



Budget Consultation 2026/27

Building a Stronger Future - Together.

Consultation period:
4 December 2025 to 9 January 2026

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

Our Vision: A Stronger Future, Built Together



We want Gloucestershire to be a thriving county where everyone can live a healthy life, get a good education and job and feel proud of their area



A county where everyone is treated fairly and can easily access opportunities and services, where we protect and enhance our natural and built environment, and where everyone feels welcome and included in a kind and caring community

Welcome

Every year, we set a budget to decide how we spend public money—and we want to make sure it reflects what matters most to you.

This budget is about more than numbers. It's about people. It's about investing in the things that matter—supporting communities, protecting our environment, and building a county where everyone feels welcome and is proud to call it home.

Costs are rising, demand for services is growing, and we don't yet know how much funding we will get from Government following a change in funding formula called the Fair Funding Review. It is likely that we'll see areas of the country with higher levels of deprivation getting more money than they did previously and other areas, like Gloucestershire, probably getting less. That means we've had to make careful choices—balancing the need to deliver essential services with opportunities to invest where it will have the greatest impact.

Government assumes we will increase council tax and the adult social care precept to the maximum allowed. This will mean a £1.61 weekly increase for a band D property and will raise an additional £26.1 million next year to support delivery of services. Despite this increase the council still expects to have one of the lowest council tax levels of any county council. Even then, it's not enough to meet the pressures we face or deliver the things Gloucestershire needs. I know times are tough and, as Leader of the Council, I take no joy in asking more of residents, but we have a legal duty to keep people safe, well, and supported—and to improve life chances for everyone.

We are also looking inward—cutting duplication and tackling inefficiencies. Every pound must go further, and we're building efficiency into everything we do to allow us to invest in the things that matter most to you.



Every child to have the best possible start, with schools and learning that give them the skills and confidence to succeed



Every adult to have the chance to learn, work and be independent



Gloucestershire to be full of energy and ideas, building on our legacy of innovation



Everyone to know they are supported by a council that listens, learns, and does the right thing, providing services people can rely on

Here's what we're planning to invest in next year:

- An additional **£15 million** to improve roads and drainage.
- A further **£80 million** for school maintenance and **£21.1 million** towards the new special school in Gloucester.
- **£6.35 million** towards the cost of three new adult care homes and **£500k** to establish a virtual Adult Social Care Academy.
- An additional **£3.9 million** to refurbish household recycling centres and **£445k** to protect nature.
- A new annual community prevention grant scheme to support people to stay independent for longer and to help reduce health inequalities.
- **£2.5 million** towards new frontline fire and rescue vehicles, training facilities, and upgrades to fire stations.

To make this possible, we have identified £25.7 million of savings next year and are also reviewing our fees and charges - proposing to make the necessary increases to support our investment plans. We're also tackling an issue that's long overdue—parking charges. For years, the cost of parking has been subsidised by wider council funds, meaning all taxpayers have been covering the gap. Charges haven't been properly reviewed since 2013 and bringing them in line with today's prices is a necessary step to make the system fairer and ensure those who use these services are covering the true cost of delivering them.

Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think of our proposed budget. Your views matter and whilst we may not be able to fund everything you'd like us to in the next year, telling us what you think will help us to make better, more informed decisions and shape a fairer future for everyone.

Your feedback will help us make the right choices for Gloucestershire.

Thank you for being part of the conversation.

Lisa Spivey

Leader

Gloucestershire County Council



Where our funding comes from

£168.3 million

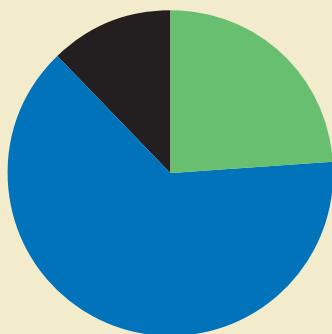
Government Grant

£443.9 million

from council tax (including the proposed 4.99% increase in 26/27 made up of 2.99% increase in Council Tax, and a 2% increase in Adult Social Care precept - Government expects us to raise these by the maximum they allow. This will mean a £1.61 weekly increase for a band D property.

