

CORPORATE PLAN 2025-28
‘PUTTING THE HEART BACK INTO GLOUCESTER’

A VIBRANT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY THAT CELEBRATES GLOUCESTER’S UNIQUE HERITAGE

1. Complete our flagship development ‘The Forum’, and continue to drive progress at other key sites, while valuing the city’s history by protecting our heritage assets.

We are committed to progressing the city’s regeneration journey and will oversee the completion of The Forum. This ambitious development will be key to delivering a city centre which reflects the aspirations of a modern, sustainable, diverse Gloucester. The completed Forum, along with our other regeneration projects and development across the city will make Gloucester a destination city, boosting footfall and income for local businesses and ensuring it is a place that residents can be proud of. Our city is rich in history, and we know how important our heritage assets, many of which are of national importance, are to our residents. We will look for new ways to invest in these assets so that we can preserve them and explore exciting opportunities to bring them back to life.

Actions:

- Complete construction on The Forum in accordance with the project plan, ensure income meets expected levels and office occupancy is at least 80%.
- Develop masterplans for key sites, including Greyfriars, the Eastgate Quarter and the Northgate area of the city.
- Bring forward housing development at Whitefriars, St Oswalds, Wessex House, Spread Eagle Court, and investigate opportunities at Colwell School and St. Stephens Church.
- Building on the success of the High Street Heritage Action Zone, explore opportunities to secure further funding to invest in our heritage assets.
- Explore opportunities to provide specialist heritage advice into major regeneration projects including, The Fleece Hotel, the Greyfriars development, and Baker's Quay.
- Work with property owners to encourage use of empty flats above shops for use as accommodation.

2. Deliver a stronger economy, working with stakeholders and partners to create and sustain employment opportunities for local people and attract new workers to the city.

Gloucester is an ambitious city with a growing population. With challenges like climate change, the changing role of the high street and new ways of working following the Covid-19 pandemic, we know that we need to continue to adapt in order to strengthen our economy and create new opportunities in our city. We want to make sure that our city has skilled, high-quality jobs for residents and people living in the wider county, as well as ensuring that graduates choose to stay in Gloucester and our young people have a range of employment options available to them. This, coupled with exciting new prospects at The Forum and the Food Dock, will help us promote Gloucester as a leading small city in the South West.

Actions:

- Determine Gloucestershire Airport’s long-term future and safeguard employment at the site.
- Work with the University of Gloucestershire and other academic institutions to create job opportunities for graduates, as well as increasing apprenticeships within the city and supporting entrepreneurs, business start-ups and the self-employed to grow and be successful in the city.
- Create employment and skills opportunities from new major developments for local residents.
- Support and encourage a vibrant and diverse retail, leisure and cultural presence in the city.
- Open the hotel at the Forum and support occupation of all units at the Food Dock.
- Support the creation of new jobs in the green economy.

3. Establish Gloucester as a vibrant and distinctive cultural centre, celebrate our rich history and promote an exciting programme of unique festivals, events and exhibitions featuring local artists and performers.

Our arts, culture and heritage sectors are already well-established, and we are proud that our city is home to four National Portfolio Organisations as awarded by Arts Council England, but we want to see these sectors continue to grow and reflect our diverse city. Working with the Gloucester Culture Trust and local organisations, we will deliver and promote a cultural offering that provides something for everyone and creates opportunities to celebrate local talent. We will develop unique events that tell the story of Gloucester and showcase our flagship cultural venues to attract more visitors into the city.

Actions:

- Develop a refreshed and diverse festivals and events programme that is inclusive and accessible to local residents and explore the commissioning of a new event to complement existing activity.
- Deliver an events programme in 2027 to commemorate the historical significance of the 700th anniversary of the burial of Edward II and the 200th Anniversary of Gloucester Docks.
- Deliver the Gloucester Guildhall Business Plan and the Museum Development Plan
- Continue to improve the brands, marketing and communications for City Council-run cultural venues and directly delivered Festivals and Events
- Work in partnership with Gloucester Culture Trust and others to ensure that the Cultural Strategy action plan is delivered and a new Strategy is delivered in 2026, maintaining our focus on making culture inclusive and accessible to all local residents, and encouraging and supporting local talent.

4. Strengthen civic pride and make Gloucester an attractive city to live in and visit.

We want Gloucester to be a city enjoyed by all generations; a city where people want to raise a family, and young people feel that they have opportunities and a future. By improving public amenities and making our public spaces more attractive, we will make the experience of living in and visiting Gloucester a better one. We want to showcase Gloucester as a forward-thinking, modern city that celebrates heritage and art, and we want our residents to be proud to live, study and work in the city, and for them to be eager to show it off to visiting friends and family.

Actions:

- Reimagine our approach towards the commissioning and delivery of public art.
- Introduce design standards to protect and enhance the built environment, while also working with owners and occupants to secure improvements to identified buildings.
- Provide quality public amenities for residents and tourists, including improved free public Wi-Fi, more public toilets and investigate the installation of water refill stations.
- Establish a graffiti-busting task force.
- Develop an Enviro-crime Enforcement Policy and Action Plan and reduce reported incidences of fly tipping.

