



COTSWOLD HOUSING STRATEGY

2024-2029



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Action Plan [separate document] and to be prepared following the public consultation and adoption of the Housing Strategy



Foreword

We are at the centre of an affordability crisis in our district and we set out in our Corporate Plan¹ our intentions to tackle the issues surrounding this.

The housing challenges facing our district are constantly evolving, with the effects of the pandemic and pressures on services continuing to be felt, combined with the increased financial pressures on our residents from the Cost of Living crisis. Our commitment to provide good quality homes for all alongside our commitments to end rough sleeping, prevent homelessness and offer a safe place to live for people fleeing war zones add to the challenge.

More decent, affordable housing is needed but land is scarce and there is a shortage of good quality, genuinely affordable housing to rent.

The Council is determined to rise to these challenges and make a real difference and this strategy will set out our plans on how we intend on tackling these.

There is no escaping the size of the challenge. We need to deliver genuinely affordable homes in a district that is extremely constrained by the high quality built, historic and natural environment. There are very few 'easy' sites to develop. That's why we have to make the most of every available opportunity to provide new affordable housing. We also need to ensure that we are addressing the issue of poor quality housing across our district whilst ensuring that we meet our commitments to respond to the climate crisis.

There is no single silver bullet to solve the issue. There are, however, various things we can do to make improvements. Some of them can make a big difference, whereas others will make small marginal gains which, when brought forward together, can also deliver a significant increase. We look forward to working with partners and communities to deliver on our commitments and to making sure Cotswold is a place where people can prosper.



Councillor Joe Harris
Leader of Cotswold District Council

¹ [Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Update Spring 2022](#)



Introduction

The impacts of not having access to good quality affordable homes have devastating effects on people, health and our economy. Our aim is to help everyone in Cotswold to access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. It will be supported by a rolling one year Action Plan. Since the implementation of our Housing Plan in 2016, and our Homelessness Strategy in 2018, there have been many successes along the way. We have increased the supply of affordable housing, invested in partnerships to deliver affordable, carbon neutral homes, as well as providing assistance to those facing homelessness. However, there is still much work to be done in addressing the current housing crisis and the evolving cost of living crisis and there are many challenges to overcome:

- The cost of living crisis and financial pressure on residents is likely to lead to increased numbers in households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- The challenges of adapting to post pandemic levels of demand continue to affect both businesses, employment and local services;
- Public services are under significant financial pressure and we will need to make tough decisions in the coming years. Our ability to generate income has been severely affected over the past two years during the pandemic and into the cost of living crisis;
- High inflation impacts on the viability of delivering affordable housing, including land, build, materials and labour costs;
- The high costs of borrowing will be passed from landlord to tenant, further increasing the affordability gap between real rents and the Local Housing Allowance rates;
- We are working with partners to deliver affordable homes in the coming years, however this needs to go further. Innovation will be key in finding the less 'obvious' schemes to bring forward to make a real difference in the supply of affordable housing;
- Innovation in the way we deliver our Prevention from Homelessness services will need to continue to evolve to respond to financial pressures and demands on the service. Due to the complex nature of Homelessness, a standalone strategy was created in 2018, and is due for review in 2023;
- Climate change and the impact of this has led us to declare a climate emergency. There is an urgent need to deliver zero carbon homes that are accessible to local services and facilities through active travel; and
- Local residents have opened their homes to a high number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. We will continue to work with both the hosts and the families fleeing conflict to find long term, sustainable housing solutions.

These are not small challenges, therefore the aims and priorities set out in this strategy need to be ambitious, innovative and embrace the unique nature of our district.



Our Council Priorities

Our [Corporate Strategy](#) sets out the overall vision for the Council:

To recreate a council that's proactive and responsive to the needs of our residents and businesses in a fast-changing environment, and to build for the future while respecting our heritage.

We will achieve this by focussing on:

1. Delivering our services to the highest standards;
2. Responding to the challenges presented by the climate crisis;
3. Providing good quality social rented homes;
4. Presenting a local plan that's green to the core;
5. Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing; and
6. Supporting businesses to grow in a green, sustainable manner, and to provide high value jobs.

Tackling the issues raised by the housing crisis is impossible to do in isolation, therefore this Housing Strategy sits alongside existing and emerging strategies, plans and work programmes. It has been shaped by national policy and local context and is informed by data and information about our local housing market. We have set out our ambition for housing in Cotswold District and will use it to improve the delivery of high quality, sustainable housing that local people can afford. This Housing Strategy is not the same as the Local Plan, which contains the policies used to determine planning applications and sets out locations for future development. However, it provides an important foundation within which to shape Local Plan policies and supporting evidence.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

- inform our partners and residents about the affordability challenges and priorities in the area;
- be a catalyst for delivering further affordable housing and in particular social rented housing;
- focus resources and effort on agreed priorities;
- highlight the importance of reducing inequalities;
- maintain a strategic overview of housing development and support the update of the Council's Local Plan; and
- give strategic context for some of our housing related statutory duties.

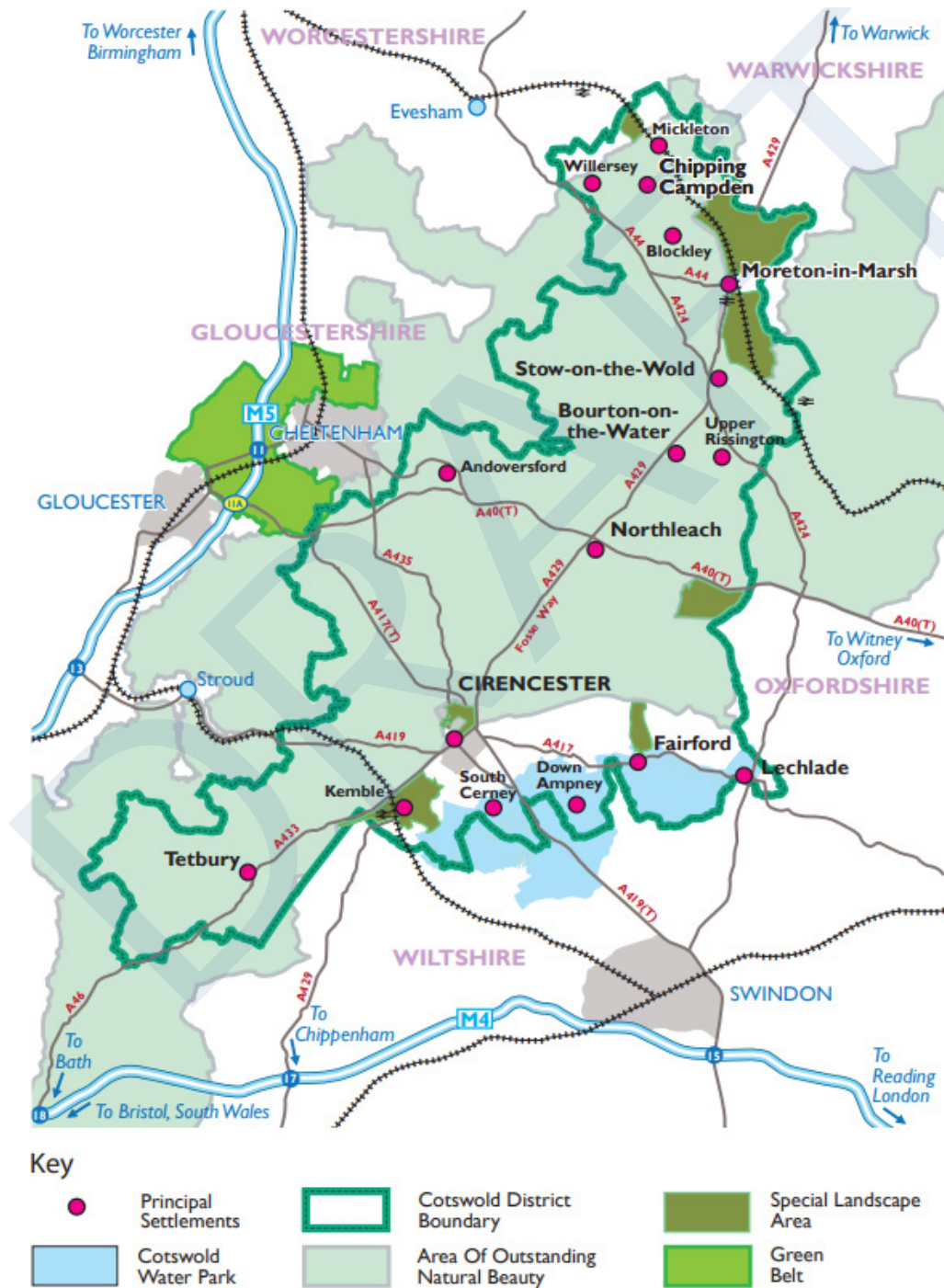
The strategy will shape and focus our work with partner organisations and Registered Providers, as well as landowners, developers and community-led organisations. It will also support bids for additional funding. The strategy will be reviewed during the five year period to make sure it continues to respond to the housing needs across Cotswold, and to reflect changes in national policy, legislation and strategy.



Where we are now

Cotswold District is a large rural area situated in the east of the county of Gloucestershire, covering almost a half of the entire county. The district is not to be confused with the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which stretches from Warwickshire in the north east to Somerset in the south west.

Figure 1: Map showing the main settlements in the district, Cotswolds AONB, Special Landscape Areas, Cotswold Water Park and the Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2015



Evolution of the housing affordability crisis

The 3rd FASTEST HOUSE PRICE GROWTH in SOUTH WEST

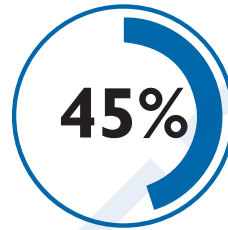
Owning with a mortgage is the most common tenure in the South West.



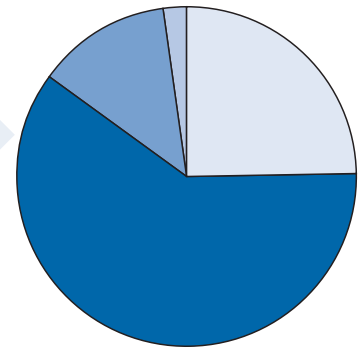
Between 2011-2021 house prices increased by

61%

Cotswold is the 2nd most expensive place to buy a house in the South West.



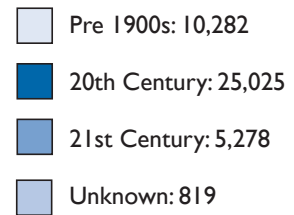
of households are owner occupiers.



