

Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee

22nd May 2019

Director's Report, Communities & Infrastructure (revised format)

This report summarises key areas likely to lead to decisions over the next 6 months, including updates on areas previously reported. A new format is being trialled seeking to make best use of existing management information and to provide a simple and easier read for Members.

1.0 **Decisions**

1.1 Relevant decisions by County Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Members and delegated to Officers, by date taken:

- [Highways Professional Services Contract Procurement](#) (Lead Commissioner: Highway Authority, March)
- [Tender and Award of Contract to provide bus service 855 \(Northleach\)](#) (Lead Commissioner: Community Infrastructure, January)

1.2 Relevant forthcoming decisions, by date due:

- [Third Party Recycling Credits Consultation](#) (Cabinet Member - Environment and Planning, between 25 Feb 2019 and 29 Mar 2019)
- [Procurement and award of contracts for the bulking, haulage and treatment of garden waste](#) (Cabinet Jun 2019)
- [Financial Monitoring Report \(June 2019\)](#) (Cabinet, Jun 2019)
- [Revenue and Capital Expenditure Outturn Report 2018/19](#) (Cabinet, Jun 2019)
- [Financial Monitoring Report \(July 2019\)](#) (Cabinet, Jul 2019)
- [Producing the Council Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-21](#) (Cabinet, Jul 2019)
- [Adoption of a Waste Tipping Away Policy](#) (Cabinet Oct 2019)
- [Financial Monitoring Report \(Nov 2019\)](#) (Cabinet, Nov 2019)
- [Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy \(For Publication and Consultation\)](#) (Cabinet, Dec 2019)
- [Financial Monitoring Report \(Dec 2019\)](#) (Cabinet, Dec 2019)

2.0 Highways update

2.1 Highways Contracts

- From the 1st April 2019 Ringway (maintenance) and Atkins (professional services) have taken responsibility for delivery of highway services. Their teams are based in Shire Hall on the 6th floor of block 5 to aid collaborative working with County Council officers. The focus is now on embedding these contracts and the processes needed to deliver as efficiently as possible. The Structural Maintenance contract (currently delivered by Tarmac) will be retendered later this year as this was awarded for a 2 year period.

2.2 £150m Highways Improvement Programme

- Programme continues to be delivered on schedule. 2019/20 Highways Capital Programme is in the process of being finalised. Looking and developing support for Borough and Districts to develop their aspirations.

- 2.3 A40 West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Schemes/ Cyber Business Park
- On 19th December 2018, Cabinet approved the proposed portfolio of works associated with the £22M Growth Deal 3 allocation for the West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Schemes.
 - Business case development is ongoing for Phase 1 and 2 (Arle Court/Golden Valley A40). Public share events are planned for June 2019, the business cases are scheduled for considered by the LEP board in autumn. Subject to approval the proposed start date on Phase 1 is January 2020 and Phase 2 summer 2020.
 - Feasibility work and early scheme design continues for phases 3 and 4. Construction is not scheduled to commence until Q4 2020/21..
- 2.4 A419 junction improvements (Stonehouse)
- Construction commenced in March 2019. Works include: capacity improvement, signal infrastructure upgrades and shared-use path creation/enhancement along route length from Horsetrough roundabout through to Chipmans Platt (M5 J13).
- 2.5 A38 Cross Keys roundabout (Hardwicke)
- Construction is programmed to commence in May 2019. Works include: Widening of approach arms to the roundabout and circulatory of the roundabout itself. Works include for underground ducting to enable Phase 2, partial signalisation of the roundabout at a later date.
- 2.6 A35 Cycle Scheme (Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve)
- Work on cycle track design and associated land purchase continues on the A435, Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve. The focus during in Q1 2019/20 will be on pricing for new foot/cycle bridge across GWSR tracks at Cheltenham Racecourse station.
- 2.7 Chepstow Bypass
- Capita Property and Infrastructure PLC were awarded a commission in April 2018 to undertake a transport study within Chepstow which has now concluded. This was jointly funded by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and GCC, with MCC being the commissioning body. The study objective was to undertake a WelTAG (Welsh equivalent of WebTAG) stage 1 / Strategic Outline Business Case (OBC) appraisal of transport options to address issues within Chepstow and the wider region. Consideration has been given to the wider issues and impacts for the A48 corridor from Lydney in the east to Chepstow in the west. The study identifies the following options as more favourable:
 - A Chepstow Bypass – Beachley and Sedbury,
 - improved Rail services to Bristol and Park & Ride Rail and
 - a Do Minimum scenario (for baseline assessment against other recommended options).
 - In addition, a number of “quick win” options were also identified.
 - The study also recommends that a WelTAG Stage 2 study is produced next, to progress the best option. There is currently no funding available for this second stage study, however, MCC are in the process of setting up an officer level study management and a member steering group with officers and members from MCC, Forest of Dean District Council and GCC represented.