INCLUSIVE, THRIVING COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS THAT FEEL SAFE, SUPPORTED AND VALUED

1. Ensure that all our residents have somewhere to call home by providing more affordable housing, working closely with private and registered social landlords and providing improved support and accommodation to tackle homelessness.

Provision of suitable, affordable, energy efficient housing is one of the UK's biggest challenges and, like many local authorities, we are focused on finding solutions that help local people. We will continue our important work safeguarding households threatened with homelessness and supporting those who find themselves without accommodation, while developing a new long-term strategy that brings together our plans to work with stakeholders to ensure all our residents have suitable housing. We will work with registered social landlords and developers to progress delivery of new housing schemes across the city and pursue other initiatives, such as converting vacant or underutilised properties and using the powers available to us to increase housing supply.

Actions:

- Adopt a new 10-year Housing Strategy.
- Explore through the emerging Strategic and Local Plan, the possibility of increasing the requirement for affordable housing on all new major developments in the city from 20% to 30%.
- Work with partners to support neighbourhood regeneration across the city, including the regeneration of Matson and Podsmead.
- Deliver new council homes and invest in existing council homes, ensuring high energy efficiency standards to reduce running costs and emissions.
- Explore options for the council to deliver social housing, including a social housing development company.
- Secure more funding to tackle homelessness to ensure that good quality support and accommodation is available for those in need.
- Work with property owners to bring empty homes back into use and review the landlord incentive scheme to increase the number of private rented homes available.
- Introduce stronger mechanisms and regulatory powers, such as an Article 4 Direction, to control the proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupation and improve standards in the private rented sector.

2. Prioritise the safety of our residents, working closely with our partners to use available mechanisms to tackle anti-social behaviour across the city and create a safer environment for everyone who lives in and visits Gloucester.

We know that communities are happiest when they feel safe; that's why we work so closely with the many agencies and organisations that are critical to protecting our residents. We want to build on our history of strong and successful partnership working to continue supporting the initiatives that work, in addition to engaging more with our communities to understand the issues that have the greatest impact on them, with the aim of addressing root causes and connecting communities, to drive forward positive change and foster safe and cohesive neighbourhoods. We will also ensure that residents and visitors feel safe to enjoy our vibrant city at night and that our emergency plans are robust and ready to be put into action when needed.

Actions:

- Work with partners and continue to use Public Space Protection Orders to deal with and reduce the incidences of anti-social behaviour and, through the work of Solace, work to reduce its impact on communities.
- Obtain moveable CCTV cameras to tackle fly tipping and anti-social behaviour for use in areas where there are persistent problems.
- Use our powers where possible to require private landlords to remove fly tipping and excessive waste on private land.
- Work with partners and agencies to retain the City's Purple Flag accreditation as part of our commitment to creating a vibrant and safe night-time economy.
- Continue our Safer Spaces hotspot work to improve safety in public spaces in Gloucester, with a particular emphasis on making spaces safer for women and girls.
- Focus on addressing safety of young people, to ensure Gloucester is a safe place for children to grow up in, including working to reduce youth violence and knife crime.
- Ensure the Council is prepared for any civil emergency by maintaining robust plans and systems and working collaboratively with partners.

3. Value our diverse communities and champion the City's essential community groups and voluntary sector by working together to shape the support and services they need.

Our communities are what make Gloucester so special, and we care about the people that live in and lead those communities, but we know that our residents have faced significant challenges in recent years and we want to help by ensuring those most impacted can access available support to continue living healthy and happy lives. All of our objectives are focused on making residents lives better and, to further contribute to this, we will build on and enhance the support we provide to voluntary groups, reflecting our belief that local people have the skills and knowledge to shape the services they need or use, while we continue to look for ways to direct more funding to these essential organisations.

Actions:

- Deliver our Cost of Living Action Plan to support immediate needs, foster long-term resilience and prevent crisis situations.
- Continue to engage with and empower communities, through network support and community events on the issues that matter to them.
- Oversee and grow the Gloucester Lottery, identify new ways to increase funding for VCS organisations and review grant arrangements to better support communities.
- Work in partnership to identify and address key issues that affect local children, young people and young adults.
- Work with voluntary groups to tackle digital exclusion in our communities.
- Continue to work with partners across Gloucestershire to implement the calls to action from the Gloucester Commission on Race Relations.

4. Support and improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents, improving access by enhancing our leisure facilities, and supporting local sports clubs and inclusive community-led initiatives.

Our goal is to improve the health and wellbeing of all Gloucester residents. We want to create opportunities that improve their physical and mental health, promote social connections and build resilience. Access to great facilities and the availability of a diverse range of clubs catering for all abilities are the building blocks; that's why we are investing in our facilities at GL1 and Oxstalls and working with partners to promote the vast benefits of regular involvement in sport and physical

activity and exploring nature. Also integral to this commitment is access to affordable, nutritious food, and we will continue to support inclusive community programmes to achieve this aim. By integrating health-focused initiatives with community-led support and accessible services, we will foster a healthier, more connected, and thriving city.