£85.2 million

Business rates retention



How we're proposing to spend the money available to us

Adults



£243.1 million

Older People • Learning Disabilities
• Mental Health • Adult Safeguarding

Children and families



£201.6 million

Children's Social Care • Children's
Safeguarding • Fostering • SEND services
• Children with Disabilities • Adoption
• Early Years • Schools & Learning

Public health and Communities



£39.6 million

Mental Health • Drugs and Alcohol support
• Health Visiting • Healthy lifestyles
• Preventing domestic abuse
• Homelessness • School Nursing • Sexual
Health • Protecting the public from disease
• Health Protection • Active Communities

Environment Economy and Infrastructure



£95.9 million

Economy • Highways • Transport
• Sustainability • Flood • Employment &
Skills • Libraries & Registration
• Waste • Environment

Community Safety



£29 million

Fire and Rescue Service • Trading Standards
• Coroner's Services

Corporate Resources



£54.9 million

Digital and ICT • Archives • Legal Services
• Procurement • Property Services
• Corporate Estate • Rural Estates • Finance
• Audit • People Services • Transformation
• Emergency Planning

Key investments

We're investing in the things that you have told us matter most to you:



£15 million

so more drainage work, highways maintenance and more full resurfacing schemes can be delivered across the county.



£2.7 million

towards Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services

to help meet the rising need and demand for Education, Health and Care Plan Needs Assessments so we can provide the right support at the right time to children and families with SEND.

£6.35 million
towards three new adult care homes



to provide high-quality environments that incorporate technology to enhance residents' care, particularly for individuals with complex needs such as dementia. It will ensure individuals remain within their local communities for their care.



£1.3 million

to deliver major refurbishment and expansion of the existing Cinderford fire station to accommodate full-time day crews.

£2 million

(over 2 years) of new investment to improve road safety with speed limit reviews and delivery of the community 20s programme.



An additional £250k

a year to improve the maintenance and upkeep of our cycleways and footways.



£500k

to establish a virtual Adult Social eCare Academy:

to support paid and unpaid carers get the information and skills they need.



Youth services:

£384k

To support young people to achieve by ensuring they are included in their community and can do well in education and go on to find rewarding work.



£2.5 million

towards replacing aging frontline fire and rescue vehicles.



£1.5 million

towards new fire and rescue training facilities.

£3.9 million

(over 4 years) to deliver key refurbishment and vital repairs to your household waste recycling centres



£445k

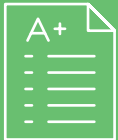
(over 4 years) to support a healthier, more resilient natural and built environment, including responding to the risks and impacts of climate change and supporting nature recovery and ecology to the benefit of communities.



Libraries:

£935k

towards upgrading library buildings and services.



School improvements:

£80.2 million

(over 3 years) to deliver essential works for our maintained schools.

£21.1 million

towards the new special school in Gloucester



A new annual

£1 million Community Prevention Grant Scheme



to support people to stay independent for longer and to help reduce health inequalities.



Budget overview

Revenue

Our draft revenue budget for 2026/27 is £697.5 million,

an increase of more than £32.375million on 2025/26 and will be used to deliver on the priorities set out in the council's new corporate plan - *A Stronger Future, Built Together*.

Below is a summary of our proposals across the different areas of the council. We explain the main changes, why we're making them, and what they would mean for you.

Capital investment

Our £216.5 million 2026/27 capital programme

will see further investment into a range of schemes and projects that will help deliver on the priorities set out in our corporate strategy.

Here we have provided a summary of our proposed spending plans for each area of the council. However, you can find a full breakdown of our revenue and capital budgets at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/budget2026-27.

IMPORTANT: The investment and savings highlighted above are repeated as part of the overall summary below.

Savings/cost reductions/increased charges for 2026/27

To meet the growing demand for services and deliver key investments, each council area will need to make savings next year. This will be done through a mixture of changing the way services are delivered and applying increases to our fees and charges. Below is a breakdown by council area:

Adults: £4.4 million of savings/efficiencies (includes a 3% (£977k) increase to the contributions people make towards their package of care to reflect inflation.

