

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

May 2022

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

1.0 Decisions

Relevant forthcoming decisions, by date due:

- [Gloucestershire County Council's partnership agreement with Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council in relation to the Joint Strategic Plan.](#) Between 3 Aug 2020 and 16 May 2022
- [Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground - Strategic Planning](#) Between 18 Apr 2022 and 30 May 2022
- [Review of Community Offer provided as part of Stage 5 of the Gloucestershire delivery programme](#) Between 10 May 2022 and 24 May 2022
- [Central Gloucestershire Mass Transit Scheme - Development Funding](#) 19 May 2022
- [Severn River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan](#) Between 25 May 2022 and 14 Jun 2022
- [Scheme development funding for Strategic Transport schemes in 2022/23, including M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme and Mass Rapid Transit Scheme](#) 22 Jun 2022 by Cabinet

Pending items for publication

- M5 J9
- Road Safety Policy
- Community and Adult Skills Programme
- Library Strategy
- Stroud Library

2.0 Highways

M5 J10

- Preferred Route Announcement took place on 16th June 2021 along with associated communications and publication via GCC website.
- Land agents progressing land acquisition/negotiations in partnership with GCC Property.
- Successful bid for £35k Capacity Funding from Homes England to support local planning authorities in both their statutory and non-statutory functions in respect of the Development Consent Order process.
- Claims to date total just under £20m.
- Consultation for A38/A4019 Coombe Hill package of works have concluded and findings are being fed into next stage of design.
- Statutory Public Consultation is complete. The feedback is currently being collated in a consultation summary report for publication which will demonstrate how the feedback is being taken on board. Formal responses will also be provided to prescribed consultees' comments.

Arle Court Transport Hub – Planning application underway with a decision expected in June/July 2022.

West Cheltenham Transport Infrastructure Scheme / Cyber

- Work started on site for Phases 1 and 2 in June 2020 and is substantially completed. The Phase 3 and 4 Design and Build contract started in January 2021 and is on programme to be completed in Spring 2022. Works due to be completed before Easter.
- National Highways' safety critical works at Staverton Bridge and M5 Junction 11 are underway with Arle Court forming part of the M5J11 diversion route – with Phase 1 and 2 works virtually complete this is no longer causing a major impact.

Gloucester SW Bypass / Llanthony Road

- All premises are now owned by GCC. Work is underway to complete all utility disconnections. Planning application for change of use (part of City Business Centre to become car park for displaced parking) has now been approved. Scheme includes segregated footway and cycleway facilities that are compliant with latest government design guidance from the DfT.
- Preferred contractor in place for City Business Centre demolition contract, with surveys, accommodation works and demolition scheduled to start early in 2022
- Levelling Up Fund bid successful at £12.822m allowing the main highway works to start in Summer 2022 following some unavoidable delays to the demolition schedule.
- Funding questionnaire now submitted.

Gloucester Station Access Works (Delivery with Gloucester City Council)

- New access/egress at Metz Way now complete. Revised Bruton Way access works including additional drainage works will commence in May 2022 following confirmation of GWR license requirements.

Structures/Geotechnical Schemes

- Blakeney West – Construction works now on site (since Jan/Feb) with piling works starting at the start of May. Construction currently due to complete August 2022.
- Rushmire Hill – investigations ongoing to determine slip failure mechanism to inform design.
- Badgeworth Road – design works underway during 2021/22
- Tintern Bridge – Currently out to tender with planned start mid-June. Ongoing co-ordination with Monmouthshire CC who jointly have responsibility for the bridge.
- Walk Bridge – tendering Design and Build contract for Stroud District Council. Preliminary early contractor involvement to investigate possible construction options prior to tender process.

Ashchurch Bridge over Rail (Delivery for Tewkesbury Borough Council)

- Planning permission for the bridge has been granted. Detailed design continues (Atkins).
- Legal agreement is underway. Ground investigation completed.
- Project delivery through Design and Build contract likely.
- Works continue with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Network Rail to understand the complexities of the legal agreements required for the construction phase.
- Embankment and haul road construction works estimated for Summer 2022.

A435 Junction Improvements

- Works are underway to deliver capacity improvements associated with local housing developments with highway works now due to complete in May 2022. The project also provides some enabling works for future cycle route between Cheltenham and Bishops Cleeve.

A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve Cycleway

- Preliminary design work is now progressing of the cycle route following an initial concept design.

A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse)

- Works substantially complete. Alterations planned at Horsetrough Roundabout to improve cycling provision planned for mid 2022.

