

Director's Report, Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee Report

January 2020

This report summarises key areas likely to lead to decisions over the next 6 months, including updates on areas previously reported.

1.0 Decisions

1.1 Relevant forthcoming decisions, by date due:

- [Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire – inspector's report and recommendation to Council for adoption](#) – 29 January 2020
- [Ashchurch Bridge over Rail \(ABoR\)](#) – 29 January 2020

1.2 Pending Items not yet published on the Forward Plan:

- Variation of current broadband contracts – extension of scope and value (11 March 2020)
- Refresh of the Local Developer User Guide (11 March 2020)
- Electric vehicle charging points (possibly 11 March 2020)
- Proposed Consultation on County Council Traveller Site Management options (TBC)

1.3 Pending Individual Cabinet member decisions:

- Ubico Shareholder Agreement (incl exempt information)

2.0 Highways update

2.1 Ringway/Term Maintenance Contract

- Defect repairs continue to improve with performance now getting close to target.
- Flooding issues during November 2019 have diverted resources into reactive response and away from planned works. There is now an emphasis on the small scale works programme to provide visibility and reliability of delivery dates, particularly around highways local delivery.

2.2 Atkins/Professional Service Contract

- Performance is steady and has moved from mobilisation to business as usual.

2.3 £150m Highways Improvement Programme

- Delivery remains on track in the 19/20 financial year with the accelerated programme.
- The website shows the current schedule plus the interactive map for 19/20 and 20/21 works.

2.4 Structural Maintenance Contract

- Tenders closed for the next 2 year structural maintenance contract on 11th December 2019.
- Tenders are now being scrutinised with a view to making a decision and awarding in January 2020.

2.5 Highway Skills Academy

- 10+ apprentices appointed across GCC, Ringway and Atkins.

- Plan for 20/21 intake being developed currently.

2.6 Collaboration

- Independent review of the relationship between GCC, Ringway and Atkins undertaken.
- Some areas of focus identified which will feed into the work towards attaining ISO44001 for Collaborative Working. Some work on embedding and developing the collaborative approach needed over the next 6-12 months which will kick off with a series of workshops in December and January, as well as a highways staff survey.

2.7 A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse)

- Continued work on site.
- Original delay to programme has been mitigated by working with contractor

2.8 A4173 Pitchcombe

- Works on programme
- Adjacent landowner issue to resolve re contractor's use of his field.

2.9 A38 Canal Bridges, Whitminster

- Works started on site

2.10 A38 Cross Keys Roundabout (Hardwicke)

- Complete on site, no contentious issues to resolve.

2.11 Gloucester South West Bypass / Llanthony Road

- Planning permission granted April 2019;
- Ongoing negotiations with landowners / landlords re- 14 plots;

3.0 Community Infrastructure Update

3.1 Cheltenham Transport Plan

- On 16th December 2019 the Traffic Regulation Committee recommended abandoning the Boots Corner trial (CTP Phase 4 amended Experimental TROs). This was supported by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20th December 2019. An urgent implementation procedure was agreed beforehand to enable legal changes to be implemented for the 28th December 2019 when the ETROs were due to expire.
- Camera signs and yellow advisory closure signs were removed prior to Christmas. Road markings and parking related lines/signs will be altered over the coming weeks. For safety reasons there will continue to be a single lane for traffic at the Boots pedestrian crossing.
- Discussions with Stagecoach highlighted the role bus growth in Cheltenham has on the viability of marginal rural routes. Having seen a healthy rise in bus use over the past year (4.5%) and high levels of reliability they are looking for reassurance from GCC on how we can sustain public transport growth post Boots Corner.
- Some low cost mitigation works are still proposed for Rodney Road near its junction with High Street, to reduce speeds of vehicles approaching this busy pedestrian area.
- Traffic signal refurbishment on the A4019 northern relief road is scheduled to take place during the next quarter. Given the age and poor condition of the signals this is

part of a larger scheme that was always required irrespective of the outcome of the trial.

3.2 Parking

- Great Western Railway (GWR) is behind schedule with its works to expand the car park at Cheltenham station. It has informed GCC that this puts at risk the pedestrian and cycle link to Lansdown Road. A funding gap of £100-£300k has been identified. It is unlikely that GWR will contribute towards this whilst it is still waiting to hear from government about whether it will be awarded the new franchise from 1st April 2020.

3.3 Highways Development Management

- Appointments have been made to two Team Leader posts following interviews in early December 2019. The quality of applicants for mid level posts (Principle Development Coordinators) was poor and discussions are underway with HR about further recruitment.

3.4 Cycling/walking

- Temporary staff have been recruited to ensure business continuity following staffing issues in the ThinkTravel team which oversees Bikeability and School Crossings.

3.5 Climate Change

- Cabinet agreed a Climate Change Strategy and initial Action Plan at its meeting in December 2019. Significant work has also been done to facilitate the coordination of activities at a county wide level.

3.6 Air Quality

- Nothing to update this month.

