



COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL 15 JULY 2026
Subject	MAKING COTSWOLD A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY DISTRICT
Wards affected	All wards
Accountable member	Councillor Paul Evans Cabinet Member for Health and Communities Email: Paul.Evans@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Helen Martin Director of Communities and Place Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Joseph Walker Head of Economic Development and Communities Email: Joseph.Walker@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update Council on progress and proposed actions to contribute towards the Council ambition to make Cotswold District dementia friendly
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Note the progress made since the Council motion in January 2026 and the evidence gathered through engagement with town and parish councils and officers. 2. Approve the proposed programme of dementia-friendly workstreams set out in this report. 3. Endorse continued partnership working with town and parish councils, health partners, the voluntary and community sector, and local dementia support organisations to take this work forward.



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	4. Request that a further update be brought back to Council in approximately 12 months setting out progress, emerging opportunities and any resource implications requiring future decisions.
Corporate priorities	• Delivering Good Services • Supporting Communities
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Engagement with Town and Parish Councils through the Forum meetings in May.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** At its meeting in January, Council considered a motion to make Cotswold District dementia friendly. The Council requested that a report be brought back for its consideration in six months exploring how this action might be realised, with a particular ask that it reflects the opportunity to work with town and parish councils.
- 1.2** This report provides an overview of the scale of dementia across Cotswold District, recognising the breadth of existing support and the commitment of local activists, and sets out a coordinated programme to build awareness and strengthen local action. It proposes a practical and ambitious approach for the district council, town and parish councils, and wider community partners to play their part in making Cotswold a more dementia-friendly district.
- 1.3** This report sets out in brief a picture of the incidence of dementia in Cotswold District. It recognises the tapestry of support and the endeavour of local activists, and sets out a proposal to increase awareness within local government – both the district council and town and parish councils – and within the wider Cotswold community.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of conditions affecting memory, thinking, communication and daily life, and it can affect people of different ages and backgrounds. It is more prevalent in older age cohorts, but is not a 'natural' function of aging, and is not limited to older people, with a range of circumstances and conditions that can lead to earlier onset dementia.
- 2.2** Dementia is a major and growing issue in the UK, with just under 1 million people currently living with the condition, and affecting approximately 1 in 14 people aged over 65. Diagnosis rates are improving but a significant proportion remain undetected, meaning real demand exceeds recorded figures. National projections used by the NHS indicate a 40–45% increase to around 1.4 million people by 2040**, creating sustained pressure on health, care, and community services.
- 2.3** In Gloucestershire, this trend is intensified by an older population and faster growth in the highest-risk age groups. Local modelling used by the One Gloucestershire ICS estimates that around 9,900 people aged 65+ were living with dementia in 2020, rising to around 13,400 by 2030, an increase of approximately 35%. Cotswold is particularly affected because of its age profile, with an estimated 2,000–2,200 residents currently living with dementia. The same modelling indicates this could rise to around 3,000–3,300 by 2040, representing roughly 1,000 additional cases over 15 years. This will place increasing pressure on carers, community services and local



infrastructure, and strengthens the case for coordinated action now to expand both formal and informal support within communities.

- 2.4** In Gloucestershire, this trend is amplified by an older population and faster growth in the highest risk age groups. Local modelling used by the One Gloucestershire ICS estimates around 9,900 people aged 65+ were living with dementia in 2020, rising to circa 13,400 by 2030 (an increase of approximately 35%). Cotswold is particularly affected due to its age profile, with in the region 2,000–2,200 residents currently living with dementia. The same modelled would suggest an increase to in the region of 3,000–3,300 by 2040, roughly 1,000 additional cases over 15 years. Clearly, this places a significant pressure on carers, community services, and local infrastructure, and reinforces the case for strengthening the formal and informal support that can be provided within the community.
- 2.5** This challenge is reflected in the Gloucestershire ICS programme around Neighbourhood Health, which aims to help people live independently for longer by shifting care closer to home, focusing on prevention, and integrating health, social care and voluntary sector support. The programme recognises that rising demand from older populations and people with complex conditions cannot be met sustainably through traditional service models alone, and that population health management and early intervention must play a central role. By mobilising local partners and strengthening community capacity, the Council is aligning strongly with this strategic direction and is well placed to secure the support of system partners.
- 2.6** Communities and activists across the district are already responding to this situation. There are numerous groups support people living with dementia and their carers, including memory cafes and singing groups, volunteer drivers, and a wide range of drop-in sessions. The Churn, Cotswold Friends, Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust and Age Uk recently launched their 'Age Friendly Cotswolds' programme, which will be a vital pillar of support for older residents, including those with dementia. Within the parish sector, there are fantastic examples of excellent practice to introduce dementia friendly practices. This baseline of activity is something to be truly proud of, and to celebrate through any discussion, and something we can look to build upon, to try to respond to the increasing incidence of dementia.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** The town and parish council forums in May created an early opportunity to introduce the Council's ambition to local councils and begin shaping a shared approach. Attendees received an introductory presentation and were briefed on the Council's January decision. The sessions were also used to test confidence in signposting support, understand the values that should underpin this work, gauge appetite to



participate and gather ideas to inform delivery. This provided useful evidence for the Council's planning and opened an early invitation to partner in the next phase of work.

