

Meeting the Challenge

**Gloucestershire County Council's
Strategy 2011-2015**

(2014/15 update)

Contents

	Page
Foreword by the Leader and the Chief Executive	3
Our Vision and Values	5
Our Funding	7
Getting Our Own House In Order	8
Protecting Vulnerable People	9
Supporting Active Communities	10
Building a Sustainable County	11
Appendix: How we will measure our performance	12

Foreword by the Leader and the Chief Executive

In April 2011, we launched a new Council Strategy and embarked on an ambitious four-year programme of change. It was based on extensive consultation with the public. This programme was designed to transform the way the Council works by generating around £114m in savings, reducing management and other running costs and focussing our front-line services on protecting the most vulnerable people, supporting active communities and building a sustainable county. This was our response to the significant financial challenges facing the public sector and our contribution to the coalition government's commitment to dramatically reducing the nation's debt.

As we approach the final year of our four-year strategy, the Council is continuing making great progress towards the goals we set ourselves. Across the range of Council Services, we have challenged ourselves to find better, more efficient ways of securing the outcomes that local people want at a price we can afford. In areas like youth services, bus services and highways we are taking a radically different approach to the way that our services are provided, by working together with local communities, by joining with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Where we have had to reduce levels of service, we have supported communities to step forward and take a greater role while keeping our focus on protecting services for the most vulnerable people and focussing on the things that matter most to local people.

By March 2014 we will have saved £95m against our target, and we remain on track to achieve our four-year target of £114m by the end of 2014/15. This is allowing us to freeze Council Tax for the fourth year running.

At the same time as delivering the Council's share of public sector savings, we have invested in economic recovery through our Grow Gloucestershire programme. This significant investment in the county's future is helping young people develop the right skills to get jobs, keeping talent within Gloucestershire by helping first time buyers get on the housing ladder and improving the county's infrastructure from roads to broadband.

Over the past year, we have taken on responsibility for Public Health and have begun the process of integrating our new responsibilities and teams into the mainstream of how the Council works.

Following the County Council elections in May 2013, no single party has an overall majority on the Council. The Conservative Group have formed a minority administration. As a result, we are finding ways of working collaboratively across all political groups in the interests of local people and communities.

In October 2013, we invited a team of peer experts from the wider Local Government family to give us an independent health check and review and challenge the way the Council works. The team was very positive about the way that the Council is

addressing the challenges faced by the public sector and about our prospects for the future. They found that:

- we have a well run council, with strong leadership at Member and Officer level
- we are managing the financial challenges we face effectively, and that we are developing robust plans to handle the future budget gap
- we have developed an ambitious and forward-looking new 'commissioning' model that is based on sensible and achievable outcomes, and is delivering savings.

The also made some advice for the future, recommending that we should:

- continue developing the innovative 'commissioning' model we have created, and make sure it is embedded across all areas of our organisation
- work ever closer with our partners, and maximise the opportunity to share best practice and get them involved as early as possible when developing and designing our services
- keep focused on addressing the financial challenges still to come.

We expect these financial challenges to continue into the future, and while some of the decisions we will have to take may be difficult, we know that the Council is in good shape to address those future challenges.

We continue to be extremely grateful for the way that local people, communities and partners have engaged with us to shape this Council strategy and are committed to continuing to work together with you to deliver the outcomes that matter most to local people.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Leader

Peter Bungard
Chief Executive

Our Vision and Values

Our vision is to use the resources available to us to improve quality of life for Gloucestershire people.

Our plans are built on 3 clear values that underpin our direction and decision-making. These values will make sure that the Council remains flexible and responsive to local people's needs and expectations.

