

County Councillor Report



Gloucestershire County Council: One Year On A Review of Progress Since the May 2025 Elections

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Introduction

It is now just under a year since the Gloucestershire County Council elections of May 2025, which brought significant political change at Shire Hall. I am pleased to share this short review of progress over the past year and to reflect on what it has meant for communities across my division, and for local councils working most closely with the county council.

The elections resulted in a council with no overall control, with the Liberal Democrats forming a minority administration and Councillor Lisa Spivey appointed as Leader of the Council. This new political balance has shaped how decisions have been made: with greater emphasis on collaboration, scrutiny, and cross-party engagement.

A New Political Context at Shire Hall

Since May 2025, Gloucestershire County Council has operated without a single party holding a majority. This has required a more open and negotiating style of governance, with decisions needing wider support to pass through Council and Cabinet.

One of the first major outcomes of the new administration was the development and adoption of a new Council Strategy for 2025–2029, titled “*A Stronger Future, Built Together*”, formally approved in November 2025. This strategy now underpins the direction of the council’s work and sets out priorities around children and young people, healthy communities, pride in place, and operating as an open and fair council.

From Strategy to Action

Over the past year, the council has moved from setting direction to putting delivery structures in place. In March 2026, Cabinet approved a Council Strategy Action Plan, alongside a performance framework to allow regular public reporting on progress.

This is an important step for transparency. It means that county councillors, town and parish councils, and residents will be able to track how promised priorities are being translated into action, and to hold the administration to account for delivery.

Financial Decisions and Budget Setting

Perhaps the most significant decisions this year have been financial. Gloucestershire County Council approved a £698.4 million budget for 2026/27 in February 2026, representing an increase of over £33 million on the previous year.

Key areas of investment include:

- Roads and highways, with an additional £15 million committed over three years to improving road condition and safety
- Education and SEND, including over £21 million for new special schools and further investment in SEND services
- Adult social care, with funding for new care homes and support for vulnerable adults
- Fire, waste, and recycling services, including upgrades to facilities and equipment

These decisions have been taken in the context of rising demand for services, inflationary pressures, and ongoing uncertainty about future government funding.

Major Projects and Funding Commitments (2025–2026)

Over the past year, Gloucestershire County Council has approved a number of significant projects and funding programmes as part of its budget setting and medium-term planning. While not all of these are located within my division, they shape the overall financial context and service capacity of the council and influence priorities across the county.

Highways and Transport

Highways Investment Programme

- Continued delivery of the council's £100 million, four-year highways investment, with around £10–15 million per year committed to road resurfacing, surface dressing, drainage and safety improvements, including a stronger focus on rural roads and pothole repair.
- Additional £2 million specifically for road safety measures over the next two years, including junction improvements and safety engineering.

Major Transport Infrastructure

- Ongoing investment of £45 million to support infrastructure works around M5 Junction 10, enabling wider housing and employment growth across the county.
- Continued expansion of public transport initiatives, including electric buses, park-and-ride facilities, and demand-responsive services such as The Robin.

Education and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

New Special Schools Programme

- Over £21 million committed to the delivery of new special schools in Gloucester and Cheltenham, increasing the capacity to educate children with SEND closer to home.

SEND Services Investment

- An additional £2.7 million invested in SEND services to help address rising demand and improve support for families.

School Buildings and Expansion

- Over £12 million invested in improving and expanding mainstream school buildings across the county to meet changing need and condition requirements.

Adult Social Care and Health

New Care Homes Programme

- Around £57 million total investment, including £6.5–7.5 million per year, towards the construction of three new adult care homes, increasing local provision and reducing reliance on out-of-county placements.

Ongoing Adult Social Care Support

- Continued use of the Adult Social Care Precept to support services for vulnerable adults, reflecting rising demand and cost pressures across the county.

Environment, Climate and Waste

Household Waste Recycling Centres

- £3.9 million committed over four years to improve and modernise Household Waste Recycling Centres across Gloucestershire.

Climate and Environmental Projects

- Continued funding for tree planting initiatives (including reaching and exceeding 500,000 trees planted) and support for community-led climate projects through grant schemes.

Fire and Emergency Services

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Investment

- £2.5 million for new frontline fire appliances
- £1.5 million for a new training facility
- £1.3 million for improvements to Cinderford Fire Station.

Linking County Investment to Local Priorities

While county-level projects are often large in scale, they directly affect towns and parishes through:

- Road condition, road safety and drainage improvements
- Education sufficiency and SEND provision
- Availability and resilience of adult care services
- Environmental improvements and recycling provision.

I will continue to highlight local priorities within this wider programme of investment and work with town and parish councils to ensure local knowledge informs county-level decision-making wherever possible.