From: **Catherine Morgan** clerk@eastleachparishcouncil.org
Subject: Fwd: COLN VALLEY WARD COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT - October Update
Date: 8 October 2026 at 18:38
To:

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Subject COLN VALLEY WARD COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT - October Update

COLN VALLEY WARD
COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT
OCTOBER 2026

Dear Colleague,

Please find my October report for you to share with colleagues.

Best wishes
Cllr David Fowles Coln Valley Ward Councillor david.fowles@cotswold.gov.uk
07747 012256
Parliamentary constituency is North Cotswolds CLIFTONBROWNG@parliament.uk

Forthcoming Committee Meetings (underlined texts are linked)

Monday 5 October	4.00 pm	Meeting of Audit & Governance
Monday 12 October	4.00 pm	Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday 14 October	2.00 pm	Meeting of Planning and Licensing Committee
Thursday 15 October	6.00 pm	Meeting of Cabinet
Tuesday 20 October	10.00 am	Meeting of Cabinet Member for Finance Decisions
Thursday 22 October	2.00 pm	Meeting of Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street Trading

Recent Committee Meetings

Monday 7 September	4.00 pm	Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday 9 September	2.00 pm	Meeting of Planning and Licensing Committee
Thursday 10 September	6.00 pm	Meeting of Cabinet
Tuesday 15 September	9.43 am	Gloucestershire Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Panel
Wednesday 23 September	6.00 pm	Meeting of Council
Thursday 24 September	2.00 pm	Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street Trading
Friday 25 September	2.06 pm	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

BY-ELECTION

Conservative candidate Tom Bradley has been elected to represent the Blockley ward on Cotswold District Council following the by-election held on 24 September. The by-election was triggered by the resignation of Clare Turner, and saw a voter turnout of [37.4]%, with residents of the Blockley ward casting their votes to elect a new councillor.
Tom got 54% of the vote
The political composition of Cotswold District Council is now:
22 Liberal Democrat councillors
11 Conservative councillors
1 Independent councillor
The Liberal Democrats retain their majority on the council.
Congratulations Tom!

****PAUSED** -** DEVOLUTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

On Monday 7 September the Government announced that it is pausing Local Government

Reorganisation. The Government has not said that Gloucestershire's single-unitary decision has been cancelled. It has put it on hold while it reviews the programme.

There are two stated reasons:

1. New legal advice The Government says it received updated and privileged legal advice which raised questions about the robustness and legality of the reorganisation process.
2. A change in the Government's wider approach The new administration also wants to test whether the LGR proposals fit its wider programme of devolution and public-sector reform. The Government's stated objective is to make sure the process is robust, legally compliant and aligned with its new priorities.

In the short term: very little changes for residents, Cotswold District Council continues to exist and continues to run its services. May 2027 local elections will proceed on the existing council boundaries while the review is taking place.

The pause potentially gives parish councils more time to understand and influence whatever eventual structure emerges. That could be particularly important because one of the central questions about a very large unitary authority is how local representation will work at parish and community level.

Future Gloucestershire (website link)

Local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire: an update for town and parish Councils.

Local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire - GOV.UK

CABINET DECISIONS - 10 September 2026

The meeting was largely concerned with approving updated governance, financial management and enforcement arrangements, alongside the specific £20,000 Sherborne SANG award and £27,000 leisure-centre capital investment. The only substantive agenda item not proceeded with was the proposed Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee, following the Government's decision to pause the Gloucestershire reorganisation process.

Item	Decision
SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) Spending 2026	£20,000 awarded to the National Trust for the Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access project. The funding will upgrade a 425-metre section of path at Sherborne Park to create a permanent accessible gravel route. The National Trust was the sole bidder and scored 86/100, above the required 75/100 threshold. 7–0–0.
Corporate Performance Q1 2026/27	Cabinet noted a positive first-quarter performance, including a forecast £122,000 year-end underspend and progress against the Corporate Plan. Key pressures include Local Government Reorganisation, workforce capacity, Land Charges, the Ubico contract and financial sustainability. £27,000 was added to the capital programme for pool covers at Bourton-on-the-Water and Chipping Campden Leisure Centres. 7–0–0.
Voluntary Joint Committee – LGR	Withdrawn from the agenda following the Government's announcement on 7 September pausing implementation of Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire. No decision was therefore taken on establishing the proposed Joint Committee.
People & Culture Strategy – Years 2 & 3	Cabinet approved the 2026–28 implementation plan, building on the first year's work on organisational culture, workforce values, performance management, recruitment, mentoring and retention. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting staff through organisational change, maintaining engagement and developing future workforce capability. 7–0–0.