Living within our means

We believe that it's wrong to spend more than we can afford or to pass financial problems on to the next generation. This means we have to make difficult decisions now and focus on our priorities, manage our budgets and reduce our borrowing. We will do that by:

- Being as efficient as possible and saving money by joining up with our partners
- Making tough but necessary choices about the services we provide and taking responsibility for those choices
- Implementing cuts in government grants locally – where government has had to cut or redirect funding streams for specific services, we will not be able to afford to subsidise those services locally
- Reducing our debt and the burden it places on our revenue finances

Providing the basics

The amount of money we have to spend continues to reduce in real terms, so we have to make sure we spend it where the need is greatest. Our role is to make sure local people get good outcomes from their services and we understand that it is the quality of the service that matters to local people, not who provides it. Our focus is on:

- Improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Providing the infrastructure and services that keep the county moving and working
- Making decisions that promote long-term sustainability or prevent people needing even more support from the Council in the longer term

- Finding the best, most efficient way of delivering services which satisfy customers. If someone else can do a better job or make the money go further, then we should make use of their skill and expertise.

Helping communities help themselves

The Council is at its most effective when it is helping people to live successful lives as independently as possible and helping communities to help themselves. We believe that if you give power to local people you get better results and achieve better value. Our approach will be to:

- Give individuals more say about the services they receive and the support they receive
- Empower communities to do more themselves and giving them the tools they need for community action
- Recognise that some areas need more help than others and that, with a little support, they can get their ideas off the ground
- Support the transfer of buildings and other assets to community ownership so that they can become a hub for local activity - flexible and responsive to local needs.

Our Funding

This strategy is all about how we make a difference for local communities with the available funding.

The funding which the Council receives from Central Government has reduced dramatically in recent years. There have been reductions both in our general funding and in grants for specific services, projects and initiatives and we expect that trend to continue into the foreseeable future.

Despite this, the Council has avoided passing the cost of these reductions on to local people and for the fourth year running the Council will be freezing Council Tax for local residents.

Other specific factors affecting the Council's funding include the following:

- Last year, responsibility for public health transferred to the County Council from the NHS, along with a ring-fenced grant. This funding remains ring-fenced for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and we are reviewing how Public Health funding can help to deliver our priorities
- We will also receive additional funding of £2.5m for adult social care to reduce the demand on acute hospital care, in recognition of the particular demand facing health and social care services.

Getting Our Own House in Order

Every pound spent on running the council is a pound that is not spent on front-line services. There is a cost associated with running any council but we will continue to minimise and reduce that cost, doing everything we can to be as efficient as possible and get the best value from our assets.

Since launching our strategy, we have fundamentally reviewed the way the Council operates, doing away with service directorates while focusing the Council on its core job of securing good outcomes for local people based on sound evidence of local people's needs. We have used this restructure to reduce senior management costs by a third and to strip out bureaucracy.

We continue to seek opportunities to share services with other public sector partners, whether that means buying-in services at better cost than we can deliver them ourselves, or generating income or reducing costs by providing services for others.

Although we have reduced the number of staff employed by the Council, we will continue to develop our workforce to be skilled and productive so that they can respond effectively to local needs. We will use technology as a key, both to reduce the back-office support needed by managers, and to help customers access our services more easily online.

As our workforce gets smaller, we are also freeing up buildings and equipment to reduce running costs and our debt.

By doing all of this, we believe we can continue to make Gloucestershire County Council not only leaner and more focussed but also more effective and responsive to local people's needs.

In this final year of our strategy, we will:

- **Continue to rationalise our property estate** in order to generate £45m capital receipts.
- **Focus on the customer** by making sure that our customers can contact the Council more easily and more efficiently and introducing a new council-wide system for capturing and learning from customer comments, compliments and complaints.
- **Carry out a council-wide review of transport** in order to generate savings of £0.5m across Council departments.
- **Let a new ICT contract** focussed on supporting the Council to drive change and improvement across its services.
- **Establish a commercial unit** in order to further develop expertise at letting, negotiating and managing its contracts.

Protecting Vulnerable People

Protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults is one of our most important areas of work. It accounts for a large proportion of our budget and we know that local people support our view that this should be our top priority. However, we also know that often the best outcomes come from helping people find the support they need within their wider communities.

Our strategy has focussed on providing, wherever possible, short-term support that helps people to regain their independence and confidence. We also give people more choice about the support they receive. This is helping us to divert or delay people from needing long term support as well as helping those receiving care to make good choices about what support they receive.

