

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

October 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 Road Safety Policy](#) 23 Nov 2022 by Cabinet
- [Passenger Transport Transformation Programme](#) 23 Nov 2022 by Cabinet
- [Library Strategy 2023-2028](#) 23 Nov 2022 by Cabinet
- [Approval to spend the allocated funding from Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee \(GEGJC\) taken from SEDF \(Business Rates retention\) on Mass Transit development work](#) Between 11 Oct 2022 and 25 Nov 2022
- [Gloucestershire County County's Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement \(2021/22\)](#) Between 12 Dec 2022 and 16 Dec 2022
- [Introduction of new digital and broadband grant schemes across Gloucestershire](#) Between 22 Nov 2022 and 31 Dec 2022 by Leader of the Council

Pending items for publication

- Public Transport – Network Review
- Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan annual report

2.0 Highways

M5 J10

- Land agents progressing land acquisition/negotiations in partnership with GCC Property.
- Successful bids for Capacity Funding from HoE to support LPAs in the DCO process.
- Statutory Public Consultation complete, report published summer 2022. Recent targeted consultation was positive and now concluded.
- Procurement for main works contract - Invitation to Tender was issued on 18th October with contract award Feb/March 2023.
- Work continues on the draft DCO documents, along with engagement with stakeholders on the Statements of Common Ground.
- Arle Court Transport Hub – Enabling works nearing completion. Kier Construction now engaged under Design and Build contract for the MSCP - value engineering underway.
- A38/A4019 Coombe Hill – awaiting planning application determination - likely planning committee date is now January 2023. Land acquisition and negotiations continue.
- A4019/Link Road - Work continues on detailed design, alongside land acquisition and local engagement.

West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme

- Wider walking and cycling improvements work are now substantially completed on Hubble Road and design is ongoing for further cycling and walking enhancements in the surrounding St Marks area with a view to delivering in 2023.

Gloucester SW Bypass / Llanthony Road

- Works commenced in July 2022 with an expected completion of late Summer 2023.
- The planning application judicial review challenge period has elapsed and work can now progress against the original scheme programme with potential refinements to the scheme broadly agreed with businesses.

Gloucester Station Access Works (Delivery with Gloucester City Council)

- New access/egress at Metz Way and Bruton Way including additional drainage works are now complete with an opening ceremony undertaken with Richard Graham for the Bruton Way works.

A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve Cycleway

- Funding has been secured from a successful DfT Active Travel Fund which means the scheme is now fully funded and preliminary design work is now progressing of the cycle route.

A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse)

- Proposed 30mph speed limit restriction currently being consulted upon for Horsetrough Roundabout.

B4063 Cheltenham to Gloucester Cycle Scheme

- The scheme links with the recently completed new cycle and walking infrastructure delivered as part of the WCTIS project and ultimately will form part of the 26 miles of cycling and walking infrastructure between Stroud and Bishops Cleeve. GCC successfully secured DfT Levelling Up and Active Travel Funding to extend the route through Gloucester City Centre and Gloucester Docks and bringing the total funding available for the cycle spine to in excess of £40 million. In addition, £78,947 has been allocated by the DfT to undertake a feasibility study for a Mini Holland scheme in West and North-West Cheltenham.
- Construction on the Pheasant Lane to Arle Court section is due to be completed by the end of this year. Works awarded to Knights Brown for section between the M5 and Elmbridge Court. Work is being coordinated with National Highways works at Brookfield Road and Bamfurlong Lane Bridges.
- Consultation is currently underway on the Elmbridge Court to Estcourt Road section of the route, two public share events were held in September at the Growth Hub, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls campus with proposals generally well received.
- Design continues on Estcourt Road roundabout, London Road and Gloucester City Centre.

Structures/Geotechnical Schemes

- Blakeney West – Construction ongoing – piling operations taking longer than anticipated. Target completion is Autumn/Winter 2022.
- Tintern Bridge – Construction ongoing and progressing well.
- Walk Bridge – working with Stroud District Council.
- Charlton Hill – Planned to be on site 23/24, ecological surveys being completed.

