



## Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 20 September 2023

### Councillors present:

Nikki Ind - Chair  
Gina Blomefield  
Claire Bloomer  
Patrick Coleman  
Daryl Corps  
David Cunningham  
Tony Dale  
Mike Evemy  
David Fowles  
Joe Harris  
Paul Hodgkinson

Mark Harris – Vice Chair  
Roly Hughes  
Angus Jenkinson  
Julia Judd  
Juliet Layton  
Andrew Maclean  
Helene Mansilla  
Mike McKeown  
Clare Muir  
Dilys Neill  
Nigel Robbins

Gary Selwyn  
Tony Slater  
Lisa Spivey  
Tom Stowe  
Jeremy Theyer  
Clare Turner  
Chris Twells  
Michael Vann  
Ian Watson  
Len Wilkins

### Officers present:

James Brain, Forward Planning Manager  
Jan Britton, Managing Director - Publica  
Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy Officer  
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager  
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)

Sarah Dalby, Elections Manager  
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer  
Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic Services Support Assistant  
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

## **54** Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Ray Brassington and Jon Wareing

## **55** Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members or Officers present.

## **56** Minutes

The Chair noted that there were exempt minutes as part of the item on Solar Photovoltaic Installation on Council Assets from the previous meeting. It was reaffirmed that any discussion on this would need to take place in closed session.

There were no comments on the exempt minutes.

Council

20/September2023

RESOLVED: That the public and exempt minutes from 19 July 2023 be agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

### Voting Record

**25 For, 1 Against, 4 Abstention, 4 Absent/Did not vote**

| For              | Against     | Abstention     | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Angus Jenkinson  | Roly Hughes | Andrew Maclean | Jon Wareing         |
| Claire Bloomer   |             | Chris Twells   | Nigel Robbins       |
| Clare Muir       |             | David Fowles   | Patrick Coleman     |
| Clare Turner     |             | Dilys Neill    | Ray Brassington     |
| Daryl Corps      |             |                |                     |
| David Cunningham |             |                |                     |
| Gary Selwyn      |             |                |                     |
| Gina Blomefield  |             |                |                     |
| Helen Mansilla   |             |                |                     |
| Ian Watson       |             |                |                     |
| Jeremy Theyer    |             |                |                     |
| Joe Harris       |             |                |                     |
| Julia Judd       |             |                |                     |
| Juliet Layton    |             |                |                     |
| Len Wilkins      |             |                |                     |
| Lisa Spivey      |             |                |                     |
| Mark Harris      |             |                |                     |
| Michael Vann     |             |                |                     |
| Mike Evey        |             |                |                     |
| Mike McKeown     |             |                |                     |
| Nikki Ind        |             |                |                     |
| Paul Hodgkinson  |             |                |                     |
| Tom Stowe        |             |                |                     |
| Tony Dale        |             |                |                     |
| Tony Slater      |             |                |                     |

### **57** Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive (if any)

The Chair introduced the announcements section.

The Chair noted the extensive commitments in the summer they had attended in their role as Chair of Council in the district and in the county. This included the Three Choirs festival launch in Gloucester Cathedral and the opening of the new Cotswold Friends Community Garden in Stow.

The Chair also noted the Mr Motivator Active Cotswold event on Sunday 1 October in Cirencester and encouraged all Members and residents to get involved.

Council

20/September2023

The Chair also wished to congratulate the winners of the Gloucestershire County Council Holiday Activities Fund Awards which included Stow Active Sports, Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust, World Jungle.

The Chair also wished all a Happy Gloucestershire Day for 21 September 2023.

The Leader began his announcements by wishing to offer condolences following the death of David Prewett as one of the founding members for Cirencester Action on Buses. It was noted that the tireless work undertaken against bus service reductions and helping with the design of many of the routes in the area would not be forgotten.

The Leader also wished to highlight to Members the financial challenges faced by the Council in the light of Birmingham City Council issuing a Section 114 notice.

It was highlighted that the reduction in funding and other inflationary pressures had left many councils struggling. It was affirmed that Cotswold District Council was financially solvent, but this could change by the year 2026/27 if financial savings were not made.

It was highlighted that to avoid what Birmingham City Council, Woking Borough Council, and Thurrock Borough Council had gone through, action needed to be taken.

The Leader also noted the Chair's comments in regards to the photo competition, the winning entries of which would be hung in the Chamber.

The Chief Executive was then invited to give any announcements and urged all Councillors to complete their Cyber Security training to ensure they had the skills to prevent Cyber Security attacks.

## **58** Public Questions

Question 1: Councillor Michael Haines, Chipping Campden Town Council

The first public question was from Councillor Michael Haines from Chipping Campden Town Council and the newly appointed Chairman of the Chipping Campden Visitor Information Centre. Councillor Haines addressed the concerns around the withdrawal of the grant funding for the visitor information centres. It was commented that the decision was seen to reflect a lack of understanding about the importance of these centres in promoting the visitor economy. It was noted that the Town Council was not aware of any consultation undertaken. Councillor Haines asked Councillor Dale as the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation.