We have improved the way we respond to children and young people who are at risk and focussed our support on those young people who are most at risk. We are speeding up the adoption process and have increased the number of young people who are successfully matched with an adoptive family. At the same time we have encouraged district, parish and town councils, voluntary organisations and community groups to provide positive community activities for young people.

Across all ages, we are encouraging closer working at a local level between different professionals and better integration of services with partners to improve the experience of service users.

In this final year of our strategy, we will:

- **Continue to transform social care**, focussing on providing short term support to maximise people's independence, and giving people choice over the services they receive.
- **Consolidate the improvements we have made to services for vulnerable children**, making sure that children are supported by skilled workers and effective plans that focus on achieving permanency.
- **Continue to roll out our Families First programme**, providing flexible, focussed support to families with the highest levels of need, helping parents into employment, children and young people back into school and reducing disruptive behaviour.
- **Target funding for housing-based support on people rather than buildings** and developing more flexible models of locality-based support.
- **Improve the quality of life of those people who have dementia** by helping to develop dementia-friendly communities.
- **Renegotiate contracts with providers** in order to ensure value for money.

Supporting Active Communities

Since the launch of this strategy, we have seen communities from all parts of the County doing more to help themselves and taking more control over local services like schools, libraries and youth centres. We want to continue to do what we can to support and develop active communities. Our commitment remains that where we step away from a service, we'll create the opportunity for communities to step forward.

In particular, we recognise that active supportive communities can help vulnerable people to remain within their own homes and avoid or delay the need for social care. By working in partnership with the Barnwood Trust in Gloucester and through our Total Place pilot in Stroud, we are exploring ways in which Asset Based Community Development can help to create supportive community networks that help vulnerable people stay connected with their communities.

That is why we have developed a range of initiatives that put power into local hands, including provided £600k in local grants for community buildings, provided Councillors with a Highways Local budget, secured a range of locality-based support and services for families through the re-tendering of our Children's Centre contract and transferred a number of council buildings to community ownership.

In this final year of our strategy, we will:

- **Launch a quarter of a million pound 'Youth Local' scheme** that will encourage County Councillors and local community groups to work together to increase sporting, social and cultural activities for young people.
- **Encourage communities to promote healthy lifestyles** through a range of initiatives including our schools-based Health Living and Learning programme, our Healthy Living Pharmacy programme and health trainers programme .
- **Explore ways of joining up a range of council services** through a single, local, 'shop front' within communities.
- **Consult on and refresh our Integrated Risk Management Plan** for the Fire & Rescue Service.

Building a Sustainable County

The financial challenges have meant that we have had to find significant savings, but we are committed to doing this in a way that avoids creating problems for future generations. We have prioritised those services that keep the county running, that make Gloucestershire an attractive place to do business, and that directly protect the public from harm.

Working with local business through our Local Enterprise Partnership, the Council's Grow Gloucestershire programme is promoting economic growth through an innovative economic stimulus programme attracting investment into critical infrastructure, major transport schemes, work based skills and the housing market.

Our strategy has seen us completely redesign our bus network, generating savings of £2m while making sure that people can still access essential services, investing significant amounts of money into building our resilience to flooding and setting up a Joint Waste Committee with District Council partners that will help us to progress towards our long-term recycling targets.

In this final year of our strategy, we will:

- **Continue to work with our Local Enterprise Partnership** to address the infrastructure constraints to economic growth through the government's Growing Places Fund.
- **Promote the vital importance of addressing the A417 'Missing Link' and campaign for the A417 Loop to be included in the Highway Agency's major scheme development programme.** Other major transport infrastructure improvements include the delivery of Cinderford Spine Road, the development of Elmbridge Park and Ride and junction capacity improvements.
- **Continue to promote apprenticeships** both within the County Council and with local employers.
- **Continue the roll out of superfast broadband** across rural communities.
- **Continue to reduce waste, recycle more and move away from landfill** with the aim of achieving recycling rates of 70%, which would put Gloucestershire amongst the highest recycling rates in Europe
- **Move towards a carbon-neutral position across our estate** by maximising income from the generation of renewable energy from our property assets.

Appendix: How we will measure our performance

As part of our New Operating Model, the Council is introducing an Outcomes Framework that sets out our intent and aspiration for local people. The Council's balanced scorecard has been aligned to this framework to help us to track and manage the performance of the Council at a strategic level.