Ashchurch Bridge over Rail (Delivery for Tewkesbury Borough Council)

- Planning permission for the bridge has been granted.
- Detailed design being undertaken by GCC in parallel.

Highways Contracts/Delivery

- Term maintenance (Ringway) – Fourth year of the contract has now commenced. Cyclical maintenance and defect repair performance remains on target.
- Professional services (Atkins) – Fourth year of contract underway.
- Structural maintenance (Tarmac) – First year of new 4-year contract started April 2022. Delivery of capital resurfacing programme well under way and on track.
- Street lighting (M Group) – Performance on key indicators remains satisfactory.
- Depots/property – ongoing programme of minor improvement works across depots.
- Ash die back – latest inspections indicate that the disease is spreading quickly and risk is increasing.

3.0 Traffic and Transport

Recent DMMO Statistics

The DMMO team is currently fully resourced following the appointment of additional staff funded in this year's budget. It will take some time for new starters to gain the skills and experience needed to manage DMMO casework.

Total number of 'unresolved' applications:	211
No. of new 'min.14(1) compliant' applications received in 2022 to date	34 (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	3 (3 in 2021)

Number of all 'undetermined' applications, as at 21 October 2022:

	Undetermined	Undet-Archived	Undet-Non14(2)
No.	50 (down 1 from last)	52	72

("Archived" applications are whereby the intended effect of the application is essentially nulled by a subsequent change in legislation (for example, 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, as at 21 October 2022:

	Apps at publication/ confirmation stage	Apps with unresolved objections	
		Submitted to SoS	Awaiting submission
No.	2	1 - on 30/6/222	34

Recent CROWC determinations:

Last 3 CROW Committees	1 App on 29 March - decision to make Order for additional FP - objection received 1 App on 16 May - decision to make Order for additional FP - objection received, but now withdrawn - Order now being confirmed. 1 App on 4 Oct 2022 - decision to make Order for additional RB and FP - Made Order being published.
Next CROW Committee	March 2023 (Dec.2022 cancelled, as staff working on Orders and Internal Panel cases this quarter.)

Public Transport

- Since 1st January 2022 the Integrated Transport Unit has reprocured contracts affecting around 40 subsidised bus services representing some 40% of all subsidised bus routes. This has been necessary as contracts have expired naturally but also because several bus operators have terminated contracts early. New contract prices have been significantly higher than old ones.
- The council has continued paying DfT Bus Revenue Grant payments to all local bus operators in order to maintain the county's bus network and allow time for passenger levels to recover from the lows experienced during Covid. In September the DfT announced an extension of Bus Revenue Grant (BRG) to councils from 1st October to 31st December 2022. During this period the grant will be paid at existing levels. However, from 1st January to 31st March 2023 funding will only be allocated to councils in areas with greatest need.
- This summer the council has also made an 8% inflationary award to its public transport contractors to help stabilise the network in the face of sharp rises in fuel and labour costs.
- Despite this support, in September Stagecoach announced its plans to reduce or withdraw several commercial services and to terminate several contracts it holds with the council for subsidised bus services. This was due to driver shortages and comes after several months of poor service reliability and unprecedented levels of cancelled journeys that have caused significant disruption to bus users across the county. The dates when these services will change or stop have been pushed back after the council challenged Stagecoach for providing insufficient notice. This notice is essential for giving the council time to tender for replacement services and bus operators time to respond with bids.
- Stagecoach's decision significantly worsens the council's underlying budget pressures. Whilst some one-off revenue funding (from government and from concessionary fares savings) is available even this will be depleted rapidly. Even with additional MTFs funding, which cannot be assumed, the subsidy levels for many services are very hard to justify and public consultation on cutting some routes may be necessary in parallel with the budget consultation process.
- Last November the government issued guidance to councils on paying concessionary fares during the Covid recovery. This included measures such as stepping down reimbursement by 5% every other month until it aligns with actual passenger levels. Currently we pay Stagecoach 90% of the pre-Covid level of concessionary fares reimbursement. Our data shows that actual trip levels are closer to 65-70%. A further reduction in payments would carry risks however if the government's funding settlement is low it may be necessary to do reduce our reimbursement levels and to reallocate the savings to the bus subsidy budget.

