

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

June/July 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:**

- [Refresh of the Local Developer User Guide](#) (Between 5 Jun 2020 and 19 Jun 2020)
- [Recommendation to Council - 2nd Review of the Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\) for Gloucestershire](#) (17 June 2020)
- [Gloucester & Sharpness Canal Towpath Upgrade Phase 3](#) (17 June 2020)
- [West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme; UK Cyber Business Park – Contract Procurement and Ancillary Orders Phases 3 & 4 and Walking and Cycling Improvements](#) (17 June 2020)
- [M5 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme; Revenue budget approval and Homes England contract conditions agreement.](#) (17 June 2020)
- [Future options to deliver the Household Recycling Centre service](#) (22 July 2020)
- [M5 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme; Commitment to use Compulsory Purchase Powers](#) (22 July 2020)
- [Food Waste Treatment Procurement and Contract Award](#) (22 July 2020)

1.2 **Pending Items not yet published on the Forward Plan:**

- Public Notice and Advertising Contract (not yet on Forward Plan)
- ITU Bus Contract Procurement (not yet on the Forward Plan)
- ULEV Strategy and Procurement of EV infrastructure services

2.0 Highways and Major Projects update

2.1 **Highways Contracts**

- Term maintenance/Professional Services - Resources operating with some limited impact from COVID19. Additional jet patching, pre-surface dressing patching and footway works all underway.
- Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Funding and Pothole Funding have been allocated by formula with a total of an additional £12.7m for Gloucestershire.
- Structural maintenance - delivery slightly behind track for 20/21 as a result of postponement of some works due to COVID19 impacts but it is anticipated that delivery for the year should still be achievable. The website shows the current schedule plus the interactive map for 20/21 works.
- Street lighting – more business as usual/capital works now underway though focus remains on emergency response and reactive repairs.

2.2 **GSWB / Llanthony Road**

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

- CPO Public Inquiry date was set for 19th May 2020; after CV-19 this was intended to be held virtually but PINS have postponed. The impact on scheme delivery timetable will be assessed as soon as a revised date is known.

2.3 A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse)

- Construction substantially complete.

2.4 A38 Canal Bridges, Whitminster

- Works progressing well.

2.5 DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund

- In May councils were invited to bid for £225m of funding for walking and cycling schemes to create space to enable social distancing by reallocating road space where necessary. For Tranche 1 schemes are likely to be temporary or “pop-up” and must be deliverable within 8 weeks. Bids for Tranche 2, later in the summer, will be for more permanent schemes.
- A briefing note was circulated to members and Districts inviting potential scheme ideas and asking districts to nominate their three top priorities. The team has been inundated with requests for measures so these are being collated and will be assessed against DfT and local criteria.
- The first three Tranche 1 schemes were rolled out in Bath Road (Cheltenham), Tewkesbury High Street and Bourton on the Water in late May, early June. A fourth, London Road (Gloucester), is under development. Learning from these pilots will be applied to later schemes.
- In early June Gloucestershire submitted a bid for Tranche 1 funding (indicative allocation £288k). A senior traffic engineer has been recruited to accelerate scheme design and implementation and develop our bid for Gloucestershire’s £1.15m indicative allocation of Tranche 2 funding.

3.0 Community Infrastructure Update

3.1 Public Transport - ITU

- Social distancing pressures on public transport are challenging all bus operators, especially in rural shire authorities. To protect the sector from collapse the council has been supporting operators by paying 90% of contract rates and concessionary scheme reimbursement whilst services have been reduced. At the same time operators have received support from the Government through the Job Retention Scheme and a Commercial Bus Services Support Grant.
- The medium term impact of COVID19 on an industry which is key to tackling climate change and improving access to essential services remains uncertain as 90% of public transport trips are made on formerly commercial services and many school bus operators traditionally rely on income from coach excursions.
- As the COVID19 Recovery grows concerns were raised regarding peak time bus service capacity. As pupils return to school, shops reopen and furloughed staff return to work bus service frequencies have been increased back to or close to former levels. However with only 20-25% of normal capacity buses become full very

quickly so people living further along routes may face being unable to board, not just at peak times. This risk should be considerably mitigated by a reduction in the 2m social distancing rules and the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport.

3.2 Network & Traffic Management and Parking

- By week 12 of the lockdown (mid/late June) traffic levels had returned to approximately 67% of pre-COVID levels. Local cycling levels were up 96% on pre-COVID levels and many local bike shops had sold out of stock.
- Following emergency changes to parking enforcement policy in April CEO patrols were temporarily reduced to one third of normal levels. Parking enforcement has since been reinstated in stages to reflect increased traffic as businesses, schools and other sectors reopen and to ensure that safety is not compromised. In the first week (22nd to 29th June) warning notices were issued for non-safety related parking offences.