- What consultation was carried out before the decision on Visitor Information Centres was taken?
- What assessment was made of likely job losses as a result of this decision, and;
- Why was the Town Council not asked to submit proposals to the Commissioning models?

Councillor Dale responded by explaining that it was felt that the public would understand the budget position. It was noted that the decision taken in December 2021 for the grant funding to not continue after 18 months which was communicated to Town and Parish Councils affected.

Question 2: Councillor Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council

Councillor Harrison wished to ask what the Council was doing to ensure decisions on planning matters were being taken properly in accordance with development management policies. It was also asked what controls were in place to ensure decisions were not taken under delegated authority without proper notice or transparency under the scheme of officer delegation. It was commented that some recent decisions were damaging to the character of the district and conflicted with the policy of tackling climate change.

Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, noted that advance sight of the question had been provided by Councillor Harrison. It was noted that the scheme of delegation had strict rules for its use and required that the case officer recommendation being proposed is checked by one other officer before being issued. It was outlined that therefore there were checks and balances provided within the scheme for these decisions. It was noted that the question pre-supposes that officers would attempt to act outside of the scheme of delegation, which was outlined as not being the case.

Councillor Harrison followed-up by commenting that it was viewed as inadvertent non-compliance with the scheme. Councillor Layton highlighted that policies are weighted and there were systems to consider all views and come to a balanced conclusion.

## **59 Member Questions**

The Chair introduced this item by highlighting that the written responses to Member Questions were on desks. These are attached at Annex A

The supplementary questions can be found attached at Annex B.

## **60 Establishment of a Working Group for Boundary Reviews**

The purpose of the report was to seek the approval of Council to create a Working Group to oversee the Local Government Boundary Review and Polling District Review which are due to take place in the next 2 years and agree Terms of Reference for the Group.

The Leader, Councillor Joe Harris introduced the report.

It was noted that the last review of the boundaries for the District Wards was in 2015. It was highlighted that the 32 wards covered by 34 Councillors represented at that time around 2000 electors with a 10% variance for individual wards.

It was highlighted that changes that had taken place since 2015 had meant a varying of the size of wards. It was highlighted that there were ten wards in the District over the 10% size variance set out by the Boundary Commission.

It was noted that a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission had been made to review the size of the wards in the District, and this work was set to be completed in good time before the next set of District elections in 2027.

Council  
20/September2023

It was highlighted that a Polling District review was also required every five years, to look at polling stations and make sure they are fit for purpose.

It was noted that the two reviews would look at the number of Members, the size of the Wards and the polling station location within the District.

Councillor Stowe then seconded the report and provided comments on this item.

It was noted that a democratic deficit could emerge with the larger seats like Campden and Vale having over 2000 electors per Member.

Members welcomed that work had already started on this issue following the May 2023 local elections.

There were various comments by Councillors that welcomed the engagement of all political groups on a cross-party basis.

It was noted by Council that there was an opportunity to review some polling stations and look at future requirements.

It was noted by the Council that the 10% variance was a statutory figure, but there was an opportunity on a local level to take house building into account.

There were various comments about dual Member wards and how these would need to be discussed as part of the reviews.

The Chair then asked each Group Leader for their Member nominations for the Boundary Reviews Working Group:

Councillor Joe Harris as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group confirmed the following Members: Councillors Paul Hodgkinson, Mike Evemy, Patrick Coleman and Clare Muir.

Councillor Stowe as Leader of the Conservative Group then confirmed the following Members: Councillors Stowe and Councillor Fowles.

Councillor Maclean was then confirmed as the nomination from the Green Group.

### Voting Record

**32 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote**

| For              | Against | Abstention | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Maclean   |         |            | Jon Wareing         |
| Angus Jenkinson  |         |            | Ray Brassington     |
| Chris Twells     |         |            |                     |
| Claire Bloomer   |         |            |                     |
| Clare Muir       |         |            |                     |
| Clare Turner     |         |            |                     |
| Daryl Corps      |         |            |                     |
| David Cunningham |         |            |                     |

|                 |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| David Fowles    |  |  |  |
| Dilys Neill     |  |  |  |
| Gary Selwyn     |  |  |  |
| Gina Blomefield |  |  |  |
| Helen Mansilla  |  |  |  |
| Ian Watson      |  |  |  |
| Jeremy Theyer   |  |  |  |
| Joe Harris      |  |  |  |
| Julia Judd      |  |  |  |
| Juliet Layton   |  |  |  |
| Len Wilkins     |  |  |  |
| Lisa Spivey     |  |  |  |
| Mark Harris     |  |  |  |
| Michael Vann    |  |  |  |
| Mike Evey       |  |  |  |
| Mike McKeown    |  |  |  |
| Nikki Ind       |  |  |  |
| Nigel Robbins   |  |  |  |
| Patrick Coleman |  |  |  |
| Paul Hodgkinson |  |  |  |
| Roly Hughes     |  |  |  |
| Tom Stowe       |  |  |  |
| Tony Dale       |  |  |  |
| Tony Slater     |  |  |  |

## **61 A review of the Cotswold District Local Plan housing requirement**

The purpose of the report was to agree that Full Council should approve the Review of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 Housing Requirement, which finds that the local housing need of the district has not changed significantly and that the minimum housing requirement provided by the Cotswold District Local Plan does not require updating.

