



Deliver the highest standard of services

Why is this important?

As a council, we exist to provide vital services to our residents, businesses and visitors. We aim to deliver these services to the highest possible standards, and we're always looking for ways to improve.

These services include:

- collecting council tax and business rates
- administering council tax and housing benefits
- collecting household waste and recycling
- dealing with building standards and flooding issues
- processing planning applications and preventing breaches of planning control
- dealing with food safety and air quality issues
- investigating fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents
- ensuring health and safety at work

Our services must be inclusive and flexible in order to meet the diverse and changeable needs of our residents and communities. We will listen to our residents to identify the areas in which they need support, ensuring we're adaptable but strategic in our approach, and making the best use of the resources available to us.

We will work with partners that include town and parish councils, community and voluntary organisations, our neighbouring district councils and Gloucestershire County Council to ensure our services work effectively together. We will also develop partnerships with private sector organisations that can help us achieve our aims and objectives.

We will deliver our services both effectively and efficiently, ensuring they're designed to reflect our commitment to climate change, a green economy and the delivery of truly affordable homes.



What will we achieve?

We will support strong communities and ensure the Cotswolds offers great opportunities to residents, businesses and visitors. We will protect, enhance and respect the district's environment and economy, and design our services to foster innovation, culture, wealth generation and opportunity.

Our services will be responsive, flexible, and focused on addressing the problems, concerns and needs of our residents and communities. We will increase engagement with the public to improve the detection and enforcement of enviro-crime such as fly-tipping and dog fouling, and develop a proactive approach to planning enforcement to increase the sense of civic pride that exists across the district. Above all else, we will put our residents at the heart of everything.

How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|--|----------------|---------------|
| Establish financial resilience to enable investment in our priorities | Adopt and implement a clear financial strategy that reflects the changing economy and our identified needs | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Adopt and implement an investment and recovery strategy | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Develop and implement an asset strategy that brings new life to empty properties | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| Create maximised flood protection measures for residential and commercial properties | Provide advice and guidance | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Promote and deliver flood mitigation measures, where appropriate | | |
| Establish excellent working relationships with town and parish councils | Establish contact with all town and parish councils | October 2020 | November 2020 |
| | Research the issues that matter to our residents, and identify the support they need | January 2021 | April 2021 |
| | Establish regular town and parish forums | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Create partnerships | June 2021 | Ongoing |



| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|
| Provide a trusted, inclusive and transparent planning service | Restructure our team to ensure resilience | September 2020 | March 2021 |
| | Relaunch our pre-application service | September 2020 | December 2020 |
| | Improve communication with residents | January 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Develop a proactive approach to planning enforcement | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Maximise external funding opportunities | December 2020 | Ongoing |
| Create and deliver a comprehensive parking strategy | Introduce cashless parking in all car parks | July 2020 | April 2021 |
| | Determine the feasibility of 'pay on exit' parking, and implement if appropriate | March 2021 | April 2022 |
| | Review charging periods at all car parks | March 2021 | April 2021 |
| | Make the Whiteway car park operational | January 2020 | December 2020 |
| Provide an efficient and competitive building standards service | Compare local markets | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Maximise opportunities for income generation | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| Provide modern and clean public toilets | Reviewing our estate | January 2021 | March 2021 |
| | Explore opportunities for 'comfort partnerships' | April 2021 | September 2021 |
| | Develop and implement a strategy for the provision of public toilets | October 2021 | April 2022 |
| Promote and implement civic pride initiatives | Maintain verges | November 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Improve road sweeping regimes | November 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Replace worn and damaged street nameplates | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Keep areas of open space tidy | April 2021 | Ongoing |



Responding to the climate crisis

Why is this important?

Minimising and adapting to the effects of climate change is a priority for everyone. The science is settled – climate heating is manmade, and greenhouse gas emissions must be cut to zero. All major international agencies now agree that climate change, and the associated biodiversity crisis, is the biggest threat to our lives.

While global CO₂ emissions were temporarily reduced by COVID-19 in 2020 (about 5.5%), reaching the Paris target (<1.5C) will require much larger emissions reductions (>7.5%) every year this decade. Mitigation (drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions) is essential and must go hand-in-hand with adaptation (managing the physical, economic and social impacts of inevitable climate disruption) and the use of nature-based solutions. Achieving the necessary reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and delivering nature recovery will not only impact all of us, it will require every single thing we do to change – from transport and energy generation to food production? and the way we use energy in our homes and workplaces.