Children and families:

Spending £5.9 million less by supporting families from an earlier point and therefore reducing what we need to spend on high-cost specialist services.

Public Health and communities:

£580k of cost reductions by reviewing all our grants and maximising their use.

Environment, Economy and

Infrastructure: £6.2 million of savings/cost reductions (includes a 3% (£216k) increase to fees and charges to reflect inflation.

Community Safety:

£285k of savings/efficiencies.

Corporate Resources: £932k of savings/efficiencies (includes a 3% (£151k) increase to fees and charges to reflect inflation.

Here are some specific savings/cost reductions/increased charges that we want to draw your attention to, because we want to know what you think before any decisions are taken

£26.1 million by applying a 4.99% increase to council tax (made up of 2.99% increase in council tax, and a 2% increase in adult social care precept) This will mean a £1.61 weekly increase for a band D property. Government assumes we will do this as part of deciding how much money it gives us through their national formula. Reducing it will require us to make more savings to balance the budget.

£450k from increasing the amount housing developers and utility companies must pay when they want to do work on the road network.

£338k more income by taking the following measures in relation to parking charges and permits:

- **The cost of on-street parking** will go up over the next two years so charges accurately reflect the amount it costs to deliver the service. This will also make charges for on-street parking the same as for off street parking. After that, prices will rise in line with off-street parking charges.
- **Resident parking permits** will return to full price following a period of temporary reduction in fees. If you need a second permit, it will cost £160. Prices will continue to rise each year for three years to cover the full cost.
- **Business parking permits** will increase to £400, making the cost more in line with annual permits for off-street sites and to help cover operational costs. Second permits will cost £500. Prices will continue to rise each year for three years to cover the full cost.
- **Carer permits** will cost £30 to cover administration of the scheme, and new rules will help make sure they're used fairly.

£100k from stopping some of the least used (and therefore most expensive) supported bus services we fund because the Robin on demand bus service is helping to keep people connected.



Adults



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£243.1 million

Capital Budget 2026/27:

£16.6 million

Capital investment

£6.4 million towards the construction of three new adult care homes in the coming years. The new homes will provide high-quality environments that incorporate technology to enhance residents' care, particularly for individuals with complex needs such as dementia. It will support more individuals to remain within their local communities for their care.

£9.1 million (estimate) to deliver equipment and home adaptations for children and adults with a disability, to support them to live as independently as possible.

Older People • Learning Disabilities • Mental Health • Adult Safeguarding • Physical Disabilities

Adults

What's happening

- We're investing £1 million in a new annual community prevention grant scheme to support people to stay independent for longer and to help reduce health inequalities.
- Carers will get faster, more flexible emergency help.
- Autism support will be redesigned to focus on earlier intervention work.
- Advocacy services will have clearer standards.
- Mental Health Social Work and Adult Occupational Therapy will be delivered by us instead of by an external provider.
- Care services run by private, independent, and voluntary providers, such as care homes and home care, will be supported to improve.
- We will work directly with adults who provide care and support to ensure their support plans effectively meet their needs.
- We will review our fees to ensure services remain efficient, sustainable and provide the best value for money.
- We're investing in home equipment, adaptations, and wheelchair-access vehicles.

Why

- To make it easier to get support.
- To make sure services meet people's needs.
- To help people stay independent and use public money wisely.

What it means

- ✓ Charities and residents will find grants easier to apply for.
- ✓ Carers will get quicker emergency help.
- ✓ People with autism and other needs will get more community-based support.
- ✓ Some services will change to focus on prevention and independence.
- ✓ We'll keep investing in essential equipment and home adaptations.

Children and Families



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£201.6 million

Capital Budget 2026/27:

£36.6 million

Capital investment

£600k towards delivering The Birches 'Harm Outside the Home' Service. To create a countywide service supporting children experiencing, or at risk of, harms outside of the home (e.g. exploitation, substance misuse, criminality).

£21.1 million towards the cost of the new 200 place special school in Gloucester which is due to open in January 2027.

£2.7 million (£4.9 million over 3 years) towards the expansion of Severnbanks Primary School to increase the number of school places available.

