

Cllr P McLain 13.01.2025

We continue to grapple with the Government's devolution decision for all areas to move to a combined authority (basically an elected new mayor with significant powers covering roughly 1.5 -2 million population). As a pre-cursor all areas are expected to move to unitary status of a minimum 500k population within a very short time period (in council terms). I have copied a link here which offers further detail:

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s106537/English%20Devolution%20White%20Paper%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

From GCC:

GCC budget has just gone out to public consultation. As mentioned previously, it is one of a minority of local councils across the UK which is able to propose a balanced budget and showing real terms growth rather than cuts. The proposed spending plans for 2025/26 will see spending rise by more than £32.7 million on 2024/25 levels, to almost £650 million.

I am mindful that changes are likely to be made in order to accommodate the Devolution Bill costs / requirements as mentioned above.

The council is in a good financial position meaning it is able to continue support for existing services as well as make significant investments across the county.

The £649.6 million proposed budget includes significant investment into the council's priority areas of highways, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), adult services, infrastructure, and the environment.

A further £10 million is proposed to be put towards delivering on the council's £100 million four-year commitment to go on improving Gloucestershire roads, with a greater focus in 2025/26 on tackling rural roads.

A total of £12.8 million is set to go towards a new £16.5 million 200 place special school.

Young people with SEND and their families would be supported with an extra £2.1 million.

£7.5 million towards the future construction of three new adult care homes is being set aside, with further investment planned in future years.

The council plans to increase capacity and improve school buildings and facilities of other schools across the county with a £12.4 million investment.

Household Waste Recycling Centres across the county will see improvements with a £1.3 million injection.

The budget proposes raising £16.5 million to help fund services through a council tax increase of 2.99%. The proposals would also see £7.8 million raised specifically to support work with the most vulnerable adults in the county through a further 2% increase in the adult social care precept.

Despite this increase the council still expects to have one of the lowest council tax levels of any county council. Based on a band D property, residents would pay an additional £6.65 each month.