What will we achieve?

Though the success of climate change mitigation and nature recovery will play out over a long period, everyone will benefit from a more liveable climate and a healthier, more resilient natural environment. In the short term there will be cost savings for residents and businesses, as well as employment and investment benefits. We will demonstrate that rural areas can play a large part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring nature recovery, to encourage similar regions elsewhere.

Our aims are:

Our own operations: to reduce our corporate net emissions by two-thirds by 2030 and to zero by 2045; 100% true zero carbon electricity use; climate and ecological emergency considerations embedded in all decisions and policy; and all staff trained accordingly.

Our policy: to partially review our local plan to make it 'green to the core', based on a natural capital approach that includes identifying renewable energy and storage opportunities; making climate change and nature recovery strategic priorities for all planning and new developments; requiring contractors to disclose climate and ecological impacts; disclosing and reconsidering any investments that don't fit within our commitments; and seeking commercial revenue generation projects that tackle climate change and increase our natural capital.

The district: to take a leadership role, influencing and working with others, and harnessing the commitment, concern, resources and goodwill of residents and communities, to promote rapid take-up of climate-friendly actions. These include low-carbon transport, retrofitting low-energy measures in homes, the use of nature-based solutions, increased awareness and enhancement of ecosystems services, and better management of valuable habitats.



How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|---|--|----------------|--|
| Achieve a reduction in carbon emissions for the district | Adopt our climate change strategy Deliver our climate change action plan | September 2020 | Actions will remain live and be added to and updated on an ongoing basis |
| Increase renewable energy generation within the district | Support the creation of Cotswold Community Energy | September 2020 | September 2021 |
| | Secure investment in renewable energy such as photovoltaic farms and electricity generation from our own estate and in partnership with others | Ongoing | December 2022 |
| | Support community-led and community-owned renewable energy projects | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Support neighbourhood-wide climate action | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| Reduce carbon emissions from our own operations | Work with Ubico to adopt ultra-low emission vehicle technology | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Secure energy-efficient, 100% green energy for all Council premises, using renewable energy where possible | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Provide electric vehicle charging points at all Council premises | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| Influence and encourage residents, businesses and partners to reduce their carbon emissions | Develop a strategy to provide electric vehicle charging points at workplaces, in car parks, on-street and elsewhere | October 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Work with Gloucestershire County Council to provide, improve and promote sustainable transport options, including walking and cycling | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Help businesses embed climate change objectives within their operations | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| Take a leadership role on the ecological emergency and nature recovery in the Cotswolds | Implement the adopted ecological emergency action plan | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| Reduce the carbon footprint of our waste and recycling service | Promote the reduction and re-use of materials | December 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Identify the true carbon footprint of our waste and recycling service | March 2021 | September 2021 |
| | Consider changes to the waste and recycling service | September 2021 | March 2022 |



Providing socially rented homes

Why is this important?

We are at the centre of a housing affordability crisis. The gap between earnings and house prices is one of the highest in the country, and there is a shortage of good quality, genuinely affordable housing to rent. Many people struggle to find and afford suitable accommodation in the Cotswolds, and many young people are forced to leave the area they've grown up in because they can't afford to live here.

We are determined to address this by providing good quality affordable housing, with an emphasis on social rented housing and a focus on provision for young people, military veterans and families.

What makes a home 'affordable' has become a serious point of contention, and it's no wonder people become angry when what's described as 'affordable housing' isn't affordable at all. Our priority is to build and help deliver 'genuinely affordable homes' – social rented and affordable rented housing that is truly affordable, in terms of rent and running costs. We will focus on what the tenant can afford to pay for their housing – not simply on housing tenure – because we believe, quite simply, that everything starts with a home.

As part of our commitment to reducing carbon we will promote homes that are carbon neutral in their build and fuel efficient in their use. Energy efficient homes that are powered by renewable energy are cheaper to run – another factor that contributes to long-term affordability.

We want to ensure that provision for homeless people strikes a balance between meeting their needs and managing our finances. On the occasions our residents find themselves in need of emergency accommodation we will treat this as a short-term stepping stone to more settled accommodation.

Housing is key to the things we love about living in the Cotswolds – resilient, supportive communities, health and wellbeing, and a safe place to live and thrive. Without a home, none of these can flourish, and so it's vital we tackle the housing emergency and strive to provide a home for everyone.

What will we achieve?

We will deliver good quality housing that is genuinely affordable, and that can be adapted to meet changing housing needs over its lifetime. Our emphasis will be on the delivery of social rented and affordable rented homes to enable local people on low incomes to stay local.