**Children’s Social Care • Children’s Safeguarding • Fostering • SEND services
• Children with Disabilities • Adoption • Early Years • Schools and Learning**

Vulnerable children

What’s happening

- We’re using grants and buying services more efficiently.
- Reducing the amount we spend on court assessments through improved management oversight and by making the process more efficient.
- Support for some asylum-seeking children will reduce because demand is lower.
- We’ll keep funding family help and support, youth services, fostering, adoption, and help for children with disabilities.
- We’re investing in youth support vehicles and new services for children at risk.

Why

- To focus money where it’s needed most.
- To make the best use of outside funding.
- To keep services strong and good value for money.

What it means

- ✓ Service quality will remain high.
- ✓ New investments will improve youth support and safety.
- ✓ Changes will be made carefully to limit impact on children and families.

Education

What’s happening

- We’re saving money by managing staff vacancies.
- We’re funding a new Education Lead for Youth Justice to help disadvantaged children stay in education.
- We’ll continue to fund home-to-school transport and make improvements to SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) services.

Why

- To use resources wisely and focus support where it’s needed most.
- To better support vulnerable children and those with additional needs.

What it means

- ✓ Most changes won’t affect the public.
- ✓ New investments will help children at risk of exclusion or disadvantage access education.

Public Health and Communities



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£39.6 million

Capital investment

£262k towards improving the condition of a traveller site we own.

**Mental Health • Drugs and Alcohol support • Health Visiting • Healthy lifestyles
• Preventing domestic abuse • Homelessness • School Nursing • Sexual Health
• Protecting the public from disease • Health Protection • Active Communities**

Public Health and Communities

What's happening

- We're reviewing all of our grants and maximising their use.
- We're investing more to cover the inflation costs of contracts.

Why

- To make the best use of government funding.
- To keep essential services running and respond to changing needs and costs.

What it means

- ✓ Residents will continue to have access to key services to support them improve their health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Some funding sources will change, but service levels will stay the same.



Economy Environment and Infrastructure



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£95.9 million

Capital Budget 2026/27:

£141.7 million

Capital investment

£15 million (over three years) so more drainage work, highways maintenance and more full resurfacing schemes can be delivered across the county.

£77 million (£135 million over two years) allocated towards the cost of delivering the major infrastructure project at M5 J10 to help bring jobs and housing including affordable housing to our county.

£23 million (£45 million over four years) to deliver more carriageways structural maintenance across the county's road network.

£5 million (£14.3 million over three years) towards a new highways depot at Coombe Hill. (A new fire and rescue training facility and new care home are also planned for this site).

£2.4 million (£4.8 million over 3 years) towards refurbishment and improvements at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HRCs) to ensure we continue to recycle as much waste as possible.

£935k (£1.2 million over three years) towards upgrading library buildings and services.

Economy • Highways • Transport • Sustainability • Flood • Employment and Skills • Libraries and Registration • Waste • Environment

Transport and Highways

What's happening

- The fees paid by utility companies and housing developers will go up.
- Parking charges and the cost of parking permits will increase.
- We're saving money by using digital tools and doing more preventative maintenance.
- Some bus routes will change to remove duplication, where demand services, like The Robin, are operating.
- Local highways funding has been reduced and reinvested in more resurfacing and drainage works.
- We're investing in IT systems, tree safety, cycleway upkeep, and road safety.

Why

- To manage congestion, keep roads safe, and make sure charges match costs.
- To deliver better value for money and tackle environmental challenges.

What it means

- ✓ Parking arrangements and charges will change.
- ✓ Better communication and maintenance will improve road safety and travel.

Economy and Environment

What's happening

- There will be a cost for taking DIY waste to a household waste recycling centre (this will only apply to those taking more than eight 50 litre bags in a four week period).
- We're making services more efficient in adult education and libraries.
- Recycling incentives, sustainability budgets, and some under-used library services will change.
- We're investing in archaeology, ecology, flood prevention, sustainable drainage, and nature recovery.

Why

- To keep services efficient and environmentally friendly.
- To support growth, protect nature, and maintain important infrastructure.

What it means

- ✓ Some fees will go up to make sure services remain available.
- ✓ Investments will help prevent flooding, protect wildlife, and make communities more resilient.

