

What is Gloucester City Council?

Who are we?

Gloucester City Council (GCC) is one of six district councils within the county of Gloucestershire. GCC is in what is called a 'two tier' system, which means there are two levels of council providing services to residents, businesses and visitors.

Gloucestershire County Council provides services across the whole county, such as schools and looking after our roads, while district councils like GCC take care of services for people living in a smaller area, so that those services can be provided in a way that works best for the residents that live there.



What do we do?

Here are some of the important things we do for people in Gloucester:

- Keeping our City clean, including collecting bins and recycling.
- Looking after our parks and providing places for residents to enjoy sports and other activities.
- Keeping our City safe and attractive by deciding what people can build and what venues and events we should have.
- Helping residents who need our support, including helping them to find housing.
- Working with communities to help them make residents' lives better through lots of different projects.
- Putting on exciting events and running venues like the Museum of Gloucester and The Guildhall.
- Working with lots of different groups and organisations to continuously improve the City and make Gloucester a great place to live.
- Collecting money from residents and businesses to pay for the services we provide – this is called Council Tax.

GCC cannot do all of these things on its own, so it works closely with lots of other organisations, including other councils, the Police, health services, community groups and many more.

What is a Councillor?

Gloucester is split into 18 areas known as 'wards' and every 4 years, 39 Councillors are voted in, or 'elected' by residents to look after those wards.

Some wards have more Councillors than others; this is because they have more people living there. Anyone who wants to help their local community and has some spare time can consider becoming a Councillor, although most people join a group or 'Party' first.

A Councillor's role is to listen to residents and try to improve their lives; this might be by helping them solve problems, getting involved in projects, attending meetings, and making decisions.



How does the council work?

At GCC, the Party with the most Councillors usually takes charge of the Council and forms a 'Cabinet', which includes the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members. Acting together or separately, the Cabinet makes most of the important decisions that affect the work that GCC is going to do and how they are going to do it.

Councillors from other Parties are often called the 'Opposition'. Their role is to question and challenge the Cabinet to make sure they are making the right decisions and they can also get involved in developing new ideas.

Councillors sit on committees that make decisions on different areas of the Council's work. The Planning Committee makes decisions about what can be built in the City, this includes big projects and changes to existing houses if neighbours object. The Licensing and Enforcement Committee makes decisions about venues that provide food, alcohol, entertainment, gaming, as well as taxis and street trading.



What does the Mayor do?

GCC has a Mayor and Sheriff. These are important roles that have been around for many years and, these days, they represent the Council and the City at important events. The Mayor is also in charge of full Council meetings, where all 39 Councillors come together to make the most important decisions, such as deciding how money will be spent and what projects will improve the City.

Unlike Councillors, who are voted in at an election, Officers are employed by the Council to do a wide range of jobs across the services that GCC is responsible for and they make decisions about the day-to-day running of the Council. GCC has around 300 Officers that support Councillors and work directly with residents, communities and businesses to ensure that Gloucester is a great place to live, work and visit.



Does the Council employ people?

Yes. Unlike Councillors, who are voted in at an election, Officers are employed by the Council to do a wide range of jobs across the services that GCC is responsible for and they make decisions about the day-to-day running of the Council. GCC has around 300 Officers that support Councillors and work directly with residents, communities and businesses to ensure that Gloucester is a great place to live, work and visit.

Put very simply, Councillors decide what is best for the City and Officers make it happen.

What are we working on?

GCC does not have a choice over some of the work it does because the law says it has to provide certain services. However, the Council is always trying to improve services, as well as coming up with new ideas to make the City better.

The most important projects and activities that GCC is working on are set out in the Council Plan, which has to be agreed by a majority of the 39 Councillors. Before it is agreed, the residents, businesses and other organisations are asked to give their opinions on the ideas that the Council has put forward to make sure that Councillors and Officers know what is important to the people who live in Gloucester.

The current Council Plan is full of projects aimed at building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester and GCC is very focused on doing everything it can to tackle climate change and make Gloucester a fairer City where everyone has opportunities to succeed.



How can I get involved?

When you turn 16 you can register ready for when you are able to vote at 18, and you also have to be 18 to become a Councillor, however, there are other ways to get involved or learn more about local democracy:

- Write to your local Councillor. You could tell them about an issue that is important to you or ask them to visit your school to tell you about their role. Visit <https://democracy.gloucester.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx> to find your local Councillor.
- Ask your school to arrange a meeting with the Mayor and Sheriff. Your class can visit the civic offices to learn about the history of these historic roles and see some interesting civic artefacts. Contact civics@gloucester.gov.uk to arrange a visit.
- Attend a council meeting. Council meetings are open to the public, so if there is an issue being discussed that is important to you, you can come along. You could even ask a question or submit a petition. Visit <https://democracy.gloucester.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1> to find out about upcoming meetings.