
Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the Council Meeting of Cirencester Town Council,
to be held at the C-Hub, 2nd Floor, Bingham House, Dyer Street, Cirencester
on 14th November 2023 at 6.30pm



Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer
7th November 2023

Pledge:

"Let our debating be reasoned and temperate, recognising that others may have a different point of view; and may we always remember that our deliberations and decisions are ultimately for the good of the people of Cirencester."

Summary of Agenda

- Items 1-9 & 18-19 Procedural and Standing Items
- Item 10 Schedule of Payments
- Item 11 Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan
- Item 12 External Audit 2022-2023
- Item 13 Interim Internal Audit 2023-24
- Item 14 Grant Applications 2023-24
- Item 15 Budget Estimates 2024-25
- Item 16 Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25
- Item 17 Information Reports
 - 17.1 Access Audit and Action Plan
 - 17.2 Town Centre Final Certificate
 - 17.3 Town Centre Memorandum of Agreement
 - 17.4 Schedule of Meetings 2024
 - 17.5 Green Spaces Strategic Review
 - 17.6 Income and Expenditure Update and Variance Report 2023-24
 - 17.7 Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review

Bingham House, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 2PP
Tel: 01285 655646, www.cirencester.gov.uk



Agenda

1. **Apologies (6.30pm)**
To receive and consider approval of the apologies presented.
2. **Declarations of Interest (6.31pm)**
To receive declarations of interest and to note any dispensations which have been approved.
(Members are reminded to declare pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with Cirencester Town Council's Code of Conduct.)
3. **Council Minutes (6.32pm)**
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 12th September 2023, as an accurate record and to provide updates and information on any matters arising.
4. **Public Participation (Standing Order 68 refers) (6.35pm)**
If a member of the public wishes to speak at the meeting, or would like to submit correspondence they are asked to notify the Chief Executive Officer in advance and no later than 5pm on the day before the meeting. For the purpose of public speaking, a member of the public is defined as someone who lives, has a business or represents an organisation within the electoral boundary of Cirencester. Members of the public who wish to submit a written question for inclusion as part of public participation may do so at any time.
5. **District and County Council Participation (Standing Item) (6.45pm)**
To receive important updates and information from Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council. Questions relating to any District or County Council matter to be submitted in advance of the meeting to the CEO.
6. **Youth Participation (Standing Item) (6.55pm)**
To receive an update on youth engagement and provide an opportunity for young people to participate; including information as attached on mental health and well-being research.
7. **Member Participation (Standing Orders 27 to 30 refer) (7.10pm)**
A member may ask the Chair any question concerning the business of the Council.
8. **Delegation of Urgent and Routine Matters (Standing Order 11 c) refers) (7.15pm)**
To provide a summary of any matter which has required urgent or routine attention under delegated authority, noting that a response, in consultation with the Finance and Audit Committee and Lead Member for Finance was submitted to the National Association of Local Councils by the CEO in respect of the Financial Regulations consultation, the renewable energy tariff contract has been renewed and the Memorandum of Agreement with Gloucestershire County Council, in accordance with the highway agreement and future maintenance arrangements for the town centre improvements has been signed.
9. **Climate and Environment Action Plan (Standing Item) (7.16pm)**
To receive and note the updated action plan, as reviewed by the Climate and Environment Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 31st October 2023 and to receive information relating to a climate competition.
10. **Schedule of Payments (7.26pm)**
 - 10.1 To approve the schedule of payments made between August and September 2023 in accordance with the budget estimates. Each individual payment has been authorised by two Councillors. A list of all individual payments is forwarded to Finance and Audit and made available on the Town Council website. Total payments are: Corporate £69,927, Office £9,676, Community £7,147, Land & Property £26,134, Priority Projects/Earmarked Reserves £27,215, Salaries/NI/Tax/Pension £138,197.
 - 10.2 To approve the implementation of the national pay award of £1,925 for Scale Points up to SCP43 and an increase of 3.88% from SCP 44 and above; noting that Council has already approved additional staffing contingency and a 2.5% allocation in the budget estimates for 2023-24.
11. **Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan (7.30pm)**
 - 11.1 To appoint a Town Council representative to the Steering Group;
 - 11.2 To approve the Reg 14 Draft for public consultation.
12. **External Audit 2022-2023 (8pm)**
To receive and note the External Audit Report and Certificate for 2022-23.

- 13. Interim Internal Audit 2023-24 (8.01pm)**
To receive and note the Interim Internal Audit Report for 2023-24.
- 14. Grant Applications 2023-24 (8.02pm)**
To consider and approve grant applications as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.
- 15. Budget Estimates 2024-25 (8.10pm)**
To consider and approve the draft 2024-25 budget estimates for public consultation.
- 16. Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25 (8.20pm)**
To consider and approve the draft 2024-25 medium term financial plan for public consultation.
- 17. Information Reports (8.30pm)**
To receive and note the following information and reports:
 - 17.1 Access Audit and Action Plan – In response to concerns raised by members of the public, directly and through consultation and engagement, about the state of roads, cycleways and pavements, as well as access to public open spaces and car parks, the Town Council commissioned an independent access audit. At the time of the audit the Town Council circulated an action plan to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Cotswold District Council (CDC), as well as internally relating to issues that the Town Council is responsible for. No response or progress update has been received from GCC or CDC; we have conducted our own internal review of progress and will be re-contacting GCC and CDC in due course.
 - 17.2 Town Centre Final Certificate – Gloucestershire County Council has agreed to issue the Final Certificate for the town centre improvements, in and around the Market Place, with no further remedial works required.
 - 17.3 Town Centre Memorandum of Agreement – In accordance with the legal Highway Agreement with GCC, the Town Council has entered into a 15-year Memorandum of Agreement to maintain the town centre improvements and regularly clear the drains. The Town Council, commits to setting aside an annual sum of £20,000, index linked to CPI in an earmarked reserve, to fund the 'Enhanced Material Extra Over Costs', in accordance with the S278 Agreement, including a minimum of £10,000 in 2023-24. In addition, the Town Council undertakes responsibility for maintaining the stopped-up pedestrian area in front of the St John Baptist Parish Church, on which the markets and community events are held.
 - 17.4 Schedule of Meetings 2024 – In accordance with Standing Orders, the schedule of meetings for 2024 in respect of Council, Committees and Groups is attached for information. In addition, Lead Members are asked to set aside Wednesday 10th January and Wednesday 26th June for briefing sessions with the CEO and Lead Officers and all Councillors are asked to set aside Friday 15th November for all staff/all member networking, as well as Friday 26th January for a Nutrition Seminar and Tuesday 5th March for Health and Safety Training.
 - 17.5 Green Spaces Strategic Review – Further to establishing a Core Project Team and Strategic Advisory Group, the Town Council will be launching an important green spaces consultation later this month, seeking the views of the public and ideas on the future of our green, and open, spaces in Cirencester. We are encouraging residents to sign up now to receive updates and be the first to find out about this and other consultations. For further information and to sign up visit: <https://cirencestertown.commonplace.is/>
 - 17.6 Income and Expenditure Update and Variance Report 2023-24 – The income and expenditure update and variance report for the period April to September 2023 is attached for information, the report provides details of each cost centre and an assessment on whether or not income and expenditure is on track with the budget estimates for 2023-24.
 - 17.7 Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review – The progress review was carried out by the Peer Team on the 11th of October and based on the Peer Challenge recommendations in 2022, and the Town Council's response through its Action Plan in 2023. The Peer Team met with community representatives, staff and Councillors. The Town Council's progress update is appended and the Progress Review Report from the Peer Team will be made available to the public as soon as it is available.
- 18. Announcements (8.31pm)**
To receive and note any important announcements from Members relating to Council business.
- 19. Correspondence (8.32pm)**
 - a) Council Information Sheet; including details of any actions taken arising from previous meetings.
 - b) Any other correspondence received in accordance with Standing Orders.

Notes & Information

1. All reports referred to, including recommendations, are available online at www.cirencester.gov.uk or on request via email at info@cirencester.gov.uk
2. You can join us live via the Town Council's YouTube channel or you can watch the recording afterwards.
3. This meeting may be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast online at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrNizX0bVb7HpmZZn5XtlwA>. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting will be filmed. The footage will be on the YouTube channel indefinitely and may be used for training purposes within the Council. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to be filmed. By entering the meeting room, you are also consenting to be filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.
4. Members of the public are welcome to submit questions under public participation, in advance of the meeting via email, info@cirencester.gov.uk
5. Future meetings:
Planning Committee Tuesday 12th December 2023 1pm Bingham House
Planning Committee Tuesday 9th January 2024 4.30pm Corinium Museum
Community Services Committee 23rd January 2024 4.30pm Corinium Museum
Council 23rd January 2024 6.30pm Corinium Museum
6. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Council Meeting held on **12th September 2023** at 6.30 p.m. at the C-Hub, 2nd Floor, Bingham House, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, Glos., GL7 2PP.

PRESENT: Councillor Sabrina Dixon – Chair of Council
Councillor Sarah Orr – Vice Chair of Council
Councillors: Nick Bridges
Naomi Bloomer
Patrick Coleman
Jan Gronow
Mark Harris
Roly Hughes (left at 7.12 p.m.)
Bob Irving
Andy Jopp
Andrea Pellegram
Nigel Robbins (arrived at 6.32 p.m.)
Gary Selwyn
Pete Smith
Andrew Tubb – Chief Executive Officer
Johan Newman – Deputy Chief Executive Officer

4 Members of the public were present.

51.24 Apologies

Councillors Christine Gore and Jenny Hincks apologised for personal reasons, which were noted and approved.

52.24 Declarations of Interest

None received.

53.24 Council Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 13th June 2023 be approved as an accurate record, subject to amendment to Minute No. 05.24 – Appointment of Lead Members, to read from May 2023 to May 2024, Minute No. 19.24 – Record of Attendance 2022-23 being updated and an amendment to Minute 07.24 that Councillor Andrea Pellegram was also appointed to represent the Council on the Town Centre Masterplan Programme Board.

Voting Record:	For – 12	Against – 0	Abstentions – 2	Absent - 2
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54.24 Public Participation (Standing Order 68 refers)

The following question was received from Ken Wallington, Mike Verdi-Cotts and Sandra Price:

"The continual growth of Cirencester and its surrounding villages is massively increasing the demand for parking in the town, which is already under severe pressure.

An extensive survey carried out for Gloucestershire County Council in 2012 identified "areas where large numbers of locally registered vehicles will need to park on the street". It also demonstrated high pressure for

on-street parking and stated that "on-street parking is very congested". The same survey also found that town centre car parks had some spare capacity, although this situation soon changed.

In 2017, Cotswold District Council published a study which focused on off-street car parking for commuters, visitors, shoppers and leisure use. It concluded that "town centre car parks are already at, or approaching capacity". Based on expected development, according to the CDC Local Plan, it concluded that an extra 247 off-street parking spaces would be needed by 2023. This study did not consider the needs of local residents in the town who need to park on-street.

Sadly, little has been achieved to ameliorate the situation. There is some extra, part-time, "off centre" parking at the Rugby Club, and an inconsistent approach to helping local residents. On street parking problems continue to be a significant source of concern for many residents struggling to sustain daily life, receive the personal care they need and maintain their homes. Currently, many residential streets are used as free long term car parks by commuters, shoppers and visitors.

Will the town council pursue this issue and work with both the district and county councils to ensure a thorough review and resolution of the parking problem in Cirencester? The town desperately needs more off-road parking spaces and many streets need some form of parking control to help local residents."

The following response was read out by the Lead Member for Planning, Councillor Andy Jopp:

"There are currently a number of issues being pursued around the town in terms of planning. Cotswold District Council are currently working on a Town Centre Masterplan which amongst other things will be making proposals in regard to parking provision and active travel within the Town Centre.

Gloucestershire County Council have consulted on a Traffic Regulation Order covering pedestrianisation, on-street parking charges and Taxi Rank provision. There have been a number of objections to this, including from the Town Council, and we are awaiting some action from the County Council.

The Town Council are in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is being led by community volunteers alongside Councillors and will be going out to formal public consultation late this year or early next year. This should include some proposals regarding traffic and parking within the town with a balanced view on both the needs of residents and businesses.

I will ensure that the Planning Committee discuss the issues you raise in order to particularly stimulate the County Council who have responsibility for highway issues within the town."

Supplementary Question:

"Can the three councils 'working' and 'consulting' on the issue over many years, finally come together to solve the traffic and parking problems in Cirencester and ensure the 'should', in your answer becomes a definite 'will'? Some of use would be very prepared to put in effort to make something happen."

55.24 District and County Council Participation (Standing Item)

Councillor Gary Selwyn, as a District Councillor, confirmed that he had discussions with the Leader of the District Council with regard to the issues of anti-social behaviour in the town who was fully aware and keen to work with local councils and agencies in seeking a resolution.

Councillor Patrick Coleman, as a District Councillor, reported that the District Council did not require any updating of the 5 year land supply figures.

Councillor Nigel Robbins, as a District Council, reported that the District Council offices were being refurbished and were looking for local organisations, etc., to use some of the free space. A new contractor had been appointed for the leisure services and hoped that an art strategy would be forthcoming. The District Council was also increasingly using its reserves to fund services.

56.24 Youth Participation (Standing Item)

Andrew Tubb, CEO, reported that the Council had a student intern for week in the summer who had attended a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, worked in the Local Information Centre, helped with the 'Make Spaces for Girls' initiative and had received online training in Health & Safety, Social Media Marketing, Mental Health Awareness, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery, Data Protection and Cyber Security. It was hoped that the student would attend the Council Meeting in November to give a talk on mental health.

57.24 Member Participation (Standing Orders 27 to 30 refer)

None.

58.24 Notice of Motion

The following notice of motion was received from Councillor Sarah Orr, for and on behalf of the Community Services Group:

‘Cirencester Town Council supports the 20’s Plenty for Gloucestershire campaign and calls on Gloucestershire County Council to implement 20mph zones in Cirencester’s residential areas. The Town Council will write to the County Council to ask for 20mph speed limits on streets throughout Gloucestershire where people live, work, shop, play or learn, with 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit.’ Further information at www.20splenty.org.uk

RESOLVED that the proposed resolution be carried.

Voting Record:	For – 11	Against – 1	Abstentions – 2	Absent – 2
Cllrs:	Sabrina Dixon	Pete Smith	Andy Jopp	Christine Gore
	Sarah Orr		Andrea Pellegram	Jenny Hincks
	Nick Bridges			
	Naomi Bloomer			
	Patrick Coleman			
	Jan Gronow			
	Mark Harris			
	Roly Hughes			
	Bob Irving			
	Nigel Robbins			
	Gary Selwyn			

59.24 Delegation of Urgent and Routine Matters (Standing Order 11c) refers)

None.

60.24 Climate and Environment Action Plan

The updated action plan was received and noted, as reviewed by the Climate and Environment Group at its meeting on 25th July 2023.

61.24 Schedule of Payments

RESOLVED that the schedule of payments made between May and July 2023 in accordance with the budget estimates be approved. Each individual payment has been authorised by two Councillors. A list of all individual payments is forwarded to Finance and Audit and made available on the Town Council website:

Corporate £47,861, Office £16,091, Community £17,717, Land & Property £39,440, Priority Projects /Earmarked Reserves £244,375, Salaries/NI/Tax/Pension £205,809.

Voting Record:	For – 13	Against – 0	Abstentions – 1	Absent - 2
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62.24 Annual Town Survey 2023

The Annual Town Survey 2023 feedback summary was received and noted that the survey was live between 24th May and 31st July 2023 and had 200 respondents, with profile data and comment analysis supplied. Feedback summary will be provided demonstrating that the Council continues to actively respond to comments and builds on its engagement and its responsibilities to the community that it serves.

63.24 Work Programme 2023-24

The work programme for each committee and group was received, outlined and it was **RESOLVED that it be approved, subject to the Community Services Committee final item amended to read ‘to support the child friendly Cirencester initial audit and co-ordinate response’.**

Voting Record:	For – 14	Against – 0	Abstentions – 0	Absent - 2
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64.24 Health and Safety Action Plan

The Action Plan relating to the health and safety audit of the Council's operations that was carried out on 18th January 2023 was received and outlined. Reference was made to the remedial actions and their risk levels and it was agreed that more detail would be provided on follow up actions in due course.

65.24 Green Spaces Strategic Review

A report was received and considered relating to the strategic aspects of the amenity land and open spaces review being corporate led under a new Green Spaces Review initiative, together with appointments.

The report included the role and remit of the core project team, strategic advisory group and thematic workstreams.

RESOLVED that:

- i) a green spaces strategic advisory group and core project team be established;
- ii) the Core Project Team be appointed comprising of the CEO (team lead with delegated authority), the Land and Property Project Officer, Councillor Andrea Pellegram and Councillor Christine Gore;
- iii) the Green Spaces Strategic Advisory Group be appointed comprising the Lead Member for Climate and Environment, Finance and Audit and Land and Property, Councillors Patrick Coleman and Bob Irving.

Voting Record:	For – 14	Against – 0	Abstentions – 0	Absent - 2
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66.24 Announcements

None.

67.24 Correspondence

- a) Council Information Sheet - Members noted the Meetings update and the Weekly Information Sheet that was circulated weekly electronically;
- b) Correspondence – None.

The meeting closed at 7.22 p.m.

Councillor Sabrina Dixon
Chair of the Council

Agenda Item 6: Youth Participation - Mental Health and Wellbeing

More than 1 in 5 who experienced trauma didn't feel their problems were serious enough to reach out for help.

78% said that school made their mental health worse.

96% said that their mental health effected their school work at some point.

More are reaching out.

25% of school staff said they were aware of a young person being excluded because of their mental health.

Secondary schools struggle to meet the needs of young people with mental health issues.

3 in 4 with a mental health issue don't get access to the right support.

48% said that they had been punished for behaviour that was caused by their mental health problems.

56% of school staff identified that young people who didn't receive support self-harmed.

1 in 4 cases referred to CAHMS get rejected.

Reaching out

School

Nearly 1 in 5 felt excluded because they were spoken down to or they didn't feel their issues were understood correctly.

Mental Health In Teens

Certain areas have had to raise their bars to be able to gibe treatment – less receiving the treatment they need.

An increase in mental health concerns (especially depression and anxiety).

Some seriously ill children have not been offered help unless they threatened to kill themselves.

50% of mental health problems are established by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

Encourage them to talk about how they're feeling.

How to help

Can help with social connections and self expression.

Social Media

Celebrate small things.

Let them know that you're there for them.

Can lead to fear of missing out (FOMO), poor body image, isolation etc.

More access to positive mental health resources.

a type of fear usually associated with the thought of a threat or something going wrong in the future, but it can also arise from something happening right now.

Anxiety

Younger people are more likely to have some form of anxiety.

In 2022/23, an average of **37.1%** of women and **29.9%** of men reported high levels of anxiety.

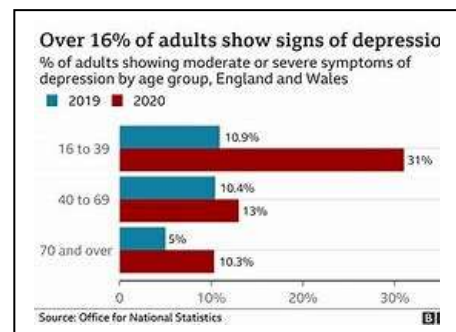
Common mental disorders

Women are **twice** as likely to experience depression than men.

15% of women receive treatment for depression, compared to only **9%** of men.

Depression

causes people to experience depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.



1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (like anxiety and depression) in any given week in England.

Mental Health

1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year.

- Family conflict.
- Relationship difficulties.
- Work Problems
- Poverty and homelessness.
- Medical conditions.
- Legal and financial problems.
- Over/under eating.
- Social isolation.
- Self-harm and harm to others.