Cotswold has an ageing stock of housing.

AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES IN THE COTSWOLDS ARE ALMOST **x14** LOCAL SALARIES

Local earnings have not kept pace with house price rises.



WORSENING LIVING CONDITIONS...

and increased demand for council services.

With people continuing to work from home, the popular rural areas, such as the Cotswolds will likely continue.

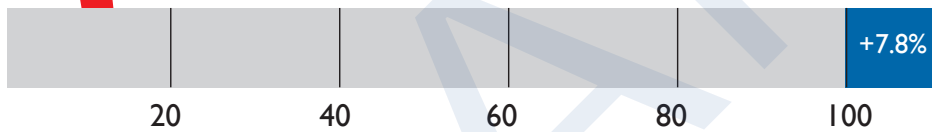
A GROWING PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR...

with increasingly high rents and competition.

In South West
between
2019-2023



Rightmoves's Rental Price Tracker shows that rents in the South West have increased by **7.8%** in the last year alone.



The average new build market housing in the district is not affordable to a resident with **AVERAGE EARNINGS** of

£34,825
PER YEAR

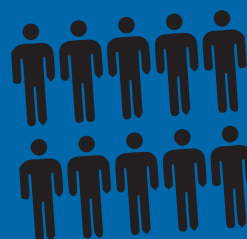
+1,500

more people now live in privately rented accommodation than in 2011.

This is being caused by a shortfall of supply and a surging demand.

There are now **10** tenants for every **1** available property nationally.

X 10
TENANTS



X 1
AVAILABLE
PROPERTY

A CONTINUING NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Approx, **2,500 households** are unable to afford market rented housing in Cotswold District and 4,800 households aspire to home ownership.



1,460

PEOPLE ARE ON COTSWOLD'S HOUSING WAITING LIST



There is a need for approximately **6,900 adapted homes** in Cotswold District between 2021 to 2041.



500

properties are overcrowded in the District

The average South West resident was paying an estimated

33%

of their basic pay on rent in 2022.



How we have responded so far?

A STRONG DELIVERY TRACK RECORD so far

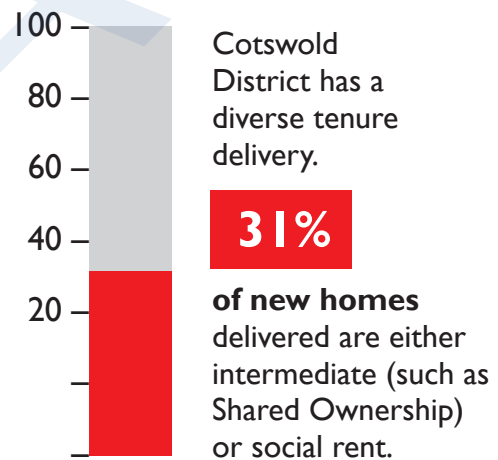
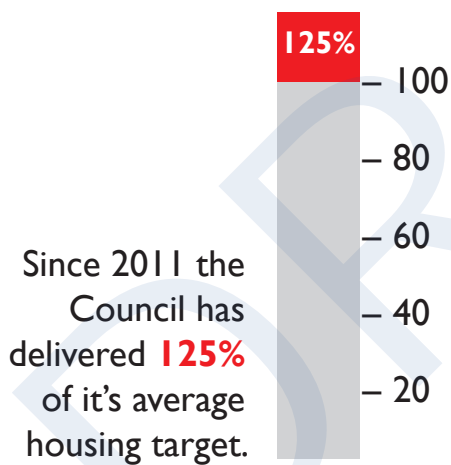
 **6,277**

new homes in the district over the last ten years.

WHICH HAS UNLOCKED THOUSANDS of NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES...

1,972 AFFORDABLE HOMES have been built since 2022.

This has secured homes for people on the waiting list.



The changing delivery context...

A CHALLENGING DELIVERY CONTEXT

FUEL PRICES

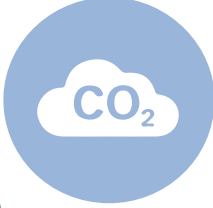
BUILD COSTS

FUEL POVERTY

**HOUSE PRICES
UNCERTAIN**

The vast majority of affordable homes have been delivered through Section 106 agreements with developers or by Registered Providers (such as Housing Associations)

The cost of tackling the climate emergency

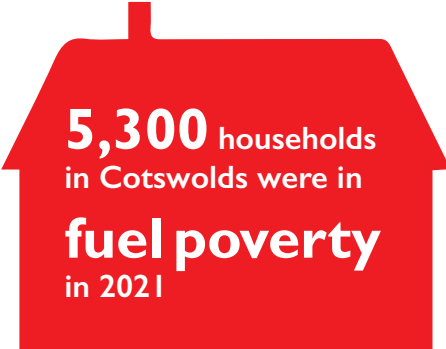


17%
of Cotswolds' CO₂
emissions are from
domestic use



17.5%

A Cotswold resident has
a larger carbon footprint
than the average UK resident



5,300 households
in Cotswolds were in
fuel poverty
in 2021

Govt. research puts the **average cost to upgrade** each tenure type to an EPC band rating at

£7,600 Private Rented;

£6,000 Social Rented; and

£8,600 for owner-occupiers



Analysis shows estimated costs
to upgrade all housing in the
UK to EPC band C

= £156 billion



Our Housing Vision and Priorities

Priorities for 2024-2029

By 2050 everyone in Cotswold District will live in a healthy, affordable, low carbon home that meets their needs within a safe, sustainable and thriving community, which is accessible to all.

Priority 1: Planning for everyone's housing needs

Why? Everyone in Cotswold deserves to live in a suitable home. This requires having the right properties to meet individual needs in the right locations, with great infrastructure, services and support. Cotswold District has not only an ageing population, but an average house price on the open market of 16 times the average wage.

Priority 2: Delivering more affordable housing

Why? There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market means that people need to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. This is being compounded by the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.

The starkest issue affecting housing in our district is its deteriorating affordability. What this means in practice is that many people, particularly younger people and first time buyers, are unable to afford a home close to where they work, grew up or have a close connection to. This has an impact on the local economy and the viability of some services. Furthermore, it can lead to an increase in commuting from areas where housing is less expensive, which runs counter to our ambition – and indeed our national requirement – to tackle climate change and improve health and wellbeing.

Annex B further explores the causes of deteriorating housing affordability and affordable housing delivery in Cotswold District.

Priority 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

Why? Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the district's total greenhouse gas emissions², so it has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Priority 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Why? Everyday needs should be easily accessible within a short distance from home. This includes safe and equitable access to fresh groceries, nature, healthcare, jobs or workspaces and other essential services, facilities and infrastructure. It also means listening and working together with communities on things that matter to them and ensuring new development fits well and enhances existing communities and neighbourhoods.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>



Good Housing Can



REDUCE INEQUALITIES



IMPROVE HEALTH & WELLBEING



HELP TO PREVENT CLIMATE CHANGE



BE AFFORDABLE



MEET THE HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS



BE SAFE



BE ACCESSIBLE, OR CAN BE MADE ACCESSIBLE



BE PART OF A THRIVING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



HELP IMPROVE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT



GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE



ENABLE PEOPLE TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



A Summary of our Housing Objectives

Each priority is supported by a series of objectives and each objective contains specific actions that we will carry out over the life of this plan to 2029.

PRIORITY 1: Planning for everyone's housing needs

- 1.1 Better understand and meet local housing need
- 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs
- 1.3 Support people to continue to live safely and independently
- 1.4 Support young people to get their first home

PRIORITY 2: Delivering more affordable housing

- 2.1 Update the Cotswold District Local Plan
- 2.2 Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans
- 2.3 Deliver more affordable housing through the planning application process
- 2.4 Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas
- 2.5 Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

PRIORITY 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

- 3.1 Deliver low and zero carbon homes
- 3.2 Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency
- 3.3 Respond to the increasing cost of living
- 3.4 Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

PRIORITY 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

- 4.1 Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives
- 4.2 Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to amenities
- 4.3 Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets
- 4.4 Improve private rented accommodation
- 4.5 Bring long-term empty homes back into use



Priority I: Planning for everyone's housing needs

Objectives

- 1.1 Better understand and meet local housing need
- 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs
- 1.3 Support people to live safely and independently
- 1.4 Support young people to get their first home

Everyone in Cotswold deserves to live in a suitable home. This requires having the right properties, locations, infrastructure, services and support. Whilst the affordability and accessibility of suitable local housing has declined over the past decades, for the majority of households, it is within their own means to choose where to purchase or rent their home, albeit to varying degrees.

The task for us is to make sure that homes are delivered, adapted and improved to ensure market supply that addresses all needs. There is a proportion of households who either do not have sufficient income or have a level of need, or both, and who are unable to make their own arrangements. This includes those who live in unsatisfactory housing conditions, have disabilities, insecure tenure, medical or welfare needs. We must ensure the provision of suitable housing for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Better understand and meet local housing need

What we will do:

- A. Undertake regular local housing needs assessments to inform our understanding of what is needed in the district, including the needs of specific groups, to inform policy and delivery.
- B. Support a programme of Parish Housing Needs Surveys in rural areas to inform proposals for parishes based on the identified local needs.
- C. Utilise our own internal data and intelligence and that of our partners to build on and improve our understanding of specific and localised housing needs.
- D. Actively allocate housing sites in the Council's updated Local Plan to meet identified needs.
- E. Ensure we provide a variety of house types and sizes to suit a range of households and income levels, particularly affordable housing.
- F. Support the delivery of different types of affordable housing, such as self & custom build and community-led housing schemes, to offer maximum choice for local people to meet their housing needs.
- G. Maintain the self-build register and work to develop a pipeline of plots for self-build and custom housebuilding, seeking a proportion from residential developments.

Why is this important?

Understanding housing needs is an essential part of planning for future housing requirements. The Council commissions various pieces of research to look at the housing need across the district, usually in partnership as housing markets tend to span more than one local authority area.

The research helps us understand the need and demand for different forms of housing including the need for affordable housing, giving us insights into the long term requirements for a whole range of households across all sectors. We also use our housing register Homeseeker Plus³ to give us additional information on local rented needs.

A list of data sources that have helped inform this strategy and provide information regarding housing needs can be found in Annex C. These needs are then translated into the Local Plan, which either specifically allocates sites for development or sets criteria in policies to support the planning application process.

