



**REPORT TITLE: Executive Director's Report, Economy, Environment & Infrastructure**

<b>Scrutiny meeting</b>	Environment Scrutiny, 6 March 2024
<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Chloe Turner
<b>Presenting Officer</b>	N/A – To be taken as read
<b>Item Type</b>	Information
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide information regarding progress and proposals for each of the areas within EE&I.
<b>Recommendations/ Action sought</b>	N/A
<b>Forthcoming Decisions</b>	<p><b>Relevant forthcoming decisions, by date due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <a href="#">Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Funding Application</a> - 27 March 2024 Cabinet</li><li>▪ <a href="#">The procurement of design, preparation and construction works in connection with the delivery of Winchcombe Bridge Refurbishment Project</a> – Between 5 August and 31 March 2024 by Cabinet Member for Highways and Flooding</li><li>▪ <a href="#">Revenue Grant Agreement funding level for community libraries, 2025-2029</a> – Between 16 January and 31 March 2024 by Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries</li><li>▪ <a href="#">Fastershire Project – Extension of Delivery and Transition Agreement and BDUK Partnership Agreement</a> - Between 8 February and 31 March 2024 by Leader of the Council</li></ul> <p><b>Pending Publication:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Arle Court Transport Hub Site Management &amp; Park and Ride Bus Contract</li><li>▪ M5 J10 Developers Contribution</li><li>▪ Highways Professional Services Support Contract</li></ul>

<b>Background Documents</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Information</b>	Colin Chick Executive Director: Economy, Environment and Infrastructure <a href="mailto:Colin.Chick@gloucestershire.gov.uk">Colin.Chick@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>

## **1.0 Highways**

### **M5 J10**

- Development Consent Order accepted by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for the scheme on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024. This now starts the examination process for which the Inquiry is anticipated later this year.
- Galliford Try have now started the value engineering design assessment.
- Land agents continue to progress land acquisition/negotiations in partnership with GCC Property.
- Arle Court Transport Hub – Kier Construction have made excellent progress and the topping out ceremony was held in Jan to mark the structure reaching its final height. Stage 2 construction completion on track for Summer 2024, full completion late Autumn 2024.
- A38/A4019 Coombe Hill – planning permission has been granted. Land acquisition and negotiations continue.

### **A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve Cycleway**

- Works on phase 1 between the Prince of Wales Stadium and Racecourse Roundabout have now commenced and are progressing well.
- Works on phase 2 between Racecourse Roundabout and Bishops Cleeve is expected to commence in Summer 2024 – the methodology and construction programme are currently being developed. Consultation event held 25<sup>th</sup> January where scheme was well received.

### **B4063 Cheltenham to Gloucester Cycle Scheme**

- Works between the M5 and Brickhampton Golf Course were completed in December 2023. Works between Brickhampton Golf Course and Elmbridge Court remain on target to be completed by Spring 2024.
- Works between Elmbridge Court and Oxstalls Lane commence in February, with ‘Meet the Contractor’ event held in January 2024.

### **Structures/Geotechnical Schemes**

- Walk Bridge – working with Stroud District Council.

### **Ashchurch Bridge over Rail (Delivery for Tewkesbury Borough Council)**

- A new project team have been established at TBC to lead the Garden Town Team.

## Highways Contracts/Delivery

- Term maintenance (Ringway) – Fifth year of the contract underway. Cyclical maintenance and defect repair performance remains on target. Maintenance resources continue to be supplemented with find and fix gangs.
- Professional services (Atkins) – Fifth year of contract underway.
- Structural maintenance (Tarmac) – Second year of four-year contract - delivery of capital resurfacing programme on track. Additional £2.8m of structural maintenance funding has been identified for delivery from schemes already in forward programme.
- Street lighting (M Group) – Preparation underway to reprocure street lighting contract for start in August 2024. Invitation to Tender issued, awaiting tender returns February 2024.
- Third Party Damage – There is a focus on recovering costs for damage to highway assets – signs, surfaces, barriers, structures/bridges etc. - caused by third parties wherever possible/practicable. Cost recovery can take some considerable time, i.e. most costs are not recovered in the same financial year as the damage caused and some costs are not pursuable (e.g. where there is no/insufficient record of third party). Recovery value covers GCC costs in carrying out recovery and original repair/response to incident.

Year	Damage Value	Recovered To Date
21/22	£245,129	£173,377
22/23	£171,062	£89,954
23/24	£239,862	£20,970

## A417 Missing Link

- GCC now in a position of discharging our statutory highway authority duties including adherence to the DCO requirements.

