessary information to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. In essence, Publica as contracting agent for the Council must ensure that the Council has sufficient information to challenge the performance of services provided by Publica and others. Publica also provides performance data on services transferred back to the Council. A similar approach is taken in relation to financial performance data, which will be presented to the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer; and where it will be for the Chief Finance Officer to advise in terms of assurance.
- 1.2** The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 2.1** The Council adopted Our Cotswolds, Our Plan 2024-28 ('the Plan') in January 2024. The Plan sets out the Council's Aim, and key priorities, and sets out the key measures of success.
- 2.2** Progress on key actions identified in the Corporate Plan for Q4 (January-March 2025) include:

Delivering good services

- The comprehensive Phase 2 transition plan was presented to Cabinet and Full Council in March, where it received full approval. Formal consultation with employees affected by Phase 2 commenced in April, with their transfer to Council employment scheduled to take effect from July.

Responding to the climate emergency

- The first draft of the Electric Vehicle Taxi Policy has been completed and is currently under officer review. Following this, it is expected to be brought forward for committee consideration in the first half of 2025–26.
- A proposal to establish a Climate Board has been drafted.
- The Council continues to actively support community energy initiatives across the district, including its ongoing partnership with Thames Head Community Energy—a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society based in the Cotswolds. The organisation focuses on developing local renewable energy projects that deliver environmental and community benefits. The Council's support has included policy



backing, financial contributions via Crowdfund Cotswold, and engagement in regional efforts such as the Community Energy workstream under Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.

- Cotswold Home Solar is being actively promoted and delivered, with 27 households having already installed solar panels. Additionally, 18 more households have placed deposits for installation.
- The Council has partnered with Gloucestershire authorities to launch a retrofit support service, live since January 22nd. The service provides energy efficiency plans, vetted installers, and project management. To date, 7 households have requested plans. CDC has also employed a Retrofit Engagement Officer, who will offer community events and free home visits until September 2025 to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy installations. Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) will provide free energy advice for low-income households through the Warm and Well Scheme for the next five years.

Delivering Housing

- Planning consent for the zero-carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney was granted on 12th March, but Bromford needs to address issues with the surface water drainage design and coordinate with Thames Water on infrastructure upgrades. These factors may delay the start of work until 2027, unless Thames Water accelerates their upgrade plans. Negotiations are also ongoing with Bromford regarding the CDC land transfer and S106 agreement.
- Work is ongoing to support all refugees, whether through a resettlement scheme or dispersed asylum. In addition to ensuring that families and individuals are properly housed, continuous wraparound support is being provided to aid with resettlement and foster community cohesion.
- The Cotswold Housing First project is widely recognised across the county as an exemplary model for projects of this type. Its success rates exceed national averages, and the Housing Team continues to collaborate closely with Bromford and P3 to ensure its ongoing success. Currently, 6 individuals are accommodated through Housing First, with external funding awarded to P3 to extend the service to an additional 2 clients, bringing the total number of spaces to 8. Referrals are currently being considered.



Supporting communities

- The first two of fourteen 'Strengthening Communities' events took place over February half term, bringing together statutory and community organisations to promote services in the district's larger settlements. These events focus on empowering residents to engage in positive local activity, with strong support from health partners. The team also worked with partners to secure the local Digihubs contract for the Churn and Cotswold Friends, ensuring continued digital inclusion support across the district.
- The Spring Round of Crowdfund Cotswold closed on 9th April, with 5 to 6 project proposals currently being verified before launch on the platform. The February project creator workshop was well attended and generated several ideas expected to come forward later this year or early next.
- Round three of the Unsung Heroes Awards received strong submissions, with winners recognised at the Council meeting in January. Due to the County Council elections and the Council's Annual General Meeting in May, the next round will take place in July. A new 'Young Hero' category is being considered to celebrate the contributions of young people to their communities.