Local Housing Needs Assessment

The six Gloucestershire district and borough councils published a jointly commissioned [Local Housing Needs Assessment \(LHNA\)](#)⁴ in 2020. The survey data gives a picture of the current and future need for different types, tenures and sizes of affordable homes in the district, including households aspiring to affordable home ownership. The LHNA also assesses the needs of different groups, such as older and younger people, people with disabilities as well as a range of other groups that may need specific types of accommodation. This survey ensures we have a good understanding of what might be required in future and can shape policies and delivery to meet this need. The current LNHA is due for renewal in 2024.

Parish Housing Needs Surveys

Different measures of assessing local housing needs can provide different perspectives on the extent and nature of housing requirements in an area. Affordable rural housing should be tailored to its community and environment.

Local evidence, including Parish Housing Needs Surveys and information from the Council's housing register, will indicate the number and type of affordable homes that are required in a parish. Parish Housing Needs Surveys consider all types of housing, from rent to self-build, both affordable and market.

A Parish Housing Needs Survey is also an opportunity to consult with the local community and may help in land coming forward. Proposals can then be drawn up individually for each parish based on the identified local needs. In some circumstances local market housing can also be provided.

³ <https://www.homeseekerplus.co.uk/choice>

⁴ [Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment \(ORS, September 2020\)](#)



Community-led housing schemes

Community-led housing schemes deliver new homes that will be owned or managed by the community. Developments can be for the benefit of the local community, a specific group of people, or both. It can be a new build or refurbishment, in a rural area or a town. This is considered an alternative to developer-led housing through empowering community groups to meet their own housing needs

There are many different types and organisations involved in community-led housing including Community Land Trusts, Co-housing and housing co-operatives. This can be in partnership with a Housing Association, private land owner, a parish council or a developer.

The Council is supportive of the Community-led Housing approach and will continue to work with local groups and the Rural Housing Enabler through the work of the Housing Strategy team.

The Community Led Homes website⁵ has a comprehensive list of funding sources for Community-led housing. The Council also has a small amount of funding to support groups in the Cotswolds with their Community-led housing projects. There are two grants available; the start-up grant of up to £1,000, for groups to become established in their community and incorporate into a formal organisation and a pre-development grant (up to £10,000) for established groups who are progressing their housing project to planning application stage. Please email the Housing Strategy team on housing.strategy@cotswold.gov.uk

Self build register

The Council has a duty to deliver self and custom build plots through the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016). Self-build and custom-built homes could be a route for some to get onto the property ladder and for others to build their ideal home.

The Council maintains a self build register....(reference CDC Self build paper here)

The Council's Local Plan requires proposals of more than 20 dwellings to provide 5% of dwelling plots for sale as serviced self or custom build plots unless it can be demonstrated that there is a higher or lower demand for plots.⁶

⁵ <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>

⁶ Cotswold District Local Plan - policy H1: Housing mix and tenure to meet local needs <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/k2kjqv3b/cotswold-district-local-plan-2011-2031-adopted-3-august-2018-web-version.pdf>



Objective 1.2 Work in partnership to deliver identified needs

What we will do

- A. Continue to work in partnership with Registered Providers, local landowners and private developers and public sector organisations to enable the delivery of specific housing needs and maximise affordable housing.
- B. Work with our affordable housing delivery partners on the regeneration of sub-standard affordable housing stock. Through this process, we will seek to deliver more social rented homes and increase the number of affordable homes on the renewal sites where this is feasible.
- C. Consider working with local community-led housing organisations and partner organisations to bring forward community led housing and rural housing schemes to give choice and empowerment at a local level.

Using Council Assets and Investments

- D. Consider using assets to support delivery of social rented, carbon zero priorities where a solid business case exists and need can be established, rather than subsidy through private housing.
- E. Identify a pipeline of sites to be delivered through the collaboration agreement with Bromford Housing Group.
- F. Review and prioritise Council owned sites to enable further reports to be brought forward for decision on:
 - i. Council owned sites suitable for development in line with the Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy; and
 - ii. Council owned sites suitable for disposal as open market sites/ plots or self build plots (as appropriate), with capital receipts earmarked for re-investment in affordable housing delivery.
- G. Acquire / develop accommodation where:
 - i. The development will be financially sustainable not relying solely on subsidy from s106 funding / contributions or any Council annual subsidy.
 - ii. It is understood that cross subsidy in the form of private housing for sale or rent may be necessary and acceptable to ensure financial viability of the development as a whole.
 - iii. The level of cross subsidy required from either private housing or Affordable Home Ownership tenure types will be considered on a case by case basis due to variations in costs etc due to site constraints and risks.
- H. Progress planning applications for the development of Council-owned sites that are allocated in the Local Plan.
- I. Consider the use of grant funding to deliver additional social rented homes and affordable homes, above the planning policy threshold, on new development sites.

Why is this important?

Partnership working has been a major success in boosting the supply of affordable housing in the district.

The Council is developing options to ensure the Council's ambitions to provide good quality, well designed, net carbon zero homes are delivered through partnership collaboration agreements, initially with Bromford Housing Association. This partnership will support shared learning in the delivery of innovative housing development, seeking to demonstrate to developers that net carbon zero affordable homes can be financially viable. The first scheme being delivered through this collaboration agreement is at Broadleaze, Down Ampney, where early engagement and thorough consultation with local people has been key to the development of proposals.

In recent years, we have developed excellent partnership arrangements with several housing associations, including Bromford, Cirencester Housing and Cottsway. This has helped deliver 100% affordable housing developments and renewal schemes across the district with more on the way.

The Council's Climate Emergency⁷ declaration and our Corporate Plan aim to deliver more affordable housing, reduce household bills and improve peoples' health and wellbeing. This ambition aligns with that of our partner housing associations, who want to have healthy and happy customers by providing them with high quality accommodation that is efficient to run.

The Council's corporate strategy to deliver more affordable homes has helped to boost delivery and will continue to do so. 100% affordable and renewal schemes that have been, or are set to be delivered are outlined in Annex D.

Using grant funds to deliver more affordable housing

The Council has often supported housing associations to use grant funding, typically from Homes England or from affordable housing commuted sums held by Cotswold District Council. This includes buying market homes from developers for affordable housing and grant funding additional affordable homes, above the planning policy threshold on new development sites.

Commuted Sums are 'off-site' financial contributions in lieu of affordable housing, provided by developers in exceptional circumstances where affordable housing is not provided on site. In these circumstances developers are required to pay a commuted sum to the Council which is then used to fund affordable housing delivery elsewhere in the district.

In August 2022, the Council sold The Cotswold Club in Cirencester to invest in more net zero affordable housing⁸. This is a further commitment from the Council to boost the delivery of affordable housing through the realisation of its assets.

⁷ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

⁸ <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-sells-the-cotswold-club-to-invest-in-more-net-zero-affordable-housing>

The basis of our partnership working arrangements

We will continue to increase the provision of social and affordable housing by developing schemes that have a solid business case and that meet the needs of local people. We will seek to deliver provision of:

- Good quality housing for rent.
- Housing that is affordable over its whole life cost, both rent and running costs.
- Build housing that is net zero carbon over its lifetime.
- Affordable housing that is available in perpetuity, where possible, supporting the well-being of the residents and the local communities.
- Housing stock needs to be more accessible and adaptable⁹ to allow people to stay in their homes longer and meet an individual's changing needs over their life.
- Homes that support diverse and inclusive communities and provide housing, where there are specific needs for: Older people; Young people; Military veterans; and Families.
- Encourage innovative carbon zero or low carbon affordable housing which utilises local trades and therefore supports the local economy.

⁹ Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>



Objective 1.3: Support people to live safely and independently

What we will do

- A. Ensure new homes are adaptable for a variety of potential users using “inclusive design principles” and minimum space standards.
- B. As part of the Local Plan update consider opportunities to:
 - i. prevent smaller properties being demolished and recognise the importance that smaller properties, including bungalows, can play in providing opportunities to first time buyers and renters and downsize.
 - ii. require the delivery of accessible and smaller sized house types, which are typically cheaper to run to accommodate our ageing population and increase the availability of family sized homes.
- C. Provide innovative solutions with our partners to support people in our community to remain living independently for as long as possible.
- D. Work with housing providers, Gloucestershire County Council and public health organisations to reduce the number of instances of adaptations being removed and sent to landfill.
- E. Explore opportunities for intergenerational housing schemes or other new models which combine care and support within the setting.
- F. Work to fulfil our duties outlined in the [Disabled Facilities Grant Policy](#).

Why is this important?

A suitable home can help disabled people of all ages to build and sustain their independence and maintain connections in their community. Many older and disabled people live in homes that are poorly designed for older age or changes in care needs. This makes it difficult for them to do everyday tasks or get out and about easily. Home adaptations give people the choice to continue living independently and safely in their own homes for longer, reducing delays in hospital discharge and preventing premature moves to residential care.

The provision of dedicated older person housing will form an important part of the overall housing mix. The identified need for additional three and four-bedroom homes could be reduced if more of the existing stock could be released by providing suitable housing in the community which older people find desirable and suitable to live in as they age.

Improvements need to be made both in terms of data collection but also the sharing of information between housing associations, local authorities and health organisations, specifically in relation to homes with existing adaptations. Existing policies can lead to unintended consequences such as existing adaptations having to be removed and thrown away once the current user no longer requires them. This creates an unnecessary financial and environmental burden. Improved intelligence and data sharing will help to ensure housing stock is being used efficiently and reduce instances of adaptation being removed. Where adaptations have to be removed opportunities should be explored to improve the reuse and recycling of adaptations.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are capital grants funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) programme to support local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person-centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers.

DFGs are available to people of all ages and in all housing tenures (i.e. whether renting privately, from a social landlord or council, or owner-occupiers) to contribute to the cost of adaptations. They are administered by local housing authorities in England and enable eligible disabled people to continue living safely and independently at home. This includes autistic people, those with a mental health condition, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments such as dementia, and progressive conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease. It includes those suffering from age-related disabilities and can also include those with terminal illness. DFGs are a support measure that a local authority can use to help enable people to live independently and safely at home and in their communities.

Cotswold District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, is under a statutory duty by virtue of the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to provide DFGs for private sector and housing association residential adaptations where the appropriate legislative conditions are met.

Objective 1.4: Support young people to access housing

What we will do

- A. Investigate a First Homes policy, with greater discounts to address the local gap in affordable homeownership prices and lower wages
- B. Continue to support the use of a range of affordable home ownership products, such as Help to Buy, shared ownership and shared equity, to assist local people into home ownership.

