



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 1 JULY 2026
Subject	COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2025-26 QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY – MARCH 2026)
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jane Portman, Chief Executive Email: jane.portman@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Yemi Olu-Opaleye, Senior Performance Analyst Email: yemi.oluopaleye@publicagroup.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 2025-26 Q4 (January – March 2026).
Corporate priorities	• Preparing for the Future • Delivering Good Services • Responding to the Climate Emergency • Delivering Housing • Supporting Communities • Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO



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Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	CDC Corporate Leadership Team, Publica Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** High-performing front-line public services are critical to the Council's role in supporting residents, businesses and communities. By ensuring our performance framework highlights variations from expected performance at the earliest opportunity, we can trigger targeted interventions that support improvement and recovery. This, in turn, strengthens our ability to provide modern, effective services for residents, businesses and communities.

Our performance framework covers the full range of public services delivered to communities through a variety of delivery models including the Council itself and the Council's Teckal companies (Publica and Ubico). The report aims to provide the necessary information for the Council to assess whether services are being delivered in line with agreed quality standards and expectations.

- 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 its Corporate Plan 2025–2028 ("the Plan") in September 2025. The Plan outlines the Council's purpose, vision, values, key priorities, and measures of success.

- 2.2** Progress on key actions identified in the Corporate Plan for Q4 (January - March) include:

- The Digital Transformation programme has progressed well with delivery on track across multiple workstreams. Work includes delivering completed projects including Windows 11, Microsoft Copilot Chat rollout, Salesforce Automatic Case Detection now live.
- Local Government Reorganisation activity has advanced, with the government undertaking their statutory consultation and good progress being made in preparing for implementation ahead of the decision expected in Summer 2026. In parallel, Gloucestershire Leaders have set out a preferred approach to establishing a Foundation Strategic Authority.
- Workforce and organisational development delivered strong outcomes, with an employee survey undertaken, 97 percent of staff completed mandatory training Internal communications performing strongly with 85 percent of staff feeling informed and connected and highly engaged.



- Service delivery improvements are progressing across several areas, including digital waste systems. The in-cab system is now live and integrated with customer platforms, supporting residents to report overflowing litter bins digitally.
- Parking strategy is advancing, tender has been awarded for capital investment in new Pay and Display machines for public car parks, with installation now being planned for later in 2026.
- The second Climate Board meeting took place in March with sustained focus on the Assets and Waste & Environment service areas which together account for most of the Council's carbon emissions: 43% from the waste fleet and 36% from council-owned buildings. Final report, actions and next steps were presented at the June Climate Leadership Group meeting. Following a CDC Cabinet decision, Ubico is procuring one electric recycling and food waste vehicle. The Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment has been completed with the final report published.
- Retrofit and decarbonisation activity is progressing well, planning is underway for CDC's retrofit and electric vehicle flagship event, Drive and Thrive, to be delivered in Cirencester in June 2026.
- Delivery of new Local plan, Local Plan on track to reach the Regulation 19 stage successfully in the summer of 2026 and Plan submission in December 2026. Full Council have agreed the date of the Regulation 19 consultation to be week commencing 24th August.
- Community activity and partnerships delivered strong outcomes, with 14 events engaging nearly 1,000 residents. This included a webinar for Gloucestershire's town and parish councils on LGR, as the government consulted on the three options.

2.3 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 delivered strong performance across most key services in Q4. Council Tax and Business Rates collection were near target, major planning applications were processed well within agreed timescales with minors and others near target. Customer satisfaction, regulatory compliance, waste services and leisure participation all remained strong.

A smaller number of services experienced ongoing pressures. Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events, although improving, remain above cumulative targets due to earlier delays and case complexity. Land Charges



performance dipped following staffing shortages but is now recovering, planning appeals allowed remain above target on a cumulative basis, affordable housing delivery is below target and recycling rates were affected by seasonal reductions.

