

Gloucestershire County Council approves 2021/22 budget

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Gloucestershire County Council has approved a budget of £483m for 2021/22 – an increase of £14.8m on the previous financial year.



The budget includes additional funding of £8.9m for adults and £7.3m for vulnerable children. There's also capital investment in key areas like children's services, highways and tackling the climate emergency, as well as planning for the Council's continued response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These include:

- £1m to make new school buildings carbon neutral
- £9.2m to complete a new special school
- £15m towards a £30m new secondary school in Cheltenham
- £11m for a new primary school in Bishops Cleeve
- A further £4.9m towards delivery of the Gloucester South West Bypass
- £3m towards the £9.5m Cheltenham to Gloucester cycle route
- £11.3m towards M5 J10
- £2.7m investment in new and improved life-saving equipment for GFRS' firefighters
- £1.8m to ensure delivering Broadband across the county

The Council will raise in the region of £7.0m to help fund services through a 1.99% increase in council tax. It will also apply the national social care precept at 2.76% to raise an additional £8.75m. In total these changes result in about a £5 monthly increase for the average Band D taxpayer.

The Council continues to challenge itself to work more efficiently and effectively and as a result has also identified £6.8 million savings for next year, helping to meet increased demand and costs.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, said: "As we all continue our work to defeat Coronavirus, the county council must also keep an eye on the future. This budget invests in Gloucestershire's future, with more support for children and young people, investment to deliver our zero carbon commitments, and infrastructure to support future homes and jobs. I am proud we are doing that whilst still delivering one of the lowest council tax levels of any county council in England."

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, said: "The Liberal Democrat amendments, that were unanimously supported across the Council, have significantly improved this budget. Whether that's more money for local highways and road safety measures, targeted funding to make sure every child reaches their full potential, or additional cash to help communities recover from the effects of Covid, these changes will make a real difference to people's lives."

Cllr Lesley Williams, Leader of the Labour Group, said: "Naturally I'd have liked more of our group's proposals to have been adopted but I am pleased to see recognition of the continued need to support food projects and the inclusion of funding for individual councillors to spend on Covid recovery projects in their own divisions."

Amendments to the budget which were approved by Council include:

- £100,000 for 20mph speed zones
- £67,000 for barriers to mobility report actions reserve
- £100,000 for School Street pilot extension for remaining districts
- £33,000 to fund the cancellation of planned increases to parking permit costs
- £100,000 to fund a pilot to support Children at risk of Exclusion
- £100,000 preparation for school / early years fund
- £265,000 to support community covid recovery (£5k per councillor)
- £50,000 for food projects
- £530,000 for local highways
- £100,000 for apprenticeships
- £60,000 to fund Nuclear South West