

### A message from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Stanley

In May 2023, I proudly became Leader of the Council and I am pleased to take this opportunity to reflect on the past 18 months since taking up my role.

During this period I was delighted to see the unanimous approval of our new Council Plan, which provides our focus to 2030. Our new vision, priorities and eight areas of focus, put communities at the heart of everything we do, and we emphasise the importance we place on really listening and engaging with our residents, businesses and partners.

Alongside this, we are reviewing the way we organise and deliver our services with the aim of becoming a High Performing Organisation (HPO). The launch of our HPO programme recognises that there is still much work to be done and more that we aim to achieve as we embark on our journey of change.

More recently, following extensive public consultation, the council made their most significant decision in decades to change its name to North Gloucestershire Borough Council. A name that better represents our entire community and sets out our approach for all areas within our borough to be equally recognised.

Whilst the last 18 months has seen progress, opportunities and accomplishments, we continue to face real pressures and challenges. The rising cost of living places unprecedented demands on our services, and the economic uncertainties, environmental concerns and the financial challenges will no doubt continue. It would be remiss of me not to mention the recent cyber incident and flooding events that have tested the resolve and resilience of our services. I'd like to thank officers and members for their hard work and flexibility throughout these challenges.

Despite these challenges, we have remained steadfast and continue to adapt and innovate as a council to meet the needs of residents and businesses across the borough. There is much work still to do but we have started the journey of transforming our council and have made a number of key achievements that we will look to build upon as our new Council Plan is delivered.

These include our award-winning digital transformation



Photo: taken by a resident, Tania Tilling at Victoria Gardens

agenda, our sustainable growth plans, our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality, and the extensive support we have provided to our communities.

I look forward to reporting back next year on the achievements made under our new plan as we focus on *'supporting people and strengthening communities'*.



**Richard Stanley**  
Leader of the Council

# Our achievements since May 2023

## Economy



- We helped provide business support through our Tewkesbury Growth Hub – assisting over 1,200 businesses to start or grow their business.
- Using the financial awards from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), we have developed additional services through Tewkesbury Growth Hub. This has included:
  - Net zero business advice
  - The employment of a start-up business navigator to support entrepreneurs to grow their business.
  - Specialist advisor services for businesses in the advanced engineering and manufacturing sector.
  - Delivery of two enterprise-ready business events.

- We helped 167 businesses with their Business Growth Support plans.
- In September 2024 we recruited a Tourism Marketing Officer to help promote what the borough has to offer.
- We supported the delivery of the Tour of Britain, an international cycling event which showcased the town centre to residents and visitors, boosting Gloucestershire's economy to the tune of £3m.



167 business  
growth  
support plans

Assisted 1,200  
businesses to  
start or grow



Tour of Britain  
came to the  
Borough



# Our achievements since May 2023

## Managing growth

- A new governance structure for the Garden Communities programme has been introduced including an oversight and a stakeholder board.
- The Garden Communities Charter was adopted by the council in February and has since received support by developers and community groups alike.
- The Garden Town team continues setting out what communities, organisations and employers can expect in the Garden Communities programme, and also increasing communication and engagement through all of the workstreams with the recruitment of both a Programme Officer and a Communications and Engagement Officer.
- The Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) consultation has taken place on the Issues and Options (Reg18). We received over 1,700 individual representations. We look to progress the SLP once the national planning reforms are clarified.



## Flood resilience



- In partnership with the National Flood Form, multiple flood recovery advice and support surgeries took place at the beginning of the year.
- We distributed over £245,000 through Government flood recovery grants to businesses and residents who were impacted by flooding in January 2024.
- A new emergency planning post is being developed to help support the council's emergency response.
- A 'lessons learnt' review of our flood response and recovery arrangements is scheduled for Overview and Scrutiny committee in December.



1,700  
representations  
received for a  
SLP

Tewkesbury  
Garden  
Communities  
Charter  
adopted



£245,000 flood  
recovery grants  
awarded

# Our achievements since May 2023

## Climate and ecological emergency



- A new air source heating system for the Public Services Centre was completed in early 2024. This will reduce the direct greenhouse gas emissions by over 90 tonnes annually.
- We were awarded £41,915 from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, this will support the creation and installation of Coronation Micro Woods in the borough and a Coronation Community Orchard grant scheme, which went live in April.

- We've worked with our waste contractors, Ubico Ltd to purchase a new energy-efficient waste vehicle fleet. Resulting in 10 new refuse vehicles, four food waste vehicles and two panel vans - all now out and about serving our community.
- The recently approved household waste and recycling collection policy will see the rollout of 140 litre bins, reduced from 180 litres – this will initially focus on new developments.
- The first of a number of Electric Vehicle Charging points are set to be installed in our car parks. The first rollout will see five double charging units installed at Spring Gardens car park by the end of 2024.



- A second climate change officer was appointed in February 2024.
- Over 100 officers and councillors have undertaken carbon literacy training - several now volunteer as Green Champions across our service areas.
- Our pool car fleet is now fully electric.



Awarded  
£41,915 to  
support micro  
woods/  
orchards

Electric charging  
points are being  
installed in our  
car parks.

