

## **Gloucestershire County Council Liberal Democrats January Update**

This has been an incredibly busy month for the Liberal Democrats at Gloucestershire County Council. We've hit the ground running since the start of 2026 and have been working hard to get our budget finalised and across the line.

### **Local Government Re-organisation**

Having established the 12 workstreams that will make up the transition programme, the LGR programme board is now being recruited to.

We continue to work collaboratively as 7 councils and have agreed a split of LGR costs and have already got a firm governance structure in place.

We have appointed a program director who will start full time at the beginning of April. Emily McGuinness brings vast experience from her role as SW regional manager for the LGA, and is a well-respected and personable figure who will be an real asset in managing the complexities of this transition.

Each workstream has a lead "sponsor" made up largely of the Chief Execs from the 7 councils and other directors. The sponsors will continue to lead on the workstreams on top of their own role. Workstream managers/co-ordinators are largely also in place and are made up of council officers whose day jobs will be "back-filled" to allow them the time to concentrate on the LGR transition.

We expect the government consultation to begin in the coming weeks and will last for 7 weeks. This will be led by MHCLG and we believe will be on all 3 options put forward in November.

We still anticipate a ministerial decision on the government's preferred option by the beginning of July.

Much of the work of the workstreams at this stage is about base-lining and data gathering so that we have a clear picture of how each council operates, what systems they use, what assets they own etc.

The next stage will be designing the future operating model and this is where councillors and partners will be asked to input through a series of workshops.

It is important to note that whilst structures will be put in place to ensure that the new authority/ies will be safe and legal and be able to deliver services on day 1 of the new council/s, many of the decisions will be made by the newly formed "shadow" authority/ies following elections in May 2027.

## **Fair Funding Review Settlement**

We received our Fair Funding Review settlement from the Government just before Christmas, this decides the amount of funding we will receive from central government over the next few years. Unfortunately, this review was far from 'fair' for Gloucestershire and we are facing a devastating near £10 million cut in funding next year, rising to a staggering £30 million in three years.

This is a horrible position for government to have put us in as we need this money to deliver essential services for our communities.

We will continue to work tirelessly to do everything in our power for our residents. We have implored Government to rethink this insulting, irresponsible decision.

## **Budget**

On 28 January Cabinet passed our 2026/27 budget, which will go to full council on 18 February.

We faced a significant challenge in producing a budget that honoured our commitments, protected and improved essential services as well as absorbing the impact of reduced funding from the fair funding review and dealing with the black hole left by the conservative administration.

However, we are incredibly happy with what we have managed to achieve, including the highest ever investment into Highways, £6.35 million towards the cost of three new adult care homes and a £42m investment in Youth Hubs.

Full budget from page 27 - <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g12173/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2028-Jan-2026%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

## **Highways Summary**

### **Peer Review**

- We are having a peer review of our highways system. Scheduled for 10–12 February 2026 with peers confirmed by the LGA.
- Scope agreed, position statement and interview schedule being finalised.

### **£15m Budget Allocations**

- £5m per year over 3 years allocated across drainage, resurfacing, deep cleans, route impact schemes, customer response, and additional operational resources.

- Officers are developing delivery and resourcing plans, to be reported to the Highways Board in March.

#### Member Influence Process

- We are reworking the current system to ensure members have proper influence. The aim is a strategic, needsled approach to maintenance with fair countywide distribution.
- Peer Review feedback will inform the final approach, full details due in March.

#### Major Projects Update

- A40 Hambrook House: Bridge repairs progressing well; completion expected midFebruary.
- A435 Cycle Link: On track for completion before the Gold Cup Festival (w/c 9 March).

#### Upcoming Resurfacing

- Multiple schemes across Forest, Stroud, Cotswold, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham districts running January–February 2026 with varied operational hours.
- Full list available on the County Resurfacing Works webpage.

#### Find and Fix

- 70% of enquiries now come via FixMyStreet (up from 35%), reducing inefficiency and duplicate reports.
- System redirects nonGCC issues automatically and improves visibility of true network demand.
- Please continue to report issues at - <https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>

### **M5 Junction 10**

After strong lobbying from our Councillors and MPs we received an additional £71.5million in funding for the transformative M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme.

This will allow us to move ahead with vital transport upgrades that will unlock homes, jobs and investment. Completion of the scheme will:

- Enable the delivery of over 20,000 new homes — including over 7,000 that are affordable

- Support the Golden Valley development and the National Cyber Innovation Centre and technology cluster, including the creation of around 12,000 skilled jobs for local people
- Build on the successful delivery of the £33 million Arle Court Transport Hub

However, we understand that during construction there may be disruption to local areas and will ensure we manage this as carefully as possible.



### **Community Safety/ 20mph Zones**

We continue our work on community and road safety including the roll out of 20mph zones.

We launched a six-week consultation on Monday 19 January, to seek views on proposals to enforce moving traffic offences at 16 high risk locations across the county.