Private Sector Housing Civil Penalty Policy	The updated Housing Civil Penalties Policy was approved, reflecting the additional powers and duties arising from the Renters' Rights Act 2025. Civil penalties can be used as an alternative to prosecution where landlords breach relevant requirements. The Council will continue to favour informal resolution where possible, with Legal Services involved to ensure penalties are applied consistently. 7–0–0.
Health & Safety Delegated Responsibility Framework	Cabinet approved a new framework setting out who is responsible for developing, approving, implementing and reviewing health and safety policies across services delivered through Publica. Routine technical and operational policies can be dealt with through delegated authority, while matters with significant legal, financial, strategic or political implications remain with Cabinet. 7–0–0.
Grants Management Policy	A new Council-wide Grants Management Policy was approved, covering community grants, government funding and emergency funding. It establishes clearer eligibility, assessment, award and monitoring arrangements, together with conflict-of-interest controls, due diligence and fraud prevention measures. 7–0–0.
Counter Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy	The revised policy was approved and adopted, updating the Council's arrangements to reflect legislative and regulatory changes since 2022. It specifically addresses the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023, including the new failure-to-prevent-fraud offence, as well as cybercrime, tax-evasion compliance and due diligence. 7–0–0.
Proceeds of Crime & Anti-Money Laundering Policy	The revised policy was approved and adopted, setting out the Council's responsibilities for preventing and responding to money laundering and related activity. The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer remains the designated Money Laundering Reporting Officer; detailed operational procedures have been moved into a separate internal procedure, supported by a staff flowchart and training. 7–0–0.

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The deadline for making representations on the Cotswold District Local Plan 2026-2043 has been extended by four weeks and will now close at 11.59pm on 3 November 2026.

Some additional information has been published, including:

- all approximately 3,000 individual responses received during the previous Regulation 18 consultation, held between November 2025 and January 2026
- some additional evidence documents including an assessment of sports hall provision, a review of established employment sites, and further transport evidence.

If you have already submitted a representation, you do not need to submit it again. However, you now have until 3 November if you would like to make any further comments.

The extension will not affect the Council’s current timetable for submitting the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of December. All representations received during the Regulation 19 consultation will be shared with the Planning Inspector as part of the examination process.

You can view the Local Plan, the newly published information and details of how to make a representation at cotswold.gov.uk/localplan. Representations can be made online, or by email to Local.Plan@cotswold.gov.uk or by post using the representation form on the CDC website.

I confirm that when the Reg19 proposal came to full Council the Conservative Group

I thought that when the Reg19 proposal came to full Council the Conservative Group voted against it

Not enough viable sites have come forward to deliver the Government's targets. If Cotswold District Council can't deliver the Government's target, what is the point in delivering bad, unsustainable planning - particularly if penalties might be incurred anyway?

Please refer to my September newsletter for detailed background.
GOVERNMENT CHANGE IN DELEGATED POWERS IN PLANNING

From 31 October 2026, every local planning authority in England will operate under a national scheme of delegation, replacing locally determined rules about which applications go to the planning committee and which are decided by officers. Most applications fall within Schedule 1 and must be decided by officers, with no member call-in or automatic referral based on objections. Schedule 2 applications, including major developments, listed-building matters and certain other categories, will also be presumed to be officer decisions but can reach committee if they pass a new gateway test: both the nominated planning officer and nominated member must agree that the application raises either a significant economic, social or environmental issue for the local area, or a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and other material considerations. For councillors, member call-in powers and automatic referral based on objection numbers are removed. Committee referral will therefore become exceptional and depend on agreement between the nominated officer and member; if either disagrees, the application is decided by officers. Written representations during the council's consultation period remain important, as does early engagement and raising material planning concerns before an application reaches decision stage. Councils must amend their constitutions accordingly by 31 October 2026, and the briefing warns that failure to follow the new arrangements could expose decisions to legal challenge.