Supporting the economy

- Officers continue to work with businesses from key sectors, including agritech, cyber/digital, and sustainable aviation, to promote employment opportunities. Discussions with key stakeholders about promoting apprenticeship opportunities are ongoing, and a campaign is planned once the new government's intended changes to apprenticeships have been announced.
- The final version of the refreshed Green Economic Growth Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2025.
- 14 projects have been allocated funding by the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant scheme for village halls. A number have been completed and others are at various stages of delivery.
- The outline planning application for the Royal Agricultural University's Innovation Village is currently progressing through the process. Officers and representatives from the RAU and its advisers have met to resolve outstanding issues, including comments from consultees.
- Officers meet monthly with representatives from the RAU and Growth Hub to monitor progress, with performance currently on track to meet targets. Cirencester Growth Hub remains one of the most successful in the network by



several measures. Outreach Navigators continue to operate across the district, holding well-attended events and discovery meetings at the Moreton Area Centre. Cabinet has approved a further year of funding for 2025–26

- 2.3** Off-target actions of the Corporate Plan behind schedule at the end of Q4 (January-March 2025) are detailed below. Whilst this report is a retrospective account of progress in Q4, where possible, the current status is also included for assurance.

Delivering good services

Instigate the second phase of activity to replace worn and damaged street nameplates

Q4 update: A backlog in sign replacements remains, but an update on progress and a forward plan is currently being agreed with Ubico.

Responding to the climate emergency

Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy

Q4 update: Delivery of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme-funded Electric Vehicle charge points across four sites is progressing well. An extension to the original 31st March deadline has been granted due to delays by the Distribution Network Operator, Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE). Two sites—Market Way (Moreton-in-Marsh) and Mangersbury Road (Stow-on-the-Wold)—are expected to be connected mid-April, while connection dates are still awaited for Brewery (Cirencester) and West Street (Tetbury).

Develop a new Cotswold Design Guide – building for the future in the Cotswolds

Q4 update: The Cotswold Design Code is now half-way through being updated. Draft Design Codes have been shared with the council for comment. The national planning policy consultation meant work had to be temporarily paused. Consideration is now being given to the new national planning policies and the implications these have on the Design Code.

Work with Cirencester Town Council on the coordination of the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan policies

Q4 update: A consultation was held on the draft masterplan between 1 Feb 2024 and 7 Apr 2024. Following the consultation, it was decided that a master plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is required. Work is currently ongoing to draft the SPD ahead of a final consultation, ahead of adopting the SPD by September 2025. Mace, a highly experienced consultancy with a proven track record of delivering masterplans, have been appointed to assist with the delivery



of the SPD. CDC continues to work closely with Cirencester TC to align the SPD with their emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Consult and adopt the Council's new Housing strategy

Q4 update: The finalisation of the Housing Strategy has been passed to the Strategic Housing Manager. It is being updated in light of the emerging options review, the Govt National Planning Policy Framework consultation outcome and will be coordinated with other related strategies/policies (e.g. Homelessness/Empty Properties etc)

Supporting communities

Continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council on the creation of a safe crossing of the Spine Road

Q4 update: Design work is underway, but implementation is dependent on resolving issues with the bridge. UK Shared Prosperity Funds earmarked for the project were reallocated to other initiatives to meet the year-end spend target and ensure local benefits.

Commence development of the cultural strategy

Q4 update: The strategy will be restructured into a Plan, focusing on short-term actions and joint working between partners to achieve positive outcomes amid the longer-term uncertainty of LGR. A stakeholder meeting is scheduled for late May to move the work forward and review the draft plan, which will be presented to members in the summer.

- 2.4** An overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex A and the Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex B.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive. Highlights include strong results in Gym Memberships, visits to the Leisure Centres and customer satisfaction. Planning determination times, with all application types remain strong and Inspections of high-risk food premises exceed target. However, processing times for Council Tax Support new claims and the delivery of affordable homes are showing a negative trend.

3.1 Service performance above target:

- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (4 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.31% against a target of 0.35%)



- Customer Satisfaction (98% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (83% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (88% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (21% against a target of 30%)
- Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Number of gym memberships (4,441 against a target of 4,000)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (159,862 visits against a target of 145,000)

3.2 Service Performance near target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (98.18% against a target of 99%)
- Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected (97.45% against a target of 99%)

3.3 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (23 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (5 days against a target of 4 days).

