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Our Cotswolds Our Plan 2024-2028



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Message from Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

Welcome to Our Plan which sets out the priorities for Cotswold District Council over the next four years.

People travel from across the world to visit the Cotswolds owing to our beautiful natural landscape and our picturesque towns and villages. While this is an important part of our identity which we want to protect and enhance we can't preserve our area in aspic.

Our residents are our most important asset and coupled with our resilient local economy the Cotswolds is also a vibrant area with lots going on!

Our Plan outlines what we will do to provide more genuinely affordable housing, facilitate the creation of high-quality jobs and better support our communities recognising the cost of living crisis and the difficulties many residents find themselves in. If we can make progress on these three areas, then the health and wellbeing of our residents will improve.

Our commitment to tackling the climate and biodiversity emergency will underpin all of our work.

This will mean higher quality housing which is better for the environment and will save residents money on their heating bills in future, the enhancement of the Cotswolds Natural Landscape and a big opportunity for the creation of sustainable jobs in the Cotswolds.

We will progress these priorities while delivering a good standard of service on the council's day to day functions such as waste collection and planning.

We believe that Our Plan will help make these ambitions a reality, whilst recognising that we will need to remain flexible and responsive if we are to continually adapt to an ever changing social, economic and environmental landscape.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Harris', written in a cursive style.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Our Ambition

To tackle some of the big challenges faced by our residents while providing a good level of key services

Delivering Good Services



Why is this important?

As a council, we exist to provide vital services to our residents, businesses and visitors. We will deliver our services both effectively and efficiently, ensuring they are designed to reflect our commitment to climate change, and value for local taxpayers.

What will we achieve?

Our services will provide value for money and high standards. We will work with our contractors and partners, such as town and parish councils, to sustain valuable services, and help maintain the Cotswolds environment we are all proud of.

How will we do this?

- Ensure our workforce can deliver for the council and our community
- Ensure effective oversight of our services, to ensure value for money and good standards
- Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets
- Deliver the Publica Review to return the majority of services to the Council

What will success look like?

- A more sustainable workforce, with greater flexibility around recruitment, focused on the needs of the residents and Businesses of Cotswold District Council
- Robust council finances, to support key services and the Council's priorities
- General public satisfaction with service delivery

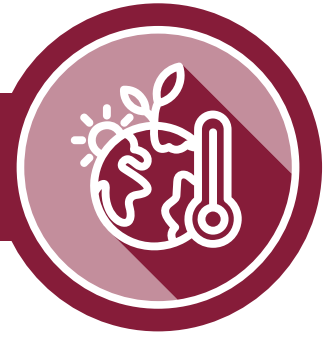
“The Council is in a relatively sound financial position currently due to decisions in the last few years to raise charges and make services more efficient.”



Priorities for 2024

- Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability
- Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal
- Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets

Responding to the Climate Emergency



Why is this important?

Minimising and adapting to the effects of climate change is a priority for everyone. 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?

We need to play our part in tackling climate change. In the short term, there will be an enhanced environment for residents and businesses, and subsequent cost savings for residents and businesses, as well as employment and investment benefits. Our commitment to Electric Car Charging Points and renewable energy installations will ensure we don't get left behind as this infrastructure becomes an everyday necessity for residents, businesses and visitors.

How will we do this?

- Reduce CO2 from Transport: We will actively encourage and support the transition to EVs and increased use of public and sustainable transport such as cycling and walking
- Reduce CO2 from Buildings: Foster community-led climate action, supporting residents and businesses adopting renewable heating and improving energy efficiency
- Champion initiatives to address the ecological emergency and nature recovery, focusing on reducing CO2 and conserving and enhancing the district's biodiversity and natural beauty
- Cut Council Carbon Footprint, implementing sustainable practices in all council operations, emphasising energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, across our buildings, fleet and suppliers
- Ensure our planning policies are green to the core and promote both carbon neutral development and infrastructure

What will success look like?

- A comprehensive network of Electric Vehicle Charging Points, supporting increasing uptake of electric vehicles, by residents, businesses and visitors and greater use of public and sustainable transport
- Increased adoption of renewable energy generation and heating across homes and businesses
- A net gain in biodiversity, an increase in regenerative agriculture and reduced CO2 footprint from land and farms
- A measurable reduction in the Council's Carbon footprint and a clear plan for our operations to reach NetZero by 2030
- Adoption of an updated local plan with the revised policies and publishing of interim planning guidelines based on the new planned policies

“Our commitment to Electric Car Charging Points and renewable energy installations will ensure we don't get left behind.”

Priorities for 2024

- Develop and deliver an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy
- Continue to promote and deliver Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen
- Explore the business cases for the installation of solar panels on more Council owned assets

Delivering Housing



Why is this important?

Housing is key to the things we love about living in the Cotswolds – resilient, supportive communities, local jobs and retained spend, health and wellbeing, and a safe place to live and thrive. Without a home, none of these can flourish, and so it is 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, 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 explore innovative routes to progress affordable housing developments within the district.

How will we do this?

- Working with our partners to explore innovative routes to deliver more affordable homes
- Understanding everyone's housing needs
- Adopting and implementing our new housing strategy

What will success look like?