- 3.2** To provide a simple and visual indicator of the thoughts in the room, an on-line tool, 'Slido' was used. 31 individuals used the tool across the two forums, from 19 parishes, from across the district.
- 3.3** Attendees were asked: 'If a friend or neighbour asked you about the support available for people living with dementia, would you feel confident responding?' Across the two events, 29% of respondents said yes, which may reflect the profile of some of the strong services already operating in the district. 53% answered no, showing clear scope for a focused programme to raise awareness and strengthen confidence in signposting people to support.
- 3.4** The same question was asked of Council staff. Because signposting is already a familiar part of many roles, confidence levels were higher, but responses also showed that staff would welcome stronger knowledge of local provision in order to support residents more effectively.
- 3.5** When asked what support services they knew of for people living with dementia or their carers, parish attendees described a rich and varied network across the district, including specialist services, broader community support groups and community institutions such as local churches. This suggests that strong local assets already exist, but that awareness of the full picture is uneven. The Council therefore has a clear role in connecting, promoting and strengthening this local ecosystem of support.
- 3.6** Attendees were also asked to describe what a dementia-friendly community would look like. The most frequent response at both Cirencester and Moreton was 'caring', followed by 'understanding', 'supportive' and 'patient'. Staff responses echoed the same themes. While these findings are not surprising, they are important: they show that a dementia-friendly district is not defined only by specialist provision, but by everyday behaviours, welcoming places and informed communities. This reinforces the case for the Council to focus not only on services, but on building inclusive communities with towns and parishes across the district.
- 3.7** Parishes were also asked whether they would support the Council's ambition, and the response was strongly positive: 90% said yes and 10% were unsure. This provides a strong foundation for collaborative delivery.
- 3.8** Making the Cotswold District dementia friendly requires a broad and coordinated programme of activity that establishes the Council as both a leader and an enabler of dementia-friendly practice across the district. The proposed approach is built around five interconnected workstreams—training, awareness, engagement, mapping,



service improvement, and funding and facilitation—which together will strengthen internal capability, build public understanding and create a stronger evidence base for future decisions. The programme is designed to deliver visible early progress while building the foundations for long-term and sustainable improvement.

4. Training

- 4.1** The training workstream focuses on building knowledge, confidence and consistency among staff and elected members. Initial activity centres on rolling out Level 1 dementia awareness training to all staff, supported by all-staff briefings, with scope to extend access to Members as the programme develops. This training will be delivered through the existing corporate training budget via the on-line platform, positioning dementia awareness alongside other core organisational requirements such as safeguarding and health and safety. This approach will ensure that all staff develop a baseline understanding and are better equipped to apply that knowledge in customer interactions. A universal training offer also sends a strong message of commitment and strengthens the Council's credibility in working with partners.
- 4.2** A more advanced Level 2 offer is proposed for service champions to embed expertise within teams. This additional awareness and expertise is crucial to empower colleagues to review service processes and consider any existing barriers to customers living with dementia. As above, this will be delivered within the existing training budget.

5. Awareness

- 5.1** The awareness workstream seeks to raise the profile of dementia support and position the council as an advocate, using communications channels such as corporate messaging, the website and the Cotswold Community Network. This is complemented by proposals for wider engagement activity, including events featuring experts and lived experience voices.
- 5.2** Members will be aware that the Council issued a press release following the motion in January, supported by further social media activity and an item in Cotswold News in April. This communications activity is a core part of the wider programme to build community awareness. It gives the Council a practical route to educate residents, promote the strong work of local partners, encourage people to access support and inspire others to contribute through volunteering or charitable giving.
- 5.3** The Council can now extend the reach of this messaging by encouraging town and parish councils, and other local partners, to share content through their own networks and publications. Attendees at the forum specifically suggested that the



Council provide ready-to-use communications materials, creating a straightforward and immediate opportunity to build district-wide momentum.

6. Engagement

6.1 Alongside awareness raising and training, the Council can deepen local knowledge and give greater visibility to partners by creating a platform for them to explain their work directly. The Council is well placed to host events that bring together local experts, lived experience voices, district councillors, town and parish councillors, staff and other interested parties. Attendees at the May forums expressed clear interest in this approach. Practical, accessible learning of this kind will strengthen staff understanding and improve knowledge of local provision. The recommended starting point is a programme of webinar-based 'lunch and learn' sessions that can also be recorded, making participation as easy and inclusive as possible. Building on this experience, officers recommend working with local partners to explore the option of a local conference. Tentatively, this would take place in early summer 2027, to increase public awareness and knowledge, but also to reflect on progress and next steps.

6.2 Mapping.

6.3 Officers propose a workstream to build a clear and comprehensive understanding of existing activity across the district and identify gaps. This will involve gathering intelligence from town and parish councils and community networks, alongside benchmarking against established models such as the Forest of Dean. Through current partnership work, officers across services already hold useful knowledge of provision within their own remits, but this work will give Cabinet a fuller district-wide picture of current provision, capacity and opportunity. This evidence-led approach will ensure that future decisions are shaped by a realistic understanding of local strengths and needs.