Network Management (Road Safety Partnership and Parking)

- During the summer the council consulted on a draft Road Safety Policy including a Safe Systems approach to improving road safety, the international Vision Zero aspiration by 2050 and an interim target to halve the number of people killed and seriously injured on Gloucestershire's roads by 2032. The consultation, which ended in September, attracted over 400 responses and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the draft proposals at its September meeting. Cabinet will consider a report on the Policy at its meeting in November.
- By the end of August some 109 parishes and community groups had applied for over 200 measures to improve local safety in phase one of the £600k Community Safety Fund. These measures include community speedwatch cameras, speed surveys, 20 is plenty stickers and Road Safety Officer advice. A second phase has launched

between 10th October 2022 and 31st January 2023. Officers will update senior management and members on phase one delivery over the coming weeks.

- In September, as part of our green Fleet Replacement programme, six electric charge points were installed in Quayside car park at Shire Hall and six Nissan Leaf EVs and one Hyundai Ioniq hybrid were delivered for use by the Edge of Care team. 37 GCC sites, including fire stations, have been assessed for the phased installation of charge points that will be needed as we upgrade the council's fleet to electric and ULEV vehicles.
- All the council's on street pay and display machines (around 160) in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Cirencester have now been upgraded this summer and autumn to take contactless payment. This gives customers easier ways to pay and makes the service more efficient as we no longer have to pay for cash collection.
- Following cabinet approval, currently out to public consultation on Moving Traffic Enforcement powers. This ends on 18th November. All feedback will be reviewed and analysed before applying for the powers to the DfT by the deadline of mid-January 2023. At present, the DfT envisage that successful applications will be granted powers in spring 2023.
- Kingsholm and East of Cheltenham parking review areas have completed formal consultation. Based on feedback from the public, each scheme has resulted in a handful of modifications, which will be consulted on over the coming weeks. Build due Spring 2023.
- Parking Annual report for 21/22 now published on GCC webpages.
- Following cabinet approval, officers have shared draft contracts with Chipside for the 7+3 uncompleted call off contract award.

4.0 Planning and Economic Development

B4063 Cheltenham to Gloucester Cycle Scheme

- The original scheme funded from National Highways' Designated Funds scheme reverted to Gloucestershire County Council in Summer/Autumn 2020. At that stage only £5 million was available to deliver a shared use footway/cycleway between Gloucester and Cheltenham. Since then significant upgrades have been undertaken to make the scheme compliant with the DfT's latest guidance by segregating cyclists and pedestrians wherever possible. The scheme links with the recently completed new cycle and walking infrastructure delivered as part of the WCTIS project and ultimately will form part of the 26 miles of cycling and walking infrastructure between Stroud and Bishop's Cleeve.
- The County Council has successfully secured DfT Levelling Up Funding to extend the route through Gloucester City Centre and Gloucester Docks and bringing the total funding available for the cycle spine to in excess of £40 million.
- Construction works began in October 2021 at the east extent of the project, with the M5 to Pheasant Lane section complete and the Pheasant Lane to Arle Court section due to complete by the end of the year. Works have recently been tendered between the M5 and Elmbridge Court with works on the easterly part of this route now underway and the remainder due to commence in late 2022. Work is being closely coordinated with National Highways' works at Brookfield Road and Bamfurlong Lane Bridges.
- Consultation is currently underway on the Elmbridge Court to Estcourt Road section of the route. Two public share events were held in September 2022 at the Growth Hub, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls campus with proposals generally well received.

- Design work is continuing on the Estcourt Road Roundabout, London Road and Gloucester City Centre parts of the route.

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;
- GCC Cabinet report (re- future expenditure on M5 J9 / A46) was considered and approved on 22nd June 2022.
- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) submitted to DfT on 16th September 2022.
- An external Gateway assessment of the project recommended that the options analysis be refined further and the numbers of potential route options reduced. Officers have, therefore, with the support of NH and DfT, adopted this recommendation.
- Public consultation is now anticipated in 2023.