In my view this is another nail in the coffin for Local Democracy. The irony is that the Government is intent on devolving District Council powers, yet this move seeks the opposite by taking our power over our District into a blanket, national policy.

Planning Review Panel: Ward councillor's automatic power to call-in applications to the Planning Committee were adjusted in 2021, by introducing the Planning Review Panel - a gatekeeper, select team, made up by the senior planning officer, the chair of the planning committee and the council legal representative. The case officer would present the call-in application to the Planning Review Panel who would decide whether there are material planning considerations to support the call-in. If not, the call-in would be denied.

I did not support the creation of the Planning Review Panel. The interpretation of planning policy is nuanced and there are times when the emphasis of one policy can outweigh the importance of another, which can affect a decision outcome.

Planning is a statutory, fee-earning and quasi-judicial service. Ward members should retain the ability to make representations, even if an application conflicts with a policy.

The Planning Committee's role is to bring balance, a human, holistic perspective to decisions exploring all policies. Planning officers must assess applications primarily against policy, but where a policy does not adequately address the circumstances, other relevant material planning considerations should be aired and taken into consideration. The Planning Committee is an important democratic safeguard, ensuring that decisions are not left disproportionately in the hands of individual officers. Ultimately, sound planning decisions require policy, local relevance and common sense.

Overview of the new Changes

- End of Automatic Call-Ins: Local ward councillors will no longer have the power to force minor or routine planning applications (such as developments of nine homes or fewer) before a planning committee. Any requests made by councillors or high volumes of public/parish objections will become purely advisory.
- Officer-Led Default: Planning officers will become the default decision-makers for

the vast majority of applications, aiming to streamline housebuilding and create consistency across England.
- Gateway Test for Larger Schemes: Committees will be restricted to major developments or proposals that clear a specific "gateway test" requiring agreement from designated planning officers and committee chairs based on significant economic, social, or environmental impact.
- Constitutional Updates: Local planning authorities across England are required to update their constitutions ahead of the October 31 deadline to reflect these statutory rules, replacing local discretion under the previous Section 101 delegation framework.

A417 MISSING LINK

A major milestone has been reached, as the A417 moved into its final layout. A new section of the A417 will open, allowing northbound traffic to continue from Cirencester directly towards Gloucester without exiting at Shab Hill junction. Single-lanes will remain in place until more work is completed. Please continue to plan ahead and allow extra time for journeys, particularly at peak times.

The new B4070 leading to Birdlip and the northbound slip road at Cowley junction will open later this year.

For now, access to Birdlip will be the existing route through Cowley junction.

Diagram and information about the new layout.

Any updates will be communicated on the project website nationalhighways.co.uk/a417-missing-link.
Check the National Highways website for updates and other works in the region.

To receive National Highways updates, opt in to ensure compliance with GDPR, please follow this link.
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.
10 mph and site restrictions. Please Reverse Park.
A417 Project Office, Birdlip, Gloucester, GL4 8JX
What3words: https://what3words.com/shaped.quietest.payback
Site visits for members of the public. If you are interested, please contact A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk
All roadworks and planned road closures on motorways and major A roads, including the A417, are published here: https://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:
https://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: https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/a417-missing-link/
Email: A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk
Phone: 0300 123 5000
X: @HighwaysSWEST Facebook: @HighwaysSWEST

Please report highway issues, such as potholes, and track their progress online at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fixmystreet Or download the app: FixMyStreet

For further information please see Cotswold District Council NEWS

Best wishes Cllr David Fowles Coln Valley Ward. Cotswold District Council .

Parishes include Coln St Dennis, Bibury, Quenington, Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop , Southrop, Eastleach

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