## 2.0 Traffic and Transport

### Staffing

- There are two new senior managers reporting to the Assistant Director: Nathan Davis (Traffic & Active Travel Manager) starts at the beginning of February and Joanne Heal (Network Manager) starts in early April. Before joining GCC Nathan worked for Bristol City Council and Jo worked at Wiltshire Council. Reporting to them are Andrew Burford, who started this month as Parking Manager, and Miguel Santos, who is due to start in February as our new Road Safety Manager. Andy has a background in transport, parking and contract management in the council and Miguel has been working on improving road safety across the UK and abroad. Last month he collected the Prince Michael Award for International Road Safety for his team's work in Tanzania. CFU have had two fulltime Admin staff hand in their notice towards the end of January, with both due to leave at the end of Feb. We are actively seeking TSS support and to start the recruitment process ASAP. This amounts to 2 thirds of the admin team in CFU.

## Recent DMMO Statistics - to 29 January 2024

Total number of 'unresolved' applications:	209 (down 3 from 4Jan)
No. of new 'min.14(1) compliant' applications received in 2024 to date	0 (21 in 2021, 35 in 2022, 13 in 2023)
Number of applications 'resolved' in 2024 to date	1 (11 in 2021, 5 in 2022, 13 in 2023)
Number of routes added to DM&S by 'other means' in 2023 to date	0 (3 in 2021, 4 in 2022, 3 in 2023)

Between 2018-2022, 7.6 applications a year were resolved.

Number of all 'undetermined' applications:

	Undetermined	Undet-Archived	Undet-Non14(2)
No.	5253	44	7473

*("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:

	Apps at publication/ confirmation stage	Apps with unresolved objections	
		Submitted to SoS	Awaiting submission
No.	3	1 - on 08/03/2023	35

Recent CROW Ctte / Internal Officer Panel determinations:

Previous CROW Ctte / IOP	Total number of applications 'determined' in 2023 = 17
Next CROW Ctte/IOP	(subject to change if late rebutting evidence is submitted) February 2024 - Officer Delegated to determine 2-3 applications. March 2024 – CROWC to determine 1 application

- The "January 2031 cut-off" provisions are now in force, but the Guidelines around the exceptions to the cut-off are still yet to be published.

### Streetworks /Signals

- Streetworks will be affected by regulatory changes in the coming months. A consultation from central Government has been released. it is expected that the ability to charge utility companies for overrunning works at weekends will be debated and the potential to change the way Lane Rental "income" can be used by authorities will be under review. Five year signal upgrade plan completed.

### Public and School Transport

- We are experiencing a rise in concessionary pass applications, mostly from dormant users who now wish to travel again. We have 4 libraries established and able to process new pass applications with Ch2 more due to come on stream. New camera/scanners are expected to arrive this week to enable most of the remaining libraries to be added.

- Two Taxi drivers were successfully prosecuted during January for licensing and motoring offences as a direct result of action taken by ITU contract compliance staff. These drivers are no longer permitted to work on GCC contracts.
- The first tranche of BSIP+ service improvements went live on 6<sup>th</sup> January within Cheltenham district. Unfortunately, Stagecoach have advised that they have had a reduction in drivers at their Stroud depot due to resignations, as a result the planned BSIP+ uplifts for Stroud area services have now been delayed. The improvements for Gloucester and FoD services is still planned to go ahead on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024.
- The BSIP+ funded Robin services for Berkely Vale, South Cotswolds and Tewkesbury district have now been advertised for tender bids. As these are very different to other services we commission we are holding a Q&A drop in session for prospective operators on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### **Corporate Fleet Unit**