Councillor Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, introduced the report.

- It was noted that a review of the strategic housing requirement was required every five years, and that a 2020 review highlighted that a partial update of the Local Plan was required to address issues such as changes to national policy and meeting the changing housing need in the District.
- It was highlighted that the adopted local housing requirement sets a minimum of 8400 homes and an additional requirement of 580 nursing and residential bed spaces.
- The review of the housing requirement carried out in Summer 2023 tested the adopted requirement to see if the number of homes needed to be higher or lower to meet housing needs whilst also protecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The review was confirmed to have found that 10,000 homes were already expected to be delivered over the Local Plan period (2011-2031).
- It was noted by Council that the local housing need in the district had not changed significantly, and that the Council had a robust housing land supply of 6.9 years.

- It was highlighted that the situation was being kept under review if any changes in the future to national policies, local housing need and any legal challenge through the planning process by applicants.

The Chair and other Members also wished to thank the Forward Planning officers for their work and for the Member Briefing provided.

It was noted that this was an important report to ensure that future developments are right for communities and are locally managed.

There was a query about special landscape areas and their protection of the AONB. The Chair then invited the Forward Planning Manager to respond to this. It was noted that special landscape areas were defined in policy EN6 of the Local Plan and that these were areas that were important to protect for their landscape character and tranquillity.

Councillor Joe Harris then seconded the report.

The thanks to the officers were reiterated by Councillor Harris for their work and to Councillor Layton for her leadership in this area.

It was noted that the situation ten years ago without a Local Plan and a five year housing land supply had changed communities, and this was why the report was so important to approve.

### Voting Record

**32 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote**

| For              | Against | Abstention | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Maclean   |         |            | Jon Wareing         |
| Angus Jenkinson  |         |            | Ray Brassington     |
| Chris Twells     |         |            |                     |
| Claire Bloomer   |         |            |                     |
| Clare Muir       |         |            |                     |
| Clare Turner     |         |            |                     |
| Daryl Corps      |         |            |                     |
| David Cunningham |         |            |                     |
| David Fowles     |         |            |                     |
| Dilys Neill      |         |            |                     |
| Gary Selwyn      |         |            |                     |
| Gina Blomefield  |         |            |                     |
| Helen Mansilla   |         |            |                     |
| Ian Watson       |         |            |                     |
| Jeremy Theyer    |         |            |                     |
| Joe Harris       |         |            |                     |
| Julia Judd       |         |            |                     |
| Juliet Layton    |         |            |                     |
| Len Wilkins      |         |            |                     |

|                 |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Lisa Spivey     |  |  |  |
| Mark Harris     |  |  |  |
| Michael Vann    |  |  |  |
| Mike Evely      |  |  |  |
| Mike McKeown    |  |  |  |
| Nikki Ind       |  |  |  |
| Nigel Robbins   |  |  |  |
| Patrick Coleman |  |  |  |
| Paul Hodgkinson |  |  |  |
| Roly Hughes     |  |  |  |
| Tom Stowe       |  |  |  |
| Tony Dale       |  |  |  |
| Tony Slater     |  |  |  |

## **62 Appointment of two Independent Persons to the Audit & Governance Committee**

The purpose of this report was to appoint two appropriately skilled and experienced members of the public to be “independent members” of the Audit & Governance Committee.

Councillor Robbins as Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced this item.

It was noted that the advertisement for the role achieved a great response which should be welcomed.

The selected appointees were outlined to Council for their experience and the knowledge they could bring to the Committee.

Councillor Muir as the seconder then addressed Council.

It was highlighted as Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, that the expertise and oversight which would be provided was welcomed.

Council asked whether the appointments would be for a four-year term or would be permanent. The Director of Governance responded that it would be for a four-year term, and the current appointees could apply again if they so wished to after 4 years.

RESOLVED: The Council APPROVED to:

1) APPOINT John Chesshire and Christopher Bass to the Council’s Audit & Governance Committee for a four-year term, commencing immediately.