Effects Of Mental Health

Approximately **15%** of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental disorder.

Older people struggle with isolation and loneliness just over **3 million** said they felt lonely often or always.

Older generation

Mental health problems are under-identified by health-care professionals, and the stigma surrounding conditions makes people reluctant to seek help.

Over **20%** of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental or neurological disorder (excluding headache disorders).

The most common disorders in this age group are dementia and depression, which affect approximately **5% to 7%** of the world's older population.



Climate and Environment Action Plan 2023-24



In 2019, Cirencester Town Council declared a Climate Emergency; this is because the Council acknowledged that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report in October 2018 on the subject of 'Global Warming of 1.5°C'.

The report stated that:

- human activity has already caused 1°C of warming to the earth;
- to limit warming to 1.5°C, it will be necessary to halve global carbon emissions by 2030 and to achieve near-zero net emissions by 2050;
- the consequences of 2°C warming is significantly worse than 1.5°C warming across all areas considered in the report.

Extreme weather events happening now can be attributed with confidence to warming at this scale, and the impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world. The UK faces damaging local impacts related to extreme heat, water shortages, sea level rise, and global impacts such as food price shocks and greatly increased migratory pressures.

The Climate Change Advisory Group has already made good progress in starting to audit and benchmark the Council's carbon footprint, the leasing of vehicles and equipment, banking arrangements and investments and switching energy tariffs.

We have also significantly minimised the number of in person meetings and have introduced flexible arrangements for working from home, reducing the need to travel. Our Council and Committee meetings are now streamed live via YouTube, reducing the need for members of the public to physically travel to our meetings.

We are also printing less and using less plastic; thinking more about how we can re-use and recycle. Our open spaces are also important for bio-diversity as well as contributing positively to the climate, this means less manicuring and more appropriate management with partners such as the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.



The purpose of this action plan is to record and reference each of the group's priorities in a SMART way as per the template below:

Ref	Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Timeframe	Financial	Notes (Lead responsibility)
<i>colour coded tracking ref</i> <i>red = delayed start</i> <i>amber = in progress</i> <i>green = complete</i> <i>no colour = update is before start date and no work has commenced on priority</i>	<i>brief description of strategic priority</i>	<i>bullet point outputs</i>	<i>coded reference identifying how achievable the output is</i> <i>1 = directly deliverable by CTC</i> <i>2 = directly deliverable by third party</i> <i>3 = jointly deliverable/joint responsibility of CTC and third party(ies)</i> <i>4 = outside of CTC direct control – impact and influence to be monitored by CTC</i>	<i>priority origin i.e. public consultation, neighbourhood planning, community plan, planning concept statement</i>	<i>where a priority is a task and finish project, to identify the earliest date by which the project is to be completed; where a project is not task and finish it will be denoted as ongoing</i>	<i>coded reference:</i> <i>1 = funding identified and available in approved CTC budget/medium term financial plan</i> <i>2 = funding needed by CTC to deliver project, to be identified in the budget or raised through precept/external grant or partner funding</i> <i>3 = delivery is dependent on third party funding</i> <i>4 = funding not required</i>	<i>notes for monitoring progress and any arising issues</i> <i>(lead officer and lead committee/group to be identified for providing updates and overseeing delivery)</i>

Ref	Specific Description of Strategic Priority	Measurable Outputs	Achievable	Timeframe a. start date b. estimated completion	Financial	Lead Points of Contact	Information and Updates
1	To create local multi modal hubs which support environmental improvements and integrate with light rail and public transport hub proposals	To ensure that through the Neighbourhood Plan consideration is given to: (a) the introduction of a multi modal hub (b) options for frequent point to point transport services c.f.: https://como.org.uk/shared-mobility/mobility-hubs/what/ and the role of Cotswold Friends	3	a. August 2022 b. subject to town centre master planning, neighbourhood plan and local public transport studies.	2	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group Lead Member for Land and Property	Included in CDC led transport study and the town centre master planning work; also, referenced in emerging Neighbourhood Plan policy as part of 20-minute neighbourhood initiative Note: CEO on an officer working group 'Cirencester Masterplanning and Transport Integration' led by CDC and including officers from GCC. Provision of a multi modal hub forms part of the town centre master planning which is work in progress; CDC public consultation expected late 2023/early 2024. Multi modal hubs are designed to offer a variety of transport modes and provide connectivity to public transport networks. Update: Incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan.
2	To audit and benchmark the carbon footprint of Cirencester Town Council	Review and assess response to the 2019-20 carbon footprint Arrange re-assessment through Carbon Footprint Ltd Benchmark against other local councils	1	a. August 2022 b. ongoing	1	Chief Executive Officer Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	Officers have attended carbon literacy course. A Carbon Footprint Appraisal has been undertaken by Carbon Footprint Ltd in respect of 2021-22 and considered by the Advisory Group. Update: The Carbon Footprint Appraisal for 2022-23 has been submitted. Once the report is received officers will benchmark results, where possible, with other local councils.
3	To encourage the co-operation of local organisations in endeavours to become more ecologically sustainable in their practices and/or work on initiatives to reduce and/or mitigate against the effects of climate change with a focus on biodiversity net gain and nature recovery,	To lead by example through what we do internally and support CDC on the clean and green projects – we do what we can in a sustainable a way as possible Support for wild flower planting of roundabouts and verges; joint initiative with CDC and GCC Explore options for a flood and environmental conference at the RAU and external funding to support local projects	3	a. September 2022 b. June 2024	1	Chief Executive Officer Land and Property Manager Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	Wild flower planting pilot of GCC roundabouts and verges being undertaken. Update: CTC is leading on a working sub-group, with representatives from the Friends of the Gumstool Brook, to plan a one-day Climate and Environment Symposium at the Royal Agricultural University in June 2024. The Symposium has secured funding from the Winstone Trust. The Lead Officer is attending meetings of the working group.

Ref	Specific Description of Strategic Priority	Measurable Outputs	Achievable	Timeframe a. start date b. estimated completion	Financial	Lead Points of Contact	Information and Updates
4	To encourage behavioural change and modal shift, reducing reliance and sole and individual use of CO2 emission vehicles	To raise awareness and host a community workshop to consider ways of achieving modal shift and behavioural change and explore options for community pilots; link with establishing multi modal mobile hubs – see community engagement ref 8 and also ref 1 (multi modal mobile hub)	1	a. August 2022 b. March 2023 b. Sept 2023 (at the earliest)	4	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group Lead Member for Land and Property	This links directly to strategic work being undertaken by GCC and CDC, which is supported by CTC. It also forms part of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept being considered as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan Cf. community services electric/hybrid car promotion - access to electric vehicles, promoting awareness of walking cycling public transport, electric vehicles/car sharing for businesses and local charities; Robin scheme Note: Exploring options for installing EV charging points at various sites. Project Officer following up a pilot initiative, subject to funding and external grants, through L&P for solar and EV charging. The revised Active Travel Map has been published and is available, free of charge, from the LIC.
5	Commit to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, to include scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions	To be assessed and scoped for consideration by the Climate Change Advisory Group	1	a. November 2022 b. January 2030	2	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	Note: Continue with annual assessment to monitor progress on reducing carbon footprint – target waste, fuel and electricity usage in 2023-24. Assess working practices in 2024-25, target setting Option 2 £2,700 to be commissioned. Assess use of amenity land and open spaces. Update: CEO has prepared a report, with a draft roadmap and interim targets. Staff and Member event in November to review the roadmap and explore practical ways in which we can reduce our carbon footprint.
6	Retain 100% renewable energy use across the council's land and buildings, rented or owned by the Council	Check scope and type of renewable energy tariff, including response to climate emergency by energy suppliers.	1	a. December 2022 b. ongoing	4	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Lead Member for Land and Property Land and Property Manager	Current tariffs and energy suppliers have been reviewed with 100% renewable energy tariffs being secured on CTC and BLT property through Total Energies Gas and Power. CTC energy usage included in rent and service charge for Bingham House. Smart Meters installed at Bingham House and across CTC sites.

Ref	Specific Description of Strategic Priority	Measurable Outputs	Achievable	Timeframe a. start date b. estimated completion	Financial	Lead Points of Contact	Information and Updates
7	Support, in principle, Cirencester to reduce direct and indirect CO2 emissions and become resilient to changes caused by the changing climate.	In particular, encouraging the: use of sustainable transport, reduction of energy uses in homes, including home insulation initiatives, reduction/efficient use of energy in businesses and other buildings, co-operation of organisations seeking to develop low carbon and community-led affordable housing in Cirencester, use and development of renewable energy sources, including exploring generating local energy (e.g. hydroelectric stations), addressing fuel poverty issues and exploring potential for local energy infrastructure, production, sale and consumption of locally-sourced food, including community allotments and minimisation of air travel.	4	a. January 2023 b. May 2024	3	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	Link to community competition as part of Carbon Literacy initiative. Raise awareness of companies such as ZeroAvia based at Kemble producing the world's first practical zero emission aviation. Update: Climate Competition will launch in November 2023 to coincide with COP28. The winners will be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Town.
8	Community Engagement	To lead on community engagement and awareness campaign including schools, business and local community To arrange workshops and talks hosted by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Phoenix Gardeners building on the Wild Campus concept of what we can all do in our own areas of green space, however limited the space is (including modal shift and behavioural change see ref 4) Create a local hub for climate and environmental advice Support Cotswold District Council's clean and green public initiatives and facilitate events such as big clean-up/recycling/re-purposing	1	a. September 2022 b. May 2023 b. January 2024	4	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	Note: Work continues on establishing a courtyard space at Bingham House, promoting bio-diverse, environmentally friendly, well-being spaces in urban areas, and launching a workshop and talks by GWT/RAU/Phoenix Gardeners @ Bingham House. Library Service interested in a joint initiative for climate themed storytelling. There has been a display in the foyer cases at Bingham House on climate change and a permanent information board in the LIC, alongside a leaflet and dedicated climate web page. LIC is a litter pick hub on behalf of CDC's clean and green team where the community can borrow litter pick equipment. Update: Climate Competition is an opportunity to engage with public and for councillors to engage with their ward residents. When the competition is launched the Climate Hub page on the CTC website will be updated and a link added from the home page.

Ref	Specific Description of Strategic Priority	Measurable Outputs	Achievable	Timeframe a. start date b. estimated completion	Financial	Lead Points of Contact	Information and Updates
9	Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Working	<p>Encourage constructive links with Cotswold District Council (CDC) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), along with bordering Parish Councils on best practice and joint initiatives; including Youth Climate Group https://cscic.org/gycg/, run by Creative Sustainability in Stroud</p> <p>https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/</p> <p>https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/climate-change/greener-gloucestershire-climate-dashboard/</p> <p>Information about the response of town and parish councils can be found via:</p> <p>https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/climate-change</p>	1	<p>a. September 2022</p> <p>b. October 2023</p>	2	Chief Executive Officer Chair of Council Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Group	<p>Stakeholders and Partners to be contacted with the view to setting up a meeting/workshop before October (Lead Officer: Natalie Reynolds).</p> <p>Update: Lead Officer attended Local Nature Recovery meeting at RAU and made contact with Kelly Osbourne, Sustainability and Engagement Officer at GCC.. Opportunity to participate in GCC climate engagement meetings.</p>
10	Achievements and Progress 2022-23	To measure the impact of achievements and produce a progress report	1	<p>a. January 2023</p> <p>b. March 2023</p> <p>b. May 2023</p>	4	Chief Executive Officer	CEO prepared report and summary for Annual Meeting of the Town.
11	Training and Development	Carbon Literacy Certification	1	<p>a. May 2023</p> <p>b. March 2024</p>	2	Lead Officer	<p>Note: All staff and Councillors to be offered opportunity to attend climate emergency related training and events. Subject to funding, all staff and Councillors to be offered opportunity to become carbon literate certificated between 2023 and 2026.</p> <p>Officers have attended a net-zero training and networking event at the Growth Hub which has provided valuable resources.</p> <p>Update: Subject to funding, the aim should be 2025/26 for all staff and councillors to become carbon literate certified.</p>

Members are asked to consider other priorities for inclusion within the Action Plan, subject to staff and budget resources.

Version11:October 2023



Council

14th November 2023

REPORT SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM:	11.2
REPORT TITLE:	Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan
REPORT AUTHOR:	Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Andy Jopp
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To approve the Reg 14 draft for public consultation.
LEGAL:	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
FINANCIAL:	There is designated funding in place to cover the costs of public engagement and consultation.
PERSONNEL:	There are no personnel implications directly arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENTAL:	There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.
CLIMATE CHANGE:	There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report.
RECOMMENDATION:	That the Reg 14 draft vision, aims and objectives, and policies be approved for public consultation subject to delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of Council, Lead Member for Planning and Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to review and revise the full draft document, as outlined in the report.

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider and approve the Reg 14 draft as recommended by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Planning Committee.

2. Background

2.1 The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Cirencester was commissioned by the Town Council, as the qualifying body, to build on previous place shaping work, such as the Community Plan 'Our Future Cirencester', the Public Realm Design Code and planning Concept Statement. This previous work can be viewed at: <https://cirencester.gov.uk/planning-and-development>

2.2 This is an opportunity for the community to influence and shape planning policy for future generations; a Neighbourhood Plan gives the people who know and love Cirencester, a real voice and input to agree a future vision for Cirencester, through planned sustainable growth, which meets community need and protects Cirencester's unique qualities.

2.3 A Steering Group, including community representatives, was appointed to lead on the preparation of the Plan with Richard Eastham at Feria Urbanism being appointed by Council as the lead planning consultant.

2.4 For information on the work of the Group and progress to-date, please visit:

<https://cirencesternp.org/>

2.5 Cirencester Town Council undertakes a role of advocacy and leadership on behalf of the community and represents the community when responding to planning applications. The Town Council also has a role in representing the needs of the community with Cotswold District Council (CDC) in respect of forward planning and the town centre Masterplanning, and Gloucestershire County Council in respect of highways and transport.

2.6 The purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan was to add context and detail to planning policies within the Cotswold District Local Plan which have an impact on Cirencester, and to establish planning policies for issues on which the Local Plan was silent.

2.7 The full Reg 14 draft document has been made available under separate cover.

2.8 This report outlines the vision, aims and objectives, and the Plan's policies for approval ahead of statutory consultation in mid-January 2024 and advises Council of further amendments and additions required to the draft document; such amendments being made under delegated authority to the CEO, in consultation with the Chair of Council, Lead Member for Planning and Chair of the Steering Group.

2.9 The role of the Steering Group during the next phase of the process will be to advise on the maps, tables, and images required within the document, to co-ordinate and oversee the statutory Reg 14 consultation and to consider the feedback and responses to that consultation alongside the advice of the planning consultant. The planning consultant will then prepare the Reg 16 document. The Reg 16 document is then subsequently submitted to the Planning Authority (CDC) for independent examination ahead of a public referendum on the Plan being made and adopted. [Note: the Reg 16 phase also includes statutory consultation.]

3. Vision

The Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan vision is:

'Our vision for Cirencester, in the period to 2033, is to pass on to future generations a historic and vibrant, welcoming, and friendly rural market town with a strong sense of community. It will be rich in heritage, character, leisure, and cultural opportunities.

Cirencester will thrive by capitalising on its heritage and the character of its urban streets while facilitating sympathetic, high quality and sustainable economic and residential growth. This will deliver for all residents and users of the Town while respecting the environment, responding to the climate emergency, and supporting employment and skills opportunities.

The Town will be well connected to a series of green parks and open spaces, nature, and the surrounding countryside, which will retain key attributes with improvements where appropriate. Recreational opportunities will be accessible to all. Opportunities for safe walking and cycling connections across all areas of the town will be improved as will active travel and public transport connections to its surrounding towns, villages, and countryside.

All areas of the town will have easy and accessible access to key services, including transport, with a more diverse cultural scene and sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of a growing population.'

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1 Ensure that land made available for new development better facilitates and maintains a vibrant, connected, economically active and sustainable town centre without adding to congestion or flood-risk.

4.2 Create a convenient, robust, and flexible network of streets and spaces that promote all modes of active travel leading to reduced reliance on private vehicles. To support this, there is a need for enhanced public transport and a mobility hub.

- 4.3 Improve connections of the outlying suburbs to the historic centre by footpaths, cycleways and public transport which are hindered by highway barriers and gaps in the walking and cycling routes. Overcome the highways barrier created by the A419 and A429 dual carriageways by putting in place direct, street level crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at each roundabout and subway.
- 4.4 Put a '20 Minute Neighbourhood' model in place across the whole of Cirencester through the development of safe, sustainable, livable, and mixed communities with active transport to jobs and essential services to meet the daily needs of the community.
- 4.5 Facilitate a reduction in carbon emissions and contribute to achieving the national goal of net zero.
- 4.6 Improve the sustainability of both conversion and new build development through use of low carbon materials, construction methods and facilitate low carbon running carbon costs in accordance with the Cotswold Design Code.
- 4.7 Prioritise new residential development towards affordable homes and first-time buyers and avoid age-specific residences.
- 4.8 Minimise future flood risk by protecting and, where possible, extending the functional floodplain. Require new developments to provide multifunctional mitigation measures, such as sustainable urban drainage systems, to ensure that rainwater is attenuated within the site. Support solutions to improve the management of the river flow on the upper Churn to reduce flooding and drying up.
- 4.9 Maintain, protect, and enhance the distinctive Cotswold-rich visual character, views and heritage of Cirencester, its immediate historic setting and vistas and its connections to the surrounding areas.
- 4.10 Protect and enhance low carbon economic activity, to encourage the promotion of innovative and high-quality employment space. New employment premises to be part of both existing and new mixed-use neighbourhoods, moving away from employment zoning, subject to respect for the character, scale, and appearance of such areas. The retention of existing skills, and the development of new ones through youth apprenticeships and placement schemes through local business and Cirencester College will be encouraged.
- 4.11 Protect, maintain, and enhance the natural environment, including local green spaces, parks, trees and green buffers, habitats, the River Churn, Gumstool Brook and all wildlife corridors alongside their connection to the wider landscape, promoting biodiversity and planting native species.
- 4.12 Protect existing, and deliver new easily accessible, community infrastructure, including for primary health care, skills development, recreation, sport, leisure, and cultural enrichment, to fill existing gaps and support the future of Cirencester and its population growth.
- 4.13 Facilitate a reduction in noise and light pollution within the town and in new development whilst maintaining and improving air quality through a reduction in emissions.
- 4.14 Protect and improve public safety and the perception of feeling safe through urban design that increases the opportunity for community vigilance and design out crime.

5. POLICY TC1 – TOWN CENTRE (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT)

Development proposals within the defined town centre area (Cotswold District Council Local Plan and Town Centre Master Plan refer) that are in accordance with the design and development principles described by the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported.

6. POLICY TC2 – TOWN CENTRE (AREAS OF CHANGE)

Development proposals for development within any of the seven defined town centre character areas, that do not compromise, conflict or are in any other way incompatible with general development principles (Policy TC1) will be supported.

7. POLICY AM1 – THE CIRENCESTER SPOKE & WHEEL CYCLE NETWORK

Support will be given for the creation of a cycle and footpath network radiating from the town centre to the neighbourhoods (the spokes) and connecting neighbourhoods to each other (the wheel).

Components of the system will include the 33 cycling routes proposed by the LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) within the town boundary, together with the following additional measures:

- a) Creation of a new walking and cycling link from rear of Tesco to The Steadings roundabout on Spratsgate Lane, via Siddington Church and Orchard Fields. This route will then connect into the new cycling and walking infrastructure within The Steadings neighbourhood and on to the RAU.
- b) Upgrade of the existing footpath between Harebushes and Bowling Green Lane to accommodate cycling journeys.
- c) Upgrade of the existing footpath between Bowling Green Lane and Whiteway View to accommodate cycling journeys.

