

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

March 2023

1.0 Upcoming decisions

Relevant forthcoming decisions, by date due:

- [Procurement of new vans for Gloucestershire Industrial Services \(GIS\)](#) | 29 March 2023 by Cabinet | Councillor Kathy Williams
- [A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve Cycle track – Contract Procurement](#) | 29 March 2023 by Cabinet | Councillor David Gray
- [Transport Business Case development 2023/24: M5 Junction 9/A46 \(Ashchurch\) transport scheme & Mass rapid Transit transport scheme](#) | 29 March 2023 by Cabinet | Councillor David Gray
- [Gloucestershire Cycle Spine: Gloucester City Centre – Contract Procurement](#) | 29 March 2023 by Cabinet | Councillor David Gray
- [Addressing Health Inequalities and widening participation across the ICS – Employment and Skills](#) | Between 14 February and 31 March 2023 by Cabinet Member – Education, Skills and Bus Transport | Councillor Philip Robinson
- [Extension of the Fastershire Partnership agreement with Herefordshire Council to 31 March 2024](#) | Between 27 Mar 2023 and 11 Apr 2023 by Leader of the Council | Councillor Mark Hawthorne

2.0 Highways

M5 J10

- Land agents progressing land acquisition/negotiations in partnership with GCC Property.
- Procurement for main works contract with contract award planned for March 2023.
- Work continues on the draft DCO documents.
- Arle Court Transport Hub – 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

- Work substantially complete.
- Some small-scale interventions planned for later this year with design ongoing for St. Marks area as part of ATF4 bid.

Gloucester SW Bypass / Llanthony Road

- Works commenced in July 2022 with an expected completion of late Summer 2023.

A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve Cycleway

- Review undertaken with Sustrans on preliminary design, awaiting Active Travel England review.

A419 Junction Improvements (Stonehouse)

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

B4063 Cheltenham to Gloucester Cycle Scheme

- 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 recently completed on the Elmbridge Court to Estcourt Road section of the route with proposals generally well received.
- Design for Estcourt Road roundabout being developed.
- Local concerns raised about volume of works on B4063 affecting residents.

Structures/Geotechnical Schemes

- Blakeney West – Works on site complete and road reopened.
- Tintern Bridge – Construction ongoing and progressing well. Completion Easter 2023.
- Walk Bridge – working with Stroud District Council. Aiming for construction 2024 with ecology surveys and mitigation in 2023.
- Charlton Hill – Tenders received and work awarded. Planned to be on site March 2023, with public share event on 2nd March. Programmed to be off site by Autumn 2023 to co-ordinate with A417 Missing Link works.

Ashchurch Bridge over Rail (Delivery for Tewkesbury Borough Council)

- Planning permission for the bridge has been granted.

Highways Contracts/Delivery

- Term maintenance (Ringway) – Fourth year of the contract has now commenced. Cyclical maintenance and defect repair performance remains on target. Currently high volume of safety defects but comparable with normal seasonal peak at present, additional resources in place to tackle the volume.
- Professional services (Atkins) – Fourth year of contract underway.
- Structural maintenance (Tarmac) – First year of four-year contract - delivery of capital resurfacing programme 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 – increased funding agreed for 23/24. Positive news about the areas which have been treated and the increased levels of biodiversity being seen as different species are now establishing in those areas.

3.0 Traffic and Transport

Recent DMMO Statistics

Total number of 'unresolved' applications:	210
No. of new 'min.14(1) compliant' applications received in 2023 to date	1 (21 in 2021, 35 in 2022)
Number of applications 'resolved' in 2023 to date	1 (11 in 2021, 5 in 2022)
Number of routes added to DM&S by 'other means' in 2023 to date	0 (3 in 2021, 4 in 2022)

Currently resolving, on average over the past 5 years, 7.6 applications a year (between the 2 Officers, plus support from 1 Technician).

Number of all 'undetermined' applications, as at 23 February 2023:

	Undetermined	Undet-Archived	Undet-Non14(2)
No.	50	51	72

("Archived" applications are whereby the intended effect of the application is likely to be 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 23 February 2023:

No.	Apps at publication/ confirmation stage	Apps with unresolved objections	
		Submitted to SoS	Awaiting submission
	2	1 - on 30/6/2022 (1- pending in Feb'23)	34

Recent CROW Ctte / Internal Officer Panel determinations:

Previous CROW Ctte / IOP	<p>1 App on 4 Oct 2022 - decision to make Order for additional RB and FP - Made Order published. No objections received. Confirmation Order being processed.</p> <p>1 App on 14 Dec 2022 - as application was superseded by S25 Creation Agreement, DMMO resolved not to make additional Order. Now resolved.</p> <p>1 App on 8 Feb 2023 - decision not to make an order, on the grounds that public motor vehicle rights have not been retained under NERC2006 (in appeal period).</p> <p>1 App on 8 Feb 2023 - as application was superseded by S119 Diversion Order, DMMO resolved not to make additional Order. Now resolved.</p>
Next CROW Ctte/IOP	(subject to change if late rebutting evidence is submitted) March 2023 - CROW Committee to determine 1 application