Highways Contracts

- Term maintenance (Ringway) – Fourth year of the contract has now commenced. Cyclical maintenance and defect repair performance remains on target. Defect numbers for Q4 were manageable despite seeing a slight increase post Winter. Parts of the network which have not yet been addressed with long term solutions such as resurfacing remain fragile. We are coming towards the end of our winter maintenance operations – at end April the total number of runs for the season are 20% above profile for the year.
- Professional services (Atkins) – Fourth year of contract underway.
- Bridge Inspections – investigating a risk based approach to inspection regime as opposed to calendar based approach, this will bring in to line with Safety Policy.
- Structural maintenance (Tarmac) – First year of new 4 year contract started April 2022.
- Street lighting (M Group) – Performance on key indicators remains satisfactory.
- Highway Skills Academy – Focus for 23/24 will be on the formation of a development/career path for those staff which are progressing through their apprenticeships in order that GCC retains the investment in time, funds and skills. Our first cohort of Level 4 (HNC equivalent) Apprenticeships of 11 staff have started with a second cohort planned to follow this year with the high level of interest from existing staff. Highways have also welcomed some participants from the Kickstart programme into the teams.

Highways Delivery

- Depots/property – development of strategic plan for highways depots included in 22/23 Service Plan in order to ensure facilities are fit for purpose.
- Ash die back – continued programme in 22/23 including planting programme to ensure that two trees are planted for each one felled with ash die back disease. Discussions are underway with external organisations such as National Trust and others to identify larger woodland planting schemes off the public highway.

3.0 Community & Infrastructure

DMMO Statistics: up to 14 April 2022

Total number of 'unresolved' applications:	207 (up 26)
No. of new 'min.14(1) compliant' applications received in 2022 to date	30 (21 in 2021)
Number of applications 'resolved' in 2022 to date	3 (10 in 2021)

Number of routes added to DM&S by 'other means' in 2022 to date	1 (3 in 2021)
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Number of all 'undetermined' applications:

	Undetermined	Undet-Archived	Undet-Non14(2)
No.	49 (up from 30)	52	72 (up from 64)

"Archived" applications are whereby the intended effect of the application is essentially nulled by a subsequent change in legislation, e.g. the NERC Act; "Non14(2)" applications have not been 'fully made' but are still valid applications in terms of needing determination.

Number of all unresolved 'determined' applications:

	Apps at publication/ confirmation stage	Apps with unresolved objections	
		Submitted to SoS	Awaiting submission
No.	0	0	34

Recent CROWC determinations:

Last 2 CROW Committees	1 App on 2 Dec - decision to make Order for additional FP 1 App on 29 March - decision to make Order for additional FP
Next CROW Committee	16 May 2022 - Application re: Spinney Court, Brimscombe

DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund

- Tranche 2: Works on an LTN 1/20 (Department for Transport cycle design standards) compliant cycle route along the B4063 between the M5 overbridge and Pheasant Lane are close to completion. Work started in April on the adjacent section from Pheasant Lane to Arle Court.

ITU Public Transport and School Transport

- In March Cabinet noted the council's draft Enhanced Partnership agreement which forms the basis for the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Following a disappointing decision by the DfT not to fund Gloucestershire's BSIP investment plan (and to fund only 30% of BSIP bids) the cabinet member has written to the DfT to reiterate the council's commitment to public transport and requesting constructive feedback on our BSIP submission. The council has received DfT funding for a three-year officer post.
- The DfT decision and timing, six months before the DfT is due to end Bus Recovery Grant, are expected to destabilise commercial and subsidised bus services in the county. These were already badly weakened by the financial impact of Covid on passenger levels (down 30%), fuel prices at record levels and driver wage growth. In the short-term officers have identified options to help reassure operators, using an underspend in concessionary fare support to provide an inflationary contract price uplift, to maintain concessionary fares reimbursement and to avoid the withdrawal of the Arle Court Park & Ride. However, this is unlikely to be of sufficient scale and duration to address longer term structural challenges so we must prepare for more early contract terminations by bus operators, sharp rises in tender prices and reductions to popular commercial services which have previously been resilient. Whilst some mitigation could be achieved by increasing GCC funding through the MTFs process service reductions will reduce the county's economic attractiveness to investors and limit progress with reducing transport carbon emissions.