8. POLICY AM 2 – TOWN & COUNTRY CONNECTIONS

- a) The building of walking and cycling routes and other measures, that connect Cirencester with outlying areas, as proposed by the LCWIP, will be supported.
- b) The delivery of the walking and cycling routes listed in Table 1 will be supported.

Note: Please see the full Reg 14 draft document, provided under separate cover for Table 1.

9. POLICY AM 3 – THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Support will be given to a range of coordinated measures designed to enhance the pedestrian experience across the plan area, as follows:

- a) Decluttering streets and removing obstacles.
- b) Widening footways and improving surfaces.
- c) Enhanced street design including high quality surfaces, street furniture, tree planting and other greening initiatives.
- d) Town centre management, including curation of events and festivals.
- e) New signage and a wayfinding strategy.
- f) Rationalising and management of vehicle parking.
- g) Creating 'bumping spaces' for people to stop and meet.
- h) Moving most parking to the periphery rather than the centre of the town.
- i) Implement changes to operation of street network to remove unnecessary through traffic from the town centre.

10. POLICY AM4 – INTEGRATED MOBILITY HUB (IMH)

- a) Support will be given for the development of an integrated mobility hub (IMB) that includes the following elements:
 - 1) Long distance coaches to London, London airports, and the Midlands.
 - 2) Regional buses to Bristol, Oxford, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath, and Swindon.

- 3) Local buses.
 - 4) Kemble railway shuttle or very light rail.
 - 5) Taxis.
 - 6) Car Hire & Car Club.
 - 7) Cycle shelters.
 - 8) Bike and e-Bike hire.
 - 9) Car passenger drop-off and pick-up.
- b) The preferred location for the IMH will be determined by the selection criteria set out in the Plan.

Selection Criteria:

- **Town Centre Integration:** At the “heart” of the town centre, the Market Place is in the immediate vicinity of key shops and facilities and provides easy visual aids for navigating to most key locations in town. As such the transport hub should be easily accessible from here. This includes ease of access in terms of wide and safe walking space as well as easy wayfinding, ideally through natural means such as clear sightlines of landmarks, but also supported through signage and pavement design.
- **Ease of Access by Bus Services:** Bus services accessing the hub should not have to take convoluted routes around the one-way system to get there. This will add to journey times, deter customers, and increase operating costs. A location that minimises the need for buses to cover additional distance to access it, will maximise the location’s appeal to customers and bus operators.
- **Ease of Access by Coach Services:** National Express (and their operator for services through Cirencester – Bennetts Coaches) have expressed a strong desire to minimise the distance their coaches have to travel away from the A417 dual carriageway, as this adds to their journey times. It is for this reason their service between Stroud and London travels along Cirencester’s ring road but does not make a stop at Cirencester. For an integrated hub to be considered usable by these companies (and other coach operators in future), it is essential that coach services are able to access any location with as little journey time from the A417 as possible.
- **Ability to Accommodate Buses, Coaches, and Community Transport Vehicles:** The site should be large enough to provide bays for a number of buses to use the hub at the same time (at least six) as well as for coaches to drop-off and pick-up and community transport vehicles, ranging from cars to mini-buses equipped with specialist accessibility features.
- **Customer Facilities:** The hub should provide the space and facilities for customers to wait in safety, protected from the elements and with access to good quality facilities including real-time information and, if appropriate, commercial facilities such as a shop or café. Any such facilities could also provide an income source for the hub.
- **Driver Facilities:** Bus drivers play a crucial role in providing mobility to all of society, yet often struggle to have access to the most basic of welfare facilities. By providing driver toilets and a rest area (including space for drivers to prepare their own food and drink) the hub can accommodate breaks in duty. This not only provides much needed facilities but will also encourage bus operators to treat the site as an operational hub, making it easier to add more services to and from Cirencester.

11. POLICY AM5 – STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS & TRANSPORT LINKS

Effective connections through public transport links with towns which are economically important to Cirencester will be supported.

These include:

- a) Level 1 Kemble – Strong public transport services and safe at grade cycle routes are strategically important to Cirencester.
- b) Level 2 Swindon, Gloucester, Cheltenham – Strong public transport services and connections to the national rail system through Kemble rail station.
- c) Level 3 – Oxford and Stroud – Strong public transport services and connections are important.

12. POLICY DBE1 – DESIGN QUALITY

The design of new buildings and their settings should be of an exceptional quality and embody the highest standards in building and landscape architecture. This creation of successful public realm spaces begins at the principal layout stage where the integration of open courtyards and their connection to pedestrian access routes, create animated, social spaces with a legible and appealing sense of place. Proposals will need to show both a deep understanding of the defining characteristics of Cirencester and demonstrate how these qualities are expressed within the new urban form. They should use materials, land, energy, and water efficiently and be designed for longevity and minimise pollution.

New developments should enhance the local character, although this does not imply simply duplicating existing developments which, in themselves, may not be of good quality.

- a) All new development proposals should have regard for the Design Checklist produced specifically for the Cirencester context.
- b) Where a development is proposed in, or on the edge of an existing settlement, all new routes will respect their place in the hierarchy within the overall network.
- c) The design of new development should take into account, the need to define and integrate the transition between areas of different character.
- d) Where the corners of new buildings lie on the sight lines and axial views, consideration should be given to the inclusion of architectural features that form focal points, e.g. turrets, oriel windows and projected gables.
- e) Buildings should incorporate publicly accessible pedestrian routes in order to maximise permeability through the town. This applies particularly where existing routes can be linked.
- f) New developments should not be disproportionate in scale to adjoining buildings in the locality, unless warranted by its proposed use and position on the street.
- g) Innovation in building design and materials in a way that supports local distinctiveness and the other objectives for good design and sustainable development will be supported.
- h) Buildings should not be more than 12 metres in height i.e. from ground level to the ridge, three storeys in height, (with use of the roof space with dormer windows as a useable fourth storey habitable living space being accepted) i.e. ridge heights to not exceed those of neighbouring buildings which set the appropriate height for a new or extended building and that the proposed design causes no impairment of light or visual impact.

13. POLICY DBE2 – PROTECTION OF LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE VIEWS

Development proposals should demonstrate through a Design and Access Statement or Visual Impact Statement how they will protect and enhance the following views, identified as important to the landscape and townscape of Cirencester:

- a) Rear of the former Watermoor Primary School: The school is currently empty and vulnerable to development. The 'glimpse' of the church spire is enjoyed as you approach from higher ground behind the premises. Roof line or development on the playing field could and would affect this.
- b) Churn Meadow Stratton: Towards the town, enjoyed by dog walkers and accessible for all, it is also a valued green space.
- c) Tower Street towards the St John Baptist Parish Church: A particularly significant central view, any development or change to the Police Station building could affect this approach with the Forum Car Park on the right.
- d) The rear of the former House of Fraser building: The back of the former House of Fraser building in the Market Place, which could be described as a mismatch of previous development, still presents an aspect of the St John Baptist Parish Church that invites anticipation of what is to come and could be affected by changes to the rear of the building.
- e) Somerford Road walking towards Sheep Street: Commercial buildings are probably unlikely to change but behind this aspect is Querns Lane with an empty large shop which currently has the potential to be developed into residential town houses or flats.
- f) Riverside Walk: Much valued Riverside Walk with open fields towards Stratton which enhance the area and its emphasis on wildlife. Probably prone to flooding and therefore unlikely to be built on but still noted.
- g) Powell's School Playing Fields from the Barton Allotments: Open aspect from extensive school playing fields which can 'sometimes' offer potential to reduce in size and zone for development.
- h) Approaching town from Gloucester Road: Could be compromised with any development of the commercial garage site on the left, or petrol station on the right of the distant eyeline.

14. POLICY DBE3 – CONVERSION OF EXISTING PROPERTIES

- a) Due to the negative impact on the appearance and character of the town centre and where planning permission is required, proposals for the merging of multiple units within Cirencester Town Centre will need to show:
 - a.1) how it will minimise any detrimental impact on the Conservation Area
 - a.2) that the tenant or occupier will be providing much needed services
- b) Redevelopment proposals will be supported where, through the design of the ground floor retail units, small, local, and/or independent traders are encouraged to locate in the town centre.
- c) The conversion to residential of under-utilised commercial upper floors across the town centre will be supported to create a more vibrant and vital town centre, as appropriate to the nature of the development concerned. Support will be given if proposals are to a high design standard, respect the scale of neighbouring buildings and the ground floor continues to provide an active and animated frontage onto the street.
- d) The sub-division of houses over 200m² gross internal floor area to create a studio, one, or two bedroomed self-contained apartments will be supported, subject to design quality.

15. POLICY DBE4 – PROTECTION OF NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

- a) The identified Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) shown on the Map on page [xx] and listed at Appendix 4 make a positive contribution to the townscape and will be protected from inappropriate demolition or alteration.
- b) Any new development or alteration to an existing structure will be required in its design, scale, and materials to preserve or enhance the setting of heritage assets, whether designated or undesignated, and the historic character of the town, and to have regard to the guidance in the Cirencester Streetscape Strategy.
- c) Any application for new development or alteration to an existing structure must include an appraisal of the site and its surroundings, with drawings showing its relationship to heritage assets, whether designated or undesignated, including roofscapes and views.
- d) The application must clearly explain how the development proposals have taken account of the findings of such an appraisal.

16. POLICY DBE5 – NET-ZERO & ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN THE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

- a) Proposals should demonstrate that solutions to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions have been adopted and included at each stage of the design and construction process.
- b) Proposals should demonstrate how greenhouse gas emissions are minimised and reduced as part of the site identification and selection process, site layout and orientation, construction methodology, thermal properties of materials, choice of glazing, choice of construction materials, avoidance of materials harmful to the environment, use of local materials and people, incorporation of sustainable modes of transport, integration with existing or planned sustainable travel networks, recharging points for electric vehicles, flexible and adaptable space, water efficiency, incorporation of systems to collect rain and grey water, use of permeable surface and sub-base materials.
- c) Proposals should follow an energy hierarchy as outlined in the supporting text.
- d) Non-residential development, design and construction should comply with the BREEAM standard and achieve an 'excellent' accreditation or an alternative standard which achieves the same or better outcome.
- e) Carbon off-setting will not be permitted.

17. POLICY DBE6 – ENERGY USE IN NEW BUILDINGS

- a) New residential developments should not use fossil fuels on-site for space heating or hot water provision.
- b) New residential developments should achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (or metered energy use) of no more than 35 kWh/m²/year for regulated and unregulated demand assessed using energy modelling such as a Passivhaus Planning Package or similar. This is based on the total amount of energy needed within a residential building per year.
- c) New residential developments should achieve a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m²/year assessed using energy modelling such as Passivhaus Planning Package or similar. This is based on the level of heat energy needed within a residential building per year to maintain a regular temperature.

- d) Non-residential developments should achieve an energy utilisation intensity or metered input of 55 to 65 kWh/m²/year (subject to building use) and a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m²/year assessed using energy modelling such as Passivhaus Planning Package or similar.
- e) On-site renewable energy should meet all the energy consumption needs of new residential buildings.
- f) The strategy for metering, monitoring, reporting, energy calculations, and predicted energy use should be confirmed as part of the planning submissions for outline and detailed grant of permission and reconfirmed before the commencement of construction.
- g) Variations on the requirements of this policy will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances where in complying with the above the development causing harm, or harm to the character of the wider area, or extraordinary reasons, clearly demonstrated where the standards above cannot be achieved.

18. DBE7 – HOMES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Proposals for the development of new Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will be supported where the development:

- a) Does not harm the residential amenity or character of the locality as a result of excessive noise.
- b) Does not increase levels of on-street parking, that cannot reasonably be regulated through parking control measures.
- c) Does not lead to inadequate off-street storage of refuse and bicycles.
- d) Is on a site in an electoral ward where under 10% of homes are currently HMOs.
- e) Has no existing HMO within 5 dwellings on either side of the property or on the opposite side of the street, within 10 dwellings.

19. POLICY QPR1 – ILLUMINATED SIGNAGE

Unless it can be demonstrated that the introduction of free standing and wall mounted structures with illuminated advertisements have no detrimental visual or acoustic impact on the town centre Conservation Areas i.e. that they are contained discretely within the fabric of buildings, proposals to introduce these or similar structures will not be supported.

20. POLICY QPR2 – QUALITY STREETS & SPACES

- a) The network of historic streets, parks, gardens, and spaces across the town will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals that would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the existing historic network will not be supported.
- b) Development proposals will be supported which use the palette of heritage materials outlined in the Cirencester Town Centre Public Realm Design Code.
- c) Where appropriate, new developments across the plan area should contribute to the delivery of projects that help implement this policy.

21. POLICY QPR3 – SOCIAL & CIVIC SPACES

Where appropriate, new developments will be supported where they provide a clear network of well designed social and civic spaces that can help support the cultural, social, and economic life of the town.

22. POLICY QPR4 – HERITAGE TRAILS & WAYFINDING SYSTEMS

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for heritage trails, wayfinding systems and the improved signposting of existing pedestrian and cycle routes within the town will be supported. Proposals that would facilitate better connections between the town centre, the surrounding areas and the wider countryside will be particularly encouraged.

23. POLICY TMN1 – 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS

- a) Development proposals which contribute to the 20-minute neighbourhood model, will be supported. The contribution made should be in proportion to the scale of the associated development.
- b) Proposals that remove barriers to cycling and walking across the Plan area will be supported.
- c) Measures designed to help overcome the barriers created by the A419 and A429 dual carriageways including the provision of safe, direct, street level (at-grade) crossings will be supported.
- d) New developments should offer a genuine choice of sustainable and active travel in accordance with the agreed travel hierarchy, both within the new development and beyond the boundaries as it connects with the surroundings.
- e) Incorporate or contribute in proportion to the scale of the development to the walking and cycle routes within the town boundary and identified in the Cirencester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- f) Street designs which provide direct, good connections to the existing or future neighbourhoods bordering the development will be a requirement of all development proposals.
- g) New residential areas will be designed in a way that keeps traffic speed at and below 20mph.

24. POLICY NE1 – BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Development will be expected to demonstrate, in accordance with the Environment Act of 2021, a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain on site or replace as near to the development as possible.

25. POLICY NE2 – REWILDING SCHEMES

Support will be given for the extension of wilding areas of the town, particularly on the periphery of green spaces, verges and edges of footpaths combined with the retention of hedgerows.

26. POLICY NE3 – WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

- a) Development proposals should maintain the integrity of existing wildlife corridors whilst creating new opportunities to connect areas of habitat through planting and links.
- b) Existing wildlife corridors within the town should not be separated or fragmented by changes to green infrastructure and habitats without justification and compensation with new connections.

27. POLICY NE4 – GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT

- a) Development proposals should protect the existing green and blue infrastructure of Cirencester alongside creating new opportunities, connections, and extensions.

- b) Green and blue infrastructure opportunities and requirements should be considered at the earliest stages of all new development planning proposals, as an integral part of the town's provision, taking into account the most suitable locations and types.
- c) The removal of existing green and blue infrastructure within the town will be resisted and must be justified and compensated for, with appropriate replacement if permitted.
- d) Developers will be required to justify the removal of any area of highway verge to create or extend vehicle access to property and land.
- e) Private households will be encouraged to avoid replacing lawns with hard landscaping.

28. POLICY NE5 – FLOOD MITIGATION

Development proposals should demonstrate how they will mitigate flood risk through design and landscape measures, as combined with other appropriate strategies such as permeable paving and sustainable drainage systems.

29. POLICY NE 6 – LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS

- a) Local Green Spaces in Cirencester identified on the Map, page xx refers, and scheduled in Table 2 will be protected from built development except in very special circumstances.
- b) Community green or open spaces that contain a building which needs improving or removing will be allowed to be developed if the proposed work is for the benefit of the community and will preserve the local significance of the space for which it was designated.

Note: Please see the full Reg 14 draft document, provided under separate cover for Table 2.

30. POLICY NE7 – GREEN GAPS

Development proposals should maintain the distinction between Cirencester and its adjacent settlements by maintaining the green gaps as shown on the Map, page xx refers, between areas of built form.

Proposals that result in the loss of peripheral boundaries and buffers of undeveloped land between Cirencester and its adjacent settlements should compensate for this loss through appropriate replacement landscaped areas.

31. POLICY LE1 – PROTECT & ENHANCE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- a) Existing economic activity (including employment, tourism, and retail uses) and premises across the town centre will be protected and enhanced.
- b) Existing economic activity in the neighbourhoods, particularly key local facilities as identified within Appendix 3 and associated information, will be protected, and enhanced.
- c) Any loss of employment uses, or premises, will not be supported unless it is accompanied by clear evidence demonstrating that the site or premises is not currently viable and that an appropriate alternative site or premises can be identified within the Plan area. The evidence required will be determined by the existing use and its site.
- d) Flexible growth and adaptation of existing employment areas (e.g. Love Lane) across the Plan area through the sensitive introduction of new low carbon economic uses and activities, will be encouraged.

32. POLICY LE2 – PROVISION FOR INNOVATIVE WORK SPACES, NEW & SMALL BUSINESSES

- a) Development proposals that provide innovative hybrid and/or mixed-use working spaces which encourage creative small businesses or community uses will be supported.

- b) Support will be given for developments on sites that provide for:
 - 1) start-up businesses by enabling low cost facilities in cooperative clusters;
 - 2) working from home, enabling extensions and small new buildings;
 - 3) enabling microbusinesses.

33. POLICY LE3 – SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- a) Development proposals will be supported where they provide opportunities for training, the obtaining of skills, and education.
- b) Proposals that provide enhancements to existing skills and training facilities will be supported, including the encouragement of local apprenticeships and T-Level placements.

34. POLICY LE4 – NEW EMPLOYMENT PREMISES & DESIGN QUALITY

- a) Proposals for new employment development outside existing industrial and employment areas should through its design, scale, and materials provide an attractive business environment which takes account of the character and appearance of Cirencester.
- b) New employment and industrial proposals should demonstrate through a Design & Access Statement how they respect the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area. Where their location provides practical opportunities to do so, development proposals will be supported where, as appropriate to their scale and location, they provide clear and convenient connections with the town centre and create public access to the surrounding areas.

35. POLICY WBC1 – AIR QUALITY

- a) Measures that reduce traffic volume near educational establishments, particularly at peak times, will be supported.
- b) Developments that encourage idling traffic, such as drive-through food outlets, within the Plan area will be resisted.
- c) Measures that reduce vehicle movement in the town centre's historic streets will be supported, particularly Park Street, Dyer Street, Thomas Street, and the Market Place.
- d) Development construction traffic will be required to monitor air quality, including particulates, to ensure net neutral is achieved throughout site development, and if necessary, instigate mitigation.
- e) Development proposals should be operationally designed in a way that minimises any impact on public health through emissions and dust.
- f) Monitoring of air quality within the town should be increased through locations identified as having greater risk of deterioration and particularly near educational establishments.

36. POLICY WBC2 – HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- a) Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) will be required in the design and access statement of developments over 10 residential units to support the 20 Minute Neighbourhood principle.
- b) A rapid HIA assessment for developments of fewer than 10 homes will be required, or where the development is over 10 homes or greater than 10,000m² of commercial space a comprehensive HIA assessment will be required.

37. POLICY WBC 3 – EQUAL ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES FOR ALL

- a) Development proposals should accommodate the needs of all users, including those with mobility needs, in the design and landscaping of public spaces.
- b) Access to new and existing green infrastructure should be provided through well-connected paths of appropriate widths, smooth non-slip surfaces, and navigation aids such as signs.

38. POLICY WBC 4 – ACCESS TO PLAY SPACES

- a) Developments of greater than 10 houses should provide appropriate play spaces for the site size, easily accessible to all users, which are maintained as part of ongoing social management plans.
- b) The development of new fitness trails and outdoor gyms in open green spaces, where appropriate, will be supported, especially those that connect to the cycling 'wheel and spoke' network of the town.