4.0 Strategic Infrastructure update

4.1 A417 Missing Link

- Preferred Route Announcement (Route 30) made March 2019;
- Further public consultation recently took place (Autumn 2019);
- A supportive officer-level response to this consultation (a joint response from CDC, TBC and GCC) was sent on 8th November 2019;
- All 6 'new' MPs had a photoshoot at the Air Balloon very soon after the election;
- RIS2 announcement is now expected imminently.

4.2 M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch)

- Work continues on the Strategic Outline Business Case for the M5 J9 / A46 scheme, with the intention of submitting it to the Department for Transport in January 2020;
- Discussions re- possible future funding to progress to the Outline Business Case – ongoing with both Homes England and Tewkesbury BC.

4.3 M5 J10 / HIF bid

- OBC submitted to MHCLG on 21st March 2019;
- Additional £2M p.a. GCC revenue secured to progress this project 2019/20-2020/21;
- Decision was expected in 'Autumn'. This has now been delayed until after the election and is expected to be imminent.

- If successful with the bid, there will be an opportunity to claim back significant elements of the business case development costs.

4.4 West Cheltenham / Cyber £22M

- Following December 2018 Cabinet approval, Outline Business Cases for all phases of scheme are being drawn up;
- Business Cases for Phases 1 & 2 were submitted, presented and agreed at the LEP Board on 10th December 2019;
- AMPS have completed the purchase of the two properties adjacent to Arle Court roundabout, with a view to demolishing them both;
- Starting on site early 2020;
- Ongoing issue re-timing / extent of Highways England's A40 / M5 'safety critical' works.

4.5 B4063 / A40 Highways England Cycling Scheme – Cheltenham to Gloucester

- GCC officers continue to engage with Highways England's Route Manager to ensure scheme links into the emerging GCC Cabinet-approved £22M transport improvement schemes to the west of Cheltenham. It has been suggested that GCC may wish to take over the sponsorship and project management of this project, given the delays with the scheme.

4.6 Improved rail connectivity

- Rail Strategy commissioned and is expected to be finalised early 2020;
- This will then feed into the emerging review of the Local Transport Plan.

4.7 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- Draft LTP (pre- public consultation) agreed at 20th December 2019 Cabinet;
- Public consultation will now take place 16th January – 26th March 2020.

4.8 Digital connectivity

- Cabinet considered and approved the latest, revised Fastershire Broadband Strategy 2019-2022 in December 2019;
- This will now be implemented with immediate effect, with a view to securing solutions for 'the final 3%'.

4.9 Minerals Local Plan

- Submitted Draft Plan to Government;
- Public Hearing took place between 11th-12th June 2019;
- Public consultation on proposed main modifications ended 11th September 2019;
- Inspector's report received in final form 23rd December 2019;
- Immediate adoption now proposed in early 2020 – aiming for 29th January 2020 Cabinet and 12th February 2020 Full Council.

4.10 Local Plans / JCS

- GCC will now become a formal partner to the JCS process from April 2020, rather than a statutory consultee, assuming approved by Full Council (in February 2020) as part of the budget setting process.
- Stroud Local Plan – Current consultation on Draft Local Plan – closes 22nd January 2020.

5.0 Libraries & Registration update

5.1 Stonehouse Library

- Works commenced on 2nd December 2019 on a 16 week refurbishment. It is planned that the library will re-open in the new location in April 2020.

5.2 Libraries Growth Hubs and Innovation Lab

- Plans are progressing for the Gloucester Innovation Lab with the aim to have this set up in spring 2020.

5.3 Mobile Library

- 4 of the 8 Customer Access points have now been set up and will commence in January 2020. Locations have now been identified for the remaining 4 and these will start from February onwards. All locations will pilot for 6 months to ensure the level of use warrants the time and travel spent by the member of staff who will be running these points.

5.4 Library Strategy & Opening Hours

- Plans are in place to update the 2012 Library Strategy. A paper will be considered by Cabinet in January 2020 to approve a public consultation on a new pattern of opening hours and to gain updated understanding on how residents want to use library services.

6.0 Waste Management update

6.1 Joint Waste Committee

- The Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee closed on 13th December 2019, with the county and district councils agreeing to form a new, less formal partnership on Resources and Waste.
- At its December 2019 meeting, Cabinet delegated responsibility to the Head of Waste to finalise Terms of Reference for the proposed Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership with district councils. A proposal to adopt the new payment system (replacing the Food Waste Agreements) was also agreed by Cabinet in December 2019.
- An officer delegated decision has been taken to award four contracts for Garden Waste Treatment, which will commence 1 Feb 2020. Forest of Dean District Council has expressed concern that its garden waste tipping location will change under the new contract (from Lydney to Dymock).
- Electricity from the Javelin Park Energy from Waste facility is now being generated. The council purchases the electricity from UBB for a guaranteed price and then sells it on the wholesale market. An Electricity Strategy Group is being convened to govern and coordinate the sale and purchase of electricity by the council.

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