3.1 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.24% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (99% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (93% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (100% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of high-risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (91.7% against a target of 90%)
- Total Planning income (£1,613,566 against a target of £1,016,495)
- Residual Household Waste per Household (kg) (90 against a target of 96)
- Missed bins per 100,000 Collections (75 against a target of 80)
- Number of gym memberships (4,712 against a target of 4,550)

3.2 Service Performance near target:

- Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (20.09 days against a target of 20 days)
- Percentage of Council tax collected (98.16% against a target of 99%)
- Percentage of Non domestic rates collected (97.24% against a target of 99%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (85.5% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (87.1% against a target of 90%)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (161,805 visits against a target of 162,193)



3.3 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (7 days against a target of 5 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (7 days against a target of 4 days)

Processing times improved in Q4, particularly for Council Tax Support, but cumulative performance remains above target. In-quarter performance reached around 4 days, the strongest position this year, showing sustained improvement.

Housing Benefit remains above target, reflecting a more complex caseload following the shift to Universal Credit. Remaining cases are typically pension-age or involve higher levels of verification, meaning processing times are more sensitive to delays, particularly where evidence is outstanding. Seasonal pressures also impacted performance in the quarter, although backlog reduction activity has helped stabilise the position.

With fewer straightforward cases, complex claims now have a greater impact on overall averages, and timescales continue to be affected by factors outside the Council's control, including evidential delays.

Alongside this, the Council has continued targeted support to financially vulnerable residents, focusing on benefit take-up, hardship support, and pension credit awareness. These activities are helping ensure residents access the support they are entitled to.

Overall direction of travel is positive, with continued improvement expected.

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (40.2% against a target of 30%)

Between January to March, seventeen planning appeals were determined. Of these, six were allowed in favour of the applicant, giving an allowance rate of 35.3% for the quarter. As this measure is cumulative, from April to December a total of 51 appeals were decided, with 20 allowed and 1 split decision, resulting in a cumulative allowance rate of 40.2%.

While the general target is for no more than 30% of appeals to be allowed, the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 introduced a formal system for assessing the performance of local planning authorities. The Council is well within tolerance for this measure. Under the designation criteria, an authority may be identified as underperforming if 10% or more of its total planning decisions are overturned at appeal. This measure of decision quality is assessed over a rolling two-year period and is applied separately to major and non-major development categories. It's important to note that the 10% threshold is based on the total number of decisions made, not just those that are appealed. Authorities exceeding this threshold in either category may be designated,



allowing applicants to submit certain types of applications directly to the Secretary of State. The Council is well below this threshold.

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative) (69 against a target of 100)

In Cotswold, twenty-eight affordable homes were delivered during Q4, bringing the year-to-date total to sixty-nine. These completions comprised 11 in South Cerney and Tetbury by Bromford, 11 new homes at Dunstall Farm by Cottsway, and 6 at Down Ampney by Sanctuary Housing Association.

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 approximately 880 affordable homes, averaging around 110 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.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (61.9% against a target of 90%)

The Council's performance against the 10-day target for completing official Land Charges searches improved in Q4, rising from 46.98% in Q3 to 61.9%, still below the 90% target. A total of 533 searches was carried out within the period, with 330 completed within the target period.

Performance declined earlier in the year due to staffing disruption in a very small team, with reduced capacity following loss of a team member last September.

To stabilise the service, a new starter will be joining the team to support the HM Land Registry Project, freeing up officers so they are able to clear the backlog, establish workflow control, and direct specialist capacity toward the more technical elements of the search process. Following the sharp downturn in September, the Council has shown a steady improvement in results.

An improvement process is underway to identify constraints around the service, reduce workarounds and remove dependencies.

Percentage of household waste recycled (54.43% against a target of 61%)

During Q4, the Council's household recycling rate fell by 2.2% compared to the same quarter last year, reflecting a wider national trend influenced by seasonal and structural factors. Residual household waste performed below target in Q4 but increased by 4.5kg compared to the same quarter last year.

Despite the recent dip, the Council continues to demonstrate strong performance. According to the latest 2024/25 national results on local authority waste management,



the district ranks within the top 25 councils in England for household recycling and remains firmly in the top quartile nationwide. This achievement underscores the Council's sustained commitment to environmental stewardship and effective waste management practices.

Nationally, recycling rates continue to vary widely: in 2024/25, councils in England recorded household recycling rates ranging from 17% to 63.9%, with a national average of 41.23%, highlighting the considerable spread between the highest- and lowest-performing areas. Against this backdrop, Cotswold continues to perform strongly with a recycling rate of 56.70%, placing the district firmly within the top tier nationally.

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

4.1 This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 June 2026. 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.

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.



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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)