Public and School Transport

- In November Stagecoach withdrew and reduced several commercial routes in the Forest of Dean and Cheltenham. It also terminated some of its bus contracts with the council. The council was able to procure some replacement services (service F to Leckhampton - now called L - and Arle Court Park & Ride) at significant additional expense. However the availability of alternative services and lack of interest from bus operators resulted in other routes not being replaced.
- Since then officers in the ITU have awarded a contract to Swanbrook to run service K in south west Cheltenham from 20th February. This service was subsidised by the council and previously run by Stagecoach. The new service will be part-funded using developer section 106 contributions. The ITU has also contracted Pulhams Coaches to extend service 656 to Woodmancote on Mondays and Fridays after the local community was left without a bus service to Bishops Cleeve when Stagecoach cut service E in November.
- In January Stagecoach announced further cuts and changes to commercial services in the Stroud area from 19th February. These mainly comprise reduced frequencies and the removal of Sunday and evening journeys. Officers are liaising with the West of England Combined Authority regarding proposals for their subsidised network which include the 84/85 services to Wotton-under-Edge.

- Stagecoach has also served notice to terminate contracts with the council for bus services in Cirencester and east Cotswolds in May.
- In light of the inflationary and other cost pressures on the council's transport budgets, proposals for additional funding were included in the draft budget for 2023/24. £398k was included for extraordinary contract inflation.
- Staff from Edge Public Solutions have started work on a 3 year programme designed to improve service outcomes for users and securing better value from the council's SEND and mainstream school transport budgets which are under significant pressure.
- In February ITU welcomed a new member of staff to take forward bus priority schemes and designs, bringing with him significant experience of traffic modelling and engineering.
- Following the Cabinet decision last year to procure a new concessionary fares management system the ITU's new service provider will soon start mobilising in readiness for the new contract starting in July. Around 100,000 Gloucestershire residents of pensionable age or with a disability have a bus pass which entitles them to free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England.

Corporate Fleet Unit

- The transfer of GCC fleet functions from the ITU to the new Corporate Fleet Unit is on course to be completed by the end of the financial year (31st March). In the past two months several key vacancies have been filled. Officers are also progressing the procurement of a new fleet management system which aims to improve safety and efficiency by streamlining the way the council manages data about its fleet. In parallel considerable time is being spent on the procurement of new and greener vehicles across the authority. This is closely linked to a multi-year programme within the 2023/24 budget and MTFs for the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on council premises such as fire stations, highways depots and some libraries.

Road Safety Partnership, ThinkTravel and Parking

- In November Cabinet agreed a new Road Safety policy and strategy which set out our ambition to reduce road casualties to zero by 2050 'Vision Zero' and aims to halve the number of people killed and seriously injured on Gloucestershire's roads between 2022 and 2032. In December the council, OPCC and Police formally launched the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership at a meeting chaired by the Cabinet Member for road safety policy and attended by key stakeholders from across the county.
- To date 190 bids have been received from communities for local road safety measures under the £600,000 Community Speedwatch Fund. These cover measures such as speed surveys, vehicle activated signs, Speedwatch cameras, bin stickers and a visit from a road safety officer. In phase 1 we received 119 bids and in phase 2, which closed on 31st January, we received a further 71 bids.
- The ThinkTravel team's support for schools, with businesses and across communities is set to grow following an increase in DfT Capability Fund grant to the council in 2023/24. This work forms a key strand of the council's strategy to tackle climate change by reducing emissions from transport through behaviour change and skills. The ThinkTravel team enable people to make more journeys by active travel (on foot, by bike, scooter etc) and using public transport by equipping them with essential cycle skills, signposting them to sources of travel information and by applying motivational techniques including team activities and gamification. This complements other work by the council such as the provision of high quality cycle infrastructure on the B4063 cycle spine linking Cheltenham and Gloucester. More details on the breakdown of this funding will follow in the next update.

4.0 Planning and Economic Development

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 Summer 2023.

Fastershire

- **Fastershire Partnership Agreement** – Discussions with Herefordshire Council remain positive and the broad principles of an agreement in principle to extend the Fastershire Partnership Agreement until the 31 March 2024 have been made at an officer level. This now needs to be taken through the formal decision-making process and a decision report will be progressed over the next month.
- **Project Gigabit** – Discussions with BDUK are ongoing regarding the preferred procurement route for the delivery of Project Gigabit. BDUK will manage the procurement process which is set to start during 2023/24 with an anticipated contract start date commencing in 2024/25.

A417 Missing Link

- The DCO planning application was submitted in June 2021 and the Planning Inspectorate's Public Examination concluded on 16th May 2022;
- The Secretary of State for Transport approved the planning application for the scheme in November 2022, which will now proceed to construction in Spring 2023.

Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- The LTP was adopted at Full Council on 17th March 2021. A review of the LTP is currently being considered later in 2023. Government guidance is currently awaited.