39. POLICY WBC5 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- a) Existing community facilities that are designated as Assets of Community Value (ACV) will be protected from change of use or closure.
- b) The loss of existing community buildings (Use Class D1) will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists.
- c) Flexible multi-functional spaces that allow for the widest possible use and activity, particularly daily community needs which are missing, will be supported.
- d) Development proposals will be required to demonstrate the provision of community infrastructure in proportion to the increased population brought about by that development, particularly recreation and primary care, either on site or off-site through developer contributions.

40. POLICY WBC6 – DESIGNING OUT CRIME

- a) Development plans should demonstrate in the design and access statement how principles that deter crime have been incorporated.
- b) Support will be given for the development of upper floor empty town centre premises to residential use to increase crime vigilance and create less opportunity for unobserved crime and anti-social behaviour.
- c) Support will be given for prevention of crime opportunities in the urban built environment by improvements to hidden or dark pedestrian footpaths.

41. POLICY WBC7 – LIGHT POLLUTION

- a) Development and design must mitigate in design, to minimise night blight by using lower lumen lighting suitably positioned in a downwards direction and avoiding reflections onto surfaces.
- b) New commercial and external light signage will only be permitted with justification for operational, safety or security reasons, designing in such a way to minimise spillage beyond the application site using guidance on lighting by the Institute of Lighting professionals (ILP) GN01, the reduction of obstructive light.

42. POLICY WBC8 – NOISE POLLUTION

- a) Support will be given for measures that reduce town centre vehicle noise especially at night through encouragement to use peripheral roads.

- b) Developments will be encouraged at the design stage to consider better noise insulation with features such as trees and hedges in landscaping, and wall insulation.

43. DRAFT TEXT REVIEW AND REVISION

- 43.1 Prior to statutory consultation, delegated authority is sought for the CEO to review and revise the full Reg 14 draft document; this will be in consultation with the Chair of Council, Lead Member for Planning and Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The CEO will also seek advice from the Steering Group on the maps, tables, images, and supporting information required within the document. In addition, the CEO wants to liaise with Councillors Pellegram and Gore, in light of their respective professional backgrounds in planning.
- 43.2 For clarity and assurance, none of the policy positions outlined within this report will be amended; the review and revision are restricted to the following aspects of the document:
 - 43.2.1 formatting and annotating;
 - 43.2.2 referencing and information sources;
 - 43.2.3 sub-headings;
 - 43.2.4 consistency of terms, words and use of upper and lower case letters;
 - 43.2.5 spelling, grammar and accuracy of text;
 - 43.2.6 repeated text, emotive and superfluous words;
 - 43.2.7 correcting and/or clarifying conflicting statements;
 - 43.2.8 logical order of text;
 - 43.2.9 adding maps, tables, images and supporting information.

- 44. **RECOMMENDATION that the Reg 14 draft vision, aims and objectives, and policies be approved for public consultation subject to delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of Council, Lead Member for Planning and Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to review and revise the full draft document, as outlined in the report.**

Agenda Item 12

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Cirencester Town Council - GL0054**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to internal control objective D in respect of the level of reserves held. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address this area of weakness in a timely manner.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

 SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

25/09/2023



Cirencester Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2023-24 (First Interim Up-date)

Prepared by Chris Hackett

For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Cirencester Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely on, for any reason whatsoever, this report, its content or conclusions.

Background and Scope

The Accounts and Audit Regulations require all Town and Parish Councils to implement an independent internal audit examination of their Accounts and accounting processes annually. The Council has complied with the requirements in terms of independence from the Council decision making process with Auditing Solutions Ltd appointed to undertake the internal audit function on behalf of the Council.

This report sets out those areas examined during the course of our first interim visit, undertaken on the 10th October 2023. We would like to record our thanks to Officers for their assistance and co-operation in providing the financial records for the purpose of our review.

Internal Audit Approach

In commencing our review for 2023-24, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts. Our approach is designed to enable us to gather sufficient evidence to complete the Internal Audit Certificate which is part of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), this requires us to give assurance on specified control objectives. In addition, our programme of cover is designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council has robust financial systems in place that operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. In doing this we undertake a mixture of 100% substantive or selected sampling techniques where considered applicable.

Overall Conclusion

We are pleased to report that, on the basis of the work undertaken to date this year, we are able to conclude that the Council continues to operate effective financial control systems. We will extend our testing at our second interim visit planned to take place early in 2024 and our final visit in the summer before signing off the Internal Audit Report in the AGAR.

Our detailed findings are set out below.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have noted that the Council uses the Rialtas Omega software to record its financial transactions. Separate cash books are maintained for the Current, Salaries, Deposit and Cheque accounts operated at Handelsbanken and Bank of Scotland respectively. Additionally, there are supplementary cash books for petty cash, the Visa account and the CCLA deposit. Consequently, we have:

- Checked the balances brought forward from the previous financial year to ensure they were rolled forward accurately;
- Confirmed the External Auditor raised no issues on the 2022/23 AGAR requiring our additional follow up;
- Discussed with officers the reconciliation of the prior year AGAR with the 2022/23 DCK accounts confirming how the records agreed;
- Verified that an appropriate cost centre and nominal ledger structure remains in place;
- Confirmed the Council continues to use a firm called Micro-Shade to back-up its data;
- Run a data check on the Rialtas Software at the time of our visit to confirm the Ledger was in overall balance;
- Checked and agreed one sample month's receipts and payments transactions (August 2023) from the Handelsbanken Current and Salaries bank account cashbooks to relevant bank printouts agreeing the balance at the beginning and end of the month to the bank listings;
- Agreed the Handelsbanken deposit balance per the bank listing at 31st August between the bank and the Deposit account cash book and cross checked inter-account transfers in August 2023;
- Agreed the reconciliation of the Bank of Scotland Cheque Account at 31st July between the bank statement and the cash book; and
- Agreed the balance recorded in the CCLA Rialtas cash book to the CCLA statement dated 30th September 2023.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently.

The Ledger is in balance and the cash books are being reconciled with no anomalous adjusting entries. We will extend our testing at our next visit.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance documentation and processes in place, that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as we are able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We have:

- Commenced our review of Council minutes;
- Noted the Council approved its Standing Orders and adopted the General Power of Competence at its Annual Meeting in May 2023;
- Noted the Council approved its Financial Regulations at its meeting in June 2023; and
- Confirmed the audit of the 2022/23 accounts was duly advertised in June 2023.

Conclusions

The Council is maintaining its governance arrangements. There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- An official order has been raised for all purchases and service delivery where one would be expected;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We discussed with officers the controls over the processing of payments and commenced testing in this area, examining all those payments individually in excess of £3,000, together with a further selection of every 50th cashbook transaction (irrespective of value) to 20th September 2023. Our sample was selected from cash book one (Barclays Current account for the first two months until it was closed) and cash book twelve (Handlesbanken current account). Our sample of 36 payments totals £420,702 and represents 53% of all non-pay related expenditure for the year to that date. Invoices or suitable documentation was provided to support the payments selected.

We note that electronic VAT recovery claims continue to be submitted quarterly. We checked the amount of VAT reclaimable at 31st March 2023 had been recovered and reviewed the VAT reclaim for quarter one confirming the funds were received in August 2023.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently. We will extend our testing at future visits.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks identified in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition. Consequently:

- We have reviewed the Council's current insurance policy provided through their Brokers BHIB, underwritten by Aviva, which runs until 31st December 2023 noting that cover provided includes;
 - Buildings and equipment insurance
 - Employer's liability cover of £10m
 - Public liability cover of £10m and
 - Fidelity guarantee cover of £1m; and
- We have confirmed the Council's grounds staff continue to undertake regular safety inspections of play areas supplemented by an annual inspection by ROSPA.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently.

Review of Income

Our objective here is to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced (where applicable) in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate recovery is effected within a reasonable time span. At this visit we have done some preliminary work on income, specifically we:

- Checked and agreed one months' cashbook receipts to relevant bank statements on the Handlesbanken bank account;
- Reviewed the latest unpaid invoices report on Rialtas for the three active sales ledgers noting there were no material aged items; and
- Agreed the initial receipt of 2023/24 precept as recorded in the cash book to the amount set and recorded in the minutes.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently.

Petty Cash and Charge Card Accounts

Whilst the amounts expended in this area are limited, we are required, as part of the AGAR certification work, to examine the Council's petty cash accounting controls. Our aim is to ensure that appropriate controls are in place, that all expenditure incurred is adequately supported by trade invoices or till receipts, that VAT (where applicable) is separately identified and that expenditure incurred is appropriate to the Council's needs.

- We have tested petty cash payments made in April to June 2023 confirming signed and certified vouchers and till receipts are retained on file by officers; and
- Confirmed a reconciliation was completed at 30th June of the cash to the Rialtas records.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently. Due to staff changes, there has been a slight delay reconciling this account recently. Officers plan to bring the reconciliation up to date. We will test further petty cash and the Visa account transactions at our next visit.

Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to ensure that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in relation to the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme.

We discussed with officers the process and controls in place over payroll transactions. The detailed processing is done by a payroll bureau (PATA) with officers checking and approving the detail. We sample tested payroll as follows:

- Checked the gross pay for two staff recorded on the August payslips to supporting contract documentation;
- Checked the calculation of tax and national insurance for a sample of staff paid in August;
- Checked the calculation of pension contributions for a sample of staff paid in August;
- Agreed the August payroll reports to the payments made and recorded in the cash books; and
- Commenced our trend analysis of payroll costs.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area to warrant formal recommendation currently.



Council

14th November 2023

REPORT SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM:	14.
REPORT TITLE:	Grant Applications
REPORT AUTHOR:	Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Harris
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To consider and approve grant applications as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.
LEGAL:	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
FINANCIAL:	The financial implications and respective notes are included within the report and appendix.
PERSONNEL:	There are no personnel implications directly arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENTAL:	There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.
CLIMATE CHANGE:	There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report.
RECOMMENDATION:	To approve grant applications as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2023, the Finance and Audit Committee, under delegated authority from Council considered grant applications for funding in 2023-24.
- 1.2 The Committee approved grants from an allocation of £14,946.25 to Allsorts Gloucestershire (£830 multi-year grant over 4 years), Cotswold Counselling (£2,500 multi-year grant over 4 years) We Grow You (£150), Living Memory Historical Association (£500 multi-year grant over 4 years) Hope for Tomorrow (£1,060), Hope Cirencester (£500 multi-year grant over 3 years), Scrubditch Care Farm (£1,500), Cirencester Signpost (£1,500), Corinium Talking News (£150), Cirencester Cricket Club (£200 multi-year grant over 4 years), The Door (£750), The Barn Project Orpheus (£2,500 multi-year grant over 2 years), The Churn (£500 multi-year grant over 4 years).
- 1.3 Decisions relating to Mindsong, Charlie's and The Phoenix Charitable Trust were deferred for further consideration.
- 1.4 The following grant applicants have been recommended to Council for consideration, the level of grant being subject to budget availability Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold District, New Brewery Arts and Cirencester Opportunity Group.

- 1.5 The main purpose for referring the matter to Council was that the Committee's view was that consideration should be given to grants, in excess of that which had been requested be considered due to the importance of the projects and the wider value and work of the organisations applying.
- 1.6 There is currently £2,306.25 remaining in the designated grant budget.
- 1.7 In order to fund each grant request and consider additional funding support, the Council would need to 'vire' available funds from an underspent budget. For example, there is currently £6k unallocated in the business and economy budget.

2. Purpose of Report

To consider and approve grant applications as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.

3. Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold District

- 3.1 Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts helps people solve their problems by providing free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information to anyone who needs it in the Cotswold District. The main areas of advice are: money issues; housing; employment; relationships and consumer problems.
- 3.2 This funding will contribute to the cost of the core advice service which is available across the Cotswold District and provided mainly from Cirencester. Advice can be accessed face to face by appointment and also via a Freephone telephone helpline and by email via the website.
- 3.3 Each town and parish council is asked to contribute proportionately to the number of enquiries from each area. Last year 641 residents of Cirencester were helped to resolve 3,287 issues which accounted for 34.5% of all work in the Cotswolds. Cirencester residents were helped across all age groups from 15-19 to 100-104. The main issues advised on were Benefits; Charitable Support and Foodbanks; Debt; Utilities and Housing.
- 3.4 Multi-year funding requested:
 - 3.4.1 Year 1 - £4,140
 - 3.4.2 Year 2 - £4,140
 - 3.4.3 Year 3 - £4,140
 - 3.4.4 Year 4 - £4,140
- 3.5 Core costs to provide this service within the Cotswold district is £133,997.

4. New Brewery Arts (NBA)

- 4.1 The funding applied for will enable the provision of free bursary spaces on NBA creative courses and workshops to Cirencester residents. This enables creativity for all within the Cirencester community.
- 4.2 Participating in a creative or craft activity can have a positive impact on well-being. By focussing on the present moment, a creative class can enhance mindfulness, reduce stress, promote relaxation and provide a sense of achievement.
- 4.3 NBA knows that not everyone can afford to take part, affordability was difficult pre-pandemic, 'we now see disposable income evaporating [further], and people need to make difficult choices about what they do. We want to do something about this.'
- 4.4 NBA has previously offered bursary spaces on their programme of courses and workshops, both to adults and to under 18s. The bursaries bring making and creativity to those who benefit most from the wellbeing it brings. For reasons as diverse as isolation, physical or mental wellbeing, a place on a creative course is important and can play a significant role in increasing activity and reducing social anxiety.

- 4.5 Giving free places on 10% of courses costs £2,625 a year. This enables NBA to work with up to 10 course bursary students, or up to 25 workshop students.
- 4.6 Multi-year funding requested:
 - 5.6.1 Year 1 - £1,250
 - 5.6.2 Year 2 - £1,250
 - 5.6.3 Year 3 - £1,250
 - 5.6.4 Year 4 - £1,250
- 4.7 The total cost of the project over 4 years is £10,600.

5. Cirencester Opportunity Group

- 5.1 Cirencester Opportunity Group's Family centre is situated between two of the most disadvantaged wards in Cirencester – Beeches and Watermoor and they support many families living in these areas. Around 50 children attend one or more sessions each week and around 30 families benefit from outreach support each week.
- 5.2 The grant application is for the Wellbeing and Physical Activity programme of learning and support. The outdoor learning space is an important sensory rich way for children to learn in a small group, and for parents to learn and participate alongside their children.
- 5.3 Children and parents also benefit from having the opportunity to access the hydrotherapy pool at Paternoster School. The healthy physical activities improve the attachment between the parent and child, and maintains strong links with Paternoster School which some of the children will eventually progress onto.
- 5.4 The funding will cover the cost of the 1 x Water Trained member of staff, 2 x SENDco staff members, the weekly pool hires and the cost of resources and woodland area upkeep.
- 5.5 The total cost of the project in Year 1 is £3,905; £905 has been raised through donations and fundraising.
- 5.6 Multi-year funding requested:
 - 5.6.1 Year 1 - £3,000
 - 5.6.2 Year 2 - £1,000
 - 5.6.3 Year 3 - £1,000
 - 5.6.4 Year 4 - £1,000
- 5.7 The multi-year funding will support the wider work of the Opportunity Group; the family centre is situated between two of the most disadvantaged wards in Cirencester – Beeches and Watermoor and the Opportunity Group supports many families living in these areas. Around 50 children attend one or more of our sessions each week and around 30 families benefit from our outreach support each week.
- 5.8 In addition, the Opportunity Group is an Adverse-Childhood-Experiences (ACEs) Champion alongside Public Health Gloucestershire. This work has been informed by the findings that the more adverse childhood experiences in a person's life, the higher the risk of poorer health and social outcomes in later life. The list of Public Health identified ACEs, are unfortunately aligned with the experiences of many of the children and their parents that we work with and many have experienced multiple ACEs within the areas of: Abuse, Neglect, Mental Illness, Substance Misuse, Incarceration, Parental Separation, Domestic Abuse.

6. Funding Requirement

- 6.1 If the full funding requested of £8,390 is approved, this can be allocated from the remaining grant fund of £2,306.25, a virement of £6,000 and overspend funded through reserves of £83.75.

- 6.2 Taking account of all current multi-year agreements and those requested within this report, the level of funding required in 2024-25 would be circa £14k.
- 6.3 The budget estimates for 2024-25 has £20,300 allocated. This includes a £753.75 grant to Baunton Parish Council to maintain a bus shelter for residents of Baunton Lane within the Cirencester electoral boundary. Within the allocation of £20,300, £3,600 is also available for ward-based community projects. This is made up of £100 to each Ward Member to support events and projects in their respective ward and £250 is per ward for individuals and community groups to apply for. This funding is administrated on behalf of the Council by the Community Services Committee.
- 6.4 Taking the above into account there would be a budget of just under £2k for any other grant applications.

7. RECOMMENDATION that the applications for funding be approved.



Council

14th November 2023

REPORT SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM:	15.
REPORT TITLE:	Budget Estimates 2024-25
REPORT AUTHOR:	Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Harris
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To consider and approve the draft 2024-25 budget estimates for public consultation.
LEGAL:	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
FINANCIAL:	The financial implications and respective notes are included within the report and appendix.
PERSONNEL:	There are no personnel implications directly arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENTAL:	There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.
CLIMATE CHANGE:	There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report.
RECOMMENDATION:	That the draft 2024-25 budget estimates be approved for public consultation.

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2023, the Finance and Audit Committee met informally for a detailed briefing session which covered expenditure, income, earmarked reserves, staffing, the precept and tax base, borrowing and capital investment.
- 1.2 The Committee then met formally in October 2023, to consider the draft budget estimates for 2024-25 which had been prepared in consultation with each lead officer.
- 1.3 In considering the draft budget estimates various risks were identified relating to land and property ownership including the cost of maintaining and inspecting trees, the Norman Arch and Cottage and the Obelisk Community Rooms.
- 1.4 Other comments made by the Committee, related to providing more detailed information to support the budget estimates, the funding and delivery of Cricklade Street improvements, S106 funding from the Steadings for town centre improvements, accruing a fund for future election costs charged by Cotswold District Council and increasing the twinning and tourism budget to incorporate the proposed Bathurst Friendship cycling event.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to consider and approve the draft 2024-25 budget estimates for public consultation.
- 2.2 The public consultation will run from late November/early December through to mid-January, with the results informing Council when it formally considers the budget estimates in January.
- 2.3 The decision required at this meeting of Council is to consider and approve the draft 2024-25 budget estimates in principle, based on the information and evidence provided for consultation; further analysis of the proposed estimates can be prepared for the January meeting of Council, if there are any aspects of the budget Councillors would like additional information on.
- 2.4 Where there is a proposal to increase or decrease income/expenditure by £5k or greater, a commentary is provided within this report. In addition, information is provided on several risks identified by the Finance and Audit Committee, those being the Norman Arch and Cottage, and the Obelisk Community Rooms, formerly known as the Scout Hut.
- 2.5 The appended budget estimates, include explanatory notes and are colour coded to identify expenditure which is a **statutory obligation or outside the direct control of the Council** or **operational/strategic/employment related/governance/contractual** and that which is **discretionary**.

statutory obligation/outside direct control of Council	Red
operational/strategic/employment/governance/contractual	Yellow
discretionary	Green

3. Financial Risks

3.1 **Green Spaces Strategic Review**

- 3.1.1 The Council is committed to the strategic aspects of the amenity land and open spaces review being corporate led under a new Green Spaces Strategic Review initiative. This initiative forms an important part of the visioning for the future of Cirencester Town Council's green spaces and builds on the work of the 2009 OFC Community Plan and incorporates a review of the 2011 – 2021 Green Spaces Strategy; considering analysis of future threats, opportunities, and priorities on a long-term basis, with the ultimate goal of creating an overarching framework for developing and managing the green spaces, including a viability assessment and delivery plan for future projects.
- 3.1.2 It is vital that the Council strengthens its financial position and is ready to bid for funding as and when funding streams become available with increased knowledge of existing grant availability such as the Community Ownership Fund.
- 3.1.3 At the Council meeting on 13th June 2023, it was made clear that the general reserve needed to be increased and that there was currently no budget provision within the estimates nor medium term financial plan for new capital projects.
- 3.1.4 An important part of the strategic review, in consultation and liaison with the Finance and Audit Committee, will be to prepare a capital investment programme and identify sources of funding for major projects. However, this has to be underpinned with operational and revenue funding as well as an appropriate level of general reserve, which could be used to generate a regular source of funding to undertake much needed feasibility studies, research and evidence required not only for funding applications but for any statutory permissions (i.e. planning and scheduled monument consent).