### **Voting Record**

**32 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote**

| <b>For</b>      | <b>Against</b> | <b>Abstention</b> | <b>Absent/Did not vote</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Andrew Maclean  |                |                   | Jon Wareing                |
| Angus Jenkinson |                |                   | Ray Brassington            |

Council  
20/September2023

|                     |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Chris Twells        |  |  |  |
| Claire Bloomer      |  |  |  |
| Clare Muir          |  |  |  |
| Clare Turner        |  |  |  |
| Daryl Corps         |  |  |  |
| David<br>Cunningham |  |  |  |
| David Fowles        |  |  |  |
| Dilys Neill         |  |  |  |
| Gary Selwyn         |  |  |  |
| Gina Blomefield     |  |  |  |
| Helen Mansilla      |  |  |  |
| Ian Watson          |  |  |  |
| Jeremy Theyer       |  |  |  |
| Joe Harris          |  |  |  |
| Julia Judd          |  |  |  |
| Juliet Layton       |  |  |  |
| Len Wilkins         |  |  |  |
| Lisa Spivey         |  |  |  |
| Mark Harris         |  |  |  |
| Michael Vann        |  |  |  |
| Mike Evey           |  |  |  |
| Mike McKeown        |  |  |  |
| Nikki Ind           |  |  |  |
| Nigel Robbins       |  |  |  |
| Patrick Coleman     |  |  |  |
| Paul Hodgkinson     |  |  |  |
| Roly Hughes         |  |  |  |
| Tom Stowe           |  |  |  |
| Tony Dale           |  |  |  |
| Tony Slater         |  |  |  |

### **63 Amendments to the Constitution - Recommendations of the Constitution Working Group**

The purpose of this report was to consider amendments to the Constitution.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

It was noted that it was important that the Constitution is kept up to date in line with legislation.

The first change outlined was the creation of a Standards Hearing Sub-Committee which was outlined as being good practice for dealing with complaints against District Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors.

It was noted that these hearings are rare but are important for good governance.

It was also highlighted that the recommended two un-paid Town and Parish Councillors would be recruited from a geographical spread and would attend hearings relating to a Town/Parish Councillor in an advisory capacity.

It was noted that the call-in rules were being changed to reflect the outcome of the 2023 local elections.

Councillor Evemy then seconded the item and outlined some points of clarification to the proposals.

It was noted that the terminology was mixed in the report but that the sub-committee would be responsible for undertaking standards hearings whereas general standards matters would remain the responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee.

It was also noted that the word 'must' should replace the word 'should' to reflect the requirements of call-in.

It was therefore noted that the call-in rules would become the following;

*The power of call-in can be exercised by any three Members of the Committee (who must be from either (i) at least two political groups; or (ii) one political group and a nonaligned (independent) Committee Member, if one sits on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*

It was asked as to how Town and Parish Councillors would be recruited for participation in the process. The Director of Governance outlined that some ideas had been taken from other local authorities and Gloucestershire Association of Town and Parish Councils (GATPC). It was noted the approach for recruitment had not been formalised, but that the geographical spread would be considered. Once this had been formalised, it would then go back to Members.

It was reaffirmed that the number of people who could exercise call-in could be more than 3, and that this rule was one that the Council had agreed in its Constitution.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- 1) AGREED to establish a Standards Hearing Sub-Committee (of the Audit and Governance Committee). This would be a politically balanced 3-member sub-committee with membership appointed by the Committee each year.
- 2) INSTRUCTED the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to recruit up to two town and parish council representatives to act as a non-voting consultee(s) at hearings to determine whether a town or parish councillor has breached their council's code of conduct.
- 3) AUTHORISED the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to update i) Part B, Article 8 of the Constitution with consequential amendments to the Audit & Governance Committee's membership Page 95
- 4) AUTHORISED the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to update Part D6, paragraph 4.13, Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

### Voting Record

**32 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote**

| For            | Against | Abstention | Absent/Did not vote |
|----------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Maclean |         |            | Jon Wareing         |

Council  
20/September2023

|                     |  |  |                 |
|---------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Angus Jenkinson     |  |  | Ray Brassington |
| Chris Twells        |  |  |                 |
| Claire Bloomer      |  |  |                 |
| Clare Muir          |  |  |                 |
| Clare Turner        |  |  |                 |
| Daryl Corps         |  |  |                 |
| David<br>Cunningham |  |  |                 |
| David Fowles        |  |  |                 |
| Dilys Neill         |  |  |                 |
| Gary Selwyn         |  |  |                 |
| Gina Blomefield     |  |  |                 |
| Helen Mansilla      |  |  |                 |
| Ian Watson          |  |  |                 |
| Jeremy Theyer       |  |  |                 |
| Joe Harris          |  |  |                 |
| Julia Judd          |  |  |                 |
| Juliet Layton       |  |  |                 |
| Len Wilkins         |  |  |                 |
| Lisa Spivey         |  |  |                 |
| Mark Harris         |  |  |                 |
| Michael Vann        |  |  |                 |
| Mike Evey           |  |  |                 |
| Mike McKeown        |  |  |                 |
| Nikki Ind           |  |  |                 |
| Nigel Robbins       |  |  |                 |
| Patrick Coleman     |  |  |                 |
| Paul Hodgkinson     |  |  |                 |
| Roly Hughes         |  |  |                 |
| Tom Stowe           |  |  |                 |
| Tony Dale           |  |  |                 |
| Tony Slater         |  |  |                 |

#### **64** Petition received in relation to Visitor Information Centres

The purpose of this item was to consider a petition presented by Councillors David Fowles and Tom Stowe regarding Visitor Information Centres in the Cotswold District.

