

County Councillor Report for October 2026

Please contact me any time on:

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And please report any Highways defects via the Fix My Street app or

<https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>

For parish councillors & clerk use only via highwayscouncillors@gloucestershire.gov.uk – feel free to copy me in.

County News

LGR update

In early September, the Government announced that it is pausing and reviewing previous decisions relating to local government reorganisation in several areas, including Gloucestershire. This follows the withdrawal of earlier LGR decisions in Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. As a result, the future structure of local government in Gloucestershire remains uncertain while the review is undertaken.

The Government's review has not yet started and there is no confirmed timetable for when it will conclude but councils have been advised to plan for local elections in May 2027, based on the existing, district and borough council arrangements. In Gloucestershire, this would mean local elections for Cotswold District, Forest of Dean District and Tewkesbury District councils.

The seven councils in Gloucestershire are continuing to work together and we are expecting more information after the government recess, in the week commencing 12th October 2026.

Electrical Safety Fund

Applications for our Electrical Safety Fund are now open, with £1 million available to support projects which protect people from electrical harm.

Eligible organisations can apply for grants of up to £10,000 to deliver projects that:

- Improve electrical safety education
- Remove, repair or replace unsafe electrical products
- Address electrical installation safety issues
- Raise awareness of electrical safety risks and how people can stay safe

The Fund is designed to support organisations working with people who may be at greater risk of electrical harm, including those affected by the cost of living, rising energy costs, poor housing, age, disability, or other factors that increase vulnerability.

Who can apply?

Applications are open to:

- Charities
- Public bodies, such as Fire and Rescue Services or Trading Standards
- Other registered not-for-profit organisations

Projects should primarily benefit individuals and communities particularly vulnerable to electrical risk and injury.

Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund

The scheme is now entering its final six months. Please note the following deadlines:

- **Friday 15 January 2027** – closing date for projects to submit new pre-applications for Cllr endorsement.
- **Monday 1 February 2027** – final date for Cllr endorsement of pre-applications.
- **Monday 15 March 2027** – closing date for projects to submit full applications.

Applications received after these dates cannot be considered.

Organisations invited to submit a full application must be able to show that they are ready to deliver their project, including having the necessary permissions, or other supporting evidence in place.

Help for the Elderly Update

In 2025 Age UK Gloucestershire identified £1.3m in benefits for older people with 278 Attendance Allowance (AA) applications completed. The process of claiming is lengthy, difficult and overwhelming for applicants. Our Help Team report that many require more than four hours of support to complete a 32-page, 63-question AA application form, with payments or a response from the DWP taking as long as 12 weeks.

DWP figures show that 18,446 claims are in payment in Gloucestershire.

A Policy in Practice report suggests that nationally 31.4% of those eligible for AA do not claim. This indicates that 8,267 people in Gloucestershire eligible for AA do not claim.

The average award in Gloucestershire is £94.49 per week. This represents £40.7m per annum of unclaimed AA in Gloucestershire.

Parish Councils help in identifying and helping these residents would be appreciated.

Spatial Development Strategy

This will be looking at future housing and transport development across Gloucestershire. There will be an initial consultation period during November. This will be very important for all residents as it is asking residents how they want to see Gloucestershire developing over the next 20 years.

Businesses invited to strengthen cyber resilience and embrace new opportunities at Gloucestershire Tech Week

Gloucestershire Tech week runs from Monday 12th October to Friday 16th October and the full programme, which includes a keynote speech from the Leader of Gloucestershire County Council, can be found here [Gloucestershire Tech Week - October 12th-16th, 2026](#)

Libraries host new seated exercise sessions

Gloucestershire Libraries have partnered with Cheltenham Town Community Trust to host weekly sessions designed to help people improve their strength, balance and mobility in a friendly and supportive environment. Sessions include Stroud Library on Wednesdays, 10am to 10.45am and Oakley Interactive Space on Fridays, 12.30pm to 1.15pm

New strategy to create more SEND places and support closer to home

The new SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2026-2031 sets out how the council will plan and expand special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision over the next five years for children and young people aged 0 to 25. The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Gloucestershire has increased significantly in recent years, with demand expected to continue to rise. As of January 2026, there were 7,521 children and young people with an EHCP in Gloucestershire, compared with 4,854 in 2022. While the strategy is a welcome acknowledgement of the growing pressures facing SEND children, young people and their families in Gloucestershire, the real test will be whether future budgets provide the resources needed to deliver the additional places promised.