4.0 Strategic Infrastructure update

4.1 A417 Missing Link

- Highways England's Road Investment Strategy 2 programme confirmed funding for the A417 Missing Link.
- Highways England have confirmed that the A417 Missing Link scheme will not be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to commence the Development Consent Order planning application process in May/June 2020. This will now affect the scheme's delivery programme. Further information is awaited.

4.2 M5 J10 / HIF bid

- After a positive funding announcement, GCC officers are working on the conditions, Heads of Terms and Assurance Framework with Homes England with the aim of getting into contract in Summer 2020, enabling drawdown on the £219.84M by late Summer / early Autumn.
- In June Cabinet approved the additional funding for the scheme. This will fund the work required to enable GCC to enter into contract with Homes England and MHCLG and ensure the scheme can continue to move forward.

4.3 M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch)

- Work continues on the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the M5 J9 & A46, to enable submission to the DfT in October 2021 discussions re- possible future funding ongoing with both Homes England and Tewkesbury BC.
- In June Cabinet approved funding to enable work on the OBC to continue

4.4 West Cheltenham / Cyber £22M

- Work has now started on site regarding phases 1 and 2 of the scheme;
- Funding approved for phases 3 and 4 of the scheme at the GFirst LEP Board meeting on 9th June 2020.

4.5 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- Following the public consultation that took place 16th January – 26th March 2020, officers are analysing the responses that were received. The Plan is scheduled for adoption in early 2021.

- The adoption of the LTP has been delayed to early 2021 to enable the implications of the Department for Transport's Decarbonisation Plan, once published late 2020, to be fully incorporated into the LTP.

4.6 Improved rail connectivity

- The Gloucestershire Rail Investment Strategy was published March 2020.
- This will now feed into the emerging review of the Local Transport Plan.
- MetroWest Phase 2 - following lobbying of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) the proposed Yate turnback option has been dropped in favour of the Gloucester extension. It is expected for this service to be incorporated into the rail service from December 2022.
- A Bristol to Birmingham (B2B) task force has been developed to promote increased connectivity for stations located on the Bristol to Birmingham rail line

4.7 Chepstow Transport Improvements

- Consultant's report outlined scheme options.
- Monmouthshire CC keen to progress the Business Case.
- GCC Lead Cabinet Members supported a GCC financial contribution of £20K (2020/21) towards Stage 2 of the Chepstow Transport Study.

4.8 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 a 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

5.1 Libraries

- The Summer Reading Challenge will be delivered by the Reading Agency using digital and online content from 6th June 2020. We are keen to ensure that we can also provide physical resources to vulnerable children or children of key workers. In order to deliver this we are working with teams from the Virtual School and Education. We are also exploring links with local food banks.
- The Innovation Lab has set up an online coding club which is a Facebook event held every Wednesday at 11am and hosted on our Youtube channel.

5.2 Registration Services

- There is a significant backlog of registration services resulting from COVID-19. Between 6th April and the end of May 914 ceremonies have been amended, cancelled or postponed. Staff are working through these in priority order with a further 70 ceremonies in June to re-arrange. Information about lifting of restrictions is awaited.
- Birth registrations – registration of births commenced in Gloucester w/c 8th June with other locations coming on line soon. There is currently a backlog of approximately 1500 babies to register.

6.0 Waste Management

- As of 27th May, all five of the county's Household Recycling Centres have reopened. All visits need to be pre-booked online and social distancing measures are in place on site.
- All waste treatment facilities including the Gloucestershire EfW, food waste and composting sites continue to accept waste.
- As of 8th June, all District Council collection services including refuse, recycling, food waste, garden waste and bulky waste collections are fully operational.

7.0 Adult Education

- The restructure of the Adult Education Service is almost completed. This will ensure that the necessary savings can be introduced before the start of the new education year (September 2020).
- Online learning is in place for community learning, skills and apprenticeship provision.
- The Local Industrial Strategy remains on hold during the Covid-19 situation.
- Work delivered across this service area will form part of the GCC Economic Recovery Proposals in respect to skills development especially for young people
- The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) has launched Wave 3 of the Careers Hubs. GFirst LEP and GCC are seeking to apply to join Wave 3 and further build on the success of the Gloucestershire Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN). CEC have already acknowledged the success of the joint working between GCC and GFirst LEP on our careers work with special schools and their students.

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