

Presentation to APSE Conference

9th October 2025

Gloucestershire Highways response to Floods/Storms in 2024/25

Kev Downer – Highways Asset & Business Manager



Accountable



Integrity



Empower



Respect



Excellence



Gloucestershire in Context

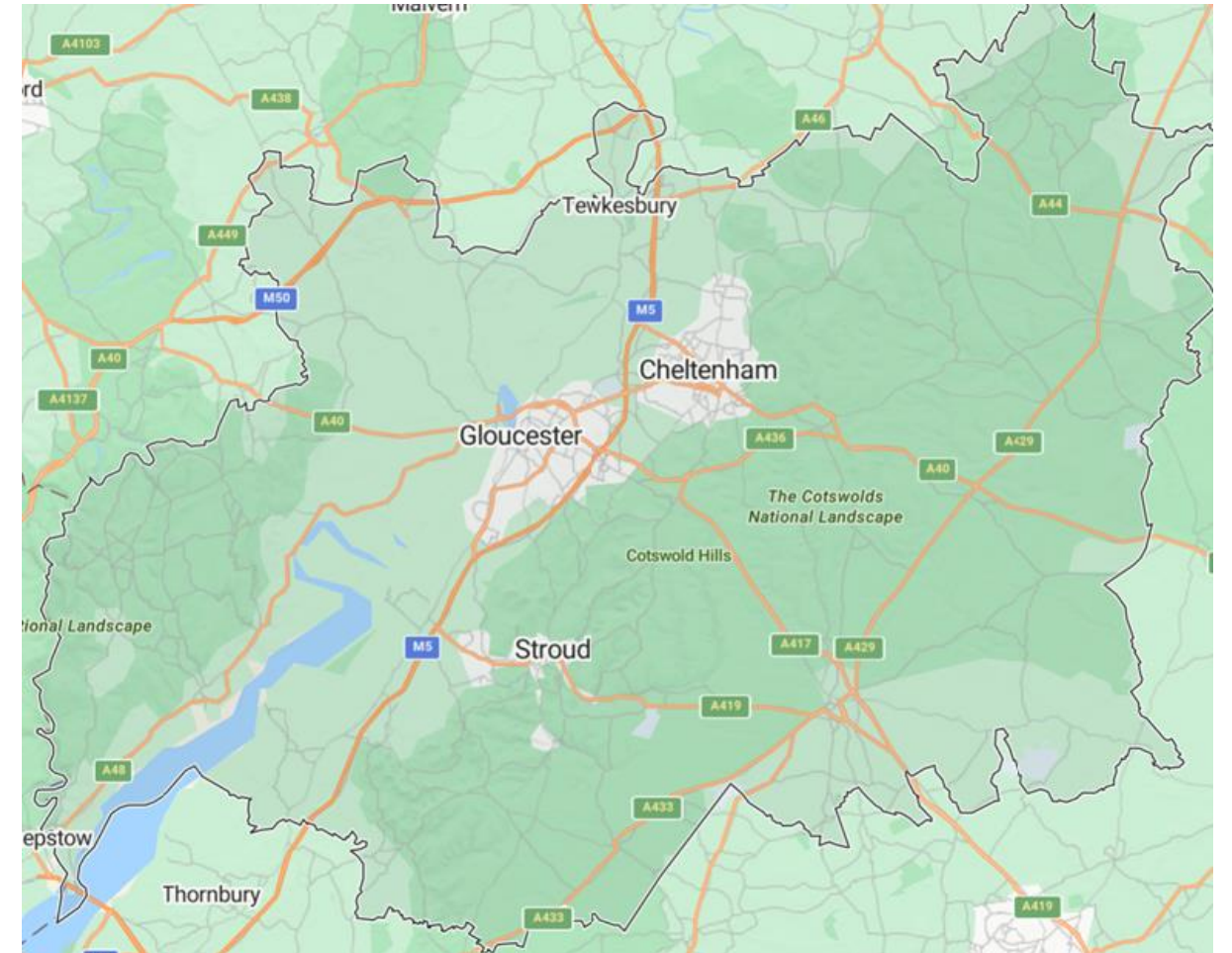
Gloucestershire has a population of approx. 670,000 with its 2 main urban areas (Gloucester City and Cheltenham) accounting for nearly 40% of the population. Both conurbations fall into a higher flood risk category.

