

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

February 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:

- [Recommendation to Council – 2<sup>nd</sup> Review of the Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\) for Gloucestershire](#) (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020)

1.2 Pending Items not yet published on the Forward Plan:

- Electric vehicle charging points (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020)
- Community and Adult Skills Programmes funding 2020 – 2021(22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020)
- Refresh of the Local Developer User Guide (17<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

## 2.0 Highways update

### 2.1 Highways Contracts

- Storm Ciara and Storm Denis have stress tested emergency response capabilities. After each event reviews have been undertaken and improvements introduced where they have been identified.
- We are working with Ringway and Atkins on the 2020/21 programmes so that we have a full pipeline of works for both, ready for a smooth start to the year.
- Structural Maintenance Contract for next 2 years has been awarded to Tarmac – begins 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

### 2.2 £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.

### 2.3 Highway Skills Academy

- 13 apprentices appointed across GCC, Ringway and Atkins.
- Plan for 20/21 intake being developed currently with a further 8 apprentices anticipated.

### 2.4 Ash Die Back

- Following the approval of the £500k allocation at full council, we are developing a strategy to prioritise delivery.

### 2.5 Major Schemes

- A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse) - The Chipmans Platt and Oldends Roundabouts are now substantially complete. Works at Horsetrough Roundabout and the Downton signals junction continue with a programme completion of May 2020

- A4173 Pitchcombe - Resurfacing works start 20<sup>th</sup> February for 2 weeks. Construction completion is due in mid-March
- A38 Canal Bridges, Whitminster - Works are ongoing on site, there have been some delays with utility diversions, but we are hoping to mitigate these and keep on programme.

### **3.0 Community Infrastructure Update**

#### **3.1 Cheltenham Transport Plan**

- Works to restore the road network to pre-Boots Corner trial arrangements are complete apart from some parking restrictions which are contingent upon the delivery of signs in February.
- The crossing at Boots Corner is being replaced as it has reached the end of its life. For safety reasons the narrowing to a single traffic lane on the immediate approach will be retained. This has little if any impact on traffic flow but more importantly addresses road safety issues for vulnerable road users.
- Notwithstanding the decision to abandon the Phase 4 trial a significant number of local measures are being delivered in 2020/21 in and around the town centre. These range from investment in signals on the ring road, and at Boots Corner itself, to High Street public realm works led by Cheltenham Borough Council.

#### **3.2 Parking**

- A cabinet panel is being set up to review the council's road safety functions, including the TRO process, and will report back to Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.
- Work continues on the GWR car park expansion at Cheltenham Spa station, including 300 secure cycle parking spaces. Discussions are ongoing with GWR and LEP regarding securing the foot and cycle link to Lansdown Road.
- In January Environment Scrutiny Committee members debated the pros and cons of options for rolling out Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Gloucestershire. A focused approach that complements investment by the commercial sector was supported. As part of our Climate Change Action Plan the council will procure 200 charging points. Atkins have been commissioned to draft the EV Strategy using the key objectives agreed at the last Environment Scrutiny and bring this back to the committee on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

#### **3.3 Climate Change & Air Quality**

- Work is underway developing the 2020/21 'Year 1' action plan as part of a five year rolling climate change action plan. In parallel the Air Quality & Health Partnership is prioritising those actions where we can maximise synergy with the Climate Change Strategy. To provide extra capacity a full time project manager has been appointed on a temporary basis pending recruitment to a permanent post after April.

### **4.0 Strategic Infrastructure update**

#### **4.1 A417 Missing Link**

- RIS2 announcement is now expected imminently.

#### **4.2 M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch)**

- The Strategic Outline Business Case for the M5 J9 / A46 scheme has been submitted to the DfT in January 2020;

- Discussions re- possible future funding ongoing with both Homes England and Tewkesbury BC.

#### **4.3 M5 J10 / HIF bid**

- A decision is expected to be imminent.

#### **4.4 West Cheltenham / Cyber £22M**

- Starting on site Spring 2020;
- Ongoing issue re-timing / extent of Highways England's A40 / M5 'safety critical' works.

#### **4.5 Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

- Public consultation currently taking place (16<sup>th</sup> January – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020).

#### **4.7 Local Plans / JCS**

- Review of JCS now underway following an 'Issues and Options' consultation which ended in January 2019;
- There is agreement with JCS officers that there should be an immediate review of the JCS CIL.
- Stroud Local Plan – Consultation on Draft Local Plan – closed 22nd January 2020. Officer concerns submitted to SDC – especially transport issues re- the significant proposed development at Sharpness;

#### **5.0 Libraries & Registration update**

##### **5.1 Library Strategy & Opening Hours**

- Plans are in place to update the 2012 Library Strategy. Staff sessions have been completed; however, there are ongoing discussions about a need for a Countywide reduction in library opening hours.

##### **5.2 Stonehouse Library**

- Stonehouse library will open in its new High Street location on Tuesday 14th April 2020. Whilst the actual opening hours have not yet been agreed we are hoping to be able to increase the weekly opening hours by an additional 6 hours. The formal launch of the library will take place on Saturday 4th July 2020.

##### **5.3 No Child Left Behind Awards**

- Cheltenham Libraries have won an award in the Cheltenham Borough Council awards for their free children's activities.

#### **6.0 Waste Management update**

##### **6.1 Joint Waste Committee**

- The four new contracts for Garden Waste Treatment commenced on 1 Feb 2020.
- The Energy from Waste visitor centre should be completed by March, when an official opening will be held. A media tour of the facility in January was successful, with local TV, radio and press in attendance.

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