Community Safety



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£29 million

Capital Budget 2026/27:

£7 million

Capital investment

£1.5 million towards new fire and rescue training facilities (a new highways depot and a new care home are also planned for this site).

£2.5 million towards replacing aging frontline fire and rescue vehicles.

£1.3 million to deliver major refurbishment and expansion of the existing Cinderford fire station to accommodate full-time day crews.

Fire and Rescue Service • Trading Standards • Coroner’s Services

Community Safety

What’s happening

- We’re reviewing how the fire service operates and its training facilities.
- We’re investing in frontline IT systems.
- We’re replacing essential equipment and upgrading fire stations.

Why

- To keep the fire and rescue service efficient, safe, and ready for future risks.
- To maintain high standards of community safety and emergency response.

What it means

✓ Residents will benefit from modern, responsive emergency services and better safety infrastructure.



Corporate Resources



Revenue Budget 2026/27:

£54.9 million

Capital Budget 2026/27:

£14.4 million

Capital investment

£1.5 million to replace the heating system at Shire Hall, making it more cost efficient to run.

£398k for essential buildings maintenance and compliance work across the council's buildings, including improvements to building accessibility and suitability.

£305k for essential repair, maintenance, servicing and upgrades of heating systems and electrical wiring.

£460k towards the replacement of the infrastructure required to back up the council's digital data.

Digital and ICT • Archives • Legal Services • Procurement • Property Services
• Corporate Estate • Rural Estates • Finance • Audit • People Services
• Transformation • Emergency Planning

Corporate Resources

What's happening

- We're bringing in more income through new contracts, more competitive fees, and extra services.
- We're saving money through increased automation and vacancy management.
- We're investing in data systems, emergency planning, IT upgrades, and building maintenance.

Why

- To make the council run efficiently and prepare for the future.

What it means

- ✓ Most changes won't affect residents directly but will help deliver services better.

Technical and countywide: £33.3 million

Technical & Countywide includes centrally held technical budgets, including capital financing, borrowing costs and investment returns. These budgets fluctuate each year and are revised in line with borrowing assumptions and investment projections.

We want to hear from you!

Here's how you can share your views:

Online: Fill out our questionnaire at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

Hard copy: Request a paper version or ask for materials in other formats or languages.

Return address: Communications Team, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TJ

Consultation period: 4 December 2025 to 9 January 2026.

What happens next?

The council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider each area of the proposed budget at an all-day session on 8 January.

At its meeting on 28 January, the Cabinet will carefully consider the results of the public consultation, any recommendations from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and feedback from unions and other stakeholders before making final decisions on the budget it proposes the council sets for 2026/27.

At a meeting of the county council (all 55 county councillors) on 18 February 2026, the budget proposed by the Cabinet will be debated and voted on.

A summary of the themes from the consultation will be published along with the other budget related information ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 28 January 2026.

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, fairer Gloucestershire. Your views guide our decisions and help us create a county where everyone can thrive.

Along with increasing costs and demand for services growing, we don't yet know how much funding we will get from Government following a change in funding formula called the Fair Funding Review. It is likely that we'll see areas of the country with higher levels of deprivation getting more money than they did previously and other areas, like Gloucestershire, probably getting less. That means we've had to make careful choices—balancing the need to deliver essential services with opportunities to invest where it will have the greatest impact.

Before setting our spending plans for 2026/27, we want to know what you think about our proposed budget so final decisions can be informed by your views.

Question 1:

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed increase of 2.99% in council tax and 2% in the adult social care precept? This would mean an additional £1.61 per week for a Band D property. See page 9 for more information on this proposal.

- ☐ Strongly support ☐ Support ☐ Neither support or oppose ☐ Oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

Please tell us why

Question 2:

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal to increase parking charges and other council fees? See page 9 for more information on this proposal

- ☐ Strongly support ☐ Support ☐ Neither support or oppose ☐ Oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

Please tell us why

Question 3:

To what extent would you support or oppose increasing parking charges and other council fees beyond the levels proposed on page 9 to increase the amount of money available to deliver services?