3.0 Strategic Infrastructure Update

3.1 A417 Missing Link

- Highways England made the Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) for the A417 Missing Link scheme on 14 March 2019. Statutory public consultation will take place soon, commencing in either late June or September, to avoid the school holidays.
- After consultation, preparation will be made for the planning permission process – the Development Consent Order (DCO). This is likely to commence in spring 2020 and will take approximately 18 months. Construction is scheduled to start in late 2021.
- The capital funding to construct the scheme needs to be allocated in the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). The RIS announcements will be made later this autumn and GCC must continue to lobby government to ensure that the A417 Missing Link scheme is included.

3.2 M5 Junction 10 – Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid

- A business case was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 21 March 2019. MHCLG has confirmed that assessment of the business case will commence in June, and will not be completed until the autumn at the earliest.
- The final submission comprises:
 - An upgraded motorway junction
 - Link road to the West Cheltenham area
 - Upgraded Arle Court park and ride site
 - Improvement at the Coombe Hill junction
 - Widening of the A4019 Tewkesbury road.
- If successful, the improvements are scheduled to be completed by 2024.

3.3 M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch)

- The A46 Partnership meets 3 times a year to work to secure improvements to the M5 Junction 9 and the A46. The Partnership works alongside Highways England, the Department for Transport and Midlands Connect the proposed sub national transport body (STB) for the midlands area. The next Road Investment Strategy (RIS) will be announced by government in the autumn and GCC and Midlands Connect are lobbying to seek a positive announcement for J9 and the A46.
- A separate strategic outline business case is being produced and will be submitted through the Western Gateway STB as a Large Local Major regional priority. The deadline for submitting this scheme is July 2019. If successful the scheme will begin construction before 2025.
- Tewkesbury Borough Council has recently been successful with a bid to government for Garden Town status at Ashchurch. This will bring 10,000 plus dwellings to the area. This announcement will add pressure to an already congested Junction 9 and A46 so there becomes an even greater need to provide the necessary upgrade to infrastructure in the area.

3.4 Improved rail connectivity

- It has been a long held policy ambition to improve rail access from Gloucester. In the short-term the focus is to improve the frequency of services accessing Bristol through an extension to the Metro-West Phase 2 project. Network Rail has raised concerns over the need for additional signal work at Gloucester station. They have stated that this issue would need to be resolved to ensure operational viability before any additional services could be timetabled. Discussions are ongoing with Network Rail to understand how this issue could be resolved in the short-term. In addition to this officers are contributing to the emerging Birmingham to Bristol rail partnership and the North Cotswold Line Task Force to lobby for improved services calling at Moreton in Marsh.

3.5 Strategic cycle network

- Highways England (HE) is promoting a £3.6M cycle improvements scheme between Gloucester and Cheltenham, which will be constructed along the B4063 by the end of 2020. Officers will continue to engage with HE, providing expertise around Member engagement, stakeholder management and design support. Other cycle improvements will be promoted and delivered as funding opportunities arise.
- Work on cycle infrastructure improvements in Lydney town centre will begin in summer 2019 using £1m LEP funding.
- The adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) is currently being reviewed and a public consultation is envisaged for early 2019. The LTP promotes mode shift from the private car to more active forms of travel. It is envisaged, that the revised Local Transport Plan will identify the key cycle desire lines linking primary areas of growth and identify key corridors where cycle projects would contribute towards full cycle access on these desire lines.

3.6 Local Plan making

- The Joint Core Strategy review started with an 'Issues and Options' consultation undertaken between 12th November 2018 and 11th January 2019.
- The Stroud Local Plan review saw an Issues and Options consultation during autumn 2017 and a public consultation on the Emerging Strategy from 16th November 2018 until 18th January 2019.
- The Minerals Local Plan (MLP) Hearing dates have been confirmed as being 11-12th June, with 13th June as a possible extension date.
- The submission version of the new MLP includes support for creating and enhancing green infrastructure (GI) in accordance with the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) GI Pledge which GCC signed up to in autumn 2018. Work will be progressed with LNP partners, especially the Wildlife Trust, to begin to construct a new nature (ecological) recovery network that will help to inform future decisions.
- At a recent meeting with Strategic Directors the Local Transport Plan (LTP) review was discussed. It was agreed that the existing LTP review would be light-touch. This would enable greater collaborative working between GCC and the Districts officers in the production of a robust longer-term strategy reflective of local plan periods. Strategic Directors also agreed for GCC officers to have a more active role in the identification of strategic development allocations to

ensure that the most sustainable transport locations were considered in the local plan making process.

3.7 Lead Local Flood Authority

- Following the completion of a £2.7M flood alleviation scheme at Priors/Oakley, northwest of Cheltenham there is a need to monitor the recovery of the landscape. This includes the use of fixed-point aerial photography to demonstrate recovery of landscape over time. Other planned projects include:
 - Continue to develop and support local Flood Action Groups to improve local awareness of, and resilience to local flood risk.
 - Investigate potential flood alleviation scheme, including natural flood management measures, for Bishop's Cleeve.
 - Promote and deliver a property level resilience project near Gloucester to protect 12-14 homes from flooding.

