

Draft Gloucester City Council Plan 2021-2024

Foreword

This plain text document is for review and reference only, and the final Council Plan will be a professionally designed and illustrated PDF document containing the text featured in this document.

Vision

Building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester

Introduction from the Leader of the Council

Welcome to our Council Plan. This plan sets out our vision and key priorities for ***Building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester*** for everyone who lives, works in, and visits our city. This vision is not something that the council can achieve alone, and the plan sets out how we intend to work with partners and residents over the next three years to shape and achieve the best outcomes for all as we recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the last four years, we have made considerable progress towards achieving the objectives set out in our previous Council Plan and, while the pandemic presented many challenges for our city, we continued to have high expectations and implemented an extension to the Council Plan to focus our efforts on initiatives to support communities and the local economy, without losing sight of our aspirations to make Gloucester a city that works for everyone.

The new Council Plan seeks to continue and build on many of the promises in the last plan, improving the city through our ambitious plans for regeneration and culture, but to do so with a clear focus on two themes: tackling inequalities and taking action on climate change. The pandemic highlighted remarkable resilience within communities that worked together to support each other during challenging times, but we cannot ignore the inequalities that exist within our society. We value diversity and are committed to meeting the evolving needs of our residents and building a fairer and more inclusive city. We also know that every individual has a role to play in protecting our planet for future generations and as an organisation we are committed to ensuring that all our priorities are rooted in sustainability and environmental responsibility, doing all we can to reverse the damaging effects of climate change. These two themes run through each area of the Council Plan, and will guide our efforts as we work towards ***Building a greener, fairer, better Gloucester*** for our residents now, and in the future.

Priority 1

Building greener, healthier, and more inclusive communities

What does this mean?

The health and wellbeing of Gloucester's residents is at the heart of everything we do, and that's why we will tackle health inequalities, advocate for inclusivity, and take action to ensure a greener future for our city. We value diversity and know our communities have many strengths, and we will listen and provide the support residents need to improve their own lives, while continuing to help our most vulnerable residents. With the support of our partner agencies, we will foster resilient, cohesive, environmentally aware neighbourhoods and build on the achievements seen within our communities during the Covid19 pandemic.

Promises

- To ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle, we will tackle food poverty and ensure everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces by working closely with organisations within our communities, leisure providers, and through our role on the Health and Wellbeing Board. We will promote active travel choices that reduce carbon emissions and contribute to physical and mental wellbeing.
- Working closely with the voluntary and community sector, we will engage directly with communities to address the root causes of inequality in our city, and involve residents in improving our services so that they meet the needs of our diverse city. We are committed to building on the work of the council's Equalities Working Group and playing a leading role in the work of the city's Commission to Review Race Relations.
- Empowering our residents and keeping them safe is fundamental to ensuring Gloucester is a city that works for everyone, so we will continue with our Asset Based Community Development approach, working alongside Gloucester Community Building Collective to help communities identify and capitalise on their own strengths. We will keep our streets safe by addressing anti-social behaviour with our partners at Gloucestershire Constabulary and our City Centre Wardens, to stamp out anti-social behaviour from our neighbourhoods and city centre.
- We will work with partners and agencies including our local housing associations to provide more social housing for people on our waiting lists, making the best use of our existing housing and reducing homelessness through effective early intervention. We will do this through liaising with landlords and providers to identify solutions and supporting our most vulnerable residents to stay in their homes wherever possible. We will work towards eradicating rough sleeping and minimise the use of temporary accommodation, ensuring that only good quality, appropriate provision is utilised.
- We recognise that environmental crime has an impact on our residents' enjoyment of their neighbourhoods and green spaces and affects how visitors view Gloucester. We will continue to take a tough stance on fly tipping and littering via our City Wardens and through enforcement action, and we are committed to protecting the environment by reducing incidences of fly tipping across our city and providing our residents with an attractive city that we can all be proud of.

Priority 2

Building a sustainable city of diverse culture and opportunity

What does this mean?