We will ensure that suitable, good quality accommodation is provided for homeless people, and will help them to move into more settled accommodation in the long-term.

We will maximise the opportunities presented by our own assets as well as working with developers and partners to progress affordable housing developments within the district.



How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|--|----------------|---------------|
| Provide more affordable housing with the emphasis on social rented accommodation | Adopt an affordable housing delivery strategy that sets out clear aims and objectives | June 2020 | November 2020 |
| Provide additional housing to meet the needs of the district | Examine our existing assets and identify opportunities for housing delivery | September 2020 | May 2021 |
| | Identify opportunities to acquire properties for homeless accommodation | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Identify and consider sites for delivery | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Explore modern methods of construction in the context of our rural setting | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| | Support young people through a 'rent to buy' scheme | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| Deliver the Kemble housing development | Secure planning permission for the development | September 2020 | March 2021 |
| | Progress the development independently, or with a suitable partner | July 2021 | June 2022 |
| Reduce reliance on bed and breakfast and hotels for emergency homeless accommodation | Maximise the opportunities of the 'housing first' model | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Acquire the property approved in July 2020, and put this to use | July 2020 | December 2020 |
| | Participate in a joint Gloucestershire bid for additional government funding | August 2020 | December 2021 |
| Deliver social rented and affordable rented accommodation across the district | Explore direct delivery options Work with partners to increase the supply of social rented accommodation Investigate the feasibility of setting up a housing company | September 2020 | Ongoing |



Make our local plan green to the core

Why is this important?

We have declared both climate and ecological emergencies in recognition of the climate crisis and to focus the delivery of our services. We're committed to ensuring the climate crisis is at the heart of our local plan and a strategic priority for planning and new development. We will introduce supplementary planning documents that clarify our plans for renewable energy generation and storage, housing resource efficiency, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage and low-carbon transport solutions.

Our review of the adopted local plan confirmed that it needs a partial update. The review recognised the need to actively respond to the climate crisis as well as national policy requirements, such as maintaining a robust supply of housing to 2031. After we'd carried out our review, the government published a white paper advocating major changes to the English planning system, including a switch from discretionary planning to zonal planning, similar to the systems operating in the USA and some parts of Europe. These are currently just recommendations but, if the suggestions become law, we would need to produce a new-style zonal local plan within 30 months.

Rather than being set in stone, our local plan is a rolling programme of continually evolving policies and proposals – and it's a vital document when it comes to keeping us on track. It provides the tools we need to deliver the actions we've committed to in other documents and strategies, including issues such as health and wellbeing, economy, renewable energy, leisure, housing, and sustainable transport. Because the local plan helps us deliver our aims, plans and government policy while responding to changing economic, environmental and social circumstances, it's vital that it's both relevant and up to date.

The local plan review will focus on areas where the plan is likely to become outdated, and must follow consultation procedures – including recommended steps and timescales – set out by the government. It will reflect wider issues such as the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground – which helps us coordinate infrastructure planning and delivery across the county – the impact of Brexit, and the effects of COVID-19.

What will we achieve?

While our local plan update follows national guidance, it plays an important part in the delivery of our priorities on climate change and on affordable housing. The local plan will empower us to promote climate change mitigation and to deliver affordable housing in the longer term.

We will succeed by including new climate crisis policies and standards that contribute to a carbon neutral society, and by achieving approval of our plan from the government's local plan inspector.



How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|---|--------------|--|
| Develop an updated local plan that delivers our corporate priorities and promotes both carbon neutral development and infrastructure | Identify and allocate land for future housing and businesses. | July 2020 | Approximately 2023/24 To be confirmed |
| | Draft new policies and updating existing policies to give effect to new council strategies, such as the economic recovery strategy, the climate and ecological emergency action plans and the renewable energy strategy. | | |
| | The local plan also brings together multiple actions that are listed elsewhere in the corporate plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include policies in the updated local plan to secure net-zero carbon housing in new developments - Allocate more land for employment through the updated local plan - review local plan policies to facilitate healthy place shaping - deliver health and wellbeing initiatives through the local plan | | |
| Create a programme of work that demonstrates our commitment to public consultation and engagement in the planning process | Update our local development scheme | August 2020 | December 2020 |
| | Update our statement of community involvement | | |



| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Develop a coordinated strategy for Cirencester town centre that responds positively to the changing nature of the high street | Deliver Cirencester town centre masterplan | 2020/21 | To be confirmed |
| | Work with Cirencester Town Council to deliver Cirencester neighbourhood development plan | | |
| | Enable appropriate changes of use | | |
| | Identify sustainable transport options | | |
| Deliver a sustainable transport strategy | Promote sustainable methods of transport to reduce reliance on car usage for short journeys | To be confirmed in the publication of our local development scheme | Ongoing planning and implementation |
| | Work with Gloucestershire County Council to provide better sustainable transport routes and options | September 2020 | |
| | Employ a Sustainable Transport Officer | November 2020 | January 2021 |



Support health and wellbeing

Why is this important?