- Two significant procurements have passed key milestones. The Fleet Management System, a single ICT system to replace two legacy systems used by GFRS and ITU, has been awarded. The other major procurement is for ten fire appliances for GFRS. Both contract award decisions were made in May. Contract now signed for new Fleet System with implementation to begin at the start of November. Notice to leave legacy Fleet systems underway with data migration info being captured for upload into new system. Access now available to new Fleet System (Fleetwave), Project Manager Assigned from contractor for implementation phase which has begun based on a 3 to 6 month implementation plan. Car Fleet (GCC Legacy system) fleet information extracted, and system no longer used new Tablets being ordered for workshop technicians. SSO (single sign on) being created with ICT and Chevin for fleet wave system. Contract now posted for signing for the 10 new fire appliances for GFRS with build kick off meeting with supplier due in in October. Contract sign and stamped, 10 new fire appliances now ordered, first vehicle due for completion Jan 2025, with the following vehicles in batches of two over the following few months in 2025. First Supplier Project meeting for the new Fire Appliances at Angloco on 13<sup>th</sup> December to run through build and project phase. Following meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December, further meetings on build plan to be held early January 2024, to ensure design work is correct.
- Following the approval of capital funds in the 23/24 budget work is underway to implement a multi-year programme of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on council premises such as fire stations, highways depots and libraries. This includes chargers at the GIS site in Hempstead to support the recent Cabinet decision to replace the GIS fleet of diesel vans. Initially 10 electric vans will be ordered. The first 5 sites established for installations of EVCPs at GIS Hempstead, Newent Fire Station, Dursley Fire Station, Stroud Fire Station and the Magistrates carpark, ST Georges Rd are now close to being signed off, subject to some final checks. Further contractor delays have led to the EVCP's not being installed although progress is expected imminently. Changes to Connect Kerb project team has led to a project overview by the new Connect Kerb Team; no quotes still and no date for install at GCC/GFRS sites. This has been escalated to Executive Director level and a second meeting is currently planned in October with Connected Kerb's CEO to chase progress. New EVCP SME employed "Tara King" to assist with EVCP rollout project. High level installation quotes for first 5

sites now received from Connected Kerb and being reviewed. Project plan to be updated following review of all GCC sites in Gloucestershire and batch any in-scope sites into priority batches. Following the previous cabinet approval for 20 new EV vehicles for GIS, it was decided to be completed in 2 phases, phase 1 is as above within the 5 sites for 10 of the vehicles. Phase 2 is to identify a suitable site to park and charge before ordering them. Llanthony Road land acquired as part of the road upgrade is needed as an option to build a "Parking Hub" for GIS vehicles and other GCC vehicles that require to be EV as a charging HUB. This required further engagement within GCC to make this happen. More detailed installation drawings for EVCP's now received by Connect Kerb for the first 5 GCC/GFRS sites, (Newent, Dursley, Stroud, GIS, St Georges Car park) this will follow a refined quote for installation to go ahead. Phase 2 & 3 installs are scheduled to be GFRS PFI sites (5 sites Glos North, Glos South, SkillZone, Chelt West, Chelt East), working with Tascor and Connect Kerb, and scoped Parking Enforcement sites, due to the cars being replaced for EV's in April 2024. A EVCP decision making group is being established through Tara King to ensure each site is evaluated and decided on correctly with the necessary people from within GCC to manage, as this project is more than Fleet.

- Considerable work is underway replacing over 60 vehicles used by GFRS and other council service areas including GIS. This includes specialist fire and community safety vehicles, pickups, vans and cars. A common theme is the focus on reducing fleet carbon emissions by switching to battery electric power and using new technologies such as solar photovoltaics fitted to the roof to reduce fuel consumption and extend battery life. This is being done hand in hand with the EV charge point programme outlined earlier. In the past month the team has also started to explore greener options for replacing cars used by the council's parking contractor. This will explore how the current fleet of petrol hybrid cars could be replaced by a fleet of battery electric cars when leases expire in 2024. All 144 GCC sites to be evaluated as in or out of scope for EVCP's. This is to follow on from the 37 sites already identified and will allow charging infrastructure being placed in the right areas first time. New EVCP SME has been employed to assist with project roll out. 5 new fully Electric vehicles for parking enforcement contract ordered for April 2024 to replace current ICE vehicles. Following ICM paper approvals for GFRS & GIS, new vehicles orders will commence ASAP.
- A new Aerial ladder platform for GFRS is in the final stages of procurement. This should be put out to invite bidders early November, all specifications complete, just finishing off procurement and legal documents. Due to be published for Tender wk. 6th November with procurement and award due end March 2024. Aerial Ladder published out for Tender through Pro Contract using the Devon and Somerset framework, with bids closing middle of January.
- Car Club / Hire cars through Enterprise has a new access portal for bookings, this is being adopted in the CFU to replace the B2B version currently used. This new access portal will allow all Car Club bookings and Hire vehicles to be completed through one system. Contract due to expire and discussions underway with Procurement about a new tender.
- Recruitment to the Fleet Workshop vacant mechanic and driver roles was unsuccessful again. Management will reevaluate advert wording before considering re-advertising. Failure to recruit a mechanic for two years is putting considerable strain on the rest of the team, especially cover for holidays and the out of hours rota. This puts GFRS vehicle availability at risk and poses a high risk

to Business Continuity should another mechanic resign. There is a clear gap between what the council pays for a mechanic and pays for someone holding an HGV license compared to the market rate. Reevaluate how advertised and consider benchmarking and or market supplement if required for Mechanic role due to numerous failures to recruit. No Further update but will work with recruitment on next steps.

