



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL 15 JULY 2026
Subject	FOOD AND FARMING MOTION REPORT
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor 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	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place Email: helen.martin@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report responds to the motion approved at Full Council on 18 March 2026 which requested an update on how food and farming would be incorporated into the development of the future operating model under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Note the opportunities for embedding food and farming as part of LGR in Gloucestershire. 2. Request the Gloucestershire LGR Joint Scrutiny Panel to consider how food and farming could be included as an active element within climate planning work for the new shadow authority or authorities.
Corporate priorities	• Delivering good services • Responding to the climate emergency • Supporting communities • Supporting the economy



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Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	As this report does not introduce new policy or budget commitments, wider public consultation has not been required.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** On 18 March 2026, the Council resolved to seek formal recognition of food and farming within LGR climate planning and to report back on governance, priorities and partnerships.
- 1.2** The Cotswold District and wider Gloucestershire have a high proportion of agricultural land. There are a substantial number of farm enterprises transitioning towards regenerative and climate-resilient practices. Agriculture is central to climate mitigation, biodiversity recovery and food resilience.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** National and international assessments have highlighted escalating risks to ecosystems, biodiversity and food systems, and emphasised the role of agriculture in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and supporting ecological recovery.
- 2.2** Gloucestershire County Council is currently developing a Food and Farming Strategy which will be aligned to the Local Growth Plan.
- 2.3** LGR presents a structural opportunity to embed food and farming within climate leadership, spatial planning, economic development and public health functions of the new unitary council or councils.

3. GOVERNANCE AND OWNERSHIP

- 3.1** How the Council responds to the challenges facing the food and farming community should be part of a wider picture, including LGR and the regional position.
- 3.2** A Gloucestershire-wide Joint Scrutiny Panel has recently been established to consider the LGR programme. Each Council (six districts and county) has nominated two non-executive members to sit on the panel. This is one means by which it can be further developed.
- 3.3** The Cotswold District Council members are the chair and vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Gina Bloomfield and Cllr Angus Jenkinson (who is the Councillor for Regenerative Agriculture and Ecology).
- 3.4** The panel is well-placed to look at the potential for local agriculture to contribute positively to climate and ecological recovery. It provides an opportunity to consider this at a county level alongside the regional context. It can engage with key stakeholders such as the National Farmers Union, local enterprise and rural business



networks, academic and research institutions and community food partnerships along with the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

3.5 Cotswold District Council officers will be liaising with Gloucestershire County Council officers as they develop the Food and Farming Strategy. Although this is work in progress it is likely that it explore areas such as:

- Developing skills career pathways
- Supporting and promoting wellbeing
- Importance of place and communities
- Balancing nature and climate change
- Driving innovation and exploring opportunities
- Implications for LGR and collaboration with bordering counties

3.6 Consideration will be given to how food and farming fits into the national policy framework. The current emphasis in the Modern Industrial Strategy being around 'AgriTech' as a Frontier Technology and understanding how our capabilities in this sector could be supported and developed.

3.7 The indicative timeline for 2026 is as follows:

- June: Scoping Review
- July: Stakeholder engagement in July (which will include engagement with the Agri-Food and Rural Business Group)
- August: drafting of Strategy
- September – Consultation and Scrutiny
- October – Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The Council resolution on food and farming could be referred to the successor unitary council or councils without consideration by the LGR Joint Scrutiny Panel. With limited resources available due to local government reorganisation, this may mean that it is not given sufficient weight in developing future priorities.

4.2 The recommended approach provides a Gloucestershire-wide approach and allows key stakeholders to provide views on how food and farming can be aligned with



climate, biodiversity and resilience in the new operating model for the new unitary council or councils.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** Food and farming are central to delivering climate mitigation, biodiversity recovery and food resilience in Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds.
- 5.2** The LGR Joint Scrutiny Panel is ideally placed to consider how this should be taken forward by the new unitary council or councils.
- 5.3** Whilst the recommendations of the panel are not binding on the new unitary council or councils, it can add significant value by providing a body of evidence to support future priorities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** If the approach suggested is not followed, opportunities for working with partners in developing future priorities for the new unitary council or councils may be missed.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1** The proposals are strategic and organisational in nature and do not adversely impact protected groups.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** The approach supports the Council's climate and ecological emergency declarations.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None identified

(END)