Network Management (Road Safety and Parking)

- A cabinet member decision will be taken to consult on a draft Road Safety Policy, including aspirational Vision Zero targets to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on Gloucestershire's roads. This follows the recent Council decision to invest £550k in 2022/23 in community road safety measures.
- Our ULEV Programme Manager has submitted an Expression of Interest to the DfT LEVI fund for a £2.1m package of EV charge point investment in rural areas. Meetings are also underway with our provider, Connected Kerb, to develop the 2022/23 workplan for delivery of the first 200 charge points.

4.0 Strategic Infrastructure

B4063 / A40 Highways England Cycling Scheme – Cheltenham to Gloucester

- The original HE scheme, in order to fulfil funding criteria, needed to be completed by March 2020. This, however, was subsequently extended to construction starting in 2021, as part of the RIS2 process. GCC officers continue to engage with HE's Route Manager to attempt to ensure everything is 'joined up'.
- GCC has decided to take over the detailed design of this project, with the design fully underway with the East part of the route designed and consulted upon in Spring 2021, an independent audit has now been completed by a leading industry expert to ensure we provide the best possible facility we can within the constraints. The audit findings have led to extensive enhancement of the provision, which have been heavily endorsed by Sustrans to the extent that they are due to become a major funding provider for the scheme. The revised proposals for the East part of the route between the M5 overbridge and Arle Court have now been published on the County Council's website reflecting the feedback received to date.
- Works started in October 2021, delivering the east part of the route first between the M5 and Pheasant Lane which is expected to be completed in Spring 2022 and will be directly followed by subsequent phases with the next section between Pheasant Lane and Arle Court now tendered and contract awarded ahead of a Spring 2022 start.
- This scheme will have the key advantage of directly linking the project to the emerging £22M West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS) providing a continuous link between Gloucester and Cheltenham rail station once complete and include the recently successfully delivered Emergency Active Travel Scheme on London Road in Gloucester. The GFirst LEP Board, in December 2020, agreed that any future underspend on the £22M WCTIS would be ringfenced to the B4063 cycle scheme. Prior to this, in November 2020, £864k was secured from an EATF Tranche 2 bid from the Department for Transport (DfT), which will part fund a section of the works. National Highways have now allocated £5 million to the construction of this scheme and Sustrans have allocated a further £1 million to the delivery of the route.
- The County Council has recently successfully secured DfT Levelling Up funding to extend the route through Gloucester City Centre and Gloucester Docks providing linkage to the Gloucester Canal Towpath.

M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch)

- The Strategic Outline Business Case for the M5 J9 / A46 scheme was submitted to the DfT in January 2020;
- Positive Government announcement in March 2020, stating that the scheme should progress to the next stage;

- This is to progress to the Outline Business Case – the cost of which is likely to be £2M-£3M – part of the funding came from the approved £4M GCC funding for 'business case development' in 2020/21;
- The progression of the scheme was considered and approved by GCC Cabinet on 24th March 2021;
- Discussions re- possible future funding ongoing with both Homes England and Tewkesbury BC due to the links to the emerging 'garden town'
- Ongoing discussions with HE to secure approval of options for Junction 9;
- Detailed HE feedback has been received and is currently being analysed by officers and Atkins.
- Baroness Vere has confirmed support for the project in November 2021.
- Cabinet report (re- future expenditure on M5 J9 / A46) programmed for 22nd June 2022.
- Non statutory public consultation anticipated in September 2022.

A417 Missing Link

- Preferred Route Announcement (Route 30) made March 2019;
- Further public consultation took place in Autumn 2019;
- A supportive officer-level response to this consultation (a joint response from CDC, TBC and GCC) was sent on 8th November 2019;
- Positive announcement in March 2020 stating that the scheme has secured funding and should progress to DCO;
- Revised proposals were subject to a further public consultation, which started on 12th October 2020. A detailed GCC officer response was sent, meeting the external deadline of 12th November 2020;
- The DCO planning application was submitted in June 2021 and a Public Examination is currently being held by the Planning Inspectorate;
- An Individual Cabinet Member decision in December 2021 has authorised the formal delegation to officers the authority to represent the Council through the DCO process. This is ongoing.

Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- The LTP was adopted at Full Council on 17th March 2021.

Chepstow Transport Improvements

- Consultant's report outlined scheme options;
- Monmouthshire CC keen to progress to Full Business Cases;
- GCC Lead Cabinet Members supported a GCC financial contribution of £20K (2020/21) towards Stage 2 of the Chepstow Transport Study;
- A further GCC financial contribution of £30K for 2021/22 has been made to Monmouthshire CC;
- Meeting with relevant MPs held on 28th January 2022.

