

District Councillor's Update for Blockley Parish Council Meeting, 19 February 2026

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1. Planning – Local Plan Update

The Regulation 18 Consultation for the updated Local Plan closed last month. There were high levels of engagement across the District; almost 2000 individuals, businesses and groups contributed to the consultation. Thank you to everyone that took the time to submit comments and feedback.

The District council's planning team will now:

- Review all comments and update potential sites, policies, and supporting documents.
- Gather further evidence, including the impact on roads and infrastructure needs.
- Assess whether larger sites are deliverable.

In summer 2026, the council will publish a final draft of the Local Plan, which it intends to submit to the planning inspectorate, reflecting the feedback received during the consultation.

There will be additional round of consultation at that point and comments submitted will be shared with the planning Inspectorate. A public examination will follow in 2027, and if approved, the council aims to adopt the Local Plan before the end of 2027.

Sign up to the Local Plan mailing list to get updates: <https://cotswold.us5.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=ab7a7e62881dc95c541265556&id=134432a242>

The Council continue to challenge the housing target set by the Government and evidence from the consultation will be used in the next round of engagement with the government. The leader of the council has pledged to, again, request a meeting with the minister to share our concerns over the housing target.

2. At the start of the month, Cotswold District Council Leader Cllr Mike Every has written to the government sharing a sample of the huge volume of views and concerns received during the council's consultation on its local plan update – to set out in black and white “the sense of anger and frustration” that communities feel. <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/a-wanton-act-of-vandalism-cotswold-district-council-relays-scale-of-local-anger-over-housing-targets-in-new-letter-to-government>

3. Dementia friendly Towns and Communities

At our full council meeting in January, we voted unanimously to support the idea of working towards Dementia Friendly towns and communities. Dementia affects many families across the Cotswolds and I think the Council can add real value to supporting people with dementia (and their carers & families) by enabling and amplifying the support that already exists and backing the implementation of new initiatives and activities.

A Dementia Friendly approach helps strengthen community resilience and social cohesion more generally and I look forward to playing my part in delivering on this commitment. Let me know if you have any experience of local groups, businesses or spaces that have been supportive of you or someone you know in

relation to dementia. We want the district to be a place where communities look out for each other, people living with dementia are valued, carers feel supported and all people can age with dignity.

You can find full details of the commitment being made in the agenda paperwork here: [Cotswold District Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 21st January, 2026, 2.00 pm](#)

And the press release here: <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/councillors-share-emotional-stories-as-they-back-plan-for-dementia-friendly-cotswolds>

4. Updating the waste collection Fleet

The District Council's waste fleet accounts for nearly half of the council's carbon footprint and as the 31 vehicles reach the end of their operational life, they will replace one of them with an electric vehicle and transition the rest of the fleet to Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) – a sustainable fuel made from used cooking oil and other industrial by-products. Modelling suggests the carbon footprint of the waste fleet will be reduced by 80% by making these changes and there should be tangible benefits to air quality too. The procurement of replacement vehicles has now been approved. When we considered this item at our Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting, I expressed my disappointment that only a single EV will be purchased and my concerns about how the feedstock for the HVO will be monitored to ensure only waste fats/oils are fuelling the fleet rather than virgin crops (which limit carbon benefits and can negatively impact biodiversity). We have been reassured that this will be closely monitored to ensure the environmental benefits we're striving for are actually realised.

The recycling vehicles will continue to be the kerbside sort system we currently use and at a date to be confirmed, collection of films will also be introduced kerbside (in line with the national "Simpler Recycling" policy that is being introduced).

Press release here: <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-plans-its-biggest-carbon-cutting-project-replacing-waste-fleet-for-greener-more-reliable-service>

5. Local Government Reorganisation

CDC have a web page dedicated to sharing updates on Local Government reorganisation: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/news-items/devolution-update/>

The government's consultation on plans for Gloucestershire is now open and residents are encouraged to share their views via the survey here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-gloucestershire/proposals-for-local-government-reorganisation-in-gloucestershire>

- I attended lots of **community group events** over the December/Jan period and would like to extend my thanks to all the organisers and to those that supported events. There was a great sense of community and lots of funds raised too. A big thank you to those who continue to give up their time to organise or host community events or groups throughout the year, which make a positive difference to our residents. Nominations for Unsung Heroes can be made here: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/unsungheroes>
- Next week, CDC has its annual budget setting meeting. Overall, the financial position for the year ahead is more positive than previously forecast and the Council will not need to borrow money to finance the waste fleet upgrade. Beyond 2026/2027 the picture is more bleak with a significant shortfall forecast. In order to achieve a balanced budget, Council tax will be increasing by £5 for a Band D property but support is available to those on lower income. You can find out more about applying for support here: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax-support/>

There is also a proposal to set aside £2million in a new earmarked reserve (coming from an existing Financial Resilience Reserve) to cover some of the expenses associated with the transition as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

The full set of budget papers can be found here:

<https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1154&MIId=2466>

8. Last week I attended a Licensing Committee hearing (as an observer) relating to a business in Ebrington Parish. These types of hearings don't happen very often, and it was a useful opportunity to better understand the licensing process and how to support residents if they have any concerns about a Licence application.
9. In January, there was a by-election in the Rissingtons, which saw a new Liberal Democrat Councillor elected and on the 6th March there will be a by-election in The Beeches, Cirencester.