- Increased number of genuinely affordable homes
- Continued success in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- Delivery of Cotswold's first low carbon, social rented homes

“It's vital we tackle the housing emergency and strive to provide a home for everyone.”



Priorities for 2024

- Deliver an exemplar zero carbon affordable housing development in Down Ampney
- Consult on and adopt the Council's new Housing Strategy
- Explore innovative approaches to housing delivery

Supporting Communities



Why is this important?

The health and wellbeing of our residents is good but we face some challenges – not least travel and public transport, as well as loneliness and isolation, due to the rural nature of our location. We're committed to working with community, voluntary and public sector partners to tackle these challenges and improve our residents' health and wellbeing for good.

What will we achieve?

We want our district to be the best in the UK for health and wellbeing. Our communities are safe and enjoyable places to live, but we want to make them even better, with improved access to leisure opportunities and a vibrant cultural scene to enrich our lives.

How will we do this?

- Strengthen our links with town and parish councils
- Address the challenges of flooding and water quality
- Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Water park, in line with the agreed partnership strategy
- Healthy place making
- Develop and deliver a district cultural strategy
- Encourage resilient, well-connected and active communities that take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing goals
- Promote healthy lifestyles, fun and self-care for all ages
- Work with partners to ensure vital services cover the district, and offer support to our residents if crises hit
- Keep residents safe, through awareness raising around domestic abuse and fraud

What will success look like?

- A genuine partnership with towns, parish councils and key stakeholders to help our communities stay safe and healthy
- A leisure contract offering value for money to the Council and to residents
- An effective partnership response to the cost of living and other wellbeing challenges

“We will host a sewage summit, reporting back to Council in May 2024.”

Priorities for 2024

- Identify opportunities to influence policy and host a sewage summit with the outcome being reported to the Council in May.
- Commence development of the cultural strategy.
- Celebrate success - promote the work being done by partners across the district to inspire communities.
- Monitor and review delivery of the district leisure contract with Freedom Leisure.
- Deliver Rural Domestic Abuse Champions programme in partnership with other rural Gloucestershire districts and Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services.

Supporting the Economy



Why is this important?

The Cotswold economy is home to businesses of all sizes and across all sectors forming the cornerstone of our local economy. Our economic growth strategy will enhance the diversity and strength of our economy, putting the impact on the environment at the heart of future growth.

What will we achieve?

We will enhance our dynamic, vibrant and balanced economy, and grow high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact businesses. Cotswold is home to some highly creative and innovative businesses across a range of sectors, promising 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 and our partners to grow the district's economy.

How will we do this?

- Work with partners to develop the skills of our residents
- Attract and manage investment to boost the local economy
- Support local businesses, to enhance the vibrancy of our towns and villages, and to manage the opportunity and impact of the visitor economy
- Work with local and county partners to grow a strong and sustainable economy

What will success look like?

- An attractive location for green businesses to locate and grow
- A visitor offer that enhances and sustains our villages and towns
- Attractive career options, particularly for our young people

“We will enhance our dynamic, vibrant and balanced economy, and grow high value, highly skilled, low environmental impact businesses in the Cotswolds.”



Priorities for 2024

- Continue to work with The Growth Hub to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups, with a focus on the outreach provision supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund
- Undertake a refresh of the Green Economic Strategy



Each of our Cabinet Members has identified two priority areas to progress in 2024

Councillor Joe Harris (Leader)

Priorities

- Deliver a programme to bring Council services back in-house, maximising responsiveness and democratic accountability
- Explore innovative approaches to housing delivery



Councillor Mike Evemy (Deputy Leader, Finance)

Priorities

- Review the waste service, and undertake an options appraisal
- Enhance our financial resilience and make best use of our assets



Councillor Tony Dale (Economy and Council Transformation)

Priorities

- Continue to work with The Growth Hub to support existing businesses and encourage the growth of start-ups, with a focus on the outreach provision supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund
- Undertake a refresh of the Green Economic Strategy



Councillor Claire Bloomer (Cost of Living and Inclusion)

Priorities

- Continue to be a proactive member of the Cotswold Food Network Steering Group and support initiatives under the network's umbrella
- Maintain a multi-service response to the cost of living crisis, and other challenges to community wellbeing



Councillor Paul Hodgkinson (Health, Leisure and Culture)

Priorities

- Commence development of the cultural strategy
- Monitor and review delivery of the District leisure contract with Freedom Leisure



Councillor Juliet Layton (Planning and Regulatory Services)

Priorities

- Enhance connectivity, and biodiversity in the Cotswold Waterpark
- Complete the update of the Local Plan



Councillor Mike McKeown (Climate Change and Sustainability)

Priorities

- Develop and deliver an EVCP Strategy
- Deliver Cotswold Home Solar, in partnership with MakeMyHouseGreen



Councillor Lisa Spivey (Communities and Public Safety)

Priorities

- Identify opportunities to influence policy and host a sewage summit with the outcome being reported to the Council in May
- Deliver Rural Domestic Abuse Champions programme in partnership with other rural Gloucestershire districts and Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services



This Plan provides a clear overview of the Council's priorities. Please see the 'Our Cotswolds, Our Plan' Action Plan for further detail on actions and performance monitoring.



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