Why is this important?

Many of the actions within this strategy will go a long way to benefit young people. This part of the Strategy considers further actions that we can do specifically to support young people to afford a home in our district.

First Homes

Specific actions that can support young people to afford a home in our district could include the recently introduced First Homes¹⁰, which aims to help first time buyers onto the housing ladder by offering discounts of 30% and up to 50%, on new build properties. This discount is retained in perpetuity for future buyers of the property.

National policy now enables us to include a policy in our Local Plan, which will help to deliver entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers or those looking to rent their first home. National policy has strict criteria that entry level exception sites must accord with.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Priority 2: Increase the supply of affordable housing

Objectives

- 2.1 Update the Cotswold District Local Plan
- 2.2 Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans
- 2.3 Deliver more affordable housing through the Planning Application process
- 2.4 Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas
- 2.5 Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

There are not enough affordable homes within our district. The high cost of buying or renting through the private market means that people need to pay a high proportion of their income towards housing costs. With the additional pressure of mounting bills and inflation, this is becoming increasingly difficult, with experts predicting that this will result in higher levels of debt and homelessness.

Objective 2.1: Update the Cotswold District Local Plan

What we will do

- A. Examine the housing requirement (the overall housing target) within the adopted Local Plan.
- B. Update Local Plan policies, with the specific aim of delivering more affordable, in particular social rented, homes. For example:
 - i. allocate further sites in the Local Plan and give greater preference in the site selection process to sites that commit to delivering higher levels of affordable housing or higher levels of social rented housing;
 - ii. test the viability of returning to a historic policy that delivered 50% affordable on sites or a greater focus on the delivery of more social rented homes.
- C. Continue to investigate innovative ways of delivering additional affordable housing.

Why is this important?

The Local Plan is one of the most powerful tools at the Council's disposal, which can be used to boost the delivery of affordable housing. We are currently undertaking a partial update of our adopted Local Plan. One of the principal objectives is to boost the delivery of genuinely affordable housing, particularly social rented housing.

The adopted Local Plan has a requirement for a minimum of 8,400 homes over the period 2011 to 2031 (an average of 420 homes a year). It allocates sites across the district to deliver the housing requirement and has an affordable housing strategy, part of which requires the delivery of 30% affordable housing on qualifying brownfield sites and 40% affordable housing on qualifying greenfield sites. To date, this has been effective in delivering a large number of affordable homes across the district.

Evidence of local housing needs

Since the adoption of the Local Plan, the government has introduced a new ‘standard method’ for calculating housing needs¹¹. As of August 2022, the government calculates the district’s housing need to be 533 homes a year. In response, the Council has reviewed the Local Plan. This is summarised in the table below:

	Annual figure (dwellings)	10-year figure (dwellings)
Average annual household growth rate (2022-2032)	307.3	3,073
Additional homes to take account of median workplace-based housing affordability ratio adjustment factor	225.7	2,257
Total housing need	533	5,330

The housing need includes an uplift of 225.7 homes a year to address housing affordability in the district, which is a 73% uplift on the household growth rate.

Whilst an increased housing need would undoubtedly deliver more housing, we do not agree that flooding the district with open market housing developments is the answer to tackling the housing affordability issue. The right types, tenures and sizes of homes are needed in the right locations. Furthermore, housing affordability needs to be considered comprehensively alongside the various other issues considered in this strategy.

Translating the housing need into a housing requirement

The Council will need to assess various matters that contribute towards determining whether the Local Plan housing requirement should be higher, lower or the same as the district’s housing need. For example, the Local Plan housing requirement may be increased above the housing need in order to deliver more affordable housing. The availability of suitable land and the protection and enhancement of the district’s high quality built and natural environments will also be key considerations.

A balance has to be struck between delivering more housing, whilst at the same time protecting the things that make Cotswold District so special. We have to be smart by maximising affordable housing delivery where we can whilst also delivering sustainable development.

Allocating additional land for development

Once the housing requirement is determined, we will need to allocate sites accordingly. We will have a range of criteria to help us choose the sites to allocate in the Local Plan and as part of this process we can give more preference to sites that are able to deliver more affordable housing. Additionally, we can give preference to sites with the best accessibility to services, facilities and employment.

¹¹ [Housing and economic needs assessment \(DLUHC and MHCLG, December 2020\)](#)



Updated national policy

Since the Local Plan was adopted, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance has been updated. New policies have been introduced and some existing policies have been altered, which now enable the Council to update the Local Plan policies to deliver more affordable homes. For example, lower site size thresholds can be set for requiring affordable housing. There are also some subtle changes that can be made to policies that will deliver more affordable homes, such as calculating the affordable housing requirement based on the gross rather than net number of homes being developed.

Vacant Building Credit

To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, national policy allows any affordable housing contributions due to be reduced by a proportionate amount. This should be equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings and does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

National policy is not clear on what defines 'vacant'. Furthermore, unlike some local authorities, the Council does not have a Vacant Building Credit policy that would otherwise provide this clarity. Consequently, a lot of affordable homes that could potentially be required are being lost.

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Objective 2.2: Deliver affordable housing through Neighbourhood Plans

What we will do

- A. Support the adoption of Neighbourhood Development Plans in our district and local aspirations to address issues including an increase in the supply of affordable housing for existing and future generations.
- B. Support Town and Parish Councils to deliver affordable housing through their share of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- C. Consider focusing the spend of commuted sums to deliver affordable housing projects in Neighbourhood Planning Areas that wish to deliver affordable homes.

Why is this important?

Neighbourhood Plans are a well-established part of the plan making process in England. Cotswold District has seven made plans¹² and 12 plans in various stages of preparation¹³. They are mostly prepared by town and parish councils and generally align with the plan period set out in the Local Plan i.e. to 2031. We know that some of our town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups have identified the need for affordable housing in their neighbourhood areas. However, land availability and site constraints make it difficult to do so. In early 2023, two Neighbourhood Plan areas are actively identifying additional land for new homes – Fairford and Stow-on-the-Wold - detailed in Annex E.

This objective should also be seen within the context of objective 1.1 which seeks to offer more support to those Town and Parish Councils wishing to deliver additional affordable housing through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

¹² Made plans as listed on the [Cotswold District website](#) at time of publication.

¹³ Emerging plans as listed on the [Cotswold District website](#) at time of publication.

Objective 2.3: Deliver more affordable housing through the Planning Application process

What we will do

- A. Provide a high level assessment of potential affordable housing development sites in our Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.
- B. Actively challenge those avoiding their obligation to contribute towards the supply of affordable housing.
- C. Consider prioritising planning applications that seek to deliver social rented housing.
- D. Deliver affordable housing through planning obligations to the following standards:
 - i. Nationally Described Space Standards;
 - ii. M4(2) (accessible housing);
 - iii. Secured by Design (Silver); and
 - iv. a proportion of the affordable housing will be built to M4(3) standard (wheelchair adaptable housing).

Why is this important?

We understand that bringing forward an affordable housing development can entail some uncertainty in terms of whether a site is suitable for development and what is needed to obtain planning permission. We're keen to remove as much of this uncertainty as possible and make it easy, convenient and quick for anyone wishing to bring forward an affordable housing development to do so.



Objective 2.4: Increase delivery of affordable housing in rural areas

What we will do

- A. Continue to support Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership and the Rural Housing Enabler.
- B. Consider applying to the Secretary of State to designate the part of the district that is not within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and not within the development boundaries of Cirencester, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh and South Cerney as a rural area.
- C. As part of the Local Plan update, propose to reduce the site size threshold where affordable housing would be required in designated areas from 6 to 10 dwellings to 3 to 9 dwellings.

Why is this important?

Affordable housing can make a huge contribution to a rural parish as it not only meets the housing needs of local people but can help maintain local services and amenities such as a local school, village shop or post office. It may also help maintain the social balance and social networks within the parish.

About 40% of the district's population lives in rural locations. Whilst the adopted Local Plan concentrates on directing development towards the 17 most sustainable settlements, this does not mean that rural housing needs beyond those towns and villages will not be met. In addition to small-scale housing development allowed in rural settlements under Policy DS3, Rural Exception Schemes will be encouraged under Policy H3 where there is a proven unmet need for affordable housing.

To help community resilience and sustainability, and increase the affordable rural housing stock, Policy H3 also promotes a 'self-help' scheme where qualifying people can find and build their own affordable home on single plot exception sites.

To support delivery of rural housing in the district, we work with the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership (GRHP). Members are local authorities and housing associations as well as host Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). Cotswold District Council alongside the partners of the GRHP provides funding for Gloucestershire's Rural Housing Enabler. Working in local communities, GRHP helps to identify unmet housing needs in rural areas and promote opportunities for rural housing development.

Rural Exception Sites

Most affordable housing developed in rural parishes is located on Rural Exception Sites. These are sites within or adjacent to a rural settlement where market housing would not normally be acceptable. Housing development is permitted on these sites as an exception to planning policy though all the other usual planning criteria must be met.

The housing must be affordable housing for local people and remain so in perpetuity. Annex D highlights some of the rural schemes that have been developed as a result of our work with the Gloucestershire Housing Partnership and the Rural Housing Enabler.



Designated Rural Areas

National policy draws a distinction between affordable housing requirements inside and outside designated rural areas. Local plans can include a lower affordable housing requirement inside designated rural areas.

In Cotswold District, 80% of the district is located inside the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) and is therefore already designated as a rural area.

The Local Plan requires affordable housing contributions on developments of:

- 6 to 10 dwellings (net) in designated rural areas; and
- 11 or more new dwellings (net) in all other parts of the district.

The ongoing partial update of the Local Plan proposes to lower the site size where affordable housing is required in designated rural areas from 6 to 10 dwellings down to 3 to 9 dwellings. The Council can also apply to the Secretary of State for other parts of the district to be designated as a rural area. This can be done independently and ahead of the ongoing partial update to the Local Plan. We have assessed the 20% of the district that is not within the AONB and have found that the entire area is suitable to become a designated rural area, with the exception of the area inside the development boundaries of Cirencester, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh and South Cerney.

Designating additional land as a rural area would mean that development sites of 6 to 10 dwellings in that area would need to contribute financially towards affordable housing. This could help to deliver more affordable homes as a result. Furthermore, if the proposal to reduce the affordable housing requirement in designated rural areas to 3 to 9 dwellings is adopted, it would help to deliver even more affordable homes in those areas.

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Objective 2.5: Cirencester Town Centre Framework Master Plan

What we will do

- A) Identify opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cirencester town centre.