The Chair announced that as the Local Petition Scheme within the Constitution only allowed for a maximum debating time of 15 minutes, it was felt by many Members from all groups that this wasn't sufficient time to debate the topic.

The Chair therefore proposed that this specific Rule of Procedure (in paragraph 19 of the Local Petition Scheme) be suspended for the duration of this item.

Councillor Nikki Ind proposed, and Councillor Joe Harris seconded.

**RESOLVED:** That Council suspend the time limit rule in paragraph 19 of the Local Petition Scheme as outlined for the duration of this item.

Council  
20/September2023  
Voting Record

30 For, 2 Against, 0 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote

| For              | Against        | Abstention | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|----------------|------------|---------------------|
| Angus Jenkinson  | Andrew Maclean |            | Jon Wareing         |
| Claire Bloomer   | Chris Twells   |            | Ray Brassington     |
| Clare Muir       |                |            |                     |
| Clare Turner     |                |            |                     |
| Daryl Corps      |                |            |                     |
| David Cunningham |                |            |                     |
| David Fowles     |                |            |                     |
| Dilys Neill      |                |            |                     |
| Gary Selwyn      |                |            |                     |
| Gina Blomefield  |                |            |                     |
| Helen Mansilla   |                |            |                     |
| Ian Watson       |                |            |                     |
| Jeremy Theyer    |                |            |                     |
| Joe Harris       |                |            |                     |
| Julia Judd       |                |            |                     |
| Juliet Layton    |                |            |                     |
| Len Wilkins      |                |            |                     |
| Lisa Spivey      |                |            |                     |
| Mark Harris      |                |            |                     |
| Michael Vann     |                |            |                     |
| Mike Evey        |                |            |                     |
| Mike McKeown     |                |            |                     |
| Nikki Ind        |                |            |                     |
| Nigel Robbins    |                |            |                     |
| Patrick Coleman  |                |            |                     |
| Paul Hodgkinson  |                |            |                     |
| Roly Hughes      |                |            |                     |
| Tom Stowe        |                |            |                     |
| Tony Dale        |                |            |                     |
| Tony Slater      |                |            |                     |

Councillor Tom Stowe as the Petition Organiser and Leader of the Conservative Group presented the petition to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council.

Councillor Stowe highlighted that:

- Councillor Stowe and Councillor Fowles had presented the petition to the Deputy Chief Executive on Tuesday 5 September which called for the reversal of the decision to cut £54,000 to save visitor information centres in Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury.
- The petition contained 2093 signatures and 953 signatures from Cotswold residents. It was noted that since the petition was handed in, there were an additional 316 signatories with 83 of these being from Cotswold district residents.

Council

20/September2023

- The response was higher than the Council's budget consultation and was a great example of local democracy in action.
- Visitor information centres helped contribute to the tourism sector of the Cotswolds which was an industry providing many jobs to residents.
- The decision to remove grant support taken by Cabinet would have an impact on the provision of visitor information centres.
- The funding was to be withdrawn at the end of September and therefore that time was of the essence for Cabinet to reconsider the decision taken.

Councillor Fowles, the second petition organiser then spoke and highlighted that:

- The Council's stated principles to decision-making, and that local views would be considered to contribute to decisions taken.
- There were Members from both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups who represent wards which have Visitor Information Centres located in their ward.
- The decision taken in December 2021 by Cabinet included a consultation with these centres, which had not appeared to have been done.
- The centres provide the opportunity to seek information and buy products which was felt could not be as useful online.

The Chair then addressed Council as a Tetbury ward member. It was noted that there was no known engagement with Tetbury residents, and that only 7 residents from Tetbury had signed the petition itself. It was noted that Tetbury Town Council had been planning for the removal of funding, and that the financial position of the Council needed to be considered.

Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation then addressed Council as the accountable member and said that:

- There had been a lot of proactive efforts to promote modern and active tourism and this decision could be helpful to provide modern digital services.
- The concerns were recognised by the Cabinet, and that the Council had given grants during its time in office.
- Many of the Visitor Information Centres had been planning for the future when the original decision was taken in December 2021.
- Digital training had been given to help all organisations businesses in the district promote tourism globally.
- Whilst it was regrettable that the grants had to be removed, it was hoped that the Visitor Information Centres would continue to engage with their communities.

There were various points raising concerns over the future of these centres once the grant funding had been withdrawn. However, it was also highlighted how alternative funding sources such as Crowdfund Cotswold may be available to them.