Waste Local Plan (WLP)

- A new WLP is currently being prepared. The target date for adoption is Summer / Autumn 2026.

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, with future meetings scheduled.

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 Summer 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 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 – The Local Plan has 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. The Public Examination starts on 7th March 2023.
- 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 – 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

- A whole service day is planned for Monday 13th March 2023. This will be the first opportunity the service has had of bringing all levels of staff together in one place. The meeting will be used to launch the new Library Strategy and to outline the opportunities that the Arts Council NPO will bring to the service.

Registration

- No update.

6.0 Waste Management

- Communications are being developed to explain that we will cease collecting tyres at the HRCs. This will be introduced from 1st April as a budget saving measure (saving an estimated £50k/yr).
- Work continues on the development of a new short-term (3 yr) Resources and Waste Strategy for the county. A revised draft has been produced following public consultation, which will be taken to the next meeting of the Resources and Waste Partnership in April.
- A number of urgent repairs are being made to the HRCs following a condition survey. A capital bid will be prepared for a major refurbishment and renewal programme as the centres are now ageing and in increasingly poor condition. The refurbishment programme will make them fit for purpose for a further generation.

Sustainability/Climate Change

- The tree planting season will draw to a close in a few weeks time, with more than 90,000 trees expected to be planted. The council has worked with dozens of different delivery partners and communities across Gloucestershire, using funding awarded by the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust together with its own revenue budget.
- An officer decision is being taken to loan £160,000 to the Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund. This has been established by the Local Nature Partnership and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to deliver off-site Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within

Gloucestershire. BNG will become law in November 2023 when developers will need to demonstrate BNG (through the planning system). GCC Legal Services have drawn up a Loan Agreement and Finance have completed Subsidy Control (State Aid) Tests.

- An officer decision is being taken to provide £75k support to the LEPs Net Zero Business Support Programme. BEIS funding for the programme ends in March 2023 and GCC funding will provide a further 12 months support to help Gloucestershire businesses to decarbonise.
- Staffing capacity within the team remains challenging with a number of open posts to be recruited.

Travellers Service

- New meters are being introduced at the GCC Traveller Sites to allow easier “top up” payments by residents and also to reduce the risk of fraudulent use.

7.0 Employment and Skills

Co-Ordination of E & S Priorities in Gloucestershire

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

- HoS attended Advanced Engineering & Construction workshop with LSIP team on 24th January. This included initial cross-sector findings. HoS working with LSIP team to organise a specific briefing and discussion with GCC over initial findings.

Careers Support

- National Careers Service (NCS) – Local Area Board postponed from 17th January because of SeeTec Pluss staff sickness. Data sharing and customer journey work with Ad Ed and E&S Hub underway.

Social Value

- No further progress this month.

Specific Employment & Skills initiatives

‘Green’/sustainable skills

- Resource requirements/‘ask’ on green/sustainable skills to be developed, based on the proposals made to CLG in the skills paper. HoS working with GFirst LEP on this.

Provision for NEETs and preventing young people becoming NEET

- HoS, VW and Sarah Poultney ready to contribute to the review of the current Youth Support Services contract delivery and proposed contract extension. Awaiting further details from Childrens Services colleagues.

Presentation to Economic Scrutiny Committee

- HoS presented at the 18th January meeting to consider ‘the challenges of the labour shortage and what could be done to address the issues, including provision of education and training, and encouraging migration to key sectors’. The Committee asked a wide range of questions and acknowledged the extensive work being done by GCC and GFirst LEP to assist with the situation.

Adult Education Service

- A series of Leadership & Management workshops have been delivered to staff and included inputs from Cllr Phil Robinson, CC and DO. These were very well received by

staff who appreciated understanding better the links with other teams within EE&I and across GCC. These workshops were the last of the 3 I's workshops the quality team planned and delivered to embed more understanding of these and Ofsted/quality overall. They included the tutors and all staff and have led to new practices across the service including a safe and well newsletter and tutor café's to share best practice and help tutors/staff discuss core British Values, prevent and safeguarding topics with their learners.

- Ofsted inspection is due anytime so preparation for this is under constant review. A mock inspection has been organised to take place in April and the SAR is currently being reviewed with a view to submitting this end April after the mock inspection.

Multiply

- 3 contract staff have now started on the programme and the first Multiply courses have started with good attendance.
- A full year programme has now been written and tutors are being interviewed next week to enable the delivery of the programme in full.

Employment & Skills Hub

Employment Programmes

- The Employment & Skills Hub Outreach (ESHO) Project is underway and has achieved its first job outcomes through supporting refugees into work.
- Over 600 people have been referred to the Employment and Skills Hub to date.
- Officers have led on the 'employment' theme and workstream within the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Strategy and she presented this to ICP partner organisations in January.
- Officers are working with colleagues in DWP to draft a partnership agreement between GCC and DWP that will form the basis of the links between the two organisations within any County Deal. Aiming for initial draft to be completed for consultation within GCC by end of Feb 2023.

- **REPORT END** -