Previous Quarter: In Q3, processing times for both Council Tax Support New Claims and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances did not meet the targets, with processing taking 21 and 7 days, respectively.

Q4: Although the Council is currently above the 20-day target for processing new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims, with an average of 22.82 days in Q4 2024/25, performance remains stable and shows steady improvement compared to the peak of over 30 days in Q1 2023/24 and the high of 47 days during 2021/22. The slight increase in Q4 processing times can largely be attributed to two factors: the temporary shutdown of the Council offices over Christmas, which created a backlog, and a spike in customer phone enquiries, which tend to peak during Q4 and required the redeployment of staff resources.

Despite these pressures, the service has effectively managed workloads, and turnaround times remain significantly improved compared to pandemic-era levels. Continued stabilisation of processing times is expected as operational pressures ease and service adjustments take effect.



It is also important to note that the volume of Housing Benefit (HB) change of circumstances has significantly declined, as applications are progressively transitioning to Universal Credit under the managed migration process. As a result, delays in processing HB applications now have a more pronounced impact on average processing times.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (86% against a target of 90%)

Previous Quarter: During Q3, the Council continued to exceed its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days with 95.77% completed within target timeframes.

Q4: During Q4, the Council fell slightly below its target for completing land charge searches within 10 days, achieving just under 86%, down from 96% in Q3. This dip in performance is primarily attributed to increased workloads and operational challenges. However, the Council has taken proactive steps to improve the situation. Efforts to strengthen communication and collaboration with the answering teams have proven successful, enhancing workload management and enabling team members to handle tasks more efficiently. These improvements are expected to contribute to higher productivity moving forward.

Additionally, the Council has begun working on the HMLR (His Majesty's Land Registry) project, which aims to establish a national local land charges service. While still in its early stages, this initiative is expected to help accelerate the land charge search process and improve overall service delivery in the future.

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) (56 delivered against a target of 100).

Previous Quarter: During Q3, no affordable homes were delivered within the District, bringing the total to fifty for April–December 2024.

Q4: During 2024–25, a total of 56 affordable homes were delivered across the district with 6 delivered in Q4, falling short of the 74 initially forecasted by Registered Providers (RPs). The shortfall is primarily due to delays caused by project re-phasing, which have pushed some planned completions into the 2025–26 financial year. A notable example of this is the Down Ampney site, where 22 affordable homes were originally expected to be completed in 2024–25. However, 18 of these have been re-phased for delivery between April and December 2025.

The delivery of affordable housing is subject to fluctuations, as most developments take over a year to complete and often progress in multiple phases over several



years. Early over-delivery at the beginning of the current strategy has also contributed to the dip in recent annual outputs, as the early years set a higher baseline.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, the district has delivered a total of 886 affordable homes, averaging 126 homes per year. Despite the recent dip in completions, this continues to reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to delivering affordable housing and meeting long-term housing needs in the area.

Missed bins per 100,000 Collections (101 against a target of 80).

Previous Quarter: During Q3, the Council exceeded its targets despite a notable reduction in missed bin collections, recording 94 misses against a target of 80.

Q4: The rate of missed bin collections rose to 101 per 100,000 collections—exceeding the target of 80. This increase was primarily driven by operational challenges, including staffing shortages and the prolonged absence of a narrow access vehicle, which was off the road for two months. These issues particularly affected properties on routes that require specialist vehicles. Recruitment efforts are actively underway, with recent interviews held to address the staffing gap and improve service resilience. Additionally, flooding in January caused temporary disruption to collection schedules, further contributing to the spike in missed bins during the period.

- 3.4** A full performance report is attached at Annex C.
- 3.5** As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where benchmarking data is not currently available or outdated, this is noted, and further investigations will be undertaken to look at options.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2025. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to Cabinet.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no direct financial implications from this report.



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6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** None specifically because of this report. However, a failure to meet statutory deadlines or standards in some services may expose the Council to legal challenge and/or financial liability.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** Contained in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** Contained in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** None

(END)