4.0 Community Infrastructure Update

4.1 Cheltenham Transport Plan

- Following the first 6 months of consultation and traffic monitoring, Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) agreed, in January, to extend the trial to allow further mitigation measures to be installed. Changes, to take effect at the start of June, include making part of Clarence Street and Clarence Parade two-way, simplifying the bus gate and restrictions and additional disabled parking spaces in Winchcombe Street. Additionally officers are reviewing options to reduce traffic using Rodney Road as a through route and to improve traffic signals on St Margaret's Road. The consultation period will be extended for a further 6 months, for the TRO Committee to meet in December.

4.2 Public Transport–

- A scheme to manage parking at Arle Court Park and Ride site went live on 13th May. This will ensure that there is sufficient capacity at the site to enable demand for the park and ride and hospital bus services to grow, reducing car trips on roads into the centres of Cheltenham and Gloucester.. This innovative system uses digital solutions instead of physical barriers and parking meters that are expensive to install and operate. Park and riders simply enter their vehicle registration on a touch screen terminal at the bus stop and validate a QR ticket on the bus to register for free parking. Park and walkers must pay to park using our cashless MiPermit app, which can be done up to one week in advance. Patrols by APCOA enforcement officers and a fine of up to £50 will encourage compliance.

4.3 Parking

- Cabinet (December 2018) agreed increases in Pay & Display and Permit charges that came into effect on 1st April 2019.
- The restructure of the Parking Team is complete and effective from 1st April 2019. Jim Daniels has retired and Alexis Newport has been appointed Parking Manager after a competitive recruitment process. The TRO Team that was formerly part of Amey has been in-sourced back into the Parking Team.

4.4 Climate Change Summit

- The Council is holding a Climate Change Summit with Gfirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on 21st May, to which a range of public, private and

community organisations have been invited. The ambition is to achieve a carbon neutral county by 2050. This will be looking at how we can all contribute to the delivery of the most sustainable development and shape communities accordingly, helping to deliver the ambitions of the Gloucestershire Energy Strategy and contribute to updating the County Council's Climate Change Strategy. The outcomes from this event will be used to develop a new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the Council. The draft Strategy & Action Plan is planned to be published for public consultation in the summer, and to go on to Cabinet in October 2019.

4.5 Highways Development Management

- A Members Seminar has been arranged to follow on from this Committee meeting to introduce new members of staff, explain team changes and highlight the role of HDM in delivering economic growth.

4.6 Air Quality

- Over the past few months the Air Quality & Health Partnership has been developing a draft Gloucestershire Air Quality and Health Strategy. This is one of the recommendations of the Task Group, supported by this Committee and agreed by Cabinet last year. A report to Health and Wellbeing Board on 14th May summarised the Gloucestershire Air Quality and Health strategy development process and the key strategic areas for delivery. Board members were asked to approve the strategy for implementation in Gloucestershire, and to consider how their organisation can make specific commitments to support its implementation.

5.0 Waste Update

5.1 Joint Waste Committee

- Food waste incentive payments have been made to each district in line with the current agreements.
- Preparations are being made to ensure waste transfer is in place prior to commissioning of Javelin Park.
- The Joint Waste Team has been supporting Cotswold District Council in the design and preparations for the new kerbside collection service.
- Maintenance of the Recycle for Gloucestershire website is ongoing, and other waste minimisation & recycling communications have been delivered across the county during and after the Christmas period. The promotion of Real Nappies and home composting continues to deliver waste reduction throughout the county.
- A home composting campaign will commence in May 19, offering free delivery of compost bins for a limited time. Food waste incentives continue to be paid, and new 'no food waste' residual bin stickers will be provided to each district which requires them.
- The procurement of a new garden waste composting contract will commence (subject to cabinet approval in June).
- Options for a future waste partnership are being considered ahead of the termination of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee in December 2019.

5.2 Residual Waste Project

- Construction of the Javelin Park Energy from Waste is progressing well and remains on track for commencement in the summer.

6.0 Library and Registration Update

6.1 Libraries

- Refurbishments undertaken within Cheltenham & Gloucester in order to improve customer access to stock and Wi-Fi.
- Stonehouse Library: A Customer engagement survey is underway and ends on 25th May 2019. To date the responses we have received show no significant negative impact on customers accessing our services. We have received very positive feedback on the proposal to date. Stonehouse Library – Service will provide a report following the end of the customer engagement. Legal negotiations continue. Planning permission for change of use will be sought. Design for internal library area will be determined.
- Public Sector Mobile: The vehicle went for its regular safety inspection in March 2019 where defects were found. We are liaising with GFRS over repair costs. The service is communicating with all regular customers to ensure their needs continue to be met.
- Service submitted a successful application for a Cultural Trainee funded through Gloucester Culture Trust. Will work one day a week with Strike-a-Light.
- Coleford Innovation Lab is being refurbished, re-branded and re-launched in July. A package of workshops and activities are being developed in partnership with local companies.

6.2 Registration Services

- Pilot Registration Office introduced into Quedgeley Library. Extremely positive feedback from Community, therefore this office will be retained.

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