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how our health underpins our lives, and how great our neighbourhoods are at looking out for one another. We know we can no longer take our wellbeing for granted, and that we all need to take responsibility for our own health.

The health and wellbeing of our residents is generally good (we rank above England and elsewhere in the county in most measures). We're one of the safest districts, with very low crime levels, and we're lucky enough to be surrounded by beautiful countryside. But we do face some challenges – not least barriers to service access, as well as loneliness and isolation, due to the rural nature of our location.

Other social, economic and environmental factors that impact the health and wellbeing of our residents require us to collaborate with a wide range of partners, to address these together. These include:

- Employment: though we have the lowest unemployment rate in the county (2.1%) the gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term condition and overall employment is 19.2%, compared to 10.5% elsewhere in Gloucestershire.
- Low income families: around 8% (1,100) of children live in low income families, and we are ranked as the most deprived district in the county for 'barriers to housing and services'. Cirencester foodbank saw a 30% increase in demand in 2019 compared to 2018, with 49% of food parcels going to children of primary school age or younger. These crises are lasting longer and require more complex support.
- Older people: having a high proportion of residents aged 65+ and 85+ has implications for age-related long-term conditions, and the number of people with caring responsibilities.
- Exercise and obesity: There is an upward trend in obesity and mental health problems. More needs to be done to address obesity and other lifestyle-related causes of life-limiting long-term conditions such as type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and mental health issues. The ability to be more active and to eat healthily shouldn't be dictated by our background – nor should this be used as an excuse to explain diverging health outcomes.

We know sustainable behaviour change can only be achieved when residents are involved in the design and implementation of services, and so we're committed to working with our communities, voluntary sector organisations and public sector partners to tackle these challenges and permanently improve our residents' health and wellbeing.



What will we achieve?

We want our district to be the best in the UK for health and wellbeing.

The pandemic taught us a lot about the resilience of our residents: their kindness, their talents, and their generosity. We want to build on this success, to ensure all our neighbourhoods are safe and enjoyable places to live. Places with united communities, where we know – and can rely on – our neighbours, where parents take responsibility for their children, and where people feel confident to challenge bad behaviour, knowing they will be supported by their neighbours, police, landlord, local council and ward members.

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|--|----------------|---|
| Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing goals | Review and revise our community grants scheme to focus on our priorities | May 2020 | New approach to go live in September 2020 |
| | Continue to invest in asset-based/place-based community development | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Host regular community forums with town and parish councils, community groups and community leaders | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Continue to raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the fear of crime and ensure residents know how, and where, to get support | July 2020 | Ongoing |



How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|---|--|----------------|------------|
| Improve equal access to quality services across the district | Use targeted initiatives to tackle both childhood poverty and food poverty in the district, so more children and vulnerable families have access to nutritious food | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Work with relevant services and organisations to provide more – and better – quality healthcare services | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Continue to invest in dementia-friendly communities, improve understanding and communication, and reduce loneliness and isolation | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Work with the Cotswold Youth Network to increase investment in, and support for, youth engagement work | July 2020 | March 2023 |
| Promote both mental and physical health equally, to increase awareness of mental health issues and improve the community response to people in crisis | Increase the number of people trained in mental health first aid and suicide prevention | September 2020 | March 2023 |
| | Provide targeted mental health campaigns and support | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Promote mental health activities and initiatives | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Continue to deliver the ‘hidden harm’ project and targeted work to raise awareness of domestic abuse, in partnership with Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Work with the DWP, businesses, education and the voluntary sector to create more employment and learning opportunities for young people | September 2020 | March 2023 |



| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|
| Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages | Complete a review of our leisure services | July 2020 | September 2020 |
| | Develop a leisure strategy to secure improved, more accessible, flexible and inclusive services | November 2020 | April 2021 |
| | Deliver the Sweatcoin campaign to reduce inactivity levels in specific socio-economic groups | November 2020 | June 2021 |
| | Deliver inclusion training and awards for young people | November 2020 | April 2023 |
| Ensure our housing and built environments enable residents to live healthy lives | Plan places with active travel and high-quality green infrastructure | October 2020 | April 2023 |
| | Develop design codes that focus on climate change and protect people from overheating risk | October 2020 | April 2023 |
| | Develop policies for dementia-friendly homes | February 2021 | May 2021 |
| | Review local plan policies to facilitate healthy place shaping | October 2020 | April 2023 |
| | Deliver health and wellbeing initiatives through the local plan | October 2020 | April 2023 |