Why is this important?

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan and Cirencester Town Centre Master Plan

We are working with Cirencester Town Council and its emerging Neighbourhood Plan to prepare a plan for Cirencester Town Centre and the wider Town. This is an ambitious undertaking but it has been a fantastic example of community-led town planning. The Town Council is leading the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan¹⁴ and we are leading on the Town Centre Master Plan but in truth we are supporting one another to deliver a coordinated and seamless plan for Cirencester.

The Town Centre Master Plan is intended to serve as an urban design framework for the town centre. It is a visionary document that will fulfil a number of functions, including those described in summary below. It will:

- describe and illustrate how planning and design policies and principles should be implemented across Cirencester town centre;
- include a vision and development objectives for the town centre as a whole, establishing a context for proposed and potential interventions, including the delivery of new housing.
- take opportunities to progress our priority to respond to the challenge posed by climate change, ensuring all development proposals and principles in Cirencester work towards the target of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions across all sectors by 2045;
- identify potential areas of change within the town centre, including the delivery of new housing.
- Coordinate the phased delivery of more detailed development briefs for specific sites within the town centre, as and when the need for them arises.

The following image shows the opportunity areas for regeneration within the Town Centre.

¹⁴ <https://cirencesternp.org/>

Opportunity sites



PRIORITY 3: Sustainable, high quality and climate resilient homes

Objectives

- 3.1 Deliver low and zero carbon homes
- 3.2 Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency
- 3.3 Respond to the increasing cost of living
- 3.4 Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

Housing is responsible for about one quarter of the district's total greenhouse gas emissions¹⁵, so has a significant contribution to make in fulfilling our pledge to become carbon neutral by 2045. More than 80% of the UK housing stock projected for 2045 already exists, which is why we have made improving (retrofitting) existing housing stock a priority.

Good quality low carbon housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of residents, so it is vital that we work to ensure that existing homes are warm, safe, meet the needs of the occupants, are affordable to run, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Objective 3.1: Deliver low and zero carbon homes

What we will do

- A. Update the Local Plan and Cotswold Design Code to require improved construction, energy and thermal standards of new homes and consider embedding the Town and Country Planning Association's Healthy Homes Act Campaign¹⁶.
- B. Deliver built examples of the application of the Council's Net Carbon Zero Toolkit, such as the Broadleaze development at Down Ampney, to showcase to developers.
- C. Work with private landlords to incentivise them to provide better insulation and energy efficiency measures in their properties and make it as easy as possible for them to do so.
- D. Adopt a comprehensive sustainability checklist in order that the Council's development planning officers can support developers to achieve the highest practicable sustainability.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

¹⁶ <https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-healthy-homes-act/>

Why is this important?

Good, well-designed and constructed housing is critical in mitigating the risks that climate change poses in the UK. Studies have shown that in the UK we tend to spend about 90% - 95% of our time indoors, and that about 66% of that indoor time is at home. UK climate change could amplify existing health risks related to building overheating, indoor air pollution, flood damage and biological contamination. New buildings should therefore be designed to address these potential health effects, but also to minimise the use of fossil fuels, which contribute to both climate change and poor air quality. New buildings should also make more use of low carbon energy sources and can incorporate technologies that help reduce energy use, and therefore the impact of the built environment on our climate.

Whilst low or net carbon zero housing was once experimental and challenging, there are now many examples of developments of every scale where the net carbon zero design and build process has been mainstreamed, with very beneficial results to owners or tenants. The delivery of net carbon zero or low carbon housing would not only contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets but would also reduce the running costs of the home, which will benefit occupants and contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty. This is particularly important in the context of the cost of living crisis.

The design and provision of zero carbon housing is something that needs to be developed further. Whilst local Housing Associations wish to embrace this provision, it is new for them and comes with risk.

To fully embed zero carbon delivery of social rented and affordable properties, all projects need to be considered from the outset to ensure carbon reduction is maximised at the pre-planning stage so that factors such as orientation can be designed in. Specialist designers/ advisers will need to be engaged on all projects to provide this support and ensure opportunities to utilise new and innovative technologies are maximised.

The Council's Climate Change Emergency declaration and our Corporate Plan¹⁷ aim to deliver more genuinely affordable housing, reduce household bills and improve peoples' health and wellbeing. This ambition aligns with that of our partner housing associations, who want to have healthy and happy customers by providing them with high quality accommodation that is efficient to run.

The Council will work with registered providers to seek exemplar small schemes, which can be used to trial zero carbon and alternative methods of constructions. In considering refurbishment of existing properties carbon emissions will be reduced as far possible taking into consideration constraints, options and costs.

Down Ampney

In Down Ampney, we have entered into a partnership with Bromford Housing Association to provide residents with local affordable homes¹⁸. The development will look to use new technology to reduce the carbon footprint of the homes and their electricity needs, making them more affordable for tenants. Residents will be given the opportunity to input into the design of the homes.

We aim to make these homes truly affordable to buy, cheaper to run and cause much less damage to the environment - tackling two of the key issues for the Cotswolds - the lack of affordable homes and responding to the climate emergency. We will be using land owned by the Council to build these homes and set a much higher standard than what we see from many housing developers. We hope this example will drive higher standards across the Cotswolds by showing what is possible.

¹⁷ [Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) – see pages 9-10

¹⁸ <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-and-bromford-form-a-ground-breaking-partnership-to-deliver-more-affordable-low-carbon-homes-for-cotswold-people>

Objective 3.2: Retrofit homes to enable carbon reduction and greater energy efficiency

What we will do

- A) Work with registered provider partners to upgrade poorly performing properties.
- B) Lobby government at a local and regional level to influence future policy, strategy and funding.
- C) Seek funding where possible to enable more retrofit in the district, including boosting resilience to direct climate impacts such as overheating.
- D) Update the Climate Emergency Action Plan and work with partners in the county and the region to take forward and develop innovations to support domestic retrofit.
- E) Consider working in partnership with a Social Enterprise Lender to provide loans to enable people to improve insulation and upgrade heating systems including renewable technology.
- F) Signpost homeowners to sources of advice in the pre-application (and early stages) of the planning application process e.g. further promote the Council's Net Carbon Zero Toolkit to enable homeowners to best retrofit their homes.
- G) Work with expert external partners to improve the quality of retrofit advice to occupants of older and solid stone walled properties typical of the Cotswolds.

Why is this important?

Retrofitting existing housing stock to bring it up to a near-net zero carbon standard is a key requirement for the district.

Emissions from buildings (that is, principally, heating) has barely dropped in 30 years - energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock is generally poor, and improving household energy efficiency (whilst being vital, and bringing dramatically lower energy bills to householders) will be expensive and disruptive, requiring, e.g., the replacement of gas boilers by high efficiency electric heating, and increasing insulation.

Impacts from hot weather are already being felt in the UK - the ONS estimates excess mortality of around 2,800 from the summer 2022 high heat periods¹⁹. Government climate advisers warn that, without adaptation, increasingly hot summers could triple existing health, wellbeing and productivity impacts²⁰. However, many effective strategies exist to limit these impacts, relating both to new build and retrofitting.

¹⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessmortalityduringheatperiods/englandandwales|june31august2022>

²⁰ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Risks-to-health-wellbeing-and-productivity-from-overheating-in-buildings.pdf>

Direct climate impacts in the form of pluvial (run-off) flooding from intense rainfall events are increasing, and can directly affect existing homes. The Environment Agency estimated in 2018 that three million properties in England are susceptible, greater in number than those at risk of fluvial (river level) and coastal flooding²¹ but that number will increase as the climate continues to destabilise. Pluvial flood resistance and resilience measures can be retrofitted where buildings are at risk, principally in urban areas.

The Council may be able to support homeowners to access government support for energy retrofit actions by quality assuring and signposting homeowners to sources of advice.

Further commentary on retrofitting can be found in the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 to 2030, specifically section 13.4.2²². Also the Council's Issues and Options local plan consultation (2022)²³ provides further commentary on retrofitting buildings within the context of the Local Plan.

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21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surface-water-the-biggest-flood-risk-of-all>

22 https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/8d8eab9716634de/cdc-climate-emergency-strategy-adopted-2020_09_23.pdf

23 <https://issuesandoptions.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/aaresponding-to-the-climate-crisis/step1>



Objective 3.3: Respond to the increasing cost of living

What we will do

- A) Reducing household bills by:
 - i) requiring new homes to be highly energy efficient so they are cool in summer and warm in winter;
 - ii) supporting existing homeowners and landlords to retrofit homes with insulation and other energy saving measures; and
 - iii) ensuring new homes include rainwater attenuation systems, such as ponds, tanks and water butts, so that occupants can make use of free rainwater and 'grey water' for toilets, gardens and other similar uses.
- B) Reducing food costs by creating spaces for people to grow their own food.
- C) Target and support/enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector.
- D) Tackle fuel poverty through our Warm and Well Scheme delivered in partnership with the Gloucestershire Authorities through energy advice and support, insulation and heating grants and loans.
- E) Work with partners to obtain more detailed information on the cost of living crisis and its impact on those living in social housing.

Why is this important?

In July 2022, Cotswold District Council declared a cost of living emergency, as we are extremely concerned how surging energy and food prices are already exacerbating poverty in the area and the impact further price rises will have on already struggling families. According to the latest figures, one in five children in the Cotswold is in poverty.

Reducing the requirement for heating homes in winter, cooling homes in the summer and reducing the consumption of mains water makes financial and environmental sense. Reducing the cost of household bills will also make a positive contribution to people's health and wellbeing and their ability to actively participate in local activities. This is essential to enable people to remain fit and able to work, which links back to people being able to afford a home.

The Council will encourage new developments to provide spaces for more allotments, community grow spaces and require gardens within new developments to have features that enable people to grow their own food and sufficient storage to accommodate necessary tools and equipment.

There are various grants available to those in need, including:

- the Gloucestershire Welfare Support Scheme²⁴;
- Household Support Fund²⁵; and
- Council led grants such as the warm and well grant, relocation grants, disabled facilities grants²⁶.

²⁴ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/>

²⁵ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/household-support-fund-find-out-more-and-apply/>

²⁶ <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/housing-grants/>

Objective 3.4: Increase the use of Modern Methods of Construction where appropriate

What we will do

- A. Lobby suppliers and government at a local and regional level to influence future policy, strategy, and funding streams to enable the development of Modern Methods of Construction products that comply with our policies
- B. Encourage the use of appropriate Modern Methods of Construction products on developments where it can actively accelerate the delivery of housing and diversify the market without affecting the delivery of the other objectives of this strategy.