It was noted that Cabinet would need to reconsider the decision quickly if it wished to do so before the funding was withdrawn. Therefore, option two would not be considered as helpful at this point.

Councillor Every then proposed the following resolution in response to the petition:

“This Council notes:

Council

20/September2023

- 1) The petition signed by 957 residents and 1,140 non-residents of the District and the desire from the signatories for the Visitor Information Centres in Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold, Bourton-on-the-Water and Tetbury to remain open;
- 2) The budget it passed on 15 February 2023 removed the funding allocation for the four visitor information centres with effect from 1 October 2023 following the decision by Cabinet on 6 December 2021 to continue funding the centres for an 18-month period until 30 September 2023;
- 3) The report presented to Cabinet on 17 July 2023 when the Cabinet decided to allocate an additional £6,000 to the Bourton Visitor Information Centre in recognition of the support to be provided for coach parking in the village until 31 December 2023.
- 4) That the four affected centres have been offered non-financial, transitional, strategic support by the Council's economic development lead, working closely with the local town and parish councils alongside input from the tourism team until 31 December 2023. The purpose of the support is to work alongside the VICs towards a self-sustaining business model and provide signposting to known funding opportunities for projects which facilitate digital engagement. This could include connecting to business support or training and potential opportunities to bid for relevant funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund or Rural England Prosperity Fund to support sustainable future delivery models.
- 5) The Council recognises its financial position. It is facing a significant financial challenge over the medium-term with a budget gap of £5m identified (2024/25 to 2026/27) in the February 2023 MTFs and a forecast overspend of £448,000 in its 2023/24 revenue budget as reported to Cabinet on 12 September. With both expenditure and income pressures continuing it is likely the budget gap will increase in part due to higher levels of inflation this year. The Council therefore needs to take action to bring its income and expenditure into line.

The Council therefore resolves to take no additional action in response to this petition.”

It was then noted that within the Council's Budget passed by Council in February 2023, the Visitor Information Centre funding reductions had been outlined and agreed by a majority vote.

It was highlighted that the financial position of the Council was not considered within the petition's resolution, and therefore could not be considered by those signing.

Councillor Joe Harris as seconder of the Liberal Democrat's Group resolution said that the debate had been constructive, but that the financial challenges meant that the proposal in the petition could not be met.

It was highlighted that some services may need to be reconsidered or taken on by Town and Parish Councils if possible. It was further noted that the Town and Parish Councils did not have a cap on their precept levels, and therefore this could be a source of funding for them.

Following a query raised by the Senior Democratic Services Officer, it was confirmed by the Director of Governance that the Liberal Democrat Group Resolution would be voted upon as it was the first resolution proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED: That Council NOTED:

Council

20/September2023

1. The petition signed by 957 residents and 1,140 non-residents of the District and the desire from the signatories for the Visitor Information Centres in Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold, Bourton-on-the-Water and Tetbury to remain open;
2. The budget it passed on 15 February 2023 removed the funding allocation for the four visitor information centres with effect from 1 October 2023 following the decision by Cabinet on 6 December 2021 to continue funding the centres for an 18-month period until 30 September 2023;
3. The report presented to Cabinet on 17 July 2023 when the Cabinet decided to allocate an additional £6,000 to the Bourton Visitor Information Centre in recognition of the support to be provided for coach parking in the village until 31 December 2023.
4. That the four affected centres have been offered non-financial, transitional, strategic support by the Council's economic development lead, working closely with the local town and parish councils alongside input from the tourism team until 31 December 2023. The purpose of the support is to work alongside the VICs towards a self-sustaining business model and provide signposting to known funding opportunities for projects which facilitate digital engagement. This could include connecting to business support or training and potential opportunities to bid for relevant funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund or Rural England Prosperity Fund to support sustainable future delivery models.
5. The Council recognises its financial position. It is facing a significant financial challenge over the medium-term with a budget gap of £5m identified (2024/25 to 2026/27) in the February 2023 MTFs and a forecast overspend of £448,000 in its 2023/24 revenue budget as reported to Cabinet on 12 September. With both expenditure and income pressures continuing it is likely the budget gap will increase in part due to higher levels of inflation this year. The Council therefore needs to take action to bring its income and expenditure into line.