Gloucestershire County Council's Highways Service is responsible for nearly 6,000 kilometres of carriageway, 4,000 kilometres of footways/cycleways, 5,600 kilometres of public footpaths, over 1,000 bridges, 130,000 gullies and nearly 65,000 streetlights. Much of our network is Rural. The Gross Replacement Costs of these assets is estimated at £9.5BN.

Gloucestershire's two main rivers are the Severn (which is tidal to just north of Gloucester) and the Avon which has its confluence with the Severn just north of Tewkesbury.

Gloucestershire Highways Staff (including our TMC and PSC contractor colleagues) are based at Shire Hall in Gloucester or at one of the four main highways depots across the county.

Gloucestershire currently has six district/borough councils.



The Perfect Storms

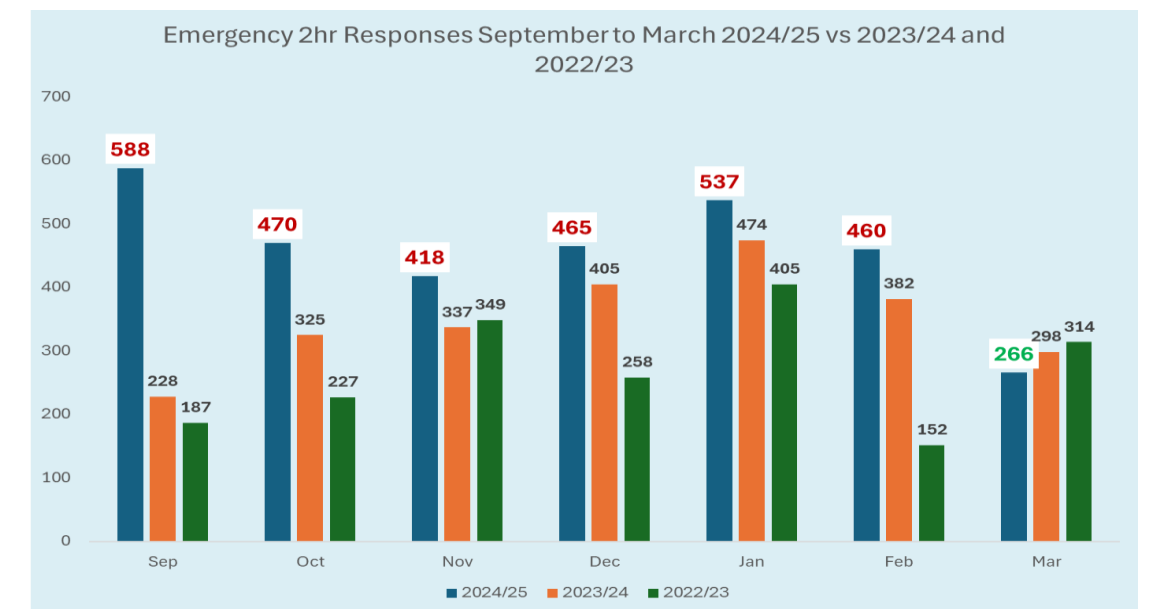
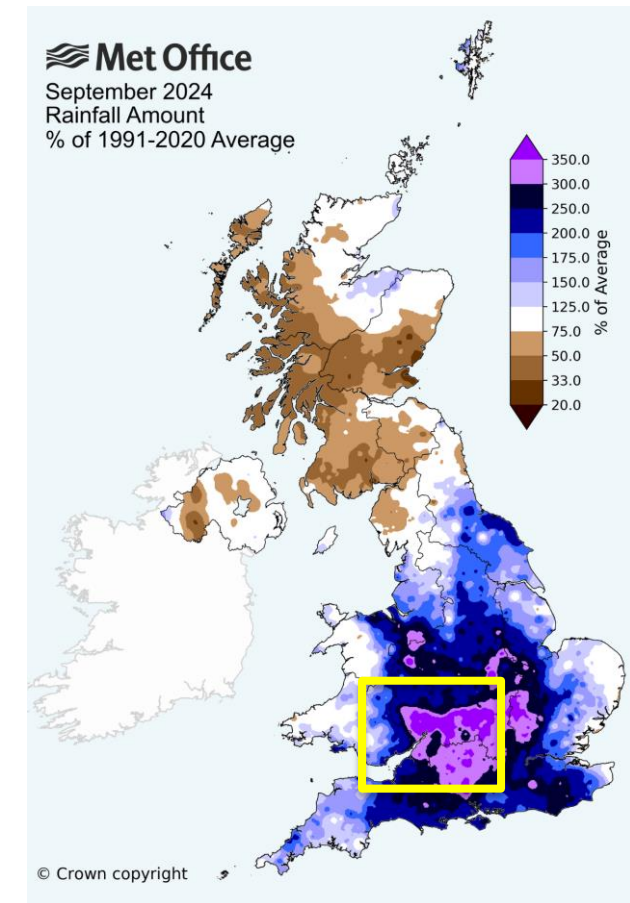
Over the period September 2024 to March 2025 we were affected by 5 named storms: Ashley, Bert, Connall, Darragh and Eowyn.

