

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 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, Spreadingale Court.
- 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.

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. 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 University of Gloucestershire and other academic institutions to create job opportunities for graduates, as well as 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.

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 exciting 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 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 accessible to all 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 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.
- Build and deliver new council homes.
- 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.

2. Prioritise the safety of our residents and work closely with our partners to use available mechanisms to tackle anti-social behaviour in the city centre and beyond.

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 and drive forward positive changes by introducing new measures where they are needed to foster safe and cohesive communities. 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.
- Through the work of Solace, work to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour on communities.
- 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.
- Ensure the Council is prepared for any civil emergency by maintaining robust plans and systems.

3. Value our diverse communities and support the City's essential community groups and voluntary sector, enabling them to focus on the residents they serve.

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. 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, allowing them to do what they do best in the communities where they have established strong relationships, while we continue to look for ways to direct more funding to these essential organisations.

Actions:

- Continue our commitment to engaging with and empowering communities, through network support and community events.
- Oversee and grow the Gloucester Lottery and identify new ways to increase funding for VCS organisations.
- Review grant arrangements to better support communities.
- Work with voluntary groups to tackle digital exclusion in our communities.

4. Promote sport to improve the physical and mental health of all residents and improve access by enhancing our leisure facilities and supporting local sports clubs.

Participation in physical activity and sport offers vast benefits and we want all our residents to have the opportunity to improve their physical and mental health, improve their self-esteem, socialise and learn new skills. 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 as part of the leisure contract and working with partners and local sports clubs to promote the benefits of regular involvement in sport and physical activity with the aim of increasing participation across the city.

Actions:

- Provide residents with affordable access to high quality leisure facilities and sports activity, growing football & memberships.
- Increase the percentage of adult Gloucester residents participating in physical activity, including participation in disability sport.
- Work with the city's schools to provides opportunities for Gloucester children to learn to swim before they leave school.
- Work with sports clubs and other partners to identify innovative ways to improve the health and wellbeing of our diverse population, including by encouraging and promoting walking and cycling.
- Support the development of the Blackbridge site to provide enhanced facilities and opportunities for residents of all abilities to participate in sport.

AN INNOVATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE COUNCIL FOCUSED ON PROVIDING 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.
- 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, review Contract Rules 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 streetcare 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 to restore pride in our city and show visitors 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 and deliver enhancements when it is beneficial to do so.

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. 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.
- Plant more trees across the city and improve the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces.
- 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 Gloucester 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.

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.
- 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.