Actions:

- Provide residents with affordable access to high quality leisure facilities and activity programmes, growing participation and memberships.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure all Gloucester children have the opportunity to learn to swim and participate in foundational activities that promote lifelong engagement with physical activity.
- Work with sports clubs and other partners to identify innovative ways to improve the health and wellbeing of our diverse population, including by encouraging walking and cycling, and promoting the health benefits of exploring nature and open spaces.
- Support the development of the Blackbridge site to provide enhanced facilities and opportunities for residents of all abilities to participate in sport.
- Work with organisations to improve access to affordable, nutritious food, coupled with education on healthy eating.

AN INNOVATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE COUNCIL FOCUSED ON PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE, HIGH-QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

1. Transform and strengthen Council services, prioritising innovation and the generation of commercial income to fund improved delivery and access for all our customers no matter how they choose to contact us.

Openness, transparency and accountability are the pillars of a successful Council, and we will uphold these principles as we continue delivering and transforming services for our customers. We will provide value for money by exploring the most effective way to deliver services and enhance capacity where possible. Innovation is increasingly important to ensuring we can achieve our ambitions across all of our objectives and central to this will be identifying creative ways to generate more income to fund our plans.

Actions:

- Deliver increased income from the council's commercial assets, including its property portfolio.
- Refresh the Council website, focusing on the customer journey to make it more user-friendly.
- Ensure the continuing provision of services for people who are digitally excluded or who have disabilities.
- Tackle the backlog of unaudited accounts, ensuring the Council publishes draft (unaudited) accounts each year by the backstop dates proposed by Government.
- Refresh the Procurement Strategy, ensuring a focus on social value and sustainability, and provide relevant training to Members and Officers.
- Review outsourced services, considering all available options with the aim of providing improved and affordable high-quality services.
- Strengthen our planning enforcement provision to tackle unauthorised development and other breaches.

2. Work with Ubico to continuously look for new ways to improve our waste, recycling, grounds maintenance and street care services and ensure our city looks its best.

We know that our residents are passionate about the services that impact them the most and we are serious about providing quality waste, recycling and streetcare services that meet everyone's expectations. We will prioritise clean and clear streets and footways and raise awareness of how residents and visitors can support us in our efforts to restore pride in our city and show Gloucester at its best. Exploring further enhancements to these key services is important, but we will only introduce changes when the benefits are clear and it is affordable for the Council and residents.

Actions:

- Maintain robust contract compliance of the street cleansing service with KPI's monitored and reported on a monthly basis.
- Provide enhanced autumn leaf and weed clearance from footways.
- Continuously review how recycling services are delivered to ensure environmental priorities and operational enhancements are achieved when it is beneficial to do so.
- Continue to use education and awareness campaigns focused on recycling and encouraging residents and visitors to help keep our streets and open spaces clean.

3. Enhance the city's parks, open spaces and play areas.

The City's open spaces are central to so many of our objectives; whether it's providing safe and attractive parks for residents to be proud of and utilise for sport and recreation, tackling climate

change by improving the biodiversity of our green spaces or attracting visitors to the city through unique new initiatives. Access to nature and quality open spaces is also central to good health and wellbeing. We will focus on improving these invaluable assets to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy and benefit from time spent outdoors in our city.

Actions:

- Retain four Green Flag awards and consider working towards a fifth.
- Employ professional gardeners to oversee the improvement of our public gardens, employing biodiversity-friendly ways of working.
- Plant more trees across the city and improve the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces, promoting projects that increase the city's climate resilience.
- As part of the review of the Open Spaces Strategy, develop a Play Strategy to improve play areas, with specific focus on provision of accessible play equipment, and restoring grass cutting to unadopted land.
- Work with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on the Gloucester Nature Park project, to transform undeveloped land along the River Severn into thriving habitats to tackle environmental issues and provide a new experience for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- Protect and increase the number of allotments where availability of land or funding allow.

4. Establish a zero-carbon Council by 2030 by implementing the Climate Change Strategy.

Our commitment to a zero-carbon Council by 2030 is well-documented and the Climate Change Strategy sets out how we intend to achieve it, while also working towards carbon neutrality across the wider district by 2045. As critical as our plans are, we also know that they are hugely ambitious and cannot be accomplished without collaborating with stakeholders and engaging the people of Gloucester in this mission. This important work also presents exciting opportunities for the city, and we intend to show leadership by taking action to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Actions:

- Install solar panels at GL1 and explore other opportunities to produce renewable energy from Council property.
- Install more EV charging points in Council-owned car parks.
- Explore alternative fuels for the waste and recycling fleet to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council.
- Work with operators to increase the number of zero emission hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- Promote active travel choices that reduce carbon emissions and contribute to wellbeing, by delivering the recommendations of the Green Travel Plan.
- Develop an Asset Management Strategy that supports the Council's carbon reduction ambitions.