Introduction from David Stanley, Chief Finance Officer at Cotswold District Council

Dear Resident,

I am writing to share with you how Cotswold District Council will use your council tax to support our communities in the upcoming financial year, I will also update you on how it was spent in the financial year coming to an end.

Our net budget for 2026/27 is £17.2 million, funded through council tax, business rates and government funding allocation. National funding for councils is lower than it was a decade ago, so we must use your contributions carefully. Only around 7% of your council tax goes to Cotswold District Council. Most is allocated to Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Police, with some also going to your town or parish council.

Our share of council tax funds essential local services, including:

- Waste and recycling
- Leisure and cultural facilities
- Street cleaning
- Environmental health
- Planning

Other services, including roads, libraries, adult social care and public health, are provided by Gloucestershire County Council.

To maintain core services despite reduced national funding, our portion of council tax will rise by less than 10p a week - £5 a year for a Band D home. This small increase helps ensure services remain sustainable.

These decisions on council tax are not taken lightly. But work has already started to prepare for local government reorganisation, which will replace the current two-tier system of county and district/borough councils in Gloucestershire with one or two unitary councils. This means our decisions are guided by a clear aim: to ensure the district council hands over strong and high-performing local services, and communities that are resilient and well-positioned for the years ahead.

Thank you,

David Stanley
Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer

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Cotswold District Council's priorities: delivering good services while enhancing and protecting our communities

Cotswold District Council aims to be proactive and responsive to the needs of its residents and businesses and to build for the future while respecting the district's heritage.

Our priorities

- Preparing for the future
- Delivering good services
- Responding to the climate emergency
- Delivering housing
- Supporting communities
- Supporting the economy

Our values

- We put our **communities first:** their priorities are our priorities
- We are **one team:** working for our residents and businesses
- We are **business focussed:** ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and good value for money
- We are **set up for success:** to deliver against our corporate priorities

Keep up-to-date with our monthly Cotswold Roundup e-newsletter, packed with the latest updates.

For local businesses, our Business Matters newsletter shares news, insights and opportunities each month.

Scan the QR code to sign up to our newsletters.

Help if you are struggling to pay your council tax

We understand that council tax can be a challenge for some to pay and we have support in place to help those who need it. If you are on low income or claim benefits you could be entitled to help under our Council Tax Support Scheme.

For more information visit: www.cotswold.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport
If you are not online you can call: 01285 623035

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Leaving a lasting legacy

Strong services, resilient communities, a lasting impact

Explaining the Cotswold District Council budget for 2026/27

Big changes are coming...

New, greener waste fleet

We're making our biggest carbon-cutting move yet by replacing our ageing waste collection fleet with cleaner, more reliable vehicles. With the fleet responsible for almost half of the council's carbon footprint, upgrading it will play a key role in reducing emissions. The change will also improve the reliability of recycling collections for residents.

The Council will introduce its first electric recycling vehicle and will switch to using Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in the rest of the fleet, where the sustainability of the source can be assured. With the existing vehicles nearing the end of their operational life, most costs were already accounted for as part of regular lifecycle replacement.

Local Plan: thank you to all those who made their voice heard

Nearly 2,000 residents, businesses and community groups responded to our recent Local Plan consultation – an unprecedented number and more than twice as many as in previous years.

The comments were high-quality, and we are very grateful to everyone who shared their invaluable local knowledge.

The Council's planning team is now reviewing all the submissions and will use them to shape the final draft of the Local Plan, due to be published later this year, when you will have a chance to comment again.

The final Plan is scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate before the end of 2026.

Shaping the future: have your say on local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire

The government is consulting on reorganising council structures, with three options on the table. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help shape how services are delivered in your area.

You can learn more about the three proposals and the process on the Future Gloucestershire website (futuregloucestershire.org.uk).

Please make sure you have your say – scan the QR code to take part in the consultation.

The consultation closes on **26 March.**

Where the Council's money comes from

- **34%** Government grants
- **38%** Service income, fees & charges
- **24%** Council tax
- **5%** Business rates

Where the Council's money will be spent in 2026/27

- **39%** Waste & recycling
- **9%** Leisure, culture & tourism
- **10%** Planning services
- **-11%*** Car parks & public conveniences
- **6%** Revenues, benefits & housing support
- **9%** Communities & place
- **7%** Non service expenditure
- **33%** Organisational cost

Broken down as:

- 8% ICT
- 8% CEX, finance, HR, legal, comms
- 4% Strategic housing & assets
- 7% Customer services
- 6% Democratic services & elections

*while there are costs to running the car parks and public conveniences, we recoup those costs as part of running the service.

What we delivered with your council tax last year

Last year we maintained financial sustainability with a balanced budget and setting aside funds to prepare for the future. As we work towards leaving a lasting legacy, we've delivered some key achievements in line with our updated priorities:

Delivering good services - Our customer services team continue to deliver an excellent service, achieving a 98% satisfaction rate this year.

Responding to the climate emergency - 24 electric-vehicle charging points have been installed in car parks across the district, helping us drive towards a greener future.

Delivering housing - Changes to government housing targets mean we have been busy updating the council's local plan to ensure new homes are built in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure.

Supporting communities - Residents have been able to access over £341,000 in financial support thanks to our new Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) programme, delivered in partnership with Policy in Practice.

Supporting the economy - We have continued to engage with local businesses and distributed over £350k in grants on behalf of the government.

Preparing for the future - We have worked with authorities across Gloucestershire to develop and submit proposals for local government reorganisation in the county.