There were high autumn and spring tides on the River Severn, peak river levels on the Severn and Avon and record rainfall periods (in September 2024 Gloucestershire received **350%** of its average September rainfall). **Mid Wales + 5 days equal peak downflow on Severn**

Gloucestershire Highways received 31% more emergency calls in the period compared to 2023/24 and 69% more calls than the same period in 2022/23. The vast majority of calls were in relation to fallen trees or flooded roads.

The only month which saw a decrease in emergency calls over the period (compared to the previous two March's) was March 2025 which reflects that this was the fourth driest March since records began in 1836.

There were huge Public and Political Expectations around our response to the Storms and who was responsible for what.



Our Response

- Prioritisation of Telephones for Emergency Calls – all other categories were moved on line/FixmyStreet – reduction of OOH times.
- Setting up and co-ordination of flood desks in the worst affected areas – let the local area teams correlate their responses, thus avoiding duplication. Local knowledge essential.
- Regular public updates via the Council's Social Media platforms and the Website (including closures and detailing diversionary routes).
- Ongoing stakeholder management with statutory partner agencies, emergency services, bus operating companies and other businesses.
- Managing the workload for front-line Highways operatives to enable them to response in a risk-based way.
- Collaboration with Social Care colleagues to ensure our most at risk and vulnerable citizens were identified and provision put in place to provide care to these individuals.
- Drone footage (Storm Darragh)

[G](#) > [News](#) > [Gloucester News](#) > [Traffic & Travel](#)

A417 at Maisemore closed due to flooding yet again

A flood alert and warning is in place in the area.



[Comments 0](#)

