

# OCTOBER 2025

 @ErminWard

I post helpful information, including road closures for infrastructure repair etc., on my Ward Councillor Facebook page. Please could you mention this in your Parish News and Village Website. **Underlined text is linked.**

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## Forthcoming Committee Meetings (underlined texts are linked)

Wednesday 8 October	2.00 pm	<a href="#">Planning and Licensing Committee</a>
Monday 13 October	4.00 pm	<a href="#">Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a>
Thursday 16 October	6.00 pm	<a href="#">Cabinet</a>
Tuesday 28 October	2.00 pm	<a href="#">Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street Trading</a>

## Recent Committee Meetings

Thursday 4 September	6.00 pm	<a href="#">Cabinet</a>
Wednesday 10 September	2.00 pm	<a href="#">Planning and Licensing Committee</a>
Wednesday 24 September	6.00 pm	<a href="#">Council</a>
Thursday 25 September	2.00 pm	<a href="#">Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire &amp; Street Trading</a>
Tuesday 30 September	4.00 pm	<a href="#">Audit and Governance Committee</a>

## CABINET DECISIONS - 4 SEPTEMBER

### **Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2025 asked that consideration be given to putting local social and /or archaeological artefacts on public display at the Council's offices, including artefacts related to the history of local government in the area.

The Council's Leisure and Culture Manager will explore with the Museum operator, Freedom Leisure, opportunities to improve public access to the Museum's extensive collection

## Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2025-2030

Presentation of a new Preventing Homelessness Strategy to assist the Council in delivering its statutory duties towards households facing homelessness.

Cabinet Approved with immediate effect.

### **Standards**

Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy and HMO Amenity Review and renew the Civil Penalties Enforcement Policy and the HMO Amenity Standards policy to take account of legislative changes and new guidance from tribunal decisions.

Cabinet Approved the Policy for Civil Penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

Approved the HMO Amenity Standards Policy.

Delegated authority for revisions to the Civil Penalties Policy and the issuing of Civil Penalties to the Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services.

### **Corporate Plan 2025-2028 refresh**

To seek Cabinet's endorsement of a refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2025 through to 2028 to reflect significant national and local changes since last year's agreement on the extant Corporate Plan.

Cabinet

1. Reviewed the appended Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and agreed that the quotes 2. 3. attributed to Councillors would be reviewed. Subject to the modifications of the councillors' quotes discussed, agreed to recommend to the Full Council to adopt the Corporate Plan. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise the design.

### **Service Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1**

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance

- Noted overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2025-26 Q1 (April-June 2025).

### **People and Culture Strategy**

To seek Cabinet's approval of the People & Culture Strategy (Annex A) and the accompanying Year 1 implementation plan (Annex B).

Cabinet:

1. Approved the People & Culture Strategy as detailed in Annex A
2. Approved the four core workforce values:
  - a. We put our communities first:
  - b. We are one team: working for our residents and businesses
  - c. We are business focussed: ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and good value for money

d. We are set up for success: to deliver against our corporate priorities  
Notification of Draft Decisions Thursday, 4 September 2025

3. 4. Approved the year 1 implementation plan as detailed in Annex B (September 2025 – August 2026) Noted the Internal Communications & Engagement Strategy as detailed in Annex C

### **Financial Performance Report 2025-26 Quarter 1**

To present the first 2025/26 budget monitoring position to Cabinet and seek Cabinet's endorsement of the proposed financial management approach and related reserve transfers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and noted the financial position set out in the report.
2. Endorsed the approach to financial management for 2025/26 as set out in paragraph 4.8 of the report.
3. Endorsed the principle to transfer any additional year-end surplus to the Transformation and Capacity Building earmarked reserves, as set out in paragraphs 4.10 to 4.11 of the report.
4. Endorsed the principle of the transfer of 50% of any year-end Planning Fee income (over and above the budgeted level) to the Planning Appeals earmarked reserve, as set out in paragraph 4.22 of the report.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW - DEVOLUTION**

Gloucestershire's devolution process is estimated to cost £3.6 million for the period up to the submission of the county's preferred devolution plan in November 2025, which local councils are seeking government funding to cover. It has been reported that the devolution of Gloucestershire councils could eventually run to around £30m. The government believes the simpler unitary structure will be more cost effective to run and lead to better outcomes for residents and improved local accountability. However from a district and parish council point of view, it will mean that contact and decision making is moved further away from residents.

Gloucestershire's current county and district local government system has been in place since 1974 consisting of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), and six district councils – Stroud, Gloucester, Cotswolds, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean.

Gloucestershire will become either one or two unitary authorities, the seven local councils will be dissolved.

Three options are being considered:

1. Merging all seven councils into one Gloucestershire "super unitary"
2. Splitting the county down the middle into two
3. Creating "Greater Gloucester" authority and a second authority for the rest of the county - aka the doughnut.

Council leaders and officers will shortly submit a final proposal for each option which will be voted on by the Cabinets in November.

The proposals will be open to a Public Consultation from January 2026 to April 2026. The government will then assess the chosen models against six criteria. The new authority (or authorities) is/are due to be launched in April 2027.