The Council therefore RESOLVED to take no additional action in response to this petition

### Voting Record

**21 For, 10 Against, 1 Abstention, 2 Absent/Did not vote**

| <b>For</b>      | <b>Against</b>   | <b>Abstention</b> | <b>Absent/Did not vote</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Angus Jenkinson | Chris Twells     | Andrew Maclean    | Jon Wareing                |
| Claire Bloomer  | Daryl Corps      |                   | Ray Brassington            |
| Clare Muir      | David Cunningham |                   |                            |
| Clare Turner    | David Fowles     |                   |                            |
| Dilys Neill     | Gina Blomefield  |                   |                            |
| Gary Selwyn     | Jeremy Theyer    |                   |                            |
| Helen Mansilla  | Julia Judd       |                   |                            |
| Ian Watson      | Len Wilkins      |                   |                            |
| Joe Harris      | Tom Stowe        |                   |                            |
| Juliet Layton   | Tony Slater      |                   |                            |
| Lisa Spivey     |                  |                   |                            |
| Mark Harris     |                  |                   |                            |
| Michael Vann    |                  |                   |                            |
| Mike Evemy      |                  |                   |                            |

|                 |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Mike McKeown    |  |  |  |
| Nikki Ind       |  |  |  |
| Nigel Robbins   |  |  |  |
| Patrick Coleman |  |  |  |
| Paul Hodgkinson |  |  |  |
| Roly Hughes     |  |  |  |
| Tony Dale       |  |  |  |

## 65 Notice of Motions

There were two motions presented to Full Council as included within the document pack.

### Motion 1: Rail Ticket Offices Motion.

The motion was presented by Councillor Hodgkinson as the proposer.

- It was noted that this issue was important as it was central to the concerns from the closure of rail ticket offices. The specific concerns were around accessibility, the quality of service and the future of public transport within the District.
- It was highlighted there had been a decline in rail ticket offices over the previous 10 years which had been met with public concern. It was stated that recent announcements in the Summer of 2023 about the closure of ticket offices in Moreton and Kemble and in Kingham in West Oxfordshire.
- It was noted that a petition had been launched by Councillor Hodgkinson and Councillor Jenkinson in response to the proposed closure of Moreton's rail ticket office, which had received public support.
- It was noted that there was a concern around job security for those staff working in ticket offices in the District.
- It was noted that the Chief Executive as part of the motion was being instructed to write to Mark Harper MP, as Secretary of State for Transport, and also to Great Western Railway in regards to the closures.
- It was also noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could provide value in questioning the decision with representatives from the railway.

An amendment had been tabled by Councillor Fowles and seconded by Councillor Blomefield which struck out point 3 of the resolution (the referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and inserted the following point (point 4):

- *Petition the MP for the Cotswolds to write to Mark Harper MP, Secretary of State for Transport, to request a review of the provision of rural ticket offices in the Cotswolds.*

Councillor Hodgkinson clarified that in proposing the motion he was altering the motion to accept the insertion of point 4 but without removing point 3 which referred the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Jenkinson as the seconder, spoke in regard to the altered motion.

- It was highlighted that whilst there was an understanding to make the railways viable, it was a core service for many residents.
- It was reaffirmed that many individuals struggle with a digital platform for tickets, and having a human support was important.

Councillor Fowles asked for clarity in regard to the motion due to some revisions being accepted. The Chair clarified that the motion was altered by the proposer who accepted the amendment in regard to point 4. Councillor Fowles then announced that following discussions with Councillor Hodgkinson before this item, that the amendment would be withdrawn so the proposal could be fully supported.

There was also a question by Councillor Fowles about whether it could be a cross-party motion, but the Chair highlighted that Councillor Jenkinson as seconder had already spoken to the motion.

There were various comments made in debate raising concerns for elderly and disabled residents, and those lacking ICT skills in the district highlighted in the motion. It was also highlighted how these were the same residents affected by the removal of cash payments from car parks.

It was noted that there was a safeguarding element to rail ticket offices, especially with railway stations at night.

It was highlighted that as the railway companies were private operators, and it was important for them to have a human interface.

It was noted that providing ticket offices was particularly important to promote sustainable travel into the future for all people.

Councillor Blomefield, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, spoke about the importance for Members to engage with the sessions proposed with Great Western Railway.

There were comments raised about the capacity for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine this on top of the usual business.

**RESOLVED:** That Council agreed (as amended) to

- **INSTRUCT** the Chief Executive to write to Mark Harper MP Secretary of State for Transport, and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the office(s) at Moreton in Marsh, Kemble and Kingham.
- **INSTRUCT** the Chief Executive to write to Great Western Railway expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office(s) at Moreton in Marsh, Kemble and Kingham.
- **REFERRED** the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Great Western Railway are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing at our local stations.

Council  
20/September2023

- PETITION the MP for the Cotswolds to write to Mark Harper MP, Secretary of State for Transport, to request a review of the provision of rural ticket offices in the Cotswolds.