Enable a vibrant economy

Why is this important?

The Cotswold economy is home to businesses of all sizes and across all sectors. Together with some key local assets, they form the cornerstone of our local economy. The global visitor economy – built on the back of beautiful landscape, towns and villages – accounts for a significant proportion of employment in the district. But the Cotswold economy is about much more than tourism, and there is potential for even greater diversity. We must encourage investment and enable new infrastructure that provides the conditions for businesses to thrive and grow.

The visitor economy has been severely impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. The retail, accommodation and hospitality sectors were particularly hard-hit, and other sectors have been affected by a reduction in demand. Through our economic recovery plan, we want to enable businesses to become more resilient, by enhancing their digital presence and looking at different business models, among other things. Our green economic growth strategy will chart the future for the local economy, putting the climate agenda at the heart of everything we do.

What will we achieve?

We want to nurture a dynamic, vibrant and balanced economy, and to grow high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact businesses in the Cotswolds. Our region is already home to some highly creative and innovative businesses. Exciting projects that are planned in the agri-tech, cyber and digital, medical equipment and environmental technology sectors promise to provide great opportunities for local people and businesses. As a business-friendly council, we won't just communicate regularly with our local business community – we will work with them to grow the district's economy to provide better opportunities for local people.

Much of our work in this area will be done in partnership with key stakeholders that include Gloucestershire County Council, GFirst LEP, chambers of commerce and other business groups, town and parish councils, institutions such as the Fire Service College, Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester College, and individual businesses. These relationships will play a vital part in the delivery of our green economic growth strategy.



How will we do this?

| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|--|---|----------------|------------|
| Develop a high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact economy that includes agritech, digital/cyber, medical equipment and environmental technologies | Work with key sectors to create new highly skilled jobs | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Allocate more land for employment through the updated local plan | March 2021 | June 2023 |
| | Secure the provision and occupation of new commercial space | March 2021 | Ongoing |
| Help our town centres recover from COVID-19 and in the face of changing shopping habits | Support businesses to become resilient and grow | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Help towns create long-term plans where needed, such as the Cirencester town centre masterplan | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Support businesses to enhance their digital presence | July 2020 | July 2021 |
| | Develop a 'shop local' campaign to encourage residents to support local businesses | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Encourage the introduction of new uses – including non-retail, cultural and affordable housing – to improve the vitality of the area and the visitor experience | October 2020 | Ongoing |
| Secure successful businesses in the visitor economy with higher visitor spend and more even footfall | Deliver the actions set out in the Cotswold Tourism destination management plan | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Make the Cotswolds a vibrant year-round destination | | |
| | Promote high-quality visitor experiences | | |
| | Increase tourism's contribution to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of our communities | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| Attract investment in infrastructure | Welcome better broadband and 5G coverage | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Support completion of the A417 'missing link' | September 2020 | March 2023 |



| Our aims | Our actions | Commencement | Completion |
|---|--|----------------|---------------|
| | Support completion of the A417 'missing link' | September 2020 | March 2023 |
| Offer better qualifications for our young people | Work with our partners to ensure our young people have the skills they need to secure employment in the district | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Work with GFirstLEP to improve the Growth Hub provision in the north Cotswolds | January 2021 | Ongoing |
| Develop strong networks, collaboration and partnerships with businesses and organisations | Work with partners to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups | July 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Build a reputation as a business-friendly council | | |
| Use our investments and assets to boost the local economy | Invest in local projects and development opportunities | September 2020 | Ongoing |
| | Use our assets to generate jobs locally | April 2021 | Ongoing |
| Ensure the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are accessible to everyone in the district | Establish needs | October 2020 | December 2020 |
| | Identify partners that can deliver improvements | January 2020 | March 2021 |
| | Develop and implement an action plan to improve digital inclusion | June 2021 | Ongoing |