3.2 Norman Arch and Cottage

- 3.2.1 The Town Council has submitted a listed building consent application to the local planning authority reference 23/01539/LBC for internal and external refurbishment of the cottage, which includes aspects of the Norman Arch at Grove Lane, and forms an important part of the Abbey Grounds.
- 3.2.2 The Norman Arch is the only surviving structure from the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary founded in Cirencester in 1131. Founded by Henry I, the abbey survived until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1539. Originally known as The Spyringate or Spittal Gate, the Norman Arch was constructed in 1180 as the gatehouse to the abbey and today is thought to be the oldest building in Cirencester. The north elevation has a large timber door with wrought-iron strap hinges, believed to date from the 17th century.
- 3.2.3 The cottage is attached to the southwest flank of the gatehouse, part of which dates from the 17th century, with a later 19th century addition. This is a two-storey building whose upper floor extends over the top of the gatehouse, with a room in the gatehouse roof space.
- 3.2.4 The cottage and gatehouse were given to the town of Cirencester in 1964 and a significant repair and refurbishment scheme was carried out in 1968 to a standard which is unlikely to have been acceptable by today's conservation standards. The cottage has been used as private residential accommodation until recently but is now empty.
- 3.2.5 The gatehouse is largely intact, with evidence of historic stone repairs, particularly to the arch. There is evidence of structural movement in the arch, which has been addressed historically by the addition of a buttress to the northeast corner, and there is cracking to all external faces, as well as to the internal room above the gatehouse. The voussoir above the large timber doors has dropped so that it no longer aligns with the top of the door.
- 3.2.6 There is evidence that the gatehouse was originally supported by structures to both sides, and the removal of the structures to the east elevation is likely to have contributed to the structural movement. Structural repairs to the arch are being addressed separately to the planning application referenced above. With monitoring estimated to cost circa £5k.
- 3.2.7 The cottage requires some remedial works externally, including repairs to the roof, repointing to walls, stone mullions and hood moulds, stonework repairs, overhauling of cast iron rainwater goods and windows and repairs to stone roof coverings. Internally, there is some damage to walls and ceilings from penetrating damp and structural movement, which needs to be repaired. Updating of services is also required.
- 3.2.8 Roofing works alone are estimated at circa £40k, full refurbishment including project fees could be circa £100k+. James Slater is our surveying and project consultant with fees for a Chartered Surveyor at £150 per hour, Architectural Designer £105 per hour and Technician and/or Surveyor £95per hour.
- 3.2.9 There are two budget headings in the estimates relating to the Norman Arch and Cottage; under Land and Property there is an operational budget estimate which reflects the cottage as a residential let and under Priority Projects the funding relates to the required capital works.
- 3.2.10 Cross-referring to the medium-term financial plan it is estimated that funding for capital projects will be available from 2025-26.

3.3 Obelisk Community Rooms

- 3.3.1 Formerly known as the Scout Hut, whilst the building remains usable and is subject to risk assessments and condition surveys, it needs refurbishment and presents an opportunity aligned to the Amphitheatre Management Plan.

- 3.3.2 The Town Council's Roman Amphitheatre Masterplan 2015 – 2025 'Putting the Amphitheatre back at the heart of Cirencester' has a vision for the Obelisk Community Rooms in creating a flagship carbon neutral community facility and interpretation centre that supports the incumbent Scout Group, a Forest School, community groups, social enterprises and charities in the town as a living legacy.
- 3.3.3 Currently, under a Licence to Occupy provided by the Council to the local Scout Group, the Town Council is committed to:
 - 3.3.3.1 make the "Property" available for all Licensee activities;
 - 3.3.3.2 pay a management fee of £50 a month for provision of bookings administration and key holding service;
 - 3.3.3.3 pay 10% of any income derived from the hire of the "Property", excluding VAT;
 - 3.3.3.4 fully maintain and repair the "Property";
 - 3.3.3.5 ensure that the "Property" is fit for purpose at all times;
 - 3.3.3.6 ensure that in the event of the "Property" being fully refurbished and unavailable for use for a period of time to cover the cost of alternative accommodation up to a maximum period of 12 months and maximum cost of £1,200;
 - 3.3.3.7 ensure that in event of the "Property" being fully refurbished or demolished and re-built, that the 1st Cirencester Scout Group will be consulted on the proposal and provided with first refusal for future use;
 - 3.3.3.8 provide contents and buildings insurance;
 - 3.3.3.9 provide public liability insurance.

4. Proposed Decreases in Expenditure

- 4.1 Civic and Local Democracy (less £6.5k)
Previous increases in this budget have related to election costs now charged by Cotswold District Council, there is currently no election scheduled relating to the Town Council in 2024-15 and therefore the budget requirement can be reduced. An earmarked fund will be established to save for and cover future costs (5.15 refers).
- 4.2 Cirencester Community Development Trust (CCDT) (less £10k)
Under delegated authority from Council, the Community Services Committee has agreed not to renew the current Memorandum of Agreement with CCDT to fund the Trust's revenue costs. CCDT will be eligible to apply for a grant from the Town Council to support project costs.
- 4.3 Office Services Staffing (less £5.4k)
Contingency previously built in to the staffing budget is not required.
- 4.4 Neighbourhood Plan (less £5k)
The costs associated with the preparation of a plan and statutory consultation have been identified and funding set aside in an earmarked reserve.
- 4.5 CCTV and Community Safety (less £5k)
No major improvements are needed to the CCTV system in 2024-25, maintenance and monitoring costs are covered to provide and maintain the service at current levels, therefore there is scope to reduce the budget estimate.

5. Proposed Increases in Expenditure

- 5.1 Office Support Office Support (plus £9k)
The budget estimate reflects actual expenditure and now includes cleaning contract costs, formerly absorbed by overall budget expenditure.

5.2 Technology Support (plus £26.5k)
Whilst supplier costs are kept under regular review technology support is increased to reflect a more realistic level of annual expenditure and requirement to replace and update IT hardware, provision of a telephone system and dedicated broadband (£12k), a one-off cost for a three-year Commonplace licence and support (£9k), IT Cloud, Support and Cyber Security (£17k).

5.3 Land and Property Staffing (plus £9k)
This increase primarily reflects the contractual decisions of Council in 2022-23.

5.4 Tree Works and Consultancy (plus £14k)
Tree works and professional consultancy support and advice has previously been underestimated and the Council has a significant number of trees on our 45+ hectares of land, which need to be regularly assessed, monitored with routine and emergency maintenance being required.

The increase in expenditure makes provision for all sites to be inspected and for a three-year programme of works established and costed, with training being provided for interim inspections to be carried out in-house.

86 trees have been identified for monitoring across 10 sites, of which circa 60% are subject to a Tree Preservation Order or that fall within a Scheduled Ancient Monument site.

Based on previous inspections the cost of reviewing all sites and preparing a schedule of tree works will be circa £5k.

The 86 trees already identified do not include those with a diameter of less than 300mm which may require remedial work. The cost of tree works for a single tree ranges from £500 to in excess of £2,500.

Since 2017-18 the Town Council has spent £5,790 on tree surveys and condition reports, and over £23k on tree works.

The last inspection report which covered 8 sites was carried out in 2020 and was due for review within 3 years; issues which need to be addressed include ivy control, dutch elm disease, and chalara ash die back. The Council has a duty of care under the Occupiers Liability act 1957 and 1984.

5.5 Green Spaces, Play Areas and Public Facilities (plus £25k)
This increase relates primarily to the need to maintain and upgrade play equipment across 16 sites. The current cost of the ROSPA accredited inspection per site is circa £63. Some equipment will be reaching end of useful life, some will need maintaining, repairing, and refurbishing. We have in excess of 115 pieces or sections of equipment, as well as fencing, gates, signage, litter bins, picnic tables, seating, safety surfaces, planters, boulders, logs, cycle racks, pathways, wooden steps, access bridge, toilets, changing facilities, recreation areas, sports pitches and bbq's.

As well as the Council's equipped areas of play and recreation we have in excess of 45 hectares of open space to maintain. The proposed increased equates to just £1,562.50 per equipped site.

5.6 Vehicles, Equipment and Machinery (plus £15k)
This budget was previously an earmarked reserve but has been reallocated to the operational cost centre for land and property.

5.7 Public Realm and Highways (plus £10k)
This increase relates primarily to an ongoing requirement to support the County Council with maintenance of the town centre as per the legal highway agreement.

5.8 Markets and Events (plus £51k)
This increase reflects the accurate costs of the Advent Festival which has grown over the years but for which the expenditure has not previously been reflected in the budget estimates.

- 5.9 Children and Young People (plus £15k)
This increase relates to an identified need by the Community Services Committee to commission additional and targeted support for young people; and in part is offset by the reduction in expenditure to CCDT (4.2 refers).
- 5.10 Amphitheatre Priority Project (plus £25k)
This increase reflects the strategic priorities relating to the review of the Council's green spaces and historic assets, as well as delivering the Council's Management Plan for the site (3.3 refers).
- 5.11 Norman Arch and Cottage Priority Project (plus £10k)
This increase reflects the strategic priorities relating to the review of the Council's green spaces and historic assets, as well as works required to enable the Council to re-let the Cottage pending the outcome of the strategic review (3.2 refers).
- 5.12 Community Services Project Support (plus £10k)
This is a new budget line, delegated by Council for the respective Committee to spend on issues which arise during the financial year/to provide the community with emergency support as and when need arises; within the approved Committee role and remit.
- 5.13 Land and Property Project Support (plus £10k)
This is a new budget line, delegated by Council for the respective Committee to spend on issues which arise during the financial year/to provide the community with emergency support as and when need arises; within the approved Committee role and remit.
- 5.14 Climate and Environment Project Support (plus £10k)
This is a new budget line, delegated by Council for the respective Committee to spend on issues which arise during the financial year/to provide the community with emergency support as and when need arises; within the approved Committee role and remit.
- 5.15 Election Costs (plus £5k)
(4.1 refers)
- 5.16 General Reserves (plus £200k)
The Council's general reserves are estimated to be around circa £60k at the year end. With year-on-year reliance on reserves in recent years, the Council's RFO identified in the current medium-term financial plan that consideration should be given to increasing the Council's general reserves. This should reflect 3 to 6 months of expenditure. Based on current expenditure 3 months general reserve should be £325k and 6 months £650k.

Concern has also been expressed at the low level of reserves by the Council's independent internal auditor and has also been raised by the Council's External Auditor as an issue that needs to be addressed in a timely manner.

Increasing the reserve by £200k in 2024-25 is a first step and phased approach to increasing the General Reserve to a level of between 3 and 6 months expenditure.

6. Proposed Increases in Income

- 6.1 Norman Arch and Cottage (plus £8k)
This increase reflects the current planning application status for refurbishing the Cottage to a standard that will enable the Council to let the property on a residential basis.

7. Proposed Decreases in Income

- 7.1 Christmas Tree and Lights (less £5k)
This income is now reflected in the overall income for markets and events.

8. Basic Allowances

- 8.1 It is proposed that Councillors who are eligible i.e. not co-opted, shall continue to receive a basic allowance of £500 per annum, payable in monthly instalments. With an annual Special Responsibility Allowance of £500 being paid to the Mayor of Cirencester as Chair of Council, also paid in monthly instalments.
- 8.2 Allowances are subject to tax being paid.
- 8.3 Information relating to current legislation on payment of allowances, to town and parish councillors can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1021/regulation/25/made>
- 8.4 Whilst the Council has the power to set the level of allowance paid to the Chair of Council (Mayor) and elected members, it must have regard to the independent remuneration panel's recommendation.
- 8.5 The remuneration panel is convened by Cotswold District Council; however, the panel does not appear to have provided advice on the level of town and parish allowances, in its latest report to CDC. The panel is due to undertake a mid-term review in 2024; the CEO will request that town and parish allowances be considered at that time.
- 8.6 The current level of basic allowance for a District Councillor is £5,541.96.
- 8.7 There is no reason why Council should not consider increasing the current allowance and in light of the cost of living and impact of the role, alongside other allowances which cannot be paid to town and parish councillors but which are permissible for District and County councillors, such as child care costs, it would not be unreasonable to consider an increase. Setting a basic allowance of up to £650 per annum.

9. RECOMMENDATION that the draft 2024-25 budget estimates be approved for public consultation.

Cirencester Town Council Budget Estimates 2024-25

statutory obligation/outside direct control of Council							
operational/strategic/employment/governance/contractual							
discretionary							
	Notes	Expenditure	Income	Total	Expenditure	Income	
				(exp less inc)	Compared to 2023-24		
CORPORATE							
Staffing (salaries, national insurance, pension)		£140,000			Plus £3k		
Professional Fees (legal, human resources, finance)		£25,000			No Change		
Staff, Member and Mayor Allowances and Expenses		£12,000			Less £4.5k		
Staff and Member Training and Development		£8,000			Less £3k		
Civic and Local Democracy		£8,000			Less £6.5k		
Office Accommodation (rent, business rates, utilities)		£38,500			No Change		
Insurance (assets, public liability, motor)		£16,000			No Change		
Memberships and Subscriptions		£6,000			No Change		
Community Development Trust (direct grant)	1	£0			Less £10k		
Bingham Library Trust Management Support*		£10,000	£42,000		No Change	No Change	
External Grants and Sponsorship			£10,000			No Change	
Investment Account Interest			£10,000			No Change	
* in accordance with the Service Level Agreement		£263,500	£62,000	£201,500			
OFFICE SERVICES							
Staffing (salaries, national insurance, pension)		£176,600			Less £5.4k		
Administration Support (postage, stationery etc)		£5,400			No Change		
Office Support (leases, maintenance, cleaning contract)	2	£13,000			Plus £9k		
Technology Support (IT equipment, software, telephones, broadband)	3	£46,500			Plus £26.5k		
Social Media and Communication		£3,000			Less £1k		
Local Information Centre		£6,000	£10,000		Plus £3.5K	Plus £3.5k	
		£250,500	£10,000	£240,500			
LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES							
Staffing (salaries, national insurance, pension)		£480,000			Plus £9k		
Tree Works and Tree Consultancy	4	£20,000			Plus £14k		
Green Spaces, Play Areas and Public Facilities	5	£80,000			Plus £25k		

Land & Property Cont'd	Notes	Expenditure	Income	Total	Expenditure	Income	
Vehicles, Equipment and Machinery	6	£15,000			Plus £15k		
Operational Costs		£55,000			No Change		
Public Realm and Highways (inc. town centre)	7	£20,000			Plus £10k		
Litter Collection and Disposal		£6,000			Plus £2k		
Norman Arch and Cottage Maintenance		£5,000			Plus £3k		
Norman Arch and Cottage Lease			£10,000			Plus £8k	
Contract (Amphitheatre)			£16,000			No Change	
Fees and Licenses (inc. sports and recreation income)			£20,000			No Change	
		£681,000	£46,000	£635,000			
COMMUNITY SERVICES							
Staffing (salaries, national insurance, pension)		£164,000			Plus £3k		
Markets and Events (including Mop and Advent)	8	£61,500	£87,000		Plus £51k	Plus £4k	
Business and Economy		£0			Less £6k		
Community Support (grants and community projects)		£20,300			No Change		
Christmas Lights and Tree		£31,000			Plus £1k	Less £5k	
Community Safety inc CCTV		£10,000			Less £5k		
Children and Young People	9	£30,000			Plus £15k		
Twining and Tourism		£7,500			Plus £2.5k		
		£324,300	£87,000	£237,300			
Sub Total		£1,519,300	£205,000	£1,314,300			
PRIORITY PROJECTS AND RESERVE ALLOCATIONS							
Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan		£0			Less £5k		
Town Centre Regeneration Loan Repayment		£75,000			No Change		
Norman Arch and Cottage	10	£25,000			Plus £10k		
Community Services Project Support	11	£10,000			Plus £10k		
Climate and Environment Project Support	11	£10,000			Plus £10k		
Land and Property Project Support	11	£10,000			Plus £10k		
Amphitheatre (including Obelisk Community Rooms)	10	£25,000			Plus £25k		
Election Costs Accrued Fund		£5,000			Plus £5k		
General Reserve	12	£200,000			Plus £200k		
		£360,000	£0	£360,000			
		Expenditure	Income	Exp less Inc			
Totals		£1,879,300	£205,000	£1,674,300			

SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE SCHEDULE

A Basic Allowance of £500 shall be paid to each Councillor per annum.

A Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of £500 shall also be paid to the Mayor of Cirencester.

Notes:

1. Cirencester Community Development Trust (direct grant) subject to decision of Community Services Committee.
2. Office Support adjusted to include cleaning contract costs, formerly absorbed by overall budget expenditure.
3. Technology Support increased to more realistic level and requirement to replace IT hardware, suppliers costs kept under regular review, telephone system and broadband (£12k), one-off cost for three-year Commonplace licence and support (£9k), IT Cloud, Support and Cyber Security (£17k)
4. Tree Works and Consultancy has previously been underestimated and we have a significant number of trees on our 45+ hectares of land, which need to be regularly assessed, monitored with routine and emergency maintenance being required. The increase in expenditure makes provision for all sites to be inspected and a three year programme of works established, with training being provided for interim inspections to be carried out in-house. 86 trees have been identified for monitoring across 10 sites, of which circa 60% are subject to a Tree Preservation Order or that fall within a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Based on previous inspections the cost of reviewing all sites and preparing a schedule of tree works will be circa £5k.

The 86 trees already identified do not include those with a diameter of less than 300mm which may require remedial work. The cost of tree works for a single tree ranges from £500 to in excess of £2,500.

Since 2017-18 the Town Council has spent £5,790 on tree surveys and condition reports, and over £23k on tree works.

The last inspection report which covered 8 sites was carried out in 2020 and was due for review within 3 years; issues which need to be addressed include ivy control, dutch elm disease, and chalara ash die back. The Council has a duty of care under the Occupiers Liability act 1957 and 1984.

5. This increase relates primarily to the need to maintain and upgrade play equipment across 16 sites. The current cost of the ROSPA accredited inspection per site is circa £63. Some equipment will be reaching end of useful life, some will need maintaining, repairing, and refurbishing. We have in excess of 115 pieces or sections of equipment, as well as fencing, gates, signage, litter bins, picnic tables, seating, safety surfaces, planters, boulders, logs cycle racks, pathways, wooden steps, access bridge, toilets, changing facilities, recreation areas, sports pitches and bbq's. As well as our equipped areas of play and recreation we have in excess of 45 hectares of open space to maintain. The proposed increased equates to just £1,562.50 per equipped site.
6. This budget was previously an earmarked reserve but has been reallocated to the operational cost centre for land and property.
7. This increase relates primarily to the ongoing requirement to support the County Council with maintenance of the town centre as per the highway agreement.

8. This increase relates primarily to the accurate costs of the Advent Festival which has grown over the years but for which the expenditure has not previously been reflected in the budget estimates.
9. This increase relates to the identified need by the Community Services Committee to commission additional and targeted support for young people.
10. This increase reflects the strategic priorities relating to the review of the Council's green spaces and historic assets.
11. This is a new budget line, delegated by Council for the respective Committee to spend on issues which arise during the financial year/to provide the community with emergency support as and when need arises; within the approved Committee role and remit.
12. This is a requirement of the internal and external auditors report due to an over reliance on reserves in recent years.