Why is this important?

Modern methods of construction - also known as MMC or 'smart construction' is a fast way of delivering new buildings, by maximising the efficiency of material and human resources. RICS²⁷ recognises that the UK construction sector is struggling to meet growing demand, with issues such as supply and demand imbalances contributing to unaffordability and in extremes, homelessness.

MMC is capable of delivering more consistent low-carbon, low-energy performance in finished buildings since most of the construction phase takes place off-site in factory conditions, enabling better quality control over energy-critical aspects such as air tightness and insulation.

MMC is seriously being considered by the government in helping to rapidly increase the supply of housing and address skill shortages and import costs. RICS explains there is an identified skills crisis in mainstream construction, which will likely result in a decrease of 20-25% in the workforce over the next decade. The workforce is ageing, and the rate of new entrants is lagging behind those leaving. They explain that this is likely to be exacerbated by Brexit as one in eight UK construction workers are foreign. In addition, the weakening pound has increased the cost of imported materials, with some 20% of bricks and brickmaking components imported, mostly from the EU. Rapidly rising energy costs coupled with the high levels of energy consumed in making bricks amplify the need to consider MMC.

²⁷ Modern Methods of Construction A forward-thinking solution to the housing crisis? <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/news/news--opinion/modern-methods-of-construction-paper-rics.pdf>

PRIORITY 4: Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Objectives

- 4.1 Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives
- 4.2 Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to everyday amenities
- 4.3 Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets
- 4.4 Improve private rented accommodation
- 4.5 Bring long-term empty homes back into use

This priority is about focussing on the wider context ensuring everyday needs are accessible within a short distance from home and focussing on specific matters to support, grow and create new thriving communities and neighbourhoods.

Objective 4.1: Neighbourhoods that people want to live in and where nature thrives

What we will do

- A. Ensure partnership working delivers the vision, aim and objectives of the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is integrated within the updated Local Plan.
- B. Consider encouraging developers to follow and adopt the Building for Life standard for well designed homes.
- C. Provide a variety of house types and sizes to suit all households and income levels.
- D. New developments to deliver principles and objectives of the Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy and support wider nature recovery.
- E. Improving the ability of local communities to have a say in the Local Plan making process.
- F. Consider the needs of children in the plan making process.
- G. Work with partners, including The Steadings Community Management Trust, to create a thriving new community at The Steadings, Cirencester.

Why is this important?

We aim to promote an inclusive and integrated society, where development enhances people and nature to thrive.

It is important that our housing strategy aligns with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy²⁸, which aims to improve the lives of people in Gloucestershire. Their vision is that Gloucestershire is a place where everyone can live well, be healthy and thrive - housing is a core component of their vision.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises the importance of accessing Green Infrastructure and work undertaken by Wildlife Trusts have shown the significant nature-based interventions to treat diagnosed illnesses in the UK²⁹. The Council has committed to updating its Green Infrastructure Strategy and this will influence the design of future developments in the district. It will help to guide new developments to actively contribute to nature's protection, and help improve connectivity to drive a healthier and more biodiversity rich towns, villages and countryside. The Town and Country Planning Association have provided a useful summary of what Green Infrastructure is on its website.³⁰

The largest and most significant new community that will be created during the 2020s will be The Steadings, Cirencester. This will be a new community on the edge of Cirencester consisting of 2,350 new homes as well as land for employment, retail and community infrastructure. The Council is working with The Steadings Community Management Trust and other partners to deliver on the goal to build a strong, healthy and cohesive community, encouraging a green lifestyle that will support a healthier future.³¹

We will examine opportunities to update the Local plan to reflect findings of the RTPI's Children and Town Planning Practice advice note³² and Make Space for Girls³³. When children and young people grow up in a quality built and natural environment it can have a positive impact on their health, well-being and future life chances.

To do this effectively local communities, including children, should have a say in what these places look like. At the beginning of 2022 the Council invested in a new digital engagement system, Commonplace, having been awarded £65,000 from the government to improve digital engagement within Planning. The CIRP awarded the Council a silver award in October 2022 for its innovative approach to engagement and professionalism to use social media tools to drive engagement in the Local Plan issues and options consultation. The Council continues to work with the government and in November 2022 we secured an additional £240,000 to further enhance our ability to engage with our local communities.

28 <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/our-focus/#:~:text=The%20Gloucestershire%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing,well%2C%20be%20healthy%20and%20thrive>

29 https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/r1_literature_review_wellbeing_benefits_of_wild_places_lres.pdf

30 <https://tcpa.org.uk/what-is-green-infrastructure/>

31 <http://steadingscmt.org.uk/>

32 <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8848/children-and-town-planning-july-2021.pdf>

33 <https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/case-studies/>

Objective 4.2: Ensure adequate infrastructure and access to everyday amenities

What we will do

- A. Examine the possibility of enshrining the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods, or equivalent, in the updated Local Plan.
- B. Maximising developer contributions.
- C. Ensure the timely provision of essential infrastructure and digital connectivity.
- D. Encourage infrastructure providers and organisations to access a proportion of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver identified strategic infrastructure.

Why is this important?

Part of our ambition to support thriving communities and neighbourhoods, and indeed our response to climate change, is to try to reduce the need for car journeys and focus on other forms of sustainable and more active forms of transport. The ambition is to create neighbourhoods where everyday requirements are within a 20-minute walk (around 1 mile) or cycle (around 3 miles) in the larger towns. This will include improving access to employment opportunities, transport, and local amenities.

Sustainable Transport Strategy

In March 2021, the Council appointed its first Sustainable Transport Strategy Lead officer, responsible for developing and delivering a new Sustainable Transport Strategy to support the partial update of the Local Plan and the transition to a carbon zero future. A key consideration will be making it easier for people of all ages and abilities to safely access their local centres or high streets by public transport and active travel (e.g. walking, mobility scooters, pushchairs and bikes, cargo bikes) and increasing options to reduce the reliance on cars.

Developer Contributions

Through the Local Plan updating process the Council will examine opportunities to improve the securing of developer contributions towards education, affordable housing, community facilities, transport, open space amenities, walking and cycling, transport links, etc. We will also seek to ensure development is designed and contributions are made to provide opportunities for physical activity for all, including play equipment, formal and informal sport, allotments, and open spaces with good access so everyone can benefit from amenities.

When legally securing these provisions the Council will also be mindful to ensure infrastructure is delivered in a sensible and timely manner and making sure new development mitigates the impact on existing local communities.

The Council will be inviting bids to access money secured by the Community Infrastructure Levy for the first time in 2023, details, including how to bid for levy, are available on the Council's website.



Objective 4.3: Address challenges of second homes and short-term holiday lets

What we will do

- A. Assess whether a new Local Plan policy can be introduced to restrict second homes, Airbnb style holiday rentals and holiday home renting in new properties.
- B. Continue to actively investigate breaches of planning conditions and thoroughly investigate any complaints where holiday homes or Airbnb style holiday rentals are operating without the correct permission and/or are breaching environmental regulations.
- C. Enable the provision of short-term holiday let accommodation in suitable locations to redirect the demand for this accommodation away from unsuitable locations and /or stressed locations.
- D. Continue to lobby the government on the second home, holiday home and Airbnb style holiday rental issues, especially in official consultations, so this issue remains on their agenda.
- E. If the legislation is introduced that allows us to do so, we will impose higher rates of council tax on empty and second homes.
- F. Support the proposal for a tourist accommodation registration scheme.
- G. Consider extending additional tourism charges on key car parks and other council assets across the district to mitigate the impact of tourism on local communities. Additional money will be focussed on new / updated infrastructure and new affordable homes.

Why is this important?

We are aware of the impact the second homes, holiday homes and Airbnbs are having on communities within the district. We undertook a consultation between February and March 2022 on our ongoing partial update to the Local Plan. This issue was raised on numerous occasions in responses to the consultation and in the conversations with residents at our drop in events with many saying it is negatively affecting communities and housing affordability.

The majority of people supported the idea of the Local Plan restricting second home / holiday ownership in new developments and less than one-fifth were against the idea. Two thirds of respondents thought restricting second home ownership in new developments would make the overall housing stock more affordable with 5% thinking it would become less affordable.

We also asked, 'should the restriction apply to all new housing that is built or a proportion of new housing?' A considerable majority of respondents (71%) thought that second home restrictions should apply within all new housing developments.

Of course, planning restrictions can only apply to new developments. The majority of second homes, holiday homes and AirBnBs are already in existence and the Council has limited powers to intervene. However, we have been lobbying the government to do so, for example, in our consultation response to the Planning White Paper.

The government has listened to our and other authorities in a similar situation and in January 2022 the [government introduced legislation](#) that will prevent owners of second homes from abusing a tax loophole by claiming their often-empty properties are holiday lets, thereby avoiding paying normal tax rates.

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill also intends to introduce further restrictions:

- Councils will also be granted powers to impose higher rates of council tax on empty and second homes (double the standard council tax rate on any home left empty for longer than a year, rather than two years as is currently the case).
- The government also committed in June 2021 to look into the possibility of a “tourist accommodation registration scheme” in England, through the [Tourism Recovery Plan](#).

The government also recently announced that second-home owners may face an Airbnb ban, which would aim to protect tenants living in tourist hotspots.

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Objective 4.4: Improve private rented accommodation

What we will do

- A. The Council will investigate undertaking a Stock Conditions Survey to identify priority areas for improvement.
- B. The Council will appeal to private landlords to insulate their properties, install double glazing and other energy features, to support their residents and reduce their maintenance costs. We will also provide guidance on the best means to do this through our support to the Warm and Well programme.
- C. The Council will target landlords whose properties do not meet the legal Minimum Energy Efficiency standards, to ensure their compliance.
- D. The Council will continue to undertake mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) to drive up the quality and safety of shared housing.
- E. The Council will drive up the quality and safety of shared housing and identify and take enforcement action against unlicensed HMO's.
- F. The Council will work with private landlords and take enforcement action where necessary to tackle hazards and improve the quality of rented accommodation where many of our most vulnerable residents live.

Why is this important?

With many people unable to afford to buy a home, the private rented sector in the district is also seeing a surge in demand. As with the cost of owning a home in the district, which has substantially increased, rental prices have also increased. We need to support people so they can afford to rent a home which is safe to live in.