- ☐ Strongly support ☐ Support ☐ Neither support or oppose ☐ Oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

Please tell us why

Question 4: Revenue budget

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals for each area?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Adults					
Children and Families					
Public Health and Communities					
Economy, Environment and Infrastructure					
Community Safety					
Corporate Resources					
Tech and Countywide					

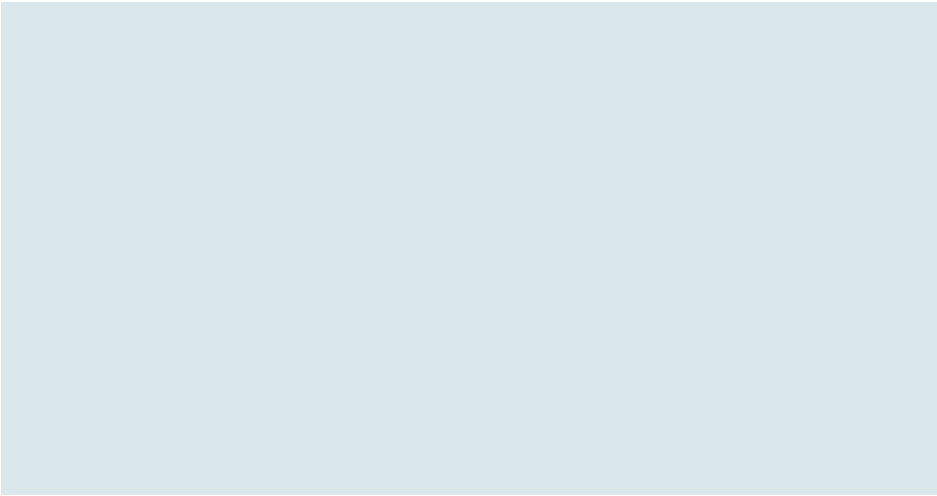
Question 5: Capital budget

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals for each area?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Adults					
Children and Families					
Public Health and Communities					
Economy, Environment and Infrastructure					
Community Safety					
Corporate Resources					

Question 6:

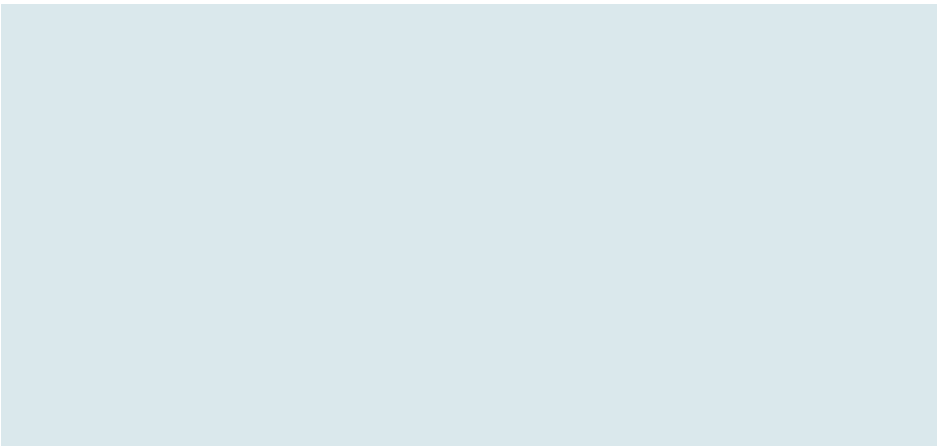
If you have answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in either question 2 or 3, please say why here.



Question 7:

Are there areas you feel the council should be investing in which aren't already covered?

If yes, please state what and where you would reduce spending to pay for it.



Question 8:

Are there areas you feel we should look to make savings or increase charges which aren't already listed?

If yes, please state what and where you would reduce spending to pay for it.

Question 9:

Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about our proposed 2026/27 budget?

Our full set of 2026/27 budget proposals are available at:
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/budget2026-27

Thank you for taking the time to give your views. Please make sure to return your completed questionnaire by 5pm on 9 January 2026
Communications Team, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TJ

We can produce this document in braille, in large print, on audio tape and in other languages. If you would like a copy in one of these formats, please call: **01452 426504**