NEWS By **Mike Taylor** TV Content Editor



Living our values every day



Accountable



Integrity



Empower



Respect



Excellence



Impact – Storm Darragh A436



Living our values every day



Accountable



Integrity



Empower



Respect

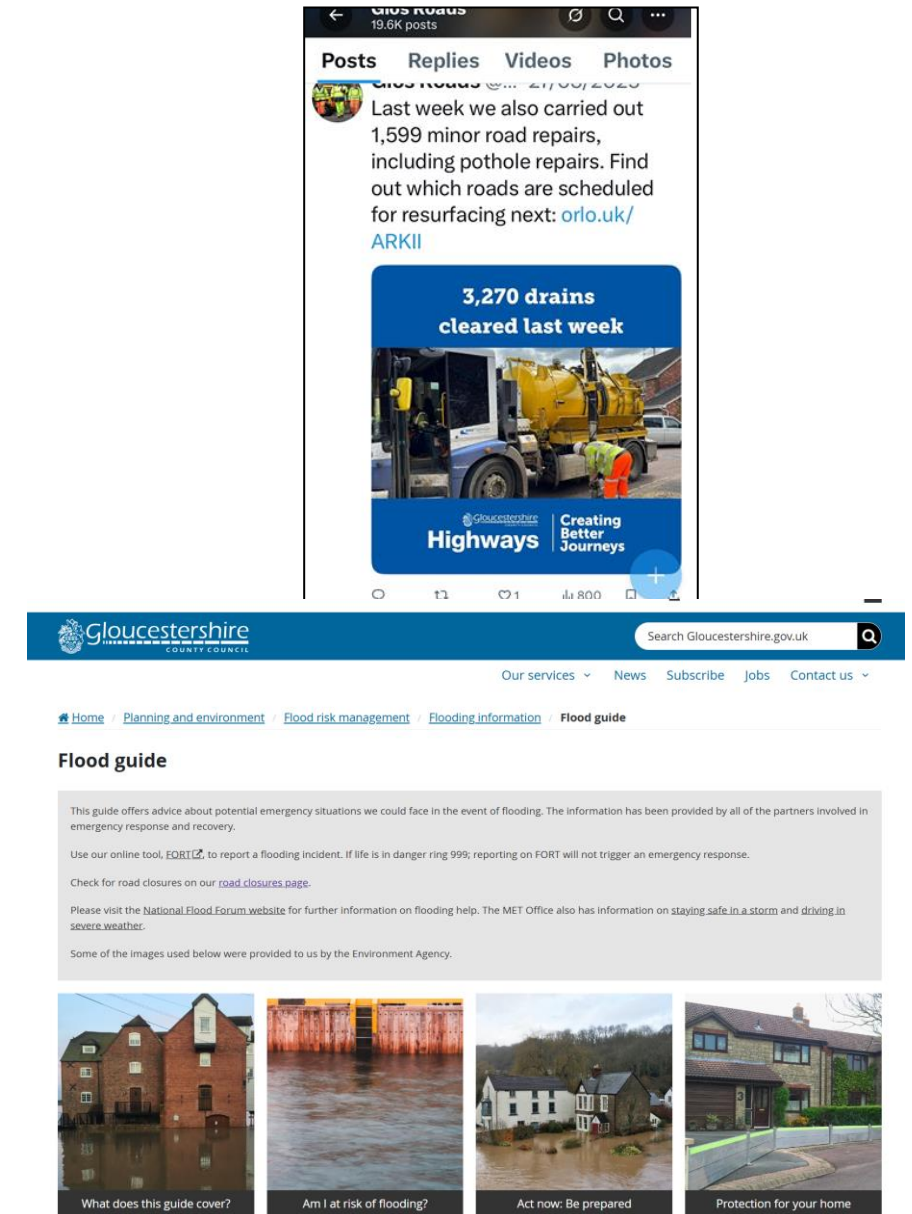


Excellence



Lessons Learnt - Improvements

- Highlight Safety at every public opportunity
- Give staff the opportunity to decompress – invite changes to BAU
- Identify high risk network gullies and ensure that they are cleaned on a regular basis (the default position is that every gully is emptied and cleaned once per year). We now have our gullies on FixmyStreet and have published our list of multi-clean gullies
- Purchase of a Drone/Licence and trained 2 staff members as pilots.
- Clear and consistent imagery and regular updates on our most important areas of work (not just in emergency situations) on all of our Social Media platforms especially 'X'.
- Training of all On-Call staff on the use of our social media and Facebook accounts so that we can provide information to the public on a 24 x 7 basis.
- Use of Heatmaps to highlight 'hotspots' on our network (by Electoral Ward) which can be filtered for floods, potholes or other network issues. These can be provided to the relevant Councillors to show the extent of issues within their respective ward.
- Ongoing discussions with Police, Fire Service, Social Services and Borough Councils around how we can continue to provide the best possible service
- Sandbags!!
- Keep Smiling 😊



And Finally



No matter how robust your response is, there will always be some people who think they know best!

Thank you and are there any Questions?

Email:

kev.downer@gloucestershire.gov.uk