This report already includes a section on how we can reduce household bills but private landlords have extra responsibilities in this regard to make sure their properties have the necessary insulation, double glazing and other energy and water saving features so that the utility bills of their tenants can be reduced. A well maintained property will keep energy and other costs down and landlords have legal responsibilities to ensure the condition of the property meets health and safety standards for occupation.

It is in the interest of landlords to have well-insulated housing which is in good condition as tenants are healthier and happier and likely to extend their contracts.



Objective 4.5: Bring empty homes back into use

What we will do

- A. Continue to work through towards achieving the key Priorities detailed in the strategy:
 - i. To maintain accurate information about the number of long term empty properties;
 - ii. Provide advice and information to help raise awareness and address issues around empty properties; and
 - iii. Bring empty properties back into use to increase the supply of quality, affordable homes for residents in housing need.
- B. Continue to apply Council Tax Premiums (Levies).
- C. Continue to appeal to the owners of long term empty properties to make their properties available for sale or to rent.
- D. Consider undertaking work to understand the causes and barriers preventing properties being brought back into use

Why is this important?

In common with many other districts, Cotswold District Council faces an increasing shortage of affordable homes for its residents. This gives rise to increased homelessness and difficulty accessing affordable accommodation for many people. Empty properties seriously affect the lives of people in the vicinity and can be a magnet for anti-social behaviour and an unnecessary drain on public services. Tackling empty homes will not only help provide additional much-needed homes within the district, but will contribute to the improvement of the local environment and benefit communities.

Empty homes can cost their owners thousands of pounds a year in council tax, insurance, mortgage and repairs. The district suffers from a lack of housing and we have hundreds of households who have registered for affordable rented homes via that council's Choice Based Lettings system, HomeseekerPlus and many are in housing need.

We are committed to reducing the number of long term empty homes in the district. For more information read our [Long Term Empty Homes Strategy](#).

ANNEX A: KEY LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

A useful library of housing related Acts - <https://thebla.co.uk/housing-acts/>

Housing Act 1985 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/contents>

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>

Housing Act 2004 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/106>

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

Localism Act 2011 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/contents/enacted/data.htm>

Housing and Planning Act 2016 (as amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/contents/enacted>

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018/guide-for-landlords-homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-closes-tax-loophole-on-second-homes>

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

NPPG: Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

Tourism Recovery Plan (policy paper) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-recovery-plan>

First Homes scheme: discounts for first-time buyers <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Building Regulations 2010. Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M, 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

Cotswold Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031 <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/k2kjqv3b/cotswold-district-local-plan-2011-2031-adopted-3-august-2018-web-version.pdf>

Town and Country Planning Association: Healthy Homes Act Campaign <https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-healthy-homes-act/>



ANNEX B: WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF DETERIORATING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY?

Many of the causes of housing unaffordability in Cotswold District are beyond the control of the District Council. For example:

- Wages have not kept pace with house price rises.
- Developers can 'drip-feed' new homes into the market to ensure house prices remain high to maximise profits (or put another
- Land banking (i.e. land being used as a financial asset to increase share prices rather than to deliver housing).
- Right to Buy has left a shortage of social-rented housing nationally.
- Both low interest rates and the increased ability of people being able to get a mortgage have fuelled an increase in house prices.
- Stamp Duty holidays have fuelled increased demand for housing. With more money to spend on buying a home, house prices have risen.
- Second homes, holiday homes and buy to let have removed housing from the market that could otherwise be made available to those who want to own a single home, and the resulting increased demand within a reduced pool of housing stock inflates house prices and worsens affordability.
- The Covid Pandemic resulted in an initial 'dash to the countryside' where there is more space than city living. However, a longer term effect has been the wider societal acceptance of remote and home working with workplaces becoming commutable on the basis of a longer journey that is required less frequently. This has made Cotswold District a more desirable location to live, especially for those working in the West Midlands, South East and the Avon area.
- Not enough new social-rented housing has been built across the country. Subsidies for building social housing have been cut and, more recently, funds have had to be diverted towards resolving fire safety concerns and cladding issues. Subsidies will also be needed to retrofit homes with insulation.
- We also recognise that simply building more and more open market housing is not the right approach. We need a strategy at both a local level and a national level to help deal with the housing (affordability) crisis.

To summarise the context in which this Strategy operates, housing affordability is a multi-faceted national housing issue and the Council's efforts to provide an effective response will always only be part of the solution. Be that as it may, delivering affordable housing helps local people to afford a home.



Delivering housing in a constrained district

We also have to bear in mind that we operate in an incredibly constrained district. For example, 80% of the district is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB). National policy requires that this nationally protected landscape, which has the highest status of protection, must be conserved and enhanced. The scale and extent of development within AONBs must be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the AONB³⁴.

The current Local Plan seeks to focus the majority of housing growth in 17 Principal Settlements³⁵, which are the most sustainable locations with the best access to services, facilities and employment. However, eight of the district's Principal Settlements are completely within the AONB³⁶. A further five Principal Settlements are bound by the AONB on one or more sides and form part of the setting of the AONB³⁷.

A further 6% of the district is designated as a Special Landscape Area, much of which provides an important setting and an effective buffer for the AONB. A further 6% of the district is located within Cotswold Water Park, a large proportion of which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest³⁸, which also has the highest status of protection.

The district also has:

- 33 registered historic parks and gardens
- 144 Conservation Areas (more than any other district in England)
- 5,004 entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest (second after City of Westminster)
- 238 Scheduled ancient monuments
- Various habitats sites, including:
 - » 2 internationally designated [Special Areas of Conservation](#)
 - » 37 other nationally designated [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) and 1 [National Nature Reserve](#)
 - » Various other locally designated sites, such as Local Sites, [Key Wildlife Sites](#) and [Local Nature Reserves](#)
 - » Various areas of Priority Habitat³⁹

The current affordable housing strategy

The Local Plan contains an affordable housing strategy, which seeks to deliver around 64% of the district's affordable housing need (approximately 100 affordable homes a year of an identified need of 157 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2031⁴⁰). The Inspector of the examination of the Local Plan concluded that the affordable housing need could not be met in full. A balance had to be struck in order to achieve sustainable development with regard to delivering affordable housing and the need to protect the high quality built and natural environment and the need to avoid long distance commuting. The Inspector concluded that the Local Plan affordable housing policies were sound⁴¹.

³⁴ NPPF paragraph 176

³⁵ The Principal Settlements are identified by Policy DSI of the adopted Local Plan

³⁶ Andoversford, Blockley, Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Northleach, Stow-on-the-Wold, Tetbury and Upper Rissington

³⁷ Cirencester, Kemble, Mickleton, Moreton-in-Marsh and Willersey

³⁸ [Cotswold Water Park confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest](#)

³⁹ These are wildlife habitats that are listed at section 41 of the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) as being [habitats of principal importance for biodiversity](#).

⁴⁰ [Cotswold District Council SHMA Further Update, Affordable Housing \(HDH Planning, 2016\)](#) and the accompanying [Errata Note \(May 2017\)](#)

⁴¹ See paragraphs 55, 56 and 209 of the Report on the Examination of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (PINS, 5 June 2018, PINS Ref: PINS/F1610/429/2)

The bulk of affordable housing delivery comes from Local Plan Policy H2, which requires up to 30% affordable housing on qualifying brownfield sites and up to 40% affordable housing on qualifying greenfield sites. There are several additional policies that add to the affordable housing supply⁴². Local Plan Policy H1 also requires a suitable mix of house types and sizes, which deliver the smaller house types and sizes that are typically more affordable.

Since the Local Plan was adopted, several additional years of monitoring data have become available, which provide some useful data:

- Between 2015 and 2022, the district delivered 1,244 affordable homes (an average of 178 affordable homes a year). This included 111 social rented homes (an average of 16 per year).
- Between 2022 and 2031, developments with planning permission and remaining Local Plan site allocations are expected to deliver 836 additional affordable homes (net) (an average of 93 per year). Based on historic delivery and future trends, it is conservatively estimated that around 215 further affordable homes will be delivered as windfalls between 2022 and 2031 (an average of 24 per year)⁴³. Based on the current housing land supply, total affordable housing delivery between 2022 and 2031 is therefore expected to be 1,051 affordable homes (an average of 117 per year).
- Total affordable housing delivery between 2015 and 2031 is expected to around 2,295 homes (net) (130 affordable homes per year on average).

The average annual delivery rate of 178 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2022 and the estimated total affordable housing delivery rate of 130 affordable homes a year between 2015 and 2031 far exceed the 100 affordable homes year figure which the Local Plan Inspector considered to be a reasonable number of affordable homes over the plan period.

The estimated number of affordable homes that would be delivered across the plan period was also a conservative figure, as it is better to underestimate than overestimate for the purpose of a Local Plan examination. However, housing delivery has been strong in the district and the Local Plan housing requirement has not been used as a maximum. This in itself has yielded a higher return of affordable homes; nearly 10,000 dwellings (all tenures) being estimated to be delivered over the plan period, which is 117% of the 8,400 dwelling Local Plan housing requirement.

⁴² Local Plan Policies H3 and H4

⁴³ NPPF (2021) Annex 2 defines windfall sites as “Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.” An explanation of how the estimate of future windfall delivery in Cotswold District is calculated and the justification for using a windfall allowance in the housing trajectory is provided at pages 7 to 18 of the [Housing Land Supply Report](#) (CDC, July 2022). In addition to the guidelines provided in that report for assessing windfall delivery, the following additional guidelines have been used for determining whether affordable housing developments count as windfalls:

Any additional affordable housing delivered on 100% affordable housing sites are counted as windfall affordable housing (the number of windfalls excludes the 30% or 40% requirement that would already have been delivered on those sites if the site is within or adjacent to the development boundaries of one of the 17 Principal Settlements identified in the Local Plan).

Market homes bought with grant funding and have been converted into affordable housing are counted as windfall affordable homes.

Affordable housing delivered to date

Between 2011 and 2022, a total of 5,927 new homes have been built within the district. This is a significant over-delivery (28% higher) than the 4,620 homes that were required for that period⁴⁴.

Of the 5,927 homes that were built, 1,880 (32%) were affordable homes. This includes 401 social rented homes, which contribute 8% of the total number of homes delivered and 21% of the number of affordable homes delivered.