Cabinet members write to Rail Minister requesting improved rail services between Gloucestershire and South Wales

During a recent review of transport connectivity and economic growth within the Forest of Dean, members discussed the strategic importance of reliable and frequent rail services linking local communities with employment, education and economic opportunities in South Wales and beyond. This prompted a letter to the rail minister requesting information on planned service enhancements, feasibility work or future opportunities to improve rail connectivity.

[Family Hubs network helping more Gloucestershire families receive support](#)

One year after launching its Family Hubs Network, Gloucestershire County Council is celebrating significant growth in the number of families receiving support locally and online, as plans to further expand support for families with children take shape. The Hubs aim to bring together family support, health, education and community services, to ensure families can access the right help, at the right time, in the right place. Building on the success of Gloucestershire's Family Hubs Network, the council is expanding support for families through the government's Best Start programme, with plans to establish a Best Start Family Hub in every district over the next three years. The first of these was launched at Bartongate, Gloucester this month: [Gloucestershire celebrates launch of county's first Best Start Family Hub | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

[Continued support for unpaid carers across Gloucestershire](#)

Gloucestershire County Council has awarded a new five-year contract to deliver services for unpaid adult carers. Following a competitive procurement process, PeoplePlus, locally known as Gloucestershire Carers Hub, will continue supporting unpaid carers across the county, having done so for more than seven years. Practical and emotional support to unpaid carers at every stage of their caring journey, including information and advice, personalised support and emergency planning.

[Applications open for grants supporting community projects across Gloucestershire](#)

Community and voluntary organisations across Gloucestershire are being invited to apply for funding through Gloucestershire County Council's Thriving Communities Grant scheme. The scheme supports activities that help adults stay well, connected and independent, while reducing isolation and strengthening local communities. Applications are now open and close on 16 October.

For full eligibility criteria and details about how to apply, visit: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/thriving-communities-grants

[Changes to adult social care services](#)

During the summer, Gloucestershire County Council's earlier decision to transfer its reablement service to independent providers prompted strong opposition from some staff and their trade unions, who feared impacts on pay, job security, staff retention and continuity of care. The dispute led to protests, scrutiny committee involvement and threatened strike action, with councillors calling for greater transparency and consultation before the transfer proceeded. Agreements with staff were reached however and the services changes were implemented as planned on 1st September. The situation prompted the Green County Councillors to prepare a motion for full council, calling for increased scrutiny of all outsourcing proposals.

GCC Meetings

September saw Council meetings resume after a summer break, with full Council, Cabinet and a range of scrutiny committees meeting this month. The dates of upcoming meetings can be found here: [Monthly meetings calendar - October 2026](#)

Full Council

Full Council met for both an Extraordinary meeting and a planned Full Council meeting on 16th September.

The Extraordinary meeting was called to debate a motion that related to changes to the Council's Reablement Service (see [Changes to adult social care](#) services above) which largely duplicated discussions and actions of the Adult Social Care & Communities Scrutiny Committee. The motion to scrutinise the service changes was quickly passed.

The extraordinary meeting was followed by a Full Council meeting which dealt with regular items including reports from the cabinet and questions from councillors / members of the public, before debating two motions that were both passed.

Motion 1 (carried)

The first motion (drafted before the LGR pause) called on the Council to ensure that local government reorganisation protects Gloucestershire's diverse communities by recognising their different needs, identities and priorities, and by strengthening local democracy and community influence.

Motion 2 (carried)

The second motion proposed creating a county-wide road safety education programme that supports children and young people from early years through to adulthood.

Cabinet

GCC Cabinet met on the 23rd September and covered a long agenda. At the meeting, cabinet members made the following decisions:

Cabinet decision	What does this mean?
Approved Council Strategy Action Plan Update and Q1 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Confirms the council's financial position, performance against priorities, and key risks. The report highlighted budget pressures, noted a forecast revenue overspend of approximately £2.4m, and presented a financial strategy to address this (e.g. limiting non-essential spend across all areas).
Approved the Draft Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP), Rail Strategy and Active Travel Strategy	Launches the next stage of transport planning to 2043. This influences future investment in buses, rail, walking, cycling, road schemes, and decarbonisation measures across the county. The Plan will be subject to a public consultation between 1 October and 15 November, with a final LTP being considered by cabinet and full council in early 2027.
Approved the Gloucestershire Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP)	Provides a programme for delivering transport improvements between 2026-2030 (i.e. the implementation plan that sits beneath the Local Transport Plan). Its submission to the Department for Transport was delegated to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members. The decision commits £250 million budget to specific Highways schemes.
Approved the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report	The report assesses whether enough childcare places are available and identifies gaps that may require intervention or investment. Overall, Gloucestershire has enough childcare places and quality is strong but the report highlights persistent challenges around SEND inclusion, workforce shortages, provider financial viability, and inequalities affecting disadvantaged children and communities.
Approved the SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2026-2031 and Delivery Plan	Sets the direction for increasing SEND provision in Gloucestershire, with positive steps to increase local SEND provision, reduce long journeys and improve inclusion. However, it is primarily a capacity-expansion strategy rather than a transformation strategy, with little emphasis on broader