Cinderford

- FoDDC yet to secure planning permission and funding for proposed extension of phase one of the road;
- A Section 73 amendment to vary the existing planning permission was submitted in April 2021 and is awaiting determination by FoDDC;
- FoDDC held a Cinderford Northern Quarter Scrutiny Inquiry in November 2021, with GCC senior officer input;
- Until planning and funding for the road is in place, no further action for GCC.

Local Plans / JCS / CIL

- Review of JCS now underway following an 'Issues and Options' consultation which ended in January 2019;
- The JCS Reg.18 public consultation has now been delayed to Spring 2023;
- Progress has been made with the JCS authorities to review the JCS CIL – consultants are now undertaking this task in liaison with GCC officers and stakeholders;
- GCC education and library contributions continue to be challenged and declined by some District Councils and developers – these are in the process of being reviewed by GCC;
- GCC continues to not receive a penny of CIL from any of the JCS authorities;
- Stroud Local Plan – Consultation on Draft Local Plan – closed 22nd January 2020. Significant officer-level concerns submitted to SDC – especially transport issues re- the significant proposed development at Whaddon and Sharpness. Another SDC consultation took place with additional possible housing sites, which was responded to in December 2020. The most recent public consultation stage (pre-submission draft consultation) ended on 21st July 2021. GCC officer comments were submitted prior to the deadline. The Plan has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. GCC officers and consultants will be actively involved in the future Public Examination and have secured approval to do so.
- Cotswold Local Plan – 'Issues and Options' consultation recently ended – the deadline for comments was 20th March 2022. GCC officers submitted representations prior to the deadline on 18th March 2022.
- Forest of Dean Local Plan – Issues and Options consultation ended on 31st October 2019. FoDDC consulted on a 'preferred option' – the closing date for comments was 29th January 2021. GCC officers commented before this deadline.

Fastershire

- **Review of household and business grants** - The review of existing Fastershire grants offered within the county has concluded. The intention is for the updated grants to be launched this summer.
- **Project Gigabit** - The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review identified that approximately 20% of the country is unlikely to be commercially viable for gigabit-capable network rollout within a reasonable time frame. BDUK are working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 but will seek to accelerate rollout further to get as close to 100% as soon as possible. BDUK launched an Open Market Review in Gloucestershire on the 6 April. The outcome of this review will inform which Project Gigabit procurement route BDUK is expected to take within the county. GCC will be informed of the outcomes of this review later this year.

5.0 Libraries & Registration

Libraries

- The public consultation on the proposal to move Stroud Library closes on Monday 25th April, with the current responses indicating that the majority of people who have responded are supportive of the move.

Registration

- No new update.

6.0 Waste Management

- An invitation to tender for the contract for the sale of electricity generated by the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste facility at Javelin Park was issued in February. The deadline for submitting an outline proposal was 18th March and four responses were received. Three companies have been selected to take forward to the negotiation stage, which will run over the spring/summer. All energy sales from the Gloucestershire EfW have now been fixed until Oct 23 (the end of the existing contract term with our current off-taker, EDF). The aim is to commence the new agreement by Sept 22, so that the council can forward sell electricity when considered best value to do so.
- The HRCs moved to their longer summer opening hours of 9am-5pm (6 days per week) on 27th March. Next day appointments are available at each of the five HRC sites.
- DEFRA is consulting on preventing local authorities from charging for the disposal of DIY waste at HRCs. It has also issued a call for evidence on booking systems at HRCs. GCC does not charge for DIY wastes but does operate a booking system.
- The new contracts for the various waste streams collected for reuse, recycling and recovery at the HRCs commenced smoothly on 1st April.
- The “Repair and Reuse” communications campaign that ran throughout March has now completed. There was an estimated total campaign reach of over 1.9 million. April’s campaign will focus on reducing fly-tipping and litter.
- A draft LCM Decision report has been published (on 19th April) to extend the Residual Waste Transfer Contract with Grundon for 3 years from 5th July 2022. No representations have been received, so the decision statement should be published on 28th April.