As I have formerly said, around 30% of Gloucestershire residents live in rural areas and there are numerous tiny parish councils, many more than in average LA areas.

It is only fair that rural residents have representation within the new unitary authority and that their concerns are not ignored whilst councillors (there will be two unitary councillors per 'ward') focus on the bigger issues of schools, health, highways etc. I am leaning towards a Rural Area Board, aka a Neighbourhood Committee. From my understanding with the new CEO of Cotswold District Council, Jane Portman, 10 Neighbourhood Committees of about 90,000 residents will form part of the unitary base and my view is that at least one should be representative of residents who live in rural areas.

The total population for Cotswold District in mid-2022 was 91,360 so a 'Cotswold' Area Board might be feasible. Alternatively a Rural Parish Area Board, which soaks up small rural parishes from neighbouring district councils, might be appropriate.

Rural parishes are also advised to collaborate and communicate with one another so that they can share valuable information and organise group campaigns together.

## PLANNING

The revised 5-year housing target means there is a need to find sites for an additional 1,036 homes a year across the district. As reported in my September update, the leader of the council has written to the Government to point out that in a district which is 80% Cotswold National Landscape, this target is unrealistic.

Many new applications for multiple housing projects are being submitted to the planning committee and the [September committee meeting](#) was illustrative about how things will go, even the 'tilted balance' does not mean that planning policies are no longer robust. However, one application, which was recommended for refusal and was contrary to at least five policies, was withdrawn the day before the committee meeting. One was unanimously refused by the planning committee and one was unanimously approved. The application which was approved aligned with policies in the NPPF, the Cotswold Local Plan and the Fairford Neighbourhood Development

Plan. The developer had worked with Fairford Town Council and CDC planning officers and had the support of the community.

## TILTED BALANCE AND POLICIES

As reported in my June Newsletter, CDC has a revised expected 5 Year Housing Land Supply 2024-2029 of 5,439 but can only demonstrate delivery of 1.8 years (1,908).

**TILTED BALANCE:** NPPF Paragraph 10 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Delivery - the 'Tilted Balance' - **Benefits** outweighing **Harm** has shifted - i.e. applications are more likely to be approved.

The update has rendered the Cotswold Local Plan 'out of date' - specifically Policies DS1, DS2, DS3 and DS4 - other policies are still relevant. CDC is therefore undertaking an update (2-3 years). Cotswold National Landscape areas will retain the usual protections.

Other Paragraphs of the NPPF which are steering the new shift: In particular 11d, Footnote 8, 68, 84, 91, 110, 115, 129, 135, 139.

## BINS AND MISSED COLLECTIONS

Despite new efforts being made, missed bin collections continue to fill my inbox (PLEASE continue to keep me informed, I cannot help if I do not know that your bins have not been collected). One Ermin resident resolutely posed a question to Full Council about this issue and she was offered a full apology and assurance that the service will improve. The issue has also been picked up by the press (see link below). The power of asking a public question at Full Council! If you would like to ask a question at full council, please get in touch and I will guide you through the process.

<https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/cheltenham-news/cotswold-residents-frustration-over-appalling-10535313>

## Public consultation for Gloucestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/.../gloucestershire.../>

Gloucestershire County Council, in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including Cotswold District Council, has developed this strategy to support nature recovery across the county. It identifies areas where efforts are already underway and highlights locations where new habitat creation and enhancement will deliver the greatest benefits for biodiversity. The strategy has been designed to inform planning and development decisions, assist farmers and landowners, and guide community-led environmental initiatives.

This is a key opportunity for you to influence how we protect and enhance nature across the county.

Your voice matters – we strongly encourage you to take part and share your views. You can either respond directly to Gloucestershire County Council, or share your comments with Cotswold District Council to be included in a collative response.

## A417

Visit the [A417 Missing Link web page](#).

The Customer Hub, located at the crusher compound at Shab Hill, is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am until 2pm. You can visit any time during these hours, without pre-booking an appointment. Members of the team will be on hand to answer questions. A417 Project Office, Birdlip, Gloucester, GL4 8JX

What3words: <https://w3w.co/shaped.quietest.payback>

10 mph and site restrictions must be adhered to. Please Reverse Park.

Site visits for members of the public. If you are interested, please contact [A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk)

All roadworks and planned road closures on motorways and major A roads, including the A417, are published on the Traffic England website: [www.trafficengland.com](http://www.trafficengland.com). Road Closure Reports, which includes a seven day look ahead of planned road closures, are updated twice daily, Monday to Friday except for bank holidays: [www.nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/road-closure-report/](http://www.nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/road-closure-report/).

To find the latest information about local road closures, please visit:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/>.

Webpage: [www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a417-missing-link/](http://www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a417-missing-link/)

Email: A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk

Phone: 0300 123 5000

X: @HighwaysSWEST

Facebook: @HighwaysSWEST

Did you know that you can report highway issues, such as potholes, and track their progress online at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fixmystreet](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fixmystreet) Or download the app: FixMyStreet