Cabinet decision	What does this mean?
	wellbeing outcomes. Delivery depends on capital investment, school cooperation and national SEND reforms that remain uncertain.
Approved a new contract for Adoption West	This decision extends the Adoption West contract term for an initial three years from April 2027, with two further two-year extension options. This ensures continuity of regional adoption services and support for children awaiting adoption and adoptive families.
Approved the procurement of a support provider for Supported Accommodation at Trevone House	The decision enables the Director of Children's Services to conduct a procurement process to secure support services for vulnerable young people transitioning towards independence.
Approved the Gloucestershire WorkWell Programme	The Gloucestershire WorkWell Programme is a government-funded employment and health support programme designed to help people with health conditions, disabilities or other barriers to employment stay in work, return to work, or move into work. The decision allows the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to enter into a funding agreement and manage the programme's delivery.
Approved the Future Community and Accommodation-Based Support (CABS) Service Model	Reshapes housing-related support services for vulnerable adults, affecting future commissioning, accommodation provision, and support pathways. The approach focuses on stronger early intervention and resettlement support and more targeted accommodation-based support. The Cabinet also approved a two-month extension to current CABS contracts to ensure service continuity.
Approved the Expert by Experience-led Quality Assurance Programme for Adult Services	Gives people with lived experience a formal role in monitoring and improving commissioned health and social care services. The decision authorises a competitive procurement process for a contract of 3 years from April 2027 with the possibility of a further 2 year extension.
Approved a Jointly commissioned service for women experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage	The service will improve support for women facing overlapping issues such as homelessness, mental health challenges, substance misuse, and domestic abuse. The decision enables Council to enter into a funding agreement with NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, and procure a service initially for two years from April 2027, with the option to extend for a further two years.
Approved the replacement of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)	The decision to replace 15 wheelchair accessible vehicles for Adults and Children's Services maintains safe and reliable transport for disabled children and adults who rely on council-supported travel.
Approved an extension to the Garden Waste Composting Contracts	Cabinet exercised a three-year extension option for contracts with three suppliers, to ensure continued processing of garden waste collected across the county and avoid disruption to recycling services.
Approved a Rural Strategic Estate Plan refresh and an update on the Rural Task & Finish Group	The strategy influences how the council manages rural land and property assets, with implications for farming tenants, biodiversity, nature recovery, and rural communities. The green group were disappointed at the inclusion of plans to "rationalise" the rural estate and formally questioned the sale of county farms, given all their societal, nature and environmental benefits.

Cabinet decision	What does this mean?
Children & Families Capital Programme update	The decision approved changes to the capital programme including adding £0.15 million of S106 contributions to a capital project at All Saints Academy (Cheltenham) and steps to implement projects that support mainstream inclusion in line with the Council's SEND Reform Implementation Plan. New cost pressures associated with the development of the Sandfield Academy site were also noted and work is underway to establish the level of additional funding that may be required to deliver this special school.
Approved agency supply of temporary and permanent staff	The council's current neutral vendor contract, for agency and permanent staffing, expires on 4 December 2027. This decision establishes similar arrangements for recruiting agency and temporary workers beyond this date.
Approved the procurement of Breathing Apparatus for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service	Replaces or upgrades critical firefighter safety equipment that is reaching the end of its operational life, improving operational resilience and complying with safety standards. The new call-off contract will commence in July 2027 and run for an initial term of 10 years.
Approved the Schedule of Proposed Disposals	Allows the council to progress sales or disposal of selected assets, potentially generating capital receipts. The assets concerned were declared surplus by cabinet in March 2026.

More information on each decision can be found [here](#) with a full recording of the meeting [here](#).

Scrutiny and Committee meetings held in September

Environment Scrutiny Committee 02/09/26

Members scrutinised the county's preparations for winter highway maintenance, progress on the Minerals and Waste Plan, and received updates from the Executive Director.

Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee 10/09/26

The Committee focused on the performance and future direction of children's services in Gloucestershire. Members reviewed progress against inspection recommendations, considered proposals for the regionalisation of care, and received updates on the implementation of SEND reforms and actions arising from recent SEND inspections.