For more information, including a full list of the identified locations, and to take part in the consultation, please visit - <https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk/engagementhq.com/moving-traffic-anpr-enforcement-site-consultation?preview=true>

### **Gloucestershire Named One of England's Top Counties for Road Maintenance**

We are incredibly happy to say that Gloucestershire has been ranked as one of the best counties in England for road maintenance in a new national map published by the Department for Transport (DfT).

However, after years of under-investment from Government and the impact of severe weather, we understand that many residents are still frustrated by the state of some local roads.

We are fully committed to improving your roads and our new budget includes a huge investment in this.

See the map here - <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/local-road-maintenance-ratings-map/index.html>

### **Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

We are delighted to announce that our Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be published mid-February. This marks a landmark step towards a greener, healthier future for our county.

The strategy includes a county-wide interactive map where individuals can select any area in the county and see how biodiversity and wildlife can be supported and enhanced there.

This will help planners, land managers, and communities identify priority areas for restoring habitats, improving rivers and green spaces, and promoting sustainable land management.

It aims to create wildlife-friendly places, connect habitats, and support community-led nature projects.

Read more and access the map from 13 February here - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/ecology-and-landscape/gloucestershire-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

### **Digital Infrastructure, Inclusion, and Innovation Strategy**

We are incredibly excited about our new digital strategy with three key focuses:

- Infrastructure
- Inclusion
- Innovation

The aim of this is to create a fully connected, digitally skilled, and innovation-driven county by 2030.

A key part of this is working with SMEs to ensure they are fully utilising digital opportunities to boost their businesses, we will offer them grants and training.

It is vitally important to us that all Gloucestershire's citizens have access to technology and are confident using it.

Read the full strategy here - <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=12173>

### **Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund**

Councillors continue to distribute their Grassroots Neighbourhood funding. It is incredibly exciting to see the positive impacts from this. Examples include –

Cllr Dr Rebecca Trimnell who has endorsed £5000 to Freedom Leisure for a Women's Only Gym at GL1 Leisure Centre.

Cllr Dr Kate Usmar who has endorsed Mystique Twirlers. A volunteer led club Great for confidence, socialising, physical fitness, teamwork and public performance.



Cllr Roger Whyborn has been incredibly busy, endorsing a collection of projects including Read the Book project to help children with reading in Primary Schools, Brizen Youth Centre, Hatherley and Reddings Cricket Club and alterations to Parish Council hall at Up Hatherley.

Cllr Sarah Hands has accepted applications from Longford parish council for the purchase of bike racks, Highnam baby and toddler group and both Down Hatherley and Woodpeckers cricket clubs.



## **Adult Social Care Survey**

We are inviting feedback from residents as part of the national Adult Social Care Survey, which runs annually under the guidance of the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England.

Around 1,439 people in Gloucestershire have been selected at random to take part in the 2025-26 survey. Questionnaires will start arriving by post this week and responses should be returned by 6 March.

The survey plays a vital role in improving services by showing what works well and where changes are needed.

For further information - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-survey/>

## **Royal Visits**

On Wednesday 21 January Her Majesty The Queen met with staff who provide vital care and support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Gloucestershire.

Upon arrival, Her Majesty met privately with a domestic abuse survivor who now works for the service after receiving direct support.

Her Majesty then met with staff and volunteers, who outlined the stages of an individual's journey through GDASS services, from initial contact through to the range of support available to those who have experienced, or are experiencing, domestic abuse.



We were also honoured to have Her Royal Highness Princess Anne officially opening University of Gloucestershire's City Campus.

We're proud to be working with the university to support the wider regeneration of Gloucester's city centre.

## **F40 Campaign**

This month was F40 campaign week fighting for fairer funding for every pupil.

Currently Gloucestershire receives less funding per pupil than many other counties. We're calling on the Government to confirm that upcoming policy reforms will include a real commitment to reinvest in our primary and secondary schools.



The children of Gloucestershire deserve equal funding.

Find out more about the campaign - [https://www.f40.org.uk/campaign-activity/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPoIPhleHRuA2FlbQlXMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeFeCxKb3B8GLNraNapLe0T8jh9riYTAcZbVszGMLF7SQg7US6gCOhEROGnB8\\_aem\\_kgKskBThuvX43XY\\_BR9TCw](https://www.f40.org.uk/campaign-activity/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPoIPhleHRuA2FlbQlXMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeFeCxKb3B8GLNraNapLe0T8jh9riYTAcZbVszGMLF7SQg7US6gCOhEROGnB8_aem_kgKskBThuvX43XY_BR9TCw)

## **Local Foster Carers for Local Children**

Across the county, many children and young people continue to need compassionate and dedicated foster carers—adults who can offer stability, care and security during what can be an incredibly challenging time in their lives.

At Gloucestershire County Council, we remain committed to our principle of 'Local foster carers for local children'.



We welcome foster carers from all walks of life, and with a range of fostering options available, we're confident there's a type of fostering that can fit different lifestyles and circumstances. Every new carer brings us closer to ensuring more children can grow, recover and thrive within their own county.

Find out more - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/childrens-social-work-jobs/foster-with-us/>