Council

14th November 2023

REPORT SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM:	16.
REPORT TITLE:	Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25
REPORT AUTHOR:	Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Harris
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To consider and approve the draft 2024-25 medium term financial plan for public consultation.
LEGAL:	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
FINANCIAL:	The financial implications and respective notes are included within the report and appendix.
PERSONNEL:	There are no personnel implications directly arising from this report.
ENVIRONMENTAL:	There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.
CLIMATE CHANGE:	There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report.
RECOMMENDATION:	That the draft 2024-25 medium term financial plan be approved for public consultation.

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2023, the Finance and Audit Committee met informally for a detailed briefing session which covered expenditure, income, earmarked reserves, staffing, the precept and tax base, borrowing and capital investment.
- 1.2 The Committee then met formally in October 2023, to consider the draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024-25; covering the period up to 2028-29.
- 1.3 In considering the draft MTFP for recommendation to Council, it was noted that the financial planning showed the impact of the financial decisions relating to 2024-25 over a four-year period.
- 1.4 The Band D info in the MTFP is based on the 2023-24 tax base figure of 7460; the impact for all tax bands and future projections will be calculated when the tax base for 2024-25 is available. The tax base figure is based on the number of households required to pay Council Tax and does not include households that receive Council Tax Benefit.
- 1.5 For illustrative purposes the MTFP includes an increase in expenditure per annum from 2024 based on a flat rate 5% year on year and income on a flat rate of 2.5%; and does not account for one off increases/decreases in expenditure over the plan period.

- 1.6 In accordance with internal and external audit advice the MTFP facilitates immediate growth in the General Reserve; the impact of this on the precept and local council tax was discussed by the Committee, alongside phasing in the growth.
- 1.7 The Council has no capital funding for investment and/or the delivery of future major projects, and the importance of raising the precept now in order to build a foundation for establishing a capital fund from 2025-26 was noted by the Committee.
- 1.8 It is also important to note that the Town Council does not receive any grant or direct funding from the Government, Gloucestershire County Council or Cotswold District Council; we are also required to pay business rates on our activities and do not receive any allocation from these rates collected from businesses in Cirencester.
- 1.9 As a local council, we are also limited and restricted from applying for certain grants and funding streams.

2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider and approve the appended draft 2024-25 Medium Term Financial Plan for public consultation.

3. Future Considerations

- 3.1 The impact of future decisions and potential growth in the tax base through the strategic housing development at The Steadings was noted.
- 3.2 More detailed analysis, where available, will be provided with the report to Council in January, this will include:
 - 3.2.1 tax base projections based on housing growth;
 - 3.2.2 tax base impact across all tax bands;
 - 3.2.3 capital investment planning and projections;
 - 3.2.4 capital project costs based on the green spaces strategic review;
 - 3.2.5 council tax support and advice;
 - 3.2.6 projections based on actual expenditure and income, as at December 2023.

4. The Precept

- 4.1 This report and recommendation is not directly related to the precept. The precept is the amount of funding raised by the Town Council through Council Tax. The Council Tax is collected on behalf of the Town Council by Cotswold District Council.
- 4.2 The MTFP does however provide indicative information on the future precept and Council Tax and is the basis of public consultation.
- 4.3 A separate, detailed, report on the precept, will be prepared for Council in January, based on the budget estimates and MTFP.
- 4.4 The tax base figure used to calculate the Band D equivalent is prepared and published by Cotswold District Council; at the time of writing this report the tax base for 2024-25 is not known.
- 4.5 As referenced at 3.2.2, the report in January will include information across all tax bands.

4.6 The National Association of Local Councils has recently published comparison precept data:

Band D Change	Number of councils 2023/2024	Number of councils 2022/2023	Number of councils 2021/2022
< 0%*	2,210 (-422)	2,632 (+406)	2,226 (+158)
0%	504 (-5)	509 (-365)	874 (+368)
<1%	705 (-92)	797 (-253)	1,050 (+307)
1.0 - 1.99%	496 (-180)	676 (-278)	954 (+158)
2.0 - 2.99%	503 (-177)	680 (-106)	786 (-9)
3.0 - 3.99%	518 (-56)	574 (+29)	545 (-29)
4.0 - 9.99%	2,110 (+478)	1,632 (+279)	1,353 (-312)
10% - 19.99%	1,009 (+238)	681 (+100)	581 (-341)
20% - 49.99%	566 (+83)	483 (+124)	359 (-182)
50% plus	214 (+38)	176 (+67)	109 (-78)

5. RECOMMENDATION that the draft Medium Term Financial Plan be approved for public consultation.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)	Notes						
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
INCOME		£	£	£	£	£	£
Corporate	2	62,003	62,000	63,500	65,000	66,600	68,000
Office Services	2	6,500	10,000	10,500	10,750	11,000	11,250
Land and Property Services	2	38,000	46,000	47,000	48,000	49,000	50,000
Community Services	2	83,000	87,000	91,000	93,000	95,000	97,000
		189,503	205,000	212,000	216,750	221,600	226,250
EXPENDITURE							
Corporate	2	284,503	263,500	278,000	292,000	305,000	320,000
Office Services	2	217,650	250,500	263,000	276,000	290,000	304,500
Land and Property Services	2	613,000	681,000	714,000	750,000	787,000	826,000
Community Services	2	262,800	324,300	338,000	355,000	372,800	390,000
Capital Projects and Investment	4	0	0	160,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Priority Projects		160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000
General Reserves	3	0	200,000	40,000	0	0	0
		1,537,953	1,879,300	1,953,000	2,033,000	2,114,800	2,200,500
		1,348,450	1,674,300	1,741,000	1,816,250	1,893,200	1,974,250
Expenditure less Income funded by:							
<i>Precept</i>		1,303,941	1,674,300	1,741,000	1,816,250	1,893,200	1,974,250
<i>Reserves</i>		44,509	0	0	0	0	0
		1,348,450	1,674,300	1,741,000	1,816,250	1,893,200	1,974,250
Estimated Year End Funds							
Capital Reserve *		0	0	160,000	360,000	560,000	760,000
General Reserve		60,000	260,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Band D Equivalent							
	1	174.79	224.00	233.00	243.00	254.00	265.00
Band D % increase							
	1	3.00%	28.00%	4.00%	4.30%	4.50%	4.30%
Total Band D increase per week							
	1	10p	95p	17p	19p	21p	21p

NOTES:

1. Band D info based on 2023-24 tax base of 7460; the impact for all Tax Bands and future projections will be calculated when the tax base for 2024-25 is available
2. Increase in expenditure per annum from 2024 is based on a flat rate 5% year on year; income on a flat rate 2.5%.
3. In accordance with internal and external audit advice the General Reserve needs to grow up to £300k based on current level of expenditure.
4. The Council has no capital funding for investment and/or major projects, it is advised that a capital fund be established from 2025-26.

Agenda Item 17.4 Councillor Schedule of Meetings 2024

Council: Lead Officer CEO Lead Administrator Deputy CEO **Corporate Governance and Personnel Group:** Lead Officer and Lead Administrator Deputy CEO **Planning Committee:** Lead Officer Deputy CEO Lead Administrator Corporate Project Officer **Finance and Audit Committee:** Lead Officer and Lead Administrator CEO **Land and Property Committee:** Lead Officer Land and Property Manager Lead Administrator Land and Property Project Officer **Community Services Committee:** Lead Officer and Lead Administrator Community Services Manager with support from the Community Services Team **Climate and Environment Committee:** Lead Officer Land and Property Project Officer Lead Administrator Local Information Officer **Health and Safety Group:** Lead Officer CEO Lead Administrator Land and Property Project Officer

Tuesday	9.30am		4.30pm	6.30pm
January 9 th			Planning Committee	
January 23 rd			Community Services Committee	Council
February 13 th			Land and Property Committee	
February 27 th			Finance and Audit Committee	Planning Committee
March 12 th	Corporate Governance and Personnel Group			
March 19 th	Finance and Audit Systems of Internal Control			
March 20 th	Finance and Audit Systems of Internal Control			
March 26 th			Community Services Committee	Planning Committee
April 9 th	Corporate Governance and Personnel Group		Land and Property Committee	
April 23 rd			Climate and Environment Committee	Annual Meeting of the Town
May 14 th				Annual Meeting of the Council
May 28 th			Planning Committee	Finance and Audit Committee
June 11 th	Health and Safety Group		Community Services Committee	
June 25 th			Planning Committee	Council
July 9 th			Land and Property Committee	
July 23 rd	Corporate Governance and Personnel Group		Climate and Environment Committee	Planning Committee
July 30 th	Informal Finance and Audit Committee			
August 27 th			Planning Committee	
September 10 th			Climate and Environment Committee	Council*
September 24 th			Community Services Committee	Planning Committee
October 8 th			Finance and Audit Committee	
October 22 nd	Corporate Governance and Personnel Group		Land and Property Committee	Planning Committee
November 12 th				Council
November 26 th	Health and Safety Group		Planning Committee	
December 10 th			Climate and Environment Committee	

* there is currently no scheduled business for Council in September; this meeting may therefore be cancelled or used as an informal meeting for Councillors

Agenda Item 17.6



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023-24 UPDATE and VARIANCE REPORT: APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2023

Introduction:

As a guide, income and expenditure should be around 50% of the estimated budget at the end of September i.e. the second quarter. There will be some variations in excess or below this where income or expenditure is based on annual invoicing such as membership subscriptions and receipt of the precept (council tax) or seasonal expenditure such as Advent.

The Council's Financial Regulations state that material variations are to be reported to Council. 'Material' has been defined by Council as being 15% above or below the respective percentage for the 'total' service budget; i.e. for this period above 57.5% or below 42.5%.

Inc. = Income, Exp. = Expenditure, **Green** = no action needed, **Amber** = monitor, **Red** = action required.

Corporate:

Cost Centre Info	Budget Estimate	Current Actual	%	Notes
101 Inc.	£1,365,941	£1,312,358	96%	
101 Exp.	£284,000	£153,096	54%	

Office:

Cost Centre Info	Budget Estimate	Current Actual	%	Notes
102 Inc.	£6,500	£5,982	92%	
102 Exp.	£217,650	£112,352	52%	

Land and Property:

Cost Centre Info	Budget Estimate	Current Actual	%	Notes
103 Operational Inc.	£38,000	£9,673	25%	review all income streams, check invoicing and debtors
103 Operational Exp.	£613,000	£279,689	47%	

Community Services:

Cost Centre Info	Budget Estimate	Current Actual	%	Notes
104 Operational Exp.	£162,000	£71,132	44%	
131 Charter Market Inc.	£14,450	£20,000	72%	
131 Charter Market Exp.	£2,300	£1,817	79%	monitor impact of budget overspend, minimise non-essential expenditure
132 Other Market Inc.	£36,500	£26,723	73%	
132 Other Market Exp.	£1,650	£4,509	273%	identify reason for budget overspend, minimise non-essential expenditure until income covers the additional spend
133 Advent Inc.	£23,000	£36,215	157%	
133 Advent Exp.	£32,550	£15,289	47%	
135 Mop Fair Inc.	£3,500	£0	0%	Mop Fair took place in October 2023
135 Mop Fair Exp.	£3,000	£0	0%	Mop Fair took place in October 2023
136 Children and Young People Exp.	£15,000	£5,443	36%	review allocation of budget estimates against actual requirements
137 Community Safety Exp.	£15,000	£11,930	79%	monitor impact of budget overspend, minimise non-essential expenditure
138 Community Projects and Support Exp.	£31,300	£2,954	9%	54% of budget estimate relates to grant funding allocated in October 2023

Bank Balances as at 30th September 2023:

Handelsbanken Current Account - £28k

Handelsbanken Salaries Account - £7k

Handelsbanken Deposit Account - £590k

Bank of Scotland - £5k

Investments as at 30th September 2023:

£170,000 Property Fund CCLA

£20,000 Deposit Fund CCLA (AAA Fitch Ratings, London, October 2022)

Other:

£25,000 town centre security deposit held by GCC.

Report by: Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer/RFO

November 2023





Corporate Peer Challenge



PROGRESS REVIEW

October 2023



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Introduction

In November 2022, building on Quality Gold accreditation, Cirencester Town Council welcomed a joint peer review team from the LGA (Local Government Association) and NALC (National Association of Local Councils) to undertake a corporate peer challenge. Peer challenges provide an independent assessment of the council with improvement focused recommendations.

The Town Council asked the peer team to provide advice, and an assessment of:

- what works well within the organisation and what could be better,
- internal and external communication and engagement,
- how effective is the Council in responding to local need, delivering priorities and day to day services,
- shaping a long-term strategy.

The peer team reviewed a wide range of documents and information provided by the Council and then spent two days in Cirencester.

During the two-day visit, the peer team:

- gathered information and views from more than 12 meetings,
- undertook further research and reading,
- spoke to more than 40 people including staff, Councillors, members of the public and external stakeholders.



The peer team then published a report with recommendations which was considered by the Town Council. The Town Council subsequently considered and approved an action plan, in response to the report. After the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) has taken place, the LGA facilitates a 'peer led' Progress Review; this is an integral part of the overall Corporate Peer Challenge process.

This document outlines the original recommendations of the peer team, the action plan, which was subsequently prepared by the Council, including evidence demonstrating how the Council has responded to the recommendations. The formal progress review will be led by the Peer Team on Wednesday 11th October 2023. Following the progress review, the LGA will produce a short reflective report providing examples of good practice and impact of the overall process. This will be published and considered by the Council at its meeting to be held on Tuesday 14th November 2023.

Corporate Peer Challenge Summary Feedback

what works well within the organisation.

www.1: The Community Services team was praised for the work it does in respect of organising events and the markets which are seen as valuable in preserving the vitality of the town centre. The Health and Wellbeing week event held in June 2022 was referenced.

www.2: The Land and Property Team undertakes excellent work in managing the Council's green spaces, including 45+ hectares of open space and historic assets, alongside allotments, a nature reserve, and sports facilities.

www.3: The Local Information Centre team are also well respected and provide a valuable service to the town and its visitors. The central location of the town council office makes the team accessible. The staff try to resolve queries at the first point of contact, regardless of the public service provider responsible for the issue. In fact, the staff do so well that the peer team heard suggestions for the council to examine the potential to accommodate the district council staff in a 'One Stop Shop'. This could potentially facilitate longer opening hours (including possible Saturday opening) and provide an even better customer experience.

www.4: the Town Council supports and works well with community ward groups, which is very positive. The community ward groups link to the Council as part of their role representing residents in those wards.

www.5: in seeking to meet organisational needs in terms of recruitment, the Council has hosted a range of informal recruitment and open days to promote opportunities for employment, volunteering and becoming a councillor. This innovative approach removing the barriers and anxiety that some people face in seeking employment was successful, as staff have been appointed and the number of volunteers increased.

www.6: the Council makes use of volunteers which Works Well, both as a benefit to the council and to the volunteers themselves. Cirencester Town Council has received a Gloucestershire Inclusive Employer Award for the work they do to build a diverse and inclusive culture.

www.7: we found staff at 'the top of their game', the members of staff that the peer team spoke to were positive and keen to be the best they could be. They were wholly supportive of the ambitions of the Council and keen to provide good services for the residents and businesses of Cirencester. There is a strong and effective learning and developmental culture at CTC. The peer team heard from members of staff that the Town Council is a great place to work. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend training events and there are regular 121s, appraisals and team meetings to ensure staff have the support and resources needed to undertake their jobs successfully.

what could be even better.

ebi.1: Local Information Centre – working in partnership and collaboration with others to provide a single point of access for a wide range of information, advice and services. **Update: The LIC is working with various partners, providing office space and a drop-in facility for Gloucestershire Carers and the Independence Trust, serving as a single point of access for the public**

ebi.2: to take a more consistent approach in the provision of supporting community ward groups, across the existing groups and more broadly to encourage groups to be set up across all wards within the town. This will support engagement across the whole town area. Local councillors could engage more with these and other local groups in their local leadership and representational role. **Update: established a community network group with themed meetings including ward councillor updates, housing developments and anti-social behaviour; contact has been made with a community consultant, exploring community group and facilitating support. Through the Annual Meeting of the Town, we were able to support four local charities find storage accommodation at Bingham House, staff have also been proactive in engaging and volunteering with a wide range of community projects including the Food Pantry, Community Group Quiz Night and the Phoenix Festival. The community services team liaised with the 5 local primary schools serving each of the eight Cirencester Wards on a community Coronation Meadows project and for Advent 2023 has launched a community snowman trail**

ebi.3: the peer team did hear that there is not a lot of capacity to do more than staff are doing now, and it would be better if the organisation was fully staffed to meet current demands. **Update: contingency was built into each service budget for 2023-24 to provide greater flexibility for teams when additional staff resource is needed**

ebi.4: there should be recognition that additional investment needs to be in place to meet future demands that may arise once the long-term corporate strategy is adopted. **Update: the Council has established a strategic advisory group and core project team of Councillors and Officers, which will be looking at one of our main assets, green spaces, incorporating land and property, climate and environment and finance and audit; this work will help shape future investment requirements and forms part of a wider capital investment programme being led by our Finance and Audit Committee**

ebi.5: whilst the peer team saw how the different services within the Council each work well as individual teams, achievement of a one team approach across councillors and staff would be even better. **Update: establishing a strategic advisory group and core project team demonstrates our commitment to, and the value of, the one team approach with communication and engagement across all service areas and key stakeholders; 'all staff' forums and joint events with Councillors, also encourages and facilitates this approach to working; also our community services and land and property teams are working more closely on planning and delivering resources for events, and several grounds staff are regularly office based, once a week to link up with office based staff on various projects**

ebi.6: the peer team heard how the CEO works incredibly hard and covers a wide range of responsibilities; from a peer team perspective, it would be even better if responsibility for operational delivery could be shared across the wider team. The peer team view is that there may be merit in holding a team building event across the staff and councillor leadership team to assist with this. **Update: operational line management is now overseen by the Deputy CEO, a Clerk has been appointed to oversee the administration of, and main point of contact for the Service Level Agreement with the Bingham Library Trust, the CEO has also delegated authority to the Community Services Manager to lead on the Business Briefings and the Deputy CEO in leading on Corporate Governance and Personnel**

internal and external communication and engagement.

Whilst internal communications have improved and the regular newsletter from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) plays a part, the peer team heard that it would be even better if there could be opportunities for more two way and cross council communication from team to team. This cross-council working would help to encourage and in time embed the one team approach as staff learn from and share knowledge with their colleagues across the organisation.

Update: in addition to quarterly team meetings with the CEO, the LIC team has introduced monthly briefing sessions attended by representatives of each service area, this has encouraged information sharing, opportunities to share resources and joint delivery of projects (see also ebi.5)

The peer team heard from those it spoke to that it would be even better if external communications, engagement, and accessibility could be improved. For example, the website could be reviewed as a means of communication, and in terms of engagement, the Council could consider including comments boxes on external and internal surveys so that respondents feel that the council is interested in what they have to say, rather than just providing a response to questions the Council want answers to. **Update: since the peer review we have brought the content and updating of the website in-house, prior to this we had 176,660 visits to the website in 2022 and in 2023 as at August, our web traffic was 216,000; our What's On page being in the Top 5 of page visits across each month of 2023 compared with 2022 when What's On was in the Top 5 in just 6 months between the same period of January to August.**

We have also revised our consultation format and incorporate an open comment box as well as consulting directly with young people. Our 2023-24 budget consultation which took place between November 2022 and January 2023 broke all previous records, with 611 responses, beating our previous record of 554.