Over 100  
officers and  
councillors  
undertook  
carbon literacy



# Our achievements since May 2023

## Housing and homelessness

- To increase the temporary housing accommodation supply, we have entered into service level agreements with two providers. As a result so far, our most vulnerable people who are homeless will benefit from eight new accommodation units.
- Working with partners, we've helped support a £1.5m project to provide 12 new properties for Ukraine and Afghan households.
- We have worked with housing providers to help the delivery of 377 affordable housing properties. Through our Housing and Homelessness Strategy in Q1 2024/25- 90 affordable homes have been secured of which 56 of these are secured for social rent properties.
- £2m of our s106 funding has been committed to support delivery of 69 new properties by Registered Social Landlords and a rural housing project with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC).



## Health and wellbeing



- The Coopers Edge sports hub was entrusted to Barnwood Utd AFC, catering for a wide range of sporting pursuits for the community including football, rugby and netball.

- We administered over £20,000 worth of funding to Community Food projects across Tewkesbury Borough.
- We issued 2,531 supermarket food vouchers, totalling £52,000 to our lowest income residents, via the Housing Support Fund.
- We administered warm spaces grants to 16 community venues providing residents struggling with the cost of living and isolation to socialise with others.
- For 2023/24, 45 health and wellbeing grants, totalling over £39,000 were awarded.
- We continue to support the Citizens Advice Bureau with a £50,000 grant. They supported nearly 3,000 of our residents providing over £1,000,000 in financial gain.



377 affordable  
homes  
delivered



£20k of funding  
to community  
food projects



£52,505k in  
food vouchers  
issued

# Our achievements since May 2023

## Place

- Place is a new priority and focus area within our new Council Plan and we are working on an ambitious Place Programme which will include developing local place plans for different areas within the borough to address the local needs within those areas.
- The first draft of the Tewkesbury town centre masterplan is complete and the plan is to look at adopting this in 2025.
- In partnership with Historic England and local property owners, over £2m has been invested in town centre improvements through the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone project.
- We continue to support over 400 volunteer litter pickers who help keep our place and environment tidy.



## Young people



- With 'young people' being a new area of focus within the Council Plan this is an exciting opportunity to reach out to our younger residents. To help do this we have established a new young people engagement officer and once recruited it will help support the council's new focus area 'young people'.
- Working together with our partners, 53 referrals from young people, aged 11-18 years old, were made to help reduce anxiety levels through a programme funded by the Integrated Locality Partnership and delivered by Young Gloucestershire.
- In March, we held a Tewkesbury Young Designers family drop-in event showcasing Tewkesbury Academy's creative projects exploring their vision for the future of Tewkesbury Garden Communities area.

New Place  
Programme being  
developed

53 young people  
referred to help  
reduce anxiety

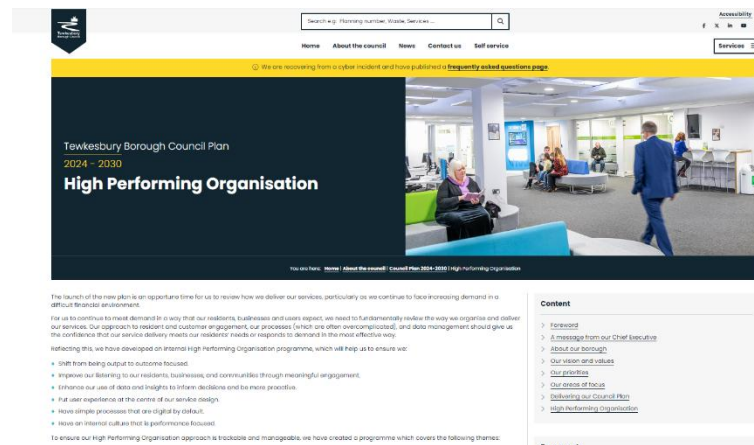
36 properties  
benefited from  
the shop front  
and upper floor  
grants



# Our achievements since May 2023

## Transformation

- In February 2024, we launched our High Performing Organisation (HPO) programme - our internal change agenda closely aligned to the delivery of our Council Plan 2024-2030. Where the Council Plan sets out what we're going to do over the next six years, our HPO programme looks at how we can deliver it – using the following as workstreams:
  - Continuous improvement
  - Culture
  - Data and intelligence
  - Governance.
- We launched a new, user-friendly corporate website, including complete redesign and review of content and greater accessibility in August 2023.
- Public I has been commissioned to deliver the council's webcasting for the next five years, which will go live in February 2025.



- We rolled out the first phase of the in-cab technology project to the waste fleet, allowing real-time solutions to common issues faced by collection crews e.g. inaccessible roads or contaminated bins. Phase two has now begun focusing on street cleansing and ground maintenance service, due to go live by the end of November.
- A new customer contact system was rolled out, Converse, to help those who wish to contact the council to have the option to engage in various ways, resulting in a seamless customer experience.
- We delivered the initial phase of the Plan X system, which allows anyone in the borough to see whether their project requires planning permission. More than 1,600 people have used the service since it went live in April.
- We implemented Citizens Access, which is an online self-service for council tax and business rates. With nearly 2000 residents and businesses successfully signing up and an additional 3600 using it to update their records at a convenient time for them.



Over 1,600  
people have  
used Plan X

Launched a  
new website

Now using  
in-cab  
technology in  
our waste  
fleet