Gloucestershire Police & Crime Panel 11/09/26

Panel members reviewed the Words Matters Policy, considered work being undertaken through the Combatting Drugs Partnership, and discussed proposals for a Community Engagement Strategy aimed at strengthening relationships between policing bodies and local communities.

Adult Social Care & Communities Scrutiny Committee 15/09/26

Members received an update on work to enable healthier lifestyles, including performance of the Adults' Healthy Lifestyles Service, progress in key areas of improvement, and the development of the Gloucestershire Tobacco Control Strategy (2026-2031) and Gloucestershire Healthy Weight Strategy (2026-2036). The committee also reviewed first quarter performance information for adult social care and communities services, considered broader updates on the delivery of adult social care and public health services. A closed session to discuss recent service changes to Adult Social Care services also took place.

Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Committee 18/09/26

Members received an update on the outcome of the Independent Review, considered progress on the development of the new GFRS Training Facility, and reviewed first quarter 2026/27 community safety performance data and strategic risk information.

Audit & Governance Committee 24/09/26

Members considered reports from KPMG on the council's audit findings and annual auditor's report, reviewed and approved the Annual Governance Statement, and scrutinised the Statement of Accounts 2025/26, including the Gloucestershire Pension Fund accounts. The committee also examined the council's performance in handling complaints escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, received the Data Protection Officer Annual Report, reviewed treasury management and internal audit activity, considered the draft internal audit plan for the remainder of 2026/27, and noted the annual health and safety report.

Gloucestershire Economy, Climate Change and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee 25/09/26

This was the first of a re-structured scrutiny committee (formally Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee, with Environment sitting in with Highways). Members scrutinised the proposed GCC Food and Farming Strategy ahead of its consideration by Cabinet, reviewed the delivery and investment plan for the Digital Infrastructure, Inclusion and Innovation Strategy, and provided feedback on stakeholder engagement plans for the emerging Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

Full recordings of all meetings can be found [here](#).

Some useful links

[Grass cutting schedules](#)

[Gully emptying schedule](#)

[Map of upcoming roadworks](#)

Greener Gloucestershire

Heat pumps

[Visit a Heat Pump](#) is a free service from the charity Nesta that connects you with people near you who already have one. Hear what it's actually like to live with, see and hear the unit for yourself, and ask an owner anything.

Find one near you at visitaheatpump.com

Halloween Costume Swaps

Gloucestershire Libraries are running their annual Halloween Costume Swap again this autumn. It's an opportunity to donate any costumes you no longer need, swap them for something different, or simply pick up a new outfit to take home. All county libraries are now accepting costume donations until the end of October, so it's the perfect time to have a clear out and give someone else the chance to dress up this Halloween. Child and adult costumes are gratefully accepted, including accessories. If you're on the hunt for something to wear this year, costumes rails will go up in libraries between 5 - 31 October, during library opening hours. All are welcome to take a costume home, even if you don't have one to swap.

Visit to Archaeological Research Services (ARS) Site

Residents are being invited to step back in time and explore remarkable archaeological discoveries uncovered as part of the pre-construction work on the M5 Junction 10 Scheme.

Archaeological Research Services (ARS) are hosting an archaeology open day on Thursday 15 October from 10am – 3.30pm, offering visitors the opportunity to meet archaeologists, view artefacts recovered from the site and learn more about the area's rich history.

Archaeological investigations carried out to date have uncovered evidence of a previously hidden landscape dating back to the Late Iron Age and Romano-British periods, providing new insights into the lives of people who lived in the area thousands of years ago.

The open day will give visitors the chance to:

- Discover the latest archaeological findings from the excavations.
- View genuine artefacts recovered from the site.
- Meet the archaeologists carrying out the work and learn about excavation techniques.
- Find out how specialist technologies, including drone and geophysical survey equipment, are being used to investigate the past.
- Ask questions and learn more about archaeology and the discoveries made during the scheme.

Davis Strubergs, Senior Archaeologist at Archaeological Research Services, said: "The M5 excavations have revealed a hidden landscape from early prehistory through to the Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods, buried below the fields at Uckington. We're looking forward to welcoming visitors on the day and sharing some of the amazing finds that are re-telling the story of the early people of Cheltenham."

Due to limited parking and site safety requirements, places must be booked in advance. A registration link is available on the scheme webpage at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J10. Bookings will remain open until all available spaces have been allocated. Only visitors with a confirming booking will be admitted on the day.