6.4 This exercise will work in tandem with the awareness programme. Building a comprehensive picture of activity will depend on town and parish councils, and the local voluntary and community sector, sharing their knowledge of local provision. In doing so, the Council will not only gather better intelligence but also actively strengthen the partnerships needed to take this work forward.

7. Service improvement

7.1 From the autumn, following completion of Stage 1 dementia training, colleagues will be invited to review services and identify any unintended barriers that may affect residents living with dementia. The Council can lead by example through practical



and visible improvements to services and facilities, including dementia-friendly audits of premises and early changes such as clearer signage and more accessible environments. These practical early actions will demonstrate organisational commitment, improve the day-to-day experience of residents and encourage partners and communities to adopt similar approaches across the district.

- 7.2** This programme also creates a platform for longer-term innovation. The Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester has opened discussions with the Council on its dementia-friendly environmental self-assessment tool, including work on access to green space. In Cotswold, where amenity green space largely sits within the town and parish council tier, the Council's emerging partnership approach places the district in a strong position to help shape and test this work in practice. This could position Cotswold as an early exemplar nationally, while also giving the Council and its partners access to specialist expertise to better understand and improve this important aspect of dementia-friendly place-making.

8. Funding and facilitation

- 8.1** As the town and parish council forums demonstrated, there is already real appetite to support this agenda. One barrier is knowledge, which this programme is designed to address, but there is also a significant opportunity in turning that appetite into collective action. There may also be practical barriers to community-led initiative. Through Crowdfund Cotswold, the Council already has a strong mechanism for helping to address financial barriers to activity. The existing criteria of the scheme are broad enough to support a wide range of community initiatives, as reflected in the diversity of projects it has already backed. Within that framework, the Council should consider running a targeted campaign to encourage projects that support people living with dementia and their carers, helping more proposals to come forward.
- 8.2** The Council also supports community action through practical advice, facilitation and signposting. The Community Wellbeing Team already works with a range of community providers to connect them to external funding, helpful partners and other sources of support. The Council also supports GRCC to provide organisational development support, including for community buildings that form part of the infrastructure underpinning much of this work.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1** The Council declared an aim in January to work towards making the Cotswold District dementia friendly, working with the district's town and parish councils. This requires a partnership approach, as set out in the report. The Council could take a more prescriptive approach, but delivery will be subject to the appetite of parish partners. A clear ask from the



conversations at the town and parish council forums was that the Council is mindful of the existing infrastructure and partnership working, and that it takes care to support this.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1** The approach outlined above outlines a deliverable approach to increasing awareness and understanding of dementia, and catalyses well-informed action. It seeks to work in close partnership with town and parish councils, recognising their connection with residents and local provision. It looks to use the district's strengths convening a local conversation and using its media reach, but seeks to avoid creating reliance on the district council with a mind to local government reorganisation.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1** As outlined, the programme is deliverable within existing resources, but will take significant time and effort from colleagues across the organisation. The additional training requirement will be serviced from within the current budget. The media work will be delivered by the Communications team, working closely with colleagues in Community Wellbeing to build links with local partners and develop media products.
- 11.2** Any service improvements that have financial implications will need to be identified by the relevant services, and either effected in the existing budget or considered as additional investment.
- 11.3** As noted above, Crowdfund Cotswold is an existing and already budgeted for community grant scheme. Should a targeted campaign be agreed, and further projects come forward, the Council may need to prioritise how it allocates grant in further rounds.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** There is no legal requirement for the Council to undertake this work. That being said, dementia is captured by Equalities legislation, with disability being a protected characteristic. By increasing awareness and training, and reflecting on service design, the Council may identify hitherto unidentified reasonable adjustments that can be made to enhance service access.

13. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 13.1** With a focus on training and awareness raising, there is limited direct risk to the Council. Given the focus on partnership working, it should also be noted that there should not be a transfer of risk to parish or town councils either. Better awareness around access to services by a distinct group of services users should instead reduce service friction and potentially offset the risk of challenge.



13.2 With any public profile activity, a clear risk may be reputational. The engagement so far suggested clear support for the Council's ambition, so it is hard to conceive that this workstream presents significant reputational risk.

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT

14.1 This report articulates the Council's ambition and programme to support a vulnerable group of residents, but does not seek to do this in any exclusionary fashion. People living with dementia benefit from protection under the disability characteristic, and there is a strong connection across to age, given the increased prevalence in older age groups.

14.2 Importantly, the behaviour and physical adjustments that would benefit people living with dementia are also likely to be beneficial to others. Encouraging front line staff and residents to develop their soft skills to support those living with dementia could also benefit those with sensory impairments, for example.

15. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are likely to be very limited climate change or ecological implications from the work envisaged by this report.

15.2 Developing a better service engagement with people living with dementia, their carers and local support organisations may encourage residents otherwise facing barriers to engage with services like energy efficiency programmes, and public transport, so on balance, it may be reasonable to think there would be a minor benefit. It is difficult to imagine that this work could have negative climate change or ecological outcomes.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None identified

(END)