We know that transforming Gloucester into a city that our residents deserve is just as important as ensuring that visitors and investors see our city as a top destination, not only in the South West, but in the country. To secure the future of our city in the post-Covid-19 world we will continue to work with our partners to facilitate innovative and sustainable regeneration across Gloucester, drive the economic recovery to support local businesses, and showcase everything the city has to offer through provision of an inspiring cultural programme that is reflective of our diverse communities.

Promises

- We will work with our partners to ensure the delivery of aspirational and sustainable development schemes that prioritise the protection and improvement of our environment and benefit residents in all our communities, including a vibrant new higher education and digital campus at The Forum, as part of the wider revitalisation of the city centre. We will support regeneration in Matson and Podsmead and work with stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of high-quality, energy efficient new homes in the city.
- We will work with our stakeholders, including Gloucester BID and local businesses, to rebuild the local economy following the Covid-19 pandemic, delivering projects and services intended to secure economic growth that benefits all our residents and protects the environment. Gloucester will be a leading location for knowledge-based jobs and enterprise, and will be a thriving centre for health, service and advanced manufacturing industries.
- We will build on the city's growing reputation as a centre for culture by working in partnership with Gloucester Culture Trust to implement our ambitious integrated Cultural Strategy and put culture at the heart of our regeneration plans. We will enrich the lives of our residents by making culture available and accessible to everyone, catering for all interests with a community-led focus and making the most of Gloucester's unique attributes and talent.
- We will strengthen Gloucester's position as a visitor destination by promoting the city's rich heritage and attractions, while also enabling new creative industries to flourish. The city will be marketed by creating a recognisable brand aimed at attracting a diverse range of high-profile festivals and events, and we will maximise the social and economic impact of these events, while also minimising the environmental impact, to improve outcomes for our communities.
- As Gloucester continues to grow, we will protect and enhance our parks, open spaces and allotments to benefit the environment and future generations. We will deliver our Open Spaces Strategy and work with developers in the city to ensure that provision of green space is fundamental to regeneration, as well as continuing our tree planting programme to further support our commitment to tackling climate change.

Priority 3

Building a socially responsible and empowering Council

What does this mean?

As we work towards achieving our ambitions for a better Gloucester, we remain committed to providing great, accessible services that offer value for money to our residents and doing so in a way that minimises our impact on the environment and promotes inclusion. We know that technology is changing the way people live, work and connect and, through our ongoing digital transformation journey, we will ensure that customers can access more of our services quickly and efficiently online, allowing us to do more with less and focus our resources in a way that enables all communities to thrive.

Promises

- By implementing our Digital Strategy, we will play a leading role in bringing community partners together to make use of developing technologies in ways that benefit all communities equally. We will develop our digital infrastructure, while simultaneously prioritising sustainability, to position Gloucester as an emerging Smart City and promote opportunities to improve access and skills across Gloucester. Internally, we will keep pace with changing preferences and transform the way we work by making more services easily accessible online.
- We will ensure that the council's day-to-day activities generate opportunities for our communities by implementing our Social Value Policy to drive sustainable procurement. We will secure investment in the city to protect the environment and ensure that more people can benefit from regeneration and other council projects. We will ensure that communities in Gloucester's suburbs can benefit from work to improve the city centre and lever opportunities for jobs, skills, environmental improvements and local project investment through this work.
- We understand the importance our residents place on high-quality waste and street care services and we also know the impact these services can have on the environment. We are already working to ensure the smooth transition from our current provider to our new waste partnership, which shares our vision of providing fit-for-purpose, value for money services which can deliver greater environmental benefits to Gloucester's residents, such as increased recycling rates.
- We will consider the environmental implications of all decisions affecting the council and continue work towards achieving a net-zero council carbon footprint by no later than 2030, taking carbon off-setting into account, with initiatives such as installation of remote meters in our properties that provide insight into how our buildings use energy, driving energy-efficiency and lower energy consumption.
- As we implement our vision, we will not compromise on meeting customers' expectations for the services that matter most to them. We will meet agreed response times and maintain high levels of statutory compliance, while prioritising the city and the council's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, including meeting any financial challenges and supporting our most vulnerable residents and local businesses.