Over 70 people responded to our online budget survey through the commonplace platform, 200 young people also responded through commonplace and over 330 people submitted handwritten comments. Everyone's comment was considered as we shape our support, services, and facilities for the future. We published 'You Said We Did' information alongside the summary feedback of responses for info please visit <https://cirencestertown.commonplace.is/>

A desire to see an increase in the visibility of Councillors in their leadership and representational roles was reflected to the peer team and this is something the Council could reflect and build upon. The current Mayor and Chair of Council is taking a strong leadership role and is about to begin a regular slot on the local radio station. **Update: since the local election in May our newly appointed Councillors have been active in the local communities they have been elected to serve and have been proactive in seeking to make a difference in responding to the needs of their local communities**

how effective is the Council in responding to local need, delivering priorities and day to day services.

Cirencester Town Council is achieving a great deal for a council of its size. Several people the peer team spoke to referred to Cirencester as a 'proper market town' and there was a genuine sense of civic pride both in the place and in the council for what it does to support the town. The CTC strategic priorities identified within the 2021-2023 short-term strategy were: Development, Design and Built Environment - Environment and Climate Change - Community, Culture and Leisure - Access, Infrastructure and Transport - Economy, Business and Retail.

These priorities were supported by actions, some of which were the sole responsibility of the Town Council (CTC), whilst others required co-delivery and partnership working. It is typical of CTC to be striving beyond its own areas of responsibility to achieve for the residents and businesses of the town.

The partnership working approach, outlined above is also providing efficiencies in service delivery, for example, working in partnership with Gloucestershire Police to centralise CCTV monitoring has improved service delivery and saved money. In identifying local need, the Town Council has commissioned an access audit of the town centre to identify safe accessible routes in and around the town centre and successfully ran a recruitment event to identify barriers to employment for young people. The Town Council is a disability confident accredited employer.

The peer team were told that the Council is doing well in responding to day-to-day services. The LIC team were mentioned as going above and beyond in dealing with issues on behalf of residents and businesses.

The Community Services team activities were reflected to the peer team, not just in terms of one-off events, but their continuing support to the vitality of the town centre with the organisation of the regular markets.

In another example, the peer team heard of the excellent work carried out by the Land and Property team in managing the council's green spaces. This is particularly impressive given the recruitment and retention challenges.

The one area that was reflected to the peer team where improvements may be possible was in consideration being given to some form of 'ticketing' system that would allow people to track progress of issues raised, and for the Council to keep them informed.

shaping a long-term strategy.

Cirencester Town Council's short-term strategy was published in 2021. The short-term strategy was seen as a 'positive taster' ahead of developing a longer-term strategy. A final short-term action plan report and update was published in May 2023.

The outcomes of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan need to inform the long-term strategy, and it will need to meet the aspirations of the new community, including identifying any impact on the town centre infrastructure and services.

Involving the staff and Councillors in the development of the long-term strategy will help them to see where their activities fit into the Council priorities and how they add value. The strategy will align with the Council priorities so that there is clarity on where the Council will focus support and resources, both in terms of investment and capacity.

In terms of delivering those priorities, the peer team heard of the need for the town council to ensure there was balance between developing strategy and delivering outcomes. By way of a practical example, resource goes into developing strategies whilst the public toilets need to be sorted. The strategy will need to identify additional capacity and investment required to deliver the strategy outcomes.

During the process of developing the strategy, and once adopted when delivering priorities, ensure regular communication to keep people informed and engaged with progress made.

Corporate Peer Challenge Key Recommendations

1. Visible Leadership

As the local representatives across all tiers of local government, enhance the Town Council role to ensure expectations are met around the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Masterplan, which are key to the ambitions of the Town Council.

2. Developing Strategy and Delivering Outcomes

Rebalance the focus between developing strategy and delivering outcomes, so that there is resource to deliver the outcomes that the strategies promise.

3. External Communication

Use a variety of methods to communicate externally, perhaps a review of the website to make it more user friendly and ensure it is kept updated.

4. Openness and Transparency

Decision making and delivery of projects could both benefit from a more transparent approach, for example, a system to report progress on issues raised.

5. Be a Listening Council

Ensure the council engages and listens more effectively, for example, include comments sections within internal and external consultation surveys.

6. Sharing Responsibility

Consider a broader shared responsibility across the council for leadership and delivery to address the possible over reliance on the Chief Executive Officer.

7. Supporting Community Groups

Make support to ward community groups more consistent. Build on the existing relationships with ward community groups to aim to deliver a more consistent approach of support to these groups across the town.

8. Governance Structure Review

The Council has ambitions going forwards, a review of governance will ensure that the Council structure is the right one to deliver on those future ambitions.

Cirencester Town Council Response

response to the recommendations.

On Tuesday 31st January 2023, the Council considered its response to the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Review and approved the way forward.

In considering its response, the Town Council reiterated the commitment to introducing a performance appraisal and competency-based framework, alongside addressing areas for improvement and development which relate to the operational and internal aspects of the organisation.

Two consultancy organisations were identified to support the Council and they were appointed as follows:

- Council HR and Governance Support, which provided a critical friend review of our short-term strategy be appointed to support the Council in respect of rebalancing the focus between developing strategy and delivering outcomes and sharing responsibility. **Update: the draft competency-based framework and performance appraisal system is in place and staff and line manager training is scheduled for the 4th and 5th of October**
- Local Government Resource Centre be appointed to support the Council is preparing a performance appraisal and competency-based framework. **Update: This report was significantly delayed and has only recently been received and is currently being reviewed by the CEO and Deputy CEO**

In respect of taking on a more visible leadership role, reviewing the governance structure, improving external communications, increasing transparency, being more effective as a listening council and making support to ward community groups more consistent, it was agreed that further work be undertaken, and an action plan be considered and approved after the Local Election in May 2023.

Induction and training was provided for all Councillors after the Local Election, including a briefing on the peer review and recommendations. The Council subsequently approved the Action Plan at its Annual Meeting.

The Council re-stated its commitment to being fit for purpose as an organisation and through what it does, the aim and purpose continues to be:

- creating a sense of civic pride and support those in need
- building strength and resilience through a thriving community
- being a voice and advocate for the people and place of Cirencester
- taking the lead, being in-tune with the democracy and community needs of our time and future
- being a conduit for, and humanitarian in, helping residents

In addition, Council confirmed that the preparation of a long-term strategy would be deferred until the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Masterplan were adopted.

Action Plan.

The main purpose of the peer challenge and review was to improve and develop as an organisation, through constructive feedback and recommendations.

This Action Plan provides an overview of the recommendations and how the Town Council has responded.

Ref	Theme	Output	Action	Evidence Base
R1	Visible Leadership	As the local representatives across all tiers of local government, enhance the Town Council's role to ensure expectations are met around the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Masterplan, which are key to the ambitions of the Town Council.	<p>Lead Officer and Lead Member for Planning, to liaise with the Forward Planning Manager and Cabinet Lead at Cotswold District Council, including a review of the existing Memorandum of Agreement on joint working.</p> <p>Project Officer to ensure Town Council representatives on the community-led Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group can play an active role and provide support to the community representatives.</p>	<p>All member and staff briefing held on Neighbourhood Planning led by Town Council's Planning Consultant.</p> <p>The Town Council has also made the following appointments to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:</p> <p>Town Councillor Andrea Pellegram (former Director of Planning and professional planning consultant), Town Councillor Andy Jopp (Lead Member for Planning) and Councillor Nigel Robbins (former County Councillor, current District Councillor)</p> <p>Following the resignation of the Steering Group Chair, who was a community representative, Cllr Nigel Robbins was proposed and seconded by the community representatives to Chair the Group and was duly appointed.</p>
R2	Developing Strategy and Delivering Outcomes	Rebalance focus to ensure resource is available to deliver the outcomes that the strategies promise.	<p>Operational Review being led by Council HR and Governance Support. Report and recommendations being considered by the CEO and Deputy CEO.</p> <p>Competency based framework and performance appraisal system being introduced. Staff Focus Group to be established. Framework and appraisal system to be introduced in a phased approach across 2023-24.</p> <p>Preparation of a long-term strategy deferred until Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Masterplan published.</p> <p>Focus on day-to-day operational delivery and priority projects arising from the Amenity Land and Open Space Review.</p>	<p>Competency based framework and performance appraisal briefings and staff training.</p> <p>Financial contingency built into budget estimates for 2023-24 enabling service areas to commission additional resource as and when needed.</p> <p>CEO line management and meeting responsibilities reviewed.</p> <p>CEO and Deputy CEO administrative & management support to the Bingham Library Trust reviewed.</p>

Ref	Theme	Output	Action	Evidence Base
R3	External Communication	Use a variety of methods to communicate externally, perhaps a review of the website to make it more user friendly and ensure it is kept updated.	<p>Website updating has been brought in-house and is being reviewed and updated.</p> <p>Monthly briefing to staff and Councillors being used as basis for social media communication and monthly newsletter to subscribers.</p>	<p>In addition to online communication through the Commonplace engagement platform, our monthly briefing is now circulated by e-mail to over 2,700 subscribers.</p> <p>The monthly briefing also serves as the basis for our social media and website news communication, which has resulted in an increased presence in the local Wilts and Glos Standard newspaper.</p> <p>Our LIC team has also noticed an increase in responses from the public to our news info and makes use of the Foyer at Bingham House for sharing and promoting community information.</p> <p>Footfall to the LIC continues to increase. In 2022, we had over 18,800 visits to our LIC. Around 9% of those enquiries were related to the town council, 14% public transport, 47% tourist and visitor and 30% local community. In 2023, to date up to August we have had more than 13k visits, which is on target to exceed 20k visits this year.</p> <p>One area for improvement in 2024 is refurbishing or replacing our ward-based notice boards. In addition, when we undertake consultation we want to be more pro-active in hosting workshops and being more visible at our markets and events to promote the opportunity for the public to engage with us and share their views.</p>
R4	Openness and Transparency	Decision making and delivery of projects could both benefit from a more transparent approach, for example, a system to report progress on issues raised.	Committee structure for each service area including Community Services, Land and Property, the Climate and Environment, Finance and Audit to be introduced.	<p>We have introduced a monthly tracking log of issues raised by the public which is circulated to all staff and Councillors, this supports the LIC when responding to the public on projects and issues relating to the services provided by each of the three tiers of local government.</p> <p>As part of a review into governance, we have also introduced a committee structure, effective from September 2023:</p> <p>Finance and Audit Committee Land and Property Committee Planning Committee Community Services Committee Climate and Environment Committee</p> <p>This makes our decision making more transparent, effective, and efficient; providing the public a greater opportunity to participate and influence the decision-making process.</p> <p>In addition, we have combined our Corporate and Personnel groups into one Corporate Governance and Personnel Group.</p>

Ref	Theme	Output	Action	Evidence Base
R5	Be a Listening Council	Ensure the Council engages and listens more effectively, for example, include comments sections within internal and external consultation surveys.	<p>Use of commonplace extended for online engagement and use of comment cards for handwritten comments with freepost address.</p> <p>Preparation of Annual Feedback Report of general comments, to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Town.</p> <p>Bespoke youth surveys.</p>	<p>We have revised our consultation and incorporated an open comment box and consult directly with young people on any consultation.</p> <p>Our 2023-24 budget consultation which took place between November 2022 and January 2023 broke all previous records, with 611 responses, beating our previous record of 554.</p> <p>Over 70 people responded to our online budget survey through commonplace, 200 young people also responded through commonplace and over 330 people submitted handwritten comments. Everyone's comment was considered as we shape our support, services, and facilities for the future, and we published 'You Said We Did' information alongside summary feedback of responses.</p> <p>Our 2023 Annual Town Survey feedback summary is appended to this report for information. We increased the response rate and our satisfaction rating increased across each of the following statements that Cirencester Town Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides value for money from 22% to 40% • engages and keeps residents informed from 32% to 48% • is open, transparent & trusted organisation from 31% to 33% • responds to concerns of local community from 21% to 36% <p>Following the 2022 consultations and surveys we published a 'you said we did' summary alongside feedback response; i.e. providing the public with information demonstrating how we had listened and acted; we are also publishing a lot more background information alongside our surveys and consultations:</p> <p>https://cirencestertown.commonplace.is/</p> <p>Example of listening; our LIC team was aware of the need for more allotments and work directly with our Land and Property Team to establish 10 new plots. Our What's On guide is available in printed form in response to customer demand as well as available online. We also want to explore our news briefings and What's On being made available through Corinium Talking News.</p> <p>http://coriniumtalkingnews.org.uk/</p>

Ref	Theme	Output	Action	Evidence Base
R6	Sharing Responsibility	Consider a broader shared responsibility across the council for operational leadership and delivery to address the possible over reliance on the Chief Executive Officer.	Operational Review being led by Council HR and Governance Support.	<p>Operational Review led by Council HR and Governance Support actioned, report and recommendations being considered by the CEO and Deputy CEO.</p> <p>Operational line management for the senior management team is now overseen by the Deputy CEO, previously the CEO had lined managed one of the senior managers.</p> <p>A Clerk has been appointed to oversee the administration of and is the main point of contact for the Service Level Agreement with the Bingham Library Trust, previously the CEO had been the designated Clerk.</p> <p>The CEO has also delegated authority to the Community Services Manager to lead on the Business Briefings and the Deputy CEO in leading on Corporate Governance and Personnel.</p> <p>Core Project Team made up of two Councillors, the CEO and a Project Officer will lead on a strategic review of green spaces sharing leadership, task preparation and delivery.</p>
R7	Supporting Community Groups	Build on existing relationships with ward-based community groups to aim to deliver a more consistent approach of support to these groups across the town.	<p>Community Services work programme for 2023-24 includes overseeing and supporting partnership and volunteering initiatives with local community groups, ensuring effective community representation in each ward. Including partnership arrangements and support to the Cirencester Community Development Trust and The Steadings Community Management Trust.</p> <p>Community Services Committee to consider:</p> <p>identity of community groups and representation of local community; how can we be inclusive of different community groups within the same ward; how can we help to unlock potential in community groups; how do we define a community group, what qualities are needed as a ward-based group; do ward based community groups need an umbrella organisation for support and advice; what does CTC support look like?</p>	<p>We have established a community network group with themed meetings including ward councillor updates, housing developments and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Contact has been made with a community consultant, to support community group and facilitation mapping, with the view to supporting the Community Services Committee answer the questions outlined in the Action column.</p> <p>Through the Annual Meeting of the Town we were able to support four local charities find storage accommodation at Bingham House, staff have also been proactive in engaging and volunteering with a wide range of community projects including the Food Pantry, Community Group Quiz Night and the Phoenix Festival, also the community services team liaised with the 5 local primary schools serving each of the eight Cirencester Wards on a community Coronation Meadows project and for Advent 2023 has launched a community snowman trail.</p> <p>Elected Member appointed to the Steadings Community Management Trust.</p>
R8	Governance Structure Review	The Town Council has ambitions going forwards, a review of governance will ensure that the council structure is the right one to deliver on those future ambitions.	Governance structure reviewed by the Corporate Group; introduction of a leader model to be deferred and as a phased approach a committee structure be piloted in 2023-24.	Committee structure established in September 2023; R4 refers

Peer Progress Review Timetable

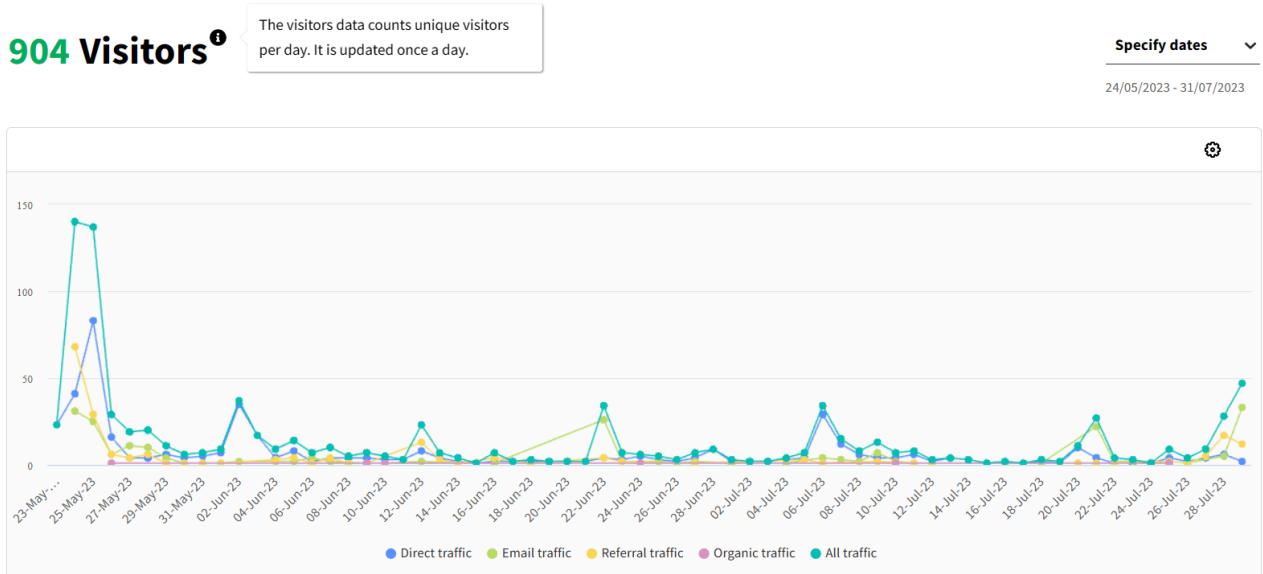


Wednesday 11th October 2023

- 9.15am Welcome and Scene Setting with CEO, Andrew Tubb and Chair of Council, Councillor Sabrina Dixon
Venue: Bingham House. Dyer Street. Cirencester.
- 10am Set Up and Refreshments at Venue
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.
- 10.15am Community Focus Group
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.
- 11.15am Break and Refreshments
- 11.20am Staff Focus Group
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.
- 12.20pm Break and Refreshments
- 12.25pm Town Councillor Focus Group
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.
- 1.25pm Working Lunch
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.
- 2.30pm Round Table with CEO, Senior Management Team, and all Town Councillors
Venue: Corinium Museum. Park Street. Cirencester.

Annual Town Survey 2023 – Feedback Summary

The Annual Town Survey 2023 had 200 respondents. The survey went live on 24th May 2023 and closed on 31st July 2023. When the survey closed 137 respondents had confirmed their status, 29 were pending and 34 anonymous. Overall, we had 904 visits to the Commonplace platform whilst the survey was live, including 116 via Facebook, 31 through LinkedIn, 31 Twitter, 15 via our website and 98 through an online news post.



Of the 200 respondents 89 were from Cirencester; some respondents skipped questions.

The others were from Ashley, Ashton Keynes, Avening, Bagendon, Bibury, Coates, Compton Abdale, Cricklade, Daglingworth, Driffield, Hatherop, Kemble, Minchinhampton, Mole Valley, Nailsworth, North Cerney, Poulton, Preston, Siddington, Somerford Keynes, South Cerney, Tetbury, Winstone and Winson.

Of the 89 respondents from Cirencester the Ward breakdown is as follows:

Abbey 15, Beeches 14, Chesterton 10, Four Acres 5, New Mills 9, Stratton 11, St Michaels 14, Watermoor 11.