Fastershire

- **Fastershire Partnership Agreement** – Discussions with Herefordshire Council regarding the Fastershire Project are ongoing and will conclude early next year where it is anticipated that an updated Fastershire Partnership Agreement will be formally agreed by each authority.
- **Project Gigabit** – Discussions with BDUK are ongoing regarding the preferred procurement route for the delivery of Project Gigabit across the county. BDUK will manage the procurement process which is set to start 2023/24 with an anticipated contract start date commencing in 2024/25.
- **New grant schemes** – Officers are reviewing the introduction of a revised set of grant schemes intended to support households in Gloucestershire that do not have access to superfast broadband services. This could include changes to the existing Fastershire Community Grant Scheme, the introduction of a revised Business Grant Scheme and a new Digital Household Grant scheme. It is anticipated that the revised grant offer will be implemented early 2023.

A417 Missing Link

- Preferred Route Announcement (Route 30) made March 2019;
- The DCO planning application was submitted in June 2021 and the Planning Inspectorate's Public Examination concluded on 16th May 2022;
- The Planning Inspectorate has (in August 2022) made a recommendation of decision to the Secretary of State for Transport. A final decision is expected to be made in November 2022.

Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- The LTP was adopted at Full Council on 17th March 2021. A review of the LTP is currently being considered. Government guidance is currently awaited.

Chepstow Transport Improvements

- Consultant's report outlined scheme options;
- GCC Lead Cabinet Members supported a GCC financial contribution of £20K (2020/21) towards Stage 2 of the Chepstow Transport Study, with a further GCC financial contribution of £30K for 2021/22 made to Monmouthshire CC;
- Supporting letter sent to Monmouthshire CC in August 2022 and a further meeting is scheduled for later this year.

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 / JSP / CIL

- Review of Joint Strategic Plan (JSP – formerly known as the JCS) now underway following an ‘Issues and Options’ consultation which ended in January 2019;
- The JSP Reg.18 public consultation has now been delayed to June/July 2023;
- Progress has been made with the JSP 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 JSP authorities and Cotswold District Council;
- Bids and Expressions of Interest have been submitted to Stroud District Council to secure CIL funding in 2023/24;
- 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. A further 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. The Forest of Dean District Local Plan Second Preferred Option was recently subject to public consultation (ending 7th October 2022). GCC officers formally responded prior to the deadline.

5.0 Libraries & Registration

Libraries

- An additional two Innovation Labs (Cheltenham and Tewkesbury) have launched successfully and since the launches have attracted new members. All 6 labs are now operating countywide with a lot of interest from the public and other partners.
- Libraries have launched their Warm and Welcome programme as part of GCC’s support hub and will be providing advice and guidance, additional activities, homework clubs and warm drinks over the winter period.
- The library service had a very successful Summer Reading Challenge held over the school holidays. 6,928 children took part in the physical offer in libraries with 590 children joining the library to participate. In addition, 654 children joined the Reading

Agencies digital programme (with the national average joiners being 227), making Gloucestershire the 9th highest authority for sign-ups in the country. A total of 1,331 Summer Reading Challenge packs were gifted to vulnerable children with 156 being gifted through the Virtual School and 1,175 through Foodbanks.

Registration

- No update for Registration.

6.0 Waste Management

- A contract has been awarded to EDF for the sale of electricity generated by the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility at Javelin Park. All energy sales from the Gloucestershire EfW have been fixed until Oct 23 (the end of the existing contract term, also with EDF). With the new agreement in place the council has forward sold electricity for Winter 23 (Oct 23 – Mar 24), Summer 2024 (Apr 24 – Oct 24) and Winter 2024 (Oct 24 – March 25)
- Next day appointments are available at each of the five HRC sites. The improvements to the website appointments booking platform that have allowed same day bookings to be made are proving popular, with around a quarter of appointments now being booked on the day.
- Fieldwork for the annual HRC customer satisfaction survey is taking place this month. This will include questions on continued use of the booking system together with questions on satisfaction with facilities and staff. A report will be available in December.
- A public engagement campaign on the reducing and recycling food waste is running through November in partnership with the district councils. The campaign aims to reduce food waste and also help people save money by making best use of the food they buy.
- The engagement campaign developed by the team on reducing plastic waste earlier in the year has been shortlisted for a local government communications award

Sustainability/Climate Change

- Preparations for the next tree planting season (Oct to Mar) are underway, with around 80,000 planting opportunities currently identified.
- The Team has been successful in securing a funding award of some £150k from the DEFRA Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund. This will fund two additional members of staff to support the council's ambitious tree planting programme. This funding is in addition to the Forestry Commission Local Authority Treescapes Fund award of £284k reported last month to fund the planting and maintenance of around 17,000 trees.
- The Climate Change Strategy annual report and action plan update is scheduled for December Cabinet and will be considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November. A first draft has been circulated to officers for comment.