Affordable housing delivery in Cotswold District between 2011 and 2022 (gross)

Year	Affordable Rent	Social Rent	Shared Ownership	Equity Model	Key Worker	Total
2011/12	18	140	64	0	0	222
2012/13	9	92	81	0	0	182
2013/14	32	37	27	4	0	100
2014/15	64	21	36	11	0	132
2015/16	55	0	12	25	0	92
2016/17	160	6	62	34	0	262
2017/18	139	3	74	29	0	245
2018/19	176	22	85	8	0	291
2019/20	57	20	54	10	0	141
2020/21	49	17	33	2	13	114
2021/22	12	43	36	8	0	99
Total	771	401	564	131	13	1,880

⁴⁴ The housing requirement of Cotswold District is a minimum of 8,400 dwellings (420 a year) for the period 2011 to 2031, which is set out in Policy DSI of the [Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031](#).

ANNEX C: DATA SOURCES AND RESOURCES

Children and Town Planning. RTPI 2021 <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8848/children-and-town-planning-july-2021.pdf>

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan
<https://cirencesternp.org/>

Community Led Housing
<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>

Cotswold Climate and Ecological Emergencies
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

Cotswold District Council and Bromford form a ground-breaking partnership to deliver more affordable, low-carbon homes for Cotswold people
<https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-and-bromford-form-a-ground-breaking-partnership-to-deliver-more-affordable-low-carbon-homes-for-cotswold-people>

Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Update Spring 2022
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/kbqdj5lw/cdc-corporate-strategy-2022.pdf>

Cotswold District Local Plan 2012 to 2031
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2011-to-2031/>

Cotswold District Local Plan evidence - housing to meet local needs
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

Cotswold Housing Grants
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/housing-grants/>

English Housing Survey data on owner occupiers, recent first time buyers and second homes
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/owner-occupiers-recent-first-time-buyers-and-second-homes#full-publication-update-history>

English indices of deprivation 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Excess mortality during heat-periods: 1 June to 31 August 2022. ONS
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessmortalityduringheatperiods/englandandwales1juneto31august2022>

First Homes scheme: discounts for first-time buyers
<https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2020
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/b43lc0lk/3110-gloucestershire-local-housing-needs-assessment-sept-2020.pdf>

Gloucestershire Welfare Support Scheme
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershire-welfare-support-scheme/>

Homeseeker Plus
<https://www.homeseekerplus.co.uk/choice/>

House Price Statistics. Land Registry 2022
<https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/browse?from=2021-09-01&location=http%3A%2F%2Flandregistry.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fregion%2Fcotswold&to=2022-09-01&lang=en>



House price to workplace-based earnings ratio. ONS, 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

Long Term Empty Homes Strategy 2019 to 2024

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/sjsf1whf/long-term-empty-homes-strategy-2019-2024-cdc.pdf>

Make Space for Girls

<https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/case-studies/>

Modern Methods of Construction A forward-thinking solution to the housing crisis?

<https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/news/news--opinion/modern-methods-of-construction-paper-rics.pdf>

NOMIS official census and labour market statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157373/report.aspx?town=cotswold>

Population projections for local authorities

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from overheating in buildings. Climate Change Committee, July 2022

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Risks-to-health-wellbeing-and-productivity-from-overheating-in-buildings.pdf>

Surface Water: The biggest flood risk of all. GOV.UK, 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surface-water-the-biggest-flood-risk-of-all>

The Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/our-focus/#:~:text=The%20Gloucestershire%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing,well%2C%20be%20healthy%20and%20thrive>

The Steading Community Management Trust

<http://steadingscmt.org.uk/>

UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

Wellbeing benefits from natural Environments rich in wildlife

https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/r1_literature_review_wellbeing_benefits_of_wild_places_lres.pdf

What is Green Infrastructure?

<https://tcpa.org.uk/what-is-green-infrastructure/>



ANNEX D: SCHEMES DELIVERED OR IN THE PIPELINE

Here is a list of [rural] schemes that have been, or are to be, delivered across the district as a result of our work with our Registered Provider partners, the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership (GRHP) and the Rural Housing Enabler.

Land adjacent to Broadleaze, Down Ampney (a social rented housing development - Bromford).

Cotswold District Council own land adjacent to Broadleaze in Down Ampney, which is allocated in the Local Plan for housing development. The Council is currently working with Bromford Housing, assembling two plots of land, to bring forward an exemplar scheme for carbon zero social rented, energy efficient homes.

Patterson Road, Cirencester (36 social rented homes - Bromford)

In 2020, 36 new, energy efficient homes were completed to update and replace existing affordable housing that was no longer fit for purpose. These provide a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership homes, built to modern energy efficiency standards, for local residents.

Churnbridge Row, North Cerney (12 affordable homes - Cirencester Housing)

In 2020, 12 new affordable homes were completed in North Cerney. The Council granted funding for the completion of the development, which played a big part in ensuring that these will always be affordable homes for local people. The scheme comprises 10 houses and flats for affordable rent and two houses for shared ownership.

Wickhams Field, Tetbury (30 social rented homes - Bromford)

In April 2022, a 30-dwelling affordable housing development was completed at Wickhams Field, Tetbury. The site is now fully occupied with most residents having a connection to the town. The 30 homes are a mixture of two and three-bedroom houses and one-bedroom flats, all of which are for social rent.

Chesterton Halt, Cirencester (24 affordable homes - Bromford)

Bromford acquired the Chesterton Halt site in Cirencester for a 100% affordable housing development of 24 no. 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. The scheme was completed in 2019.

Akeman Court, Cirencester

In 2015, Bromford completed the delivery of six houses and seven apartments at Akeman Court in Cirencester on land that had stood empty for some time.

Fortey Road, Northleach

Bromford demolished an abandoned affordable housing block at Fortey Road, Northleach, which had stood empty for many years. In its place, 22 new affordable rent and affordable home ownership homes were completed in 2016.

Chamberlayne Close, Stow-on-the-Wold (18 social rented homes - Bromford)

In July 2022, 18 energy efficient homes for social rent were completed in Stow-on-the-Wold. The previous homes were identified under the Sheltered Housing Review as being no longer fit for purpose for elderly customers and they had a poor energy efficiency rating.



Stockwells, Moreton-in-Marsh (28 social rented homes - Bromford)

Stockwells cul-de-sac in Moreton is being redeveloped to provide 28 new net zero carbon social rented homes. The development will be the first affordable modular build of its kind in the Cotswolds.

The existing homes at Stockwells were built in the 1950s and were not energy efficient. The scheme involves demolishing the 24 existing homes and replacing them with 28 modern, energy-efficient homes which are affordable for tenants to run. The new homes will be completely gas-free and all homes will be fitted with air source heating and solar panels to align with the Council's drive for all affordable housing to be green to the core.

Leaholme Court, Cirencester (44 apartments - Bromford)

44 new apartments for social rent were completed at Leaholme Court in summer 2022, replacing 46 flats built in the early 1960's that were no longer fit for purpose.

Cross Tree Crescent and Oakley Flats, Kempsford (27 1-3 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows - Bromford)

A scheme is underway to demolish 14 sub-standard existing houses and 12 flats and to rebuild 27 new affordable 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows. Oakley Flats are currently under construction and due for completion spring 2023. Cross Tree Crescent is to follow thereafter. These will be modern, energy efficient homes, which are affordable for people to live in and run.

The Sunground, Avening (14 new social rented and shared ownership homes - Bromford)

Work has commenced on the development of three 2-bedroom and six 1-bedroom social rented homes and four 2-bedroom and one 3-bedroom shared ownership homes. These will include various features that will make the homes more carbon efficient and cheaper to operate, such as the homes having an air source heat pump for heating and hot water; electric vehicle charging points; solar panel; provision of water butts; secure cycle storage; and provision of broadband.

Land at Davies Road, Moreton-in-Marsh (15 social rented homes - Cottsway)

This development, located at Davies Road in Moreton-in-Marsh, will provide 15 low-carbon homes for social rent, including a mix of one, two and three-bed properties. The scheme is due to be completed in 2024 and will include sustainable features such as air-source heat pumps and enhanced levels of insulation.

Berrington Road Garages, Chipping Campden (4 1-bed bungalows for social rented - Bromford)

Bromford acquired a site in 2019 at Berrington Road in Chipping Campden in 2019 and completed a development of four no. 1-bedroom affordable bungalows in 2021.



ANNEX E: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS



Stow on the Wold and The Swells Neighbourhood Plan

The supply of affordable housing in Stow on the Wold has been historically low compared to other settlements across the district, even when land is available other more lucrative development has occurred often at ours and the Town Council's objection. The hill top town is completely surrounded by long views across the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural beauty which makes it incredibly sensitive to new housing developments on the edge of the town.

Stow on the Wold Town Council and Swells Parish Council have jointly embarked on preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. It has set a vision which seeks to ensure by 2031 the whole community will have benefitted from new genuinely affordable, energy efficient homes with robust connectivity, and other carbon-neutral developments providing educational and leisure provision, new employment space and greatly improved parking provision. It will thus sustain an energetic and productive community of all ages.

The Town Council finds the attractiveness of the Stow area has brought housing pressures leading to high property values that are unaffordable for those on the average (median) income in Cotswold District. The Town Council believes a lack of an appropriate mix of housing, particularly affordable housing, has led to more economically-active people, particularly the young, being forced to look elsewhere for somewhere to live. Local businesses link difficulties in recruiting staff on high house prices, lack of public transport, high commuting costs and lack of parking to support existing services and facilities.

We agree with the Town Council that improving the availability of affordable housing would enable local young people and others to take up local employment opportunities and help provide sufficient accommodation for an economically active population. The challenge will be to do so in a way that protects and enhances the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a national landscape designation.



Fairford Neighbourhood Plan

Similar to Stow on the Wold and The Swells Neighbourhood Plan, Fairford has also embarked on a Neighbourhood Plan for its area. Their plan is far more advanced and a final draft plan is due to be consulted on in 2023. It contains policies to help preserve the historic character of Fairford, protect green spaces, ensure necessary infrastructure is provided on a timely basis, and ensure that development does not create or increase flood risk.

Their plan directs new housing development to an area, close to the schools, between Leafield Road and the northern extension of Hatherop Road. This will deliver additional affordable housing in the Town over the next decade.



ANNEX F: DELIVERY AND MONITORING

We will need to work in partnership with government agencies, public organisations, the voluntary sectors and private sector providers to deliver the strategy. We will also work with our neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary housing issues and priorities.

We will monitor and assess our progress towards achieving the objectives in this strategy through an action plan. To help us respond to a continually changing environment, we will review our actions annually to make sure they remain effective.

A Housing Strategy Action Plan 2024-25 will be prepared following adoption of the Housing Strategy and will set out what we plan to achieve in year one.

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HOUSING STRATEGY



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