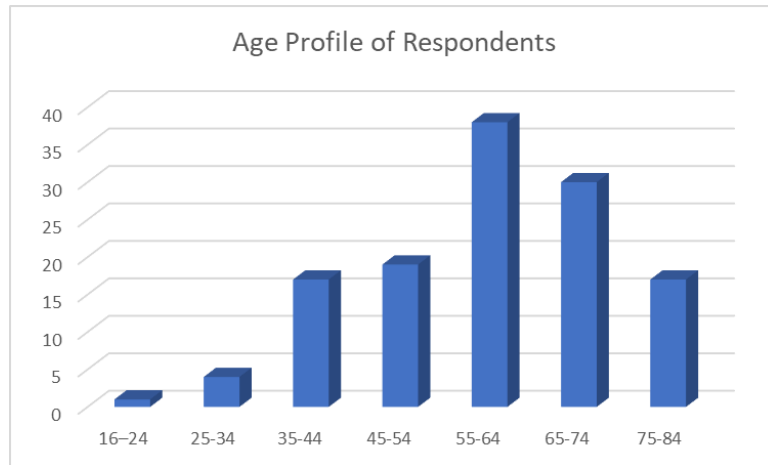
Connection:

50 of the respondents lived in Cirencester, 7 stated that they lived in Cirencester as well as having a business, 21 live and work in Cirencester, 11 visited and shopped in Cirencester and 2 work in Cirencester.

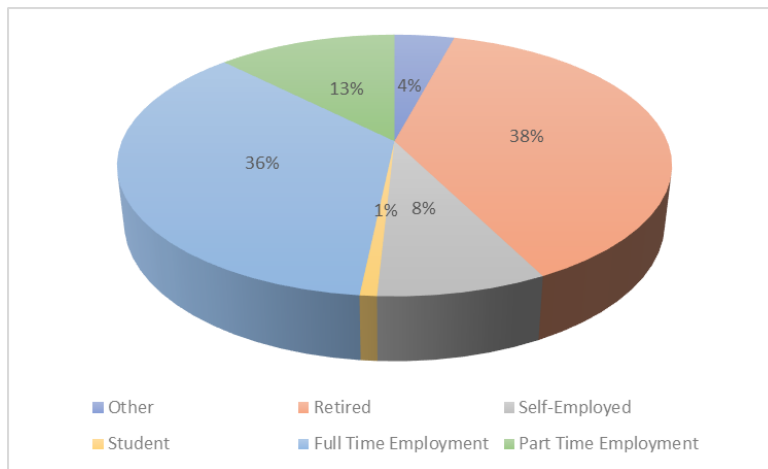
Gender:

56 respondents identified as being Male, 62 as being Female and 1 as other.

Age Profile:

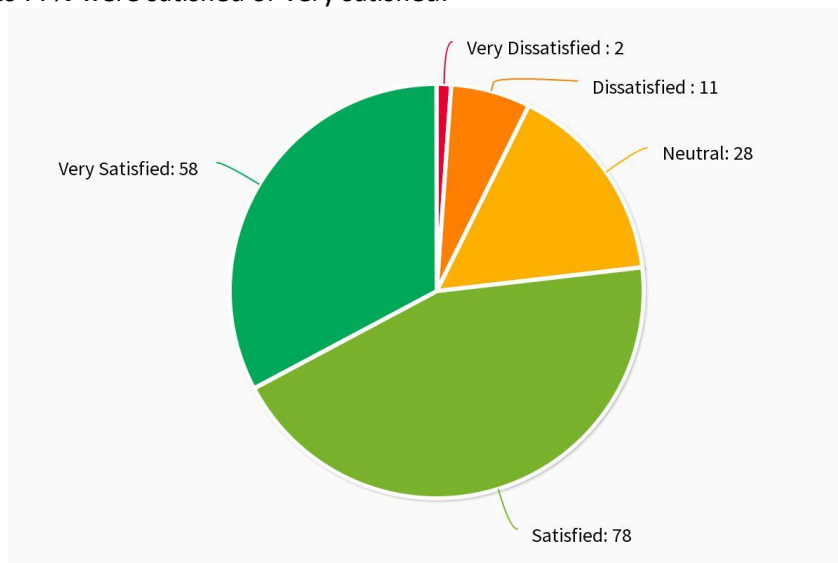


Education and Employment Profile:

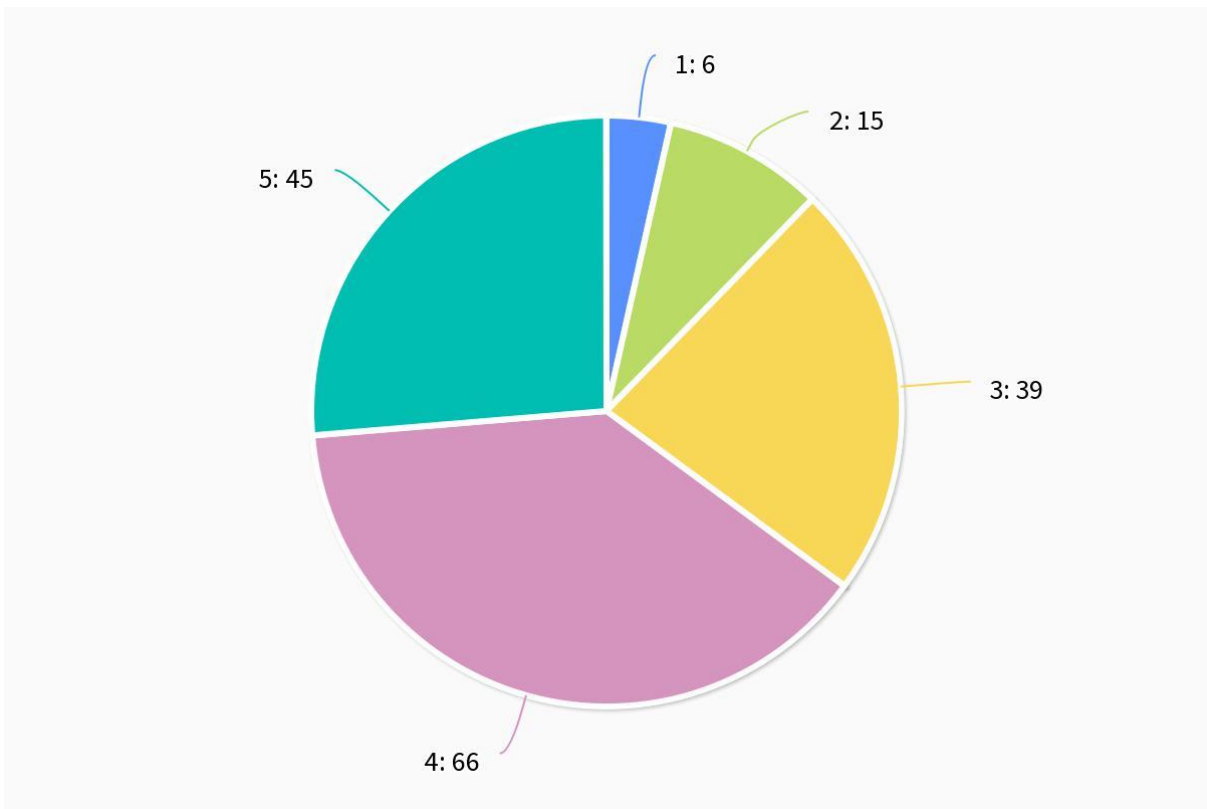


Survey Questions and Responses

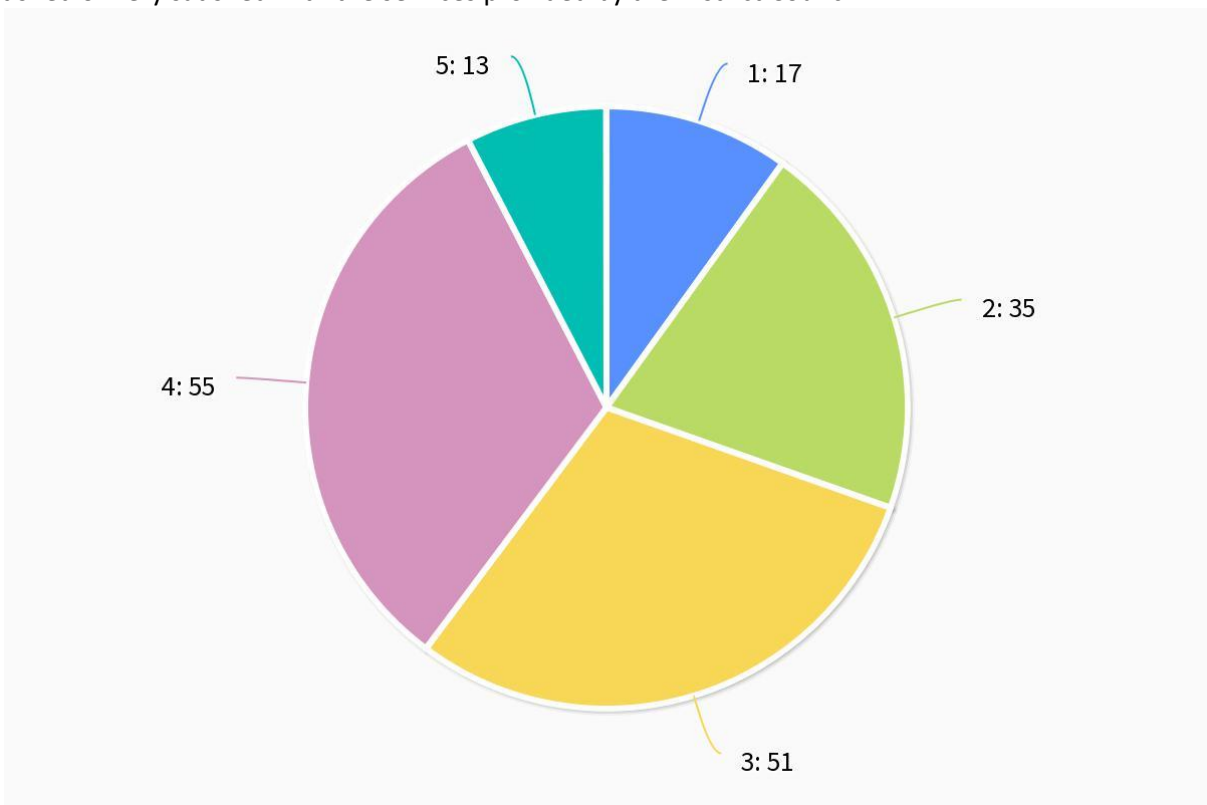
The first question we asked was how satisfied the respondents were with Cirencester as a place to live, work or study in; of the 177 responses 77% were satisfied or very satisfied:



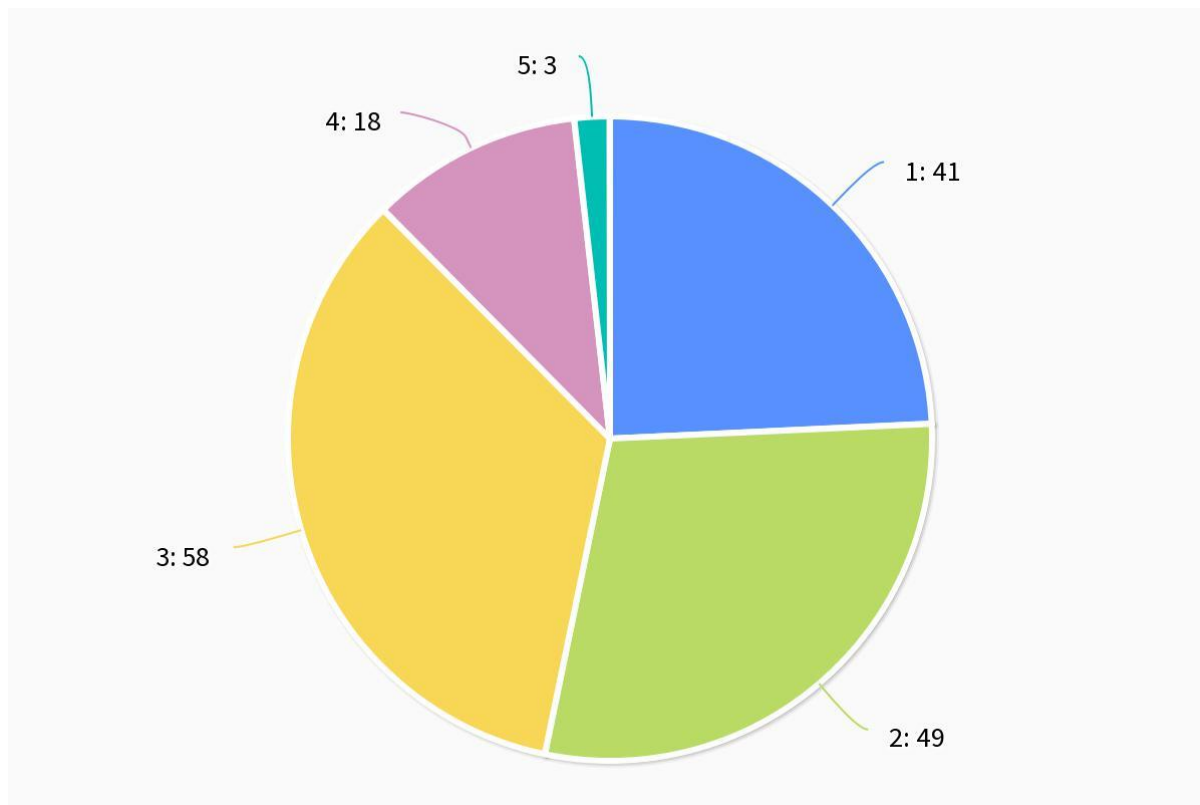
We also wanted to know how satisfied respondents were to the services provided by Cirencester Town Council for example markets & events, local information centre, parks, and open spaces; 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Of the 171 people who responded, 65% were satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the Town Council:



We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with the services provided by Cotswold District Council for example planning, waste and recycling, parking, environment, and housing of the 171 people who responded, 40% were satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the District Council:



We asked the same question, in respect of Gloucestershire County Council and services they provide such as public transport, roads, libraries, health, and social care; of the 169 people who responded, 12% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by the County Council:



In 2022 we issued a few statements and asked the public if they agreed or not. The feedback received was that the public wanted more information and evidence to be able to respond accurately and in an informed way. In 2023, we provided a wide range of information and evidence, and this is the response we received:

Cirencester Town Council....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
provides value for money	16	64	76	31	13
engages and keeps residents informed	13	83	59	34	11
is open and transparent and a trusted organisation	15	49	90	27	15
responds to concerns of the local community	12	61	78	35	14

Compared to the responses received in 2022, the percentage of respondents who agreed has increased, as outlined in the table below:

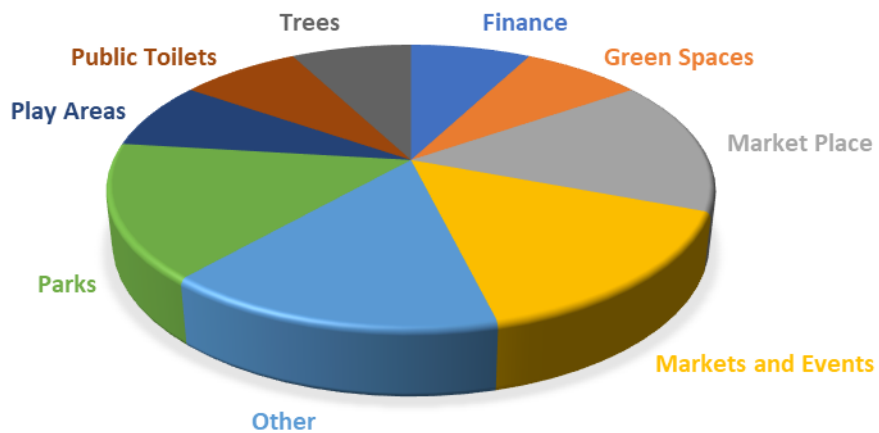
Cirencester Town Council....	Strongly Agree and Agree	Strongly Agree and Agree	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Strongly Disagree and Disagree
	2022	2023	2022	2023
provides value for money	22%	40%	27%	22%
engages and keeps residents informed	32%	48%	25%	22%
is open, transparent & trusted organisation	31%	33%	26%	21%
responds to concerns of local community	21%	36%	26%	24%

Comment Analysis

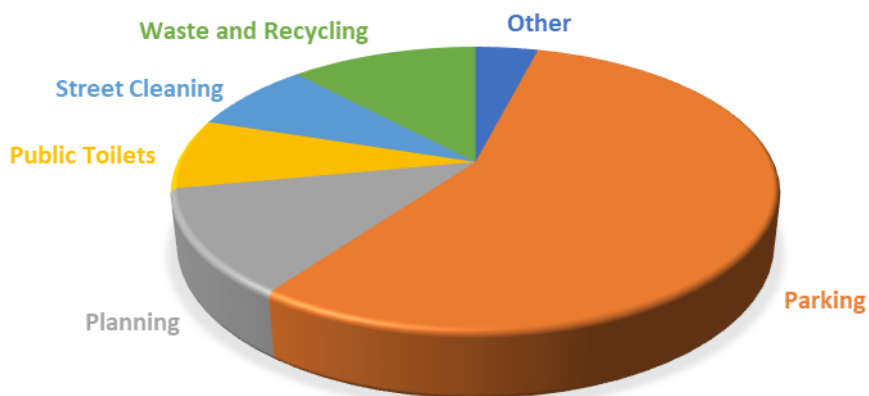
Some members of the public are critical of engagement and consultation; this could be for many reasons. Cirencester Town Council is seeking to build a level of trust with the public which demonstrates that our consultations are meaningful and relevant. Through the Commonplace platform we will follow up with a feedback summary and a 'you said - we did' tile or 'you said - we'll do'; demonstrating an active response to the feedback we receive.

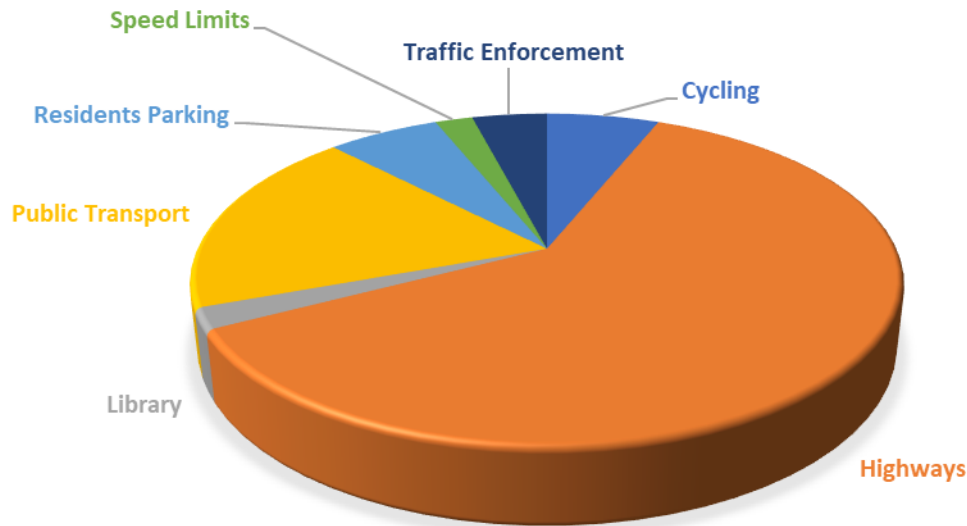
In the 2023 Annual Town survey we received over 100 comments; 14 of which related to the Town Council, 25 Cotswold District Council and 49 the County Council. 22 were general comments and 2 related to the impact of college students parking in nearby residential areas.

CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL - COMMENTS SUMMARY



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL - COMMENTS SUMMARY





GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - COMMENTS SUMMARY

General issues and comments:

Cinema

Cirencester is fast becoming a zombie town.

Housing

Lack of affordable housing and rental accommodation.

Let down by incompetent local government.

Light rail link

More pedestrian-only space in centre.

More Useful Shops and increased pedestrianisation

Much more needs to be done to improve look and appeal of Cirencester for residents and visitors.

Need another large supermarket like Asda or Sainsbury's.

Not enough for young people.

There is no climate emergency and diversity is not a strength.

Too passive, there is no plan for the future.

Use contractors who carry out work properly and are held to account financially when they don't.

Vacant Shops

Lack of Shop Variety

Youth

Taxi Rank