Travellers Service

- New electricity meters are to be installed at the Travellers sites, which will help reduce the risk of fraudulent use and make it easier for residents to apply funds to their pre-pay accounts. An invitation to tender has been issued through the Supplying the South West Portal.

7.0 Employment and Skills

Co-Ordination of E & S Priorities in Gloucestershire

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

- Being developed by Business West. We are contributing to this work with data, market intelligence and contacts.

Careers Support

- Careers Hub – Interim management arrangements start 1st November. We are exploring closer links and co-ordination between the Careers Hub and the GCC E&S Hub.
- National Careers Service (NCS) – we are working with SeeTec Pluss to clarify customer journeys and referral arrangements between Adult Education, the Careers Hub, the E & S Hub and SeeTec Pluss.

Social Value

- Working with Cheltenham Borough Council to identify, share and embed good practice.

'Green'/sustainable skills

- PC attended the October meeting of Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to contribute to the discussion on green skills and jobs. This topic will be explored further at the November meeting and an action plan developed.

Adult Education Service

- Health and Social Care courses being rolled out plus Apprenticeship offer for employers. Local employer interest is high, and a Sector Based Work Academy Level 1 course is being set up in collaboration with Proud to Care and the E & S Hub
- First Mental Health First Aid courses (1 day) run successfully, and half day courses to suit employers being rolled out.
- Weekly career café run to support people with job applications, job searching and career development. Working closely with the hub team to deliver these sessions to ensure both teams work collaboratively to meet our customer needs.
- ESOL provision continues to be in high demand – whole year targets have been increased due to already hitting our whole year enrolments in the first term.

Employment & Skills Hub

Employment Programmes

- 381 referrals since 1 October 2022 into the Employment and Skills Hub
- Still some issues around staff recruitment – particularly the Step Forwards (Care Leavers) post is difficult to recruit into
- Contracts will be issued in November to VCS organisations that have been successful in the EOI process to deliver the Employment and Skills Hub Outreach (ESHO) Project across Gloucestershire. ESHO will replace GEM supporting people who are economically inactive as GEM finishes in December 2022 and this will increase Hub coverage across the county as well as increasing capacity.

- The Gloucestershire Joint Commissioning Partnership Executive (JCPE) has signed off just over £1m of funding for the Hub to develop, deliver and commission projects to:
 - o Address health inequalities for people who are at risk of long-term economic activity with a focus on areas of highest deprivation across Gloucestershire
 - o Provide additional support to young people with barriers to entering the labour market including in work support, school support and mentoring for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET
 - o Work with Integrated Care System (ICS) business areas to open up opportunities for paid work, work experience etc for young people and adults working with the E&S Hub
- The DWP-funded Local Supported Employment (LSE) Project will commence on the 1st of November 2022. This will support an additional 60 people with complex learning disabilities/and or autism over the next 2 years.
- In October, the Employment and Skills Hub hosted a visit from Julia Gault – Head of the DWP’s Work and Health Unit. Julia visited Gloucestershire to look into how we have developed our inclusive employment provision, how we link with education and health, and she also visited GIS – her first ever visit to a Supported Business – an area of work which she has responsibility for. Her feedback on the success of our provision was very positive and gives us an opportunity to feed ideas into future policy decisions.

The Gloucestershire GEM Project

- Referrals are now all being channelled through the Employment and Skills Hub and achieving work is underway.
- The GEM celebration event is taking place on 17th November at Gloucester Rugby Club and provides an opportunity to look back over the successes of and learnings from the project.

- REPORT END -