### Voting Record

**30 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention, 3 Absent/Did not vote**

| For              | Against | Abstention  | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|---------|-------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Maclean   |         | Gary Selwyn | Chris Twells        |
| Angus Jenkinson  |         |             | Jon Wareing         |
| Claire Bloomer   |         |             | Ray Brassington     |
| Clare Muir       |         |             |                     |
| Clare Turner     |         |             |                     |
| Daryl Corps      |         |             |                     |
| David Cunningham |         |             |                     |
| David Fowles     |         |             |                     |
| Dilys Neill      |         |             |                     |
| Gina Blomefield  |         |             |                     |
| Helen Mansilla   |         |             |                     |
| Ian Watson       |         |             |                     |
| Jeremy Theyer    |         |             |                     |
| Joe Harris       |         |             |                     |
| Julia Judd       |         |             |                     |
| Juliet Layton    |         |             |                     |
| Len Wilkins      |         |             |                     |
| Lisa Spivey      |         |             |                     |
| Mark Harris      |         |             |                     |
| Michael Vann     |         |             |                     |
| Mike Evely       |         |             |                     |
| Mike McKeown     |         |             |                     |
| Nikki Ind        |         |             |                     |
| Nigel Robbins    |         |             |                     |
| Patrick Coleman  |         |             |                     |
| Paul Hodgkinson  |         |             |                     |
| Roly Hughes      |         |             |                     |
| Tom Stowe        |         |             |                     |
| Tony Dale        |         |             |                     |
| Tony Slater      |         |             |                     |

### Motion 2: Grey Water Motion

Councillor Julia Judd as the proposer of the motion introduced the motion. The following points were highlighted:

- It was highlighted how there were very simple ways of capturing rainwater such as water butts which could have a big impact.

Council

20/September2023

- It was noted that there were significant problems with water drought, and the harvesting of rainwater and re-use of grey water was important to combat this.
- It was noted that minimising hot water use was important for reducing carbon emissions.
- It was noted that it was important that the use of these systems can prevent localised flooding.

Councillor Maclean then seconded the motion and spoke to the motion.

- It was highlighted that promoting these schemes in developments is difficult to enforce at present.
- It was highlighted that river pollution was also a big problem and these systems will help to reduce that.

An amendment was tabled by Councillor Spivey which was highlighted at Annex A.

Councillor Judd and Councillor Maclean accepted the amendment, and this became the substantive motion.

Councillor Spivey as the proposer for the amendment thanked Councillor Judd and Councillor Maclean for accepting the amendment.

It was noted that the measures should be part of national standards and it was important to promote this within the National Planning Policy Framework, and with the water companies.

It was highlighted that as part of the review of the Local Plan, the Cotswold District design code could be reviewed to reflect the intentions of this motion.

It was highlighted by Members that parts of the motion did not go far enough to cover areas like agriculture which were high users of water.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

Endorses the use of rainwater and greywater systems to achieve water neutrality.

- Request that officers investigate how rainwater and greywater systems can be promoted for use in developments and properties in the wider District.
- Request that officers investigate how rainwater and/or greywater systems could be applied to Council assets such as the Council Offices, Trinity Road.
- Request that the findings of these requests be delivered by officers through a briefing note to Members'.
- Instructs the Chief Executive to write to the MP asking for urgent action on funding for the Environment Agency to investigate and take action on illegal sewage spills by water companies
- Writes to the Secretary of State for DH/LUC lobbying for changes in the NPPF and Building Regulations, making the introduction of greywater recycling mandatory in new housing developments

Council  
20/September2023  
Voting Record

31 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention, 3 Absent/Did not vote

| For              | Against | Abstention | Absent/Did not vote |
|------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Andrew Maclean   |         |            | Chris Twells        |
| Angus Jenkinson  |         |            | Jon Wareing         |
| Claire Bloomer   |         |            | Ray Brassington     |
| Clare Muir       |         |            |                     |
| Clare Turner     |         |            |                     |
| Daryl Corps      |         |            |                     |
| David Cunningham |         |            |                     |
| David Fowles     |         |            |                     |
| Dilys Neill      |         |            |                     |
| Gary Selwyn      |         |            |                     |
| Gina Blomefield  |         |            |                     |
| Helen Mansilla   |         |            |                     |
| Ian Watson       |         |            |                     |
| Jeremy Theyer    |         |            |                     |
| Joe Harris       |         |            |                     |
| Julia Judd       |         |            |                     |
| Juliet Layton    |         |            |                     |
| Len Wilkins      |         |            |                     |
| Lisa Spivey      |         |            |                     |
| Mark Harris      |         |            |                     |
| Michael Vann     |         |            |                     |
| Mike Evely       |         |            |                     |
| Mike McKeown     |         |            |                     |
| Nikki Ind        |         |            |                     |
| Nigel Robbins    |         |            |                     |
| Patrick Coleman  |         |            |                     |
| Paul Hodgkinson  |         |            |                     |
| Roly Hughes      |         |            |                     |
| Tom Stowe        |         |            |                     |
| Tony Dale        |         |            |                     |
| Tony Slater      |         |            |                     |

**66** Next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council will be on Wednesday 22 November 2023.

**67** Matters exempt from publication

Full Council did not enter into private session.

**68** Exempt minutes from the meeting on 19th July 2023

The exempt minutes within the private document pack were taken as read and agreed at Agenda Item 3.

Council  
20/September2023

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.35 pm

Chair

(END)