

Annex B

Recommendations to Cabinet from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2025/26

Recommendation	Agree (Y/N)	Comment	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Review & Action – 08 July 2025				
1. That Ward Members are key local contacts for officers to engage and interface with in terms of planning enforcement activities. <i>Section 3, item 1 (pages 82 & 93 of Cabinet's pack) "Enhance internal communication and understanding".</i>	Partly agreed	An all-member briefing on planning enforcement will be held and communication to Members about enforcement cases will be improved.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
2. That the Council encourages the use of existing functionality that is available but not utilised to its full capacity. <i>Section 3, item 10 (page 84 & 103 of Cabinet's pack) "Maximise digital capabilities and embrace technological innovation".</i>	Y	Fully support the help of colleagues in ICT to help maximise digital and technological innovation.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
3. That the Council prioritises recruitment to vacant posts within Planning Enforcement, notwithstanding the recruitment challenges faced by local government. <i>Paragraph 3.2 (page 87 of Cabinet's pack)</i>	Y	Recruitment to the enforcement service will be treated as a priority within existing resources.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services

Local Plan Update – 08 July 2025

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive timely updates as the Local Plan develops	Y	It is recommended that Members receive updates at key stages in the development of the Local Plan.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
2. That the Council commits to a publicly available communications and engagement strategy for both Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, specifying: • What methods will be used (digital, in-person, targeted) • Clear stakeholder mapping with consideration of how hard-to-reach groups will be involved • How it will be resourced • How Artificial Intelligence (AI) summaries will be verified and validated How the Council will lobby the government on the unrealistic housing targets	Y	<i>Communications and engagement will be a critical part of developing and shaping the Local Plan.</i> <i>Given the current planning context, which has seen our housing target doubled, leading to the loss of our five-year land housing supply - leaving us at the mercy of speculative development and minimal opportunity for residents to have their say - updating the Local Plan will enable residents to have a say, and engage on future development in the district.</i> • <i>As such, and prior to this recommendation being made, we have already started working on a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to maximise community participation.</i> • <i>That strategy will be guided by the council's Statement of Community Involvement, which is already publicly available on the website, setting out what we consult on, how we will consult, at</i>	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services

		<i>what stages we consult, and who with. We are legally bound – as part of the Local Plan update process – to adhere to the terms of this statement. It is therefore unnecessary to publish anything else – but any consultation activity, requiring community participation, will be appropriately and thoroughly advertised in good time.</i> • <i>Our communications and engagement strategy will be guided by both the timelines of the Local Plan project process and the Statement of Community Involvement. I can assure everyone that it will utilise online and offline channels, ensure engagement is targeted when it needs to be, but be broad, accessible and innovative in principle, seeking to capture as many views from across our communities as possible.</i> • <i>We also intend to engage government, to impress upon them and the Planning Inspectorate that the Cotswold's National Landscape, covering 80% of our district, massively impinges on our ability to deliver on the amount of housing being requested. That programme of engagement will run alongside the Local Plan process.</i> <i>In respect of using artificial intelligence to analyse consultation responses, these tools</i>		
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		<i>are becoming more and more sophisticated. The platform that we intend to use, Go Vocal, is reputable and has in-built AI functionality, fine-tuned for the purpose of analysing public consultation data. We plan to test a small sample of responses first – that can be sense-checked – before committing to undertake more analysis of responses via this method.</i>		
3. That the Local Plan is disseminated to Town and Parish Councils to ensure two-way dialogue on proposed site allocations and development priorities commencing June 2026 as part of the Regulation 19 consultation on the draft plan.	Y	<i>Town & Parish Councils will be a primary stakeholder group, and we will devise a thorough programme of engagement for the district's councillors and clerks, leveraging a mixture of channels throughout the plan process.</i>	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director for Planning Services
4. That the Council considers the establishment of a Local Plan (Contingency) reserve to support the delivery and completion of the Local Plan. Cabinet are encouraged to consider this request as part of the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update due in October 2025 to ensure adequate resources are made available at the start of the Local Plan delivery timetable.	Y	Cabinet will consider a prudent amount to hold as a contingency budget held as an earmarked reserve (and subject to expenditure decision arrangements as set out in paragraph 6.11 of the report) as part of the early 2026/27 budget setting process. Cabinet will consider this request 'in the round' taking into account other Council priorities, financial position set out in the February 2025 MTFS, and the likely reduction in funding this Council will receive in 2026/27 as indicated in the Fair Funding 2.0 consultation document.	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

5. That consideration is given to whether the proposed resources are sufficient to meet the anticipated risks set out in the report.	Y	Proposed resources are considered adequate but Cabinet do note the risks as set out in the report. Establishing a contingency budget, to be held as an earmarked reserve and subject to decision making arrangement, as set out in paragraph 6.11 of the report, provides adequate mitigation	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
6. That the Council ensures that sufficient resources are in place to deliver the business-as-usual planning activity such as the management of planning applications and enforcement activity and this is considered as part of the 2026/27 Budget Strategy and MTFS Update due in October 2025.	Y	Cabinet will consider the financial performance of 'business as usual planning activity' in the quarterly financial performance reports. The Budget Setting process for 2026/27 will need to consider any request additional resources for future financial years.	Councillor Patrick Coleman, Cabinet Member for Finance	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1 – 01 September 2025				
1. That consideration is given to putting local social and/or archaeological artefacts on public display at the Council's offices, including artefacts related to the history of local government in the area.	Y	The Council's Leisure and Culture Manager will explore with the Museum operator, Freedom Leisure, opportunities to improve public access to the Museum's extensive collection	Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Health Culture and Visitor Experience	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place

Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-31) Regulation 18 Consultation**- 13 October 2025**

That the Council continues to lobby government for a significantly lower housing target for the Cotswold District given: a) 80% of the district is within the Cotswold National Landscape area. b) The infrastructure challenges across the district (sewage capacity, rural roads, public transport, etc.) c) Lack of access to facilities and employment in many areas. d) The need for government support to address some of these challenges (e.g. funding for a bypass). The reality of what scale of development and supporting infrastructure will be deliverable in the remaining developable parts of the district.	Y	The Leader has drafted a letter to go to Steve Reed which will set out what we are doing and reiterate these messages. The letter will set out the challenges and constraints unique to the district which impact upon our ability to deliver the government's housing targets. It will also reference infrastructure and ask what support the government can provide to unlock funding and to ensure utilities providers are positioned to support this growth with adequate and timely provision.	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place
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District Local Plan Regulation 18 – Preferred Options November 2025 – 5 November 2025

That the Council clearly communicates to town and parish councils and the wider public: a) The importance of getting a local plan in place at the earliest opportunity in order to manage development appropriately and to prevent piecemeal speculative development (which won't provide supporting infrastructure); b) Why the local plan timeline is fixed and the Regulation 18 consultation cannot be extended; How respondents can make valid contributions and what the material planning considerations are in relation to the Local Plan.	Y	Information on the importance of getting a local plan in place as soon as possible, why the timelines for consultation cannot be extended and the planning grounds on which objections representations can be made clear to the wider public – indeed this work is well underway. Eight news releases have been issued on or in relation to the council's Local Plan since July. All of these have been published on the council's website, on social media, in its newsletters and in media outlets – and they all reference the urgency around getting a Local Plan in place and the work being undertaken. As part of a comprehensive communications and engagement plan being executed over the coming weeks – targeting diverse audiences in different ways, through both paid-for (advertisements), owned (council social, newsletters, website) and earned (media, partners) channels, we will reiterate the message in part a of the recommendation, and tie in messaging set out in part b and c (where appropriate and relevant).	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
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		This will include: • At presentations to over 160 Town and Parish councillors at council-run forums. One was hosted last night (Nov 5) and one to be held in Cirencester next Monday (10th). • At four public exhibitions in locations across the district • At parish council-organised public meetings that officers and members have been invited to • Regular member briefings (by email) On the webpages via Q&As (we are collating all the questions submitted to date and/or which have been asked at events – and sharing those for councillors and public to use). We will continue to update as events occur throughout the consultation period. • On social media – our content on this topic, designed to engage and inform, is performing well – having reached over 81k people since July. We will be utilising paid and organic posts.		
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		• Via our regular email newsletters (Local Plan, business, general) which have more than 8,000 combined subscribers. • Through "Community Comms Packs" which are being shared with town and parish councils for sharing with their residents, encouraging participation in the upcoming consultation – which will provide guidance on 'material' feedback for planning consideration. This will all be in addition to messaging on the Local Plan, already planned to go out in the coming days/weeks. This includes: • A printed newsletter going through the letterbox of every household in the district • Advertising on buses Posters and leaflets in all council-owned assets (i.e MAC, leisure centres, car parks)		
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Consideration of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Submission – 17 November 2025

That progress on the implementation Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire, including decisions on the use of transition funds allocated by the Council, are subject to scrutiny and reported to Full Council, until such a	Yes	Updates will be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee periodically and/or at key milestones to keep members informed of progress.	Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council	Jane Portman, Interim Chief Executive Officer.
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time as the Shadow Authority is established.				
Retail and Hospitality Sectors in the Cotswold District – 2 February 2026				
1. That the Council writes to the local Members of Parliament inviting them to lobby on behalf of local businesses in the retail and hospitality sectors faced with the challenges of increased Business Rates and employment costs.	Y	Councillor Wilkinson will send a letter to local MPs.	Councillor Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transformation	Paul James, Economic Development Lead
2. That the Council continues to liaise with agents and landlords to encourage them to advertise more prominently their vacant retail properties.	Y	This is something we do already and will continue to do.		
3. That the Council considers how to minimise the loss of retail space to residential, in particular in the district's smaller towns, through the Local Plan.	Y	The Local Plan fulfils this purpose. The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions must support the role of town centres at the heart of local communities, and take a <i>positive approach</i> to their growth, management, and adaptation.		
4. That the Council considers developing an integrated strategy for town centre economies, building communities and not just housing, with a view to enhancing the Cotswolds' unique visitor economy.	N	The Council also has a Green Economic Growth Strategy, which was reviewed in 2025. It is not considered that an additional strategy is necessary.		

5. That the Council writes to the government to advise them of the looming crisis in the retail and hospitality sectors and highlight the vulnerability of high streets and small communities that rely on access to them for essential local retail provision and employment opportunities.	Y	Councillor Wilkinson will send a letter to the relevant government minister.		
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