Outcome 1: Vulnerable children and adults are safe from injury exploitation and harm	
Youth support	Rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 (NI111)
	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system (NI19)
Children in Care	Average weekly cost of internal & external foster and residential placements
	Looked After Children reviewed within required timescale (NI66)
	Number of looked after children with three or more placements during the year (NI62)
	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement (NI63)
Children's Social Care	Percentage of initial assessments carried out within ten working days of referral
	Average spend per child receiving commissioned services/goods through Budget Holding Lead Professional
Safeguarding	Number of children on a Child Protection Plan for two years or more
	Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time (NI65)
	Number of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan (rate per 10,000)
Outcome 2: People with a disability or limiting long-term illness live as independently as possible	
Adult Social Care	Percentage of social care clients receiving Self Directed Support
	Percentage of Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information (NI135)
	Unit cost of all Adult Social Care services
Outcome 3: People live healthy lives as free as possible from disability or limiting long-term illness	
Adult Social Care	The number of adults of all ages receiving preventative/enablement services in the community funded by Adult Social Care
Public Health	The percentage of pregnant women smoking at the time of delivery
	The number of smokers quit at 4 weeks
	The percentage of eligible patients offered a NHS health check
	The number of drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not then re-present to treatment again within six months as a proportion of the total number in treatment (aged 18 and over)

Outcome 4: People and communities are active and resilient	
Fire & Rescue	Number of accidental dwelling fires
	Number of deliberate dwelling fires
	Net revenue cost of fire service per head of population
Trading Standards	Cost of service per enquiry / request
Registration	Cost of Registration Service per registration
Coroners	Cost per Coroners Service per head of population
Libraries & Information	Number of unique users
	Cost per user
Highways	Number of potholes and road defects repaired
	Cost of structural maintenance per km
	Principal road condition (NI168)
	Non-principal road condition (NI169)
	Unclassified road condition (BVPI224b)
Road Safety	Number of killed and seriously injured people
	Number of killed and seriously injured children
Floods	Percentage delivery of the gully emptying programme
Outcome 5: People can access education, training, work and essential services	
Public Transport	Number of bus services in receipt of subsidy
	Number of community transport journeys
	Cost per journey (community transport journeys)
	Average cost of five most expensive rural subsidised bus journeys/head
	Average cost of five most expensive urban subsidised bus journeys/head

Outcome 6: Young people reach adulthood with the skills and self-confidence they need to make a positive contribution to the economy of the County	
Outcome 7: Vulnerable children and young people have the basic skills and support they need to live successful lives	
Youth support	Number & percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
Children in Care	Looked after children achieving five A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths) (NI101)
	Care leavers in suitable accommodation 2 years after leaving care (NI147)
	Care leavers in education, employment or training two years after leaving care (NI148)
Home to School Transport	Number of pupils entitled to school transport
	Average cost of home to school transport per pupil (by category - SEN, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools; and total average daily cost)
Lifelong learning	Total number of learners
Outcome 8: Gloucestershire and its communities are attractive places to live, work and invest, now and in the future	
Climate Change	Renewable Energy Generation from the Council Estate (kWh and percentage of total energy consumption)
	Council Carbon Emissions, buildings & transport (inc schools) (tonnes of CO2)
Waste	Overall residual waste arisings (except household recycling centres)
	Residual household waste per household (NI 191)
	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (NI 192)
	Percentage of municipal waste landfilled (NI 193)
	Average cost to dispose of 1 tonne residual waste
Outcome 9: Good value for money for local citizens	
Human Resources	Total number of staff/headcount FTE exc. schools/fire
	Days lost to sickness per FTE (exc. schools)
Finance	Forecast Year End Budget Outturn
	Total in year savings delivered through Meeting the Challenge
Property	Funds raised from asset sales (Capital receipts)
Legal	Number of complaints upheld by Local Government Ombudsman
Customer services	Total number of Customer Services contacts
	Average cost per contact through Customer Services
	Number of social care complaints received this quarter
	Number of social care compliments received this quarter