



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL – 20 SEPTEMBER 2023
Subject	PETITION RECEIVED IN RELATION TO VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES
Wards affected	Bourton Village, Bourton Vale, Campden & Vale, Stow, Tetbury East & Rural, Tetbury Town, Tetbury with Upton.
Accountable member	Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk">tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	For Council to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution).
Annexes	Annex A – Petition titled “Save our Cotswold Visitor Information Centres in Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury”
Recommendation(s)	<i>That Council resolves to either:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) <i>Refer the petition to Cabinet as the decision-maker for the request to be considered.</i></li><li>2) <i>Refer the petition to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.</i></li><li>3) <i>Note the petition and take no further action.</i></li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver the highest standard of service</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/	NONE



Consultation	
--------------	--

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report presents a petition in relation to decisions taken by Cabinet on Visitor Information Centres (VICS) on 6 December 2021 and then on 17 July 2023.
- 1.2 The report presents to Council the options for courses of action to take in response to the petition, in line with the Council's Constitution.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution includes a Local Petition Scheme (Part F) which enables residents of the district to submit petitions to the Council.
- 2.2 Petitions can either be submitted on paper directly to the council offices or via the e-petition service the Council has on the website.
- 2.3 A petition will be considered at Full Council if it reaches a threshold of 850 signatures by residents.

## **3. PETITION IN RELATION TO VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES**

- 3.1 The Council received a hard copy of a petition on 5 September 2023.
- 3.2 The petition calls for 'Cotswold District Council to reverse their planned funding cuts of £54,000 annually, to help save our Visitor Information Centres in Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury'
- 3.3 The petition has a verified number of signatures of 2093 and therefore meets the Constitution's threshold for a Full Council debate.
- 3.4 The options set out in the recommendation are in line with the Local Petition Scheme, and are consistent with the topic area being discussed.
- 3.5 As Cabinet took the original decision regarding Visitor Information Centres on 17 July 2023, any reconsideration would need to go back to Cabinet as it is an Executive matter. Council can decide whether or not to refer the matter to Cabinet for reconsideration.
- 3.6 A referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Council would involve the Overview and Scrutiny Committee using its functions to investigate the matter concerned and/or make recommendations to Cabinet.
- 3.7 Due to the agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September 2023 being published prior to this meeting of Council, the petition would need to be considered at the following meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 October.



**3.8** The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of any decision taken by Council. This confirmation will also be published on the Council's website.

**3.9** A petitioner has the right to request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the decision taken by Council if it is felt that the Council has not dealt with the petition properly.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1** The options for Council's response are set out in the Local Petition Scheme. However, the options presented are in-line with the decision-making processes and the request set out by the petitioners.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The petition relates to a budget saving of £54,000 that was made by Cabinet. Funding is currently only provided in the 2023/24 budget for the first half of the financial year and will end on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. If the Council wishes to continue to fund the VICs it would need to reduce costs and find savings from other service budgets.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** None other than those identified elsewhere in the report

#### **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**7.1** In the event of the Council not responding to the petition, then this would be in breach of scheme set out within the Constitution.

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**8.1** This report does not have a negative impact on equalities. The local petition scheme process enables residents to engage with the council on concerns within the District.

#### **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** There are no significant impacts arising from this report.

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1** None

(END)