7.0 Employment and Skills

Adult Education Service

- New 4-year subcontract framework documents now completed and ready for cabinet review in June.
- RoAPT application has been submitted and we will know the outcome by the end of April 2022.
- Centre computers and learner laptops have now all been upgraded to Windows 10 to allow us to deliver the most up to date ICT courses. All learner computers now have the Pearson online exam software installed as well as the BCS software. These allow us to deliver the new level 3 BCS qualifications that we have been funded to deliver this year. We can also now run online exams instead of just paper exams which will really help us compete with other local providers. Currently having some teething issues with the software updates but once working correctly we have our first level 3 cohort starting this week.
- We have been awarded direct claim status with our awarding bodies for all of the qualifications we deliver this year, this means we can directly claim learner certificates as soon as we know they have passed, making the process quicker for learners and more cost effective overall.
- New Health and Social Care IQA/Assessor/Tutor (Fixed Term Contract) has been recruited to enable us to deliver Health and Social Care accredited qualifications next academic year, currently in the process of developing curriculum, gaining awarding body accreditation and speaking to local employers to ascertain the needs for specific areas of training. New catalogue of Health and Social care CPD and online courses are now available to add value to our offer and to increase our full cost recovery income.

- Working with the Skills and Employment Hub to build working relationships, supporting programmes with specific employability and wellbeing training.
- Recent whole team curriculum meetings concentrating on Ofsted preparation have included the Skills and Employment hub team to ensure integration of both teams and consistent message to our learners/customers across both services.
- Attending job fairs and open days with the skills hub staff to promote AdEd and skills and employment hub joint working.
- Support the hub with a variety of workshops and training, including Forwards Job Clubs, Moving Forwards and various other employability programmes.
- Shared AdEd/skills hub tutor has started and is settling in well, she will be carrying out an IAG role within AdEd and a tutor role within the hub and will ensure our RARPA policy is carried out and has focus with our learners.
- Learner surveys are taking place currently to help us gain vital feedback that will help shape the curriculum review for 2022/2023.
- Recently set up a mobile library within the centre to promote joining the library and literacy with our learners and the hub customers.
- ESOL provision now the chosen provider for all Ukrainian's coming through the Homes for Ukraine scheme – increasing our provision significantly, we have moved key staff into this delivery area to cover the increase in need for a flexible delivery to meet this demand.

Skills and Employment Hub

- The Hub is now establishing itself with lots of interest from both internal and external partners and the feedback about the concept is all positive.
- Partners have started to use the Hub and we have held a couple of open days for partners and Social Care staff to come and have a look to understand more about what we are doing. 17 partners attended our first coffee morning but sadly only 5 people came to our Social Care open day so we will be picking this up with Managers.
- Performance April 1 2021 – 31 March 2022
 - Paid Job Outcomes - 80 (72 were for Forwards (disabilities) the remainder Hub (since January)
 - Total of 248 referrals last year – 112 into the Hub since September 2021
- We are working closely with Proud to Care to promote care jobs across the business and wider sector
- Gloucestershire's first Inclusive Jobs Fair will take place in May which will be run by GEM and the Hub utilising the space of the whole building including Ad Ed and Blackfriars
- Coordinating with other "Hubs" eg Young Glos to establish pathways and eliminate "competition" and working with Adult Education/Libraries to establish a robust skills and employment journey

Employment Programmes

- Our Forwards programme for Disabilities continues to operate smoothly and we now have all staff in post
- We are still recruiting for some posts and similar to other business areas and other employers struggling to fill vacancies so some of the programmes and the Hub itself is still understaffed
- We have recruited a BME Research Officer who will be working with young people from BME communities to understand their experiences pre, during and post covid in education and employment to help us understand why there are higher levels of

NEETs in this group and to help us make changes in the system to aid their progression

- Our ICS programme of work will now start with all three posts recruited. This will look at addressing health inequalities for those at risk of long-term unemployment and create opportunities for young people across the ICS business areas including work experience, supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships.
- We also have some additional funding to provide ongoing in work support to Care Leavers and NEETs going into work to help them sustain their employment and an IAG Adviser working with NEETs and Care Leavers and the Hub providing targeted careers advice.

The Gloucestershire GEM Project

- Over the next few months we will be putting in place close-down procedures for GEM which will include as a priority compliance checking all programme documentation to mitigate financial risk to GCC and partners.
- An interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report has now been produced with a final report due in the Autumn 2022.

Kickstart

- Now that Kickstart has finished in terms of referrals into the programme we continue to work with employers to ensure those young people left are supported.
- We are completing an evaluation of the project and this will be shared soon.

GIS Healthcare

- The supported employment element of GIS transferred to us in September. We are currently looking at how the DWP grant can be utilised more effectively to help more disabled people into work including looking at external host employers.

- REPORT END -