- 8 new EV and plugin vehicles ordered for Parking Enforcement Contract Team. These vehicles will be delivered for the 1st of April 2024 and will replace more polluting ICE vehicles. Had to change order due to supply issue, should not impact on April delivery, however EVCP's need to also be in place in readiness. Continue work on suitable GCC locations and installs as urgent phase 2 for EVCP's to be able to accommodate April delivery of these vehicles.
- GFRS new Community Safety Vehicle due to be made operational, this follows the vehicle being placed on display at the Emergency Services Show at the NEC in September. No Further update, as vehicle needed some final PDI work due to an airbag recall.
- Incident Command Unit for GFRS specification requirements is now underway to allow CFU to go to tender soon. Specification of high-level design for ICU complete with stakeholder group, continued work to build detailed tender specification to go out to tender in 2024.
- Electric Officer car evaluation has been concluded with preferred option to be announced shortly. The preferred fully EV (4 vehicles) and plugin Hybrid (3 vehicles) evaluated, waiting for ICM paper approval before completing next steps to order ASAP.
- GCC Share point engagement with CFU to move towards this early 2024 as per all GCC departments and remove data from other shared drives etc.

### **Road Safety Partnership**

- 191 bids were received from 156 different communities for local road safety measures under the £600,000 Community Speedwatch Fund. 8 bids either duplicated or superseded earlier bids from the same community, leaving 183 live bids. These bids request measures including speed surveys, vehicle activated speed signs, Speedwatch cameras, bin stickers and a visit from a road safety officer.
- 70 bids were submitted for AutoSpeedWatch cameras.
- 68 bids were submitted for VAS signs.
- Data from the first AutoSpeedWatch camera sites has demonstrated very positive early results. For example, in the 6 months to June 2023 compliance with the speed limit on the three roads in the Quenington Community SpeedWatch Scheme improved - in one case compliance increased from 5% to 43%.

### **Thinktravel**

- No new update this month.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging**

- Live operational sites: – 7 locations with 28 sockets commissioned.
- Locations installed and ready for commissioning: – 3 locations with 10 sockets.
- Sites in progress (started) – 2 sites (8 sockets)
- It is scheduled to install 33 locations and 130 Ev charge points this financial year.

## **Parking**

- A commitment has been given for a review of Zone 15 for the autumn 2024. A review scope has been developed and is being priced by independent consultants with specialist parking expertise and independent of the original scheme consultation, design and implementation. A tender specification has been produced with returns due 15 February 2024 to enable a provider to be appointed.
- Meetings have been held with Stow and Moreton Town councils to consider the next steps following parking surveys in each area. A similar meeting has been offered to the County Councillor for Tivoli area to decide next steps.
- A meeting is to be held with Cirencester Town Council to confirm parking measures to be introduced. Traffic orders will be made allowing implementation of controls in late March 2024.
- A review county-wide of the waiting restriction and permitted parking lines and signs is progressing with maintenance work anticipated in March 2024.
- An Enforcement Agent (Bailiff Services) contract is out to tender with a return date 19 February 2024. The scope of services includes parking as well as Social Care and commercial debt.

## **TROs**

- All TROs are continuing to progress although there are still a small number of more complex historic schemes to move forward.
- The TRO programme spreadsheet is now available for all County Councillors to view and is updated once a month.
- Further improvements to the internal TRO process and digitisation of all existing TROs are being looked into.
- DfT will be updating the Primary and Secondary legislation for TROs which may incur extra work and cost

## **3.0 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;
- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) submitted to DfT on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- GCC Cabinet report (re- future expenditure on M5 J9 / A46) was considered and approved on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- The project is currently being reviewed given the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 MP debate in the House of Commons.
- A detailed response to the latest set of DfT questions on the submitted SOC was sent to the DfT in January 2024 . This consisted of six Technical Notes. The DfT will now consider the approval of the SOC.

### **Fastershire**

- Resources have been identified to oversee the completion of the Fastershire project during 2024/25. The aim is for the project to be closed down before 31 March 2025.
- The next phase of Broadband upgrades will be managed by central Government as part of the Project Gigabit initiative. The procurement process to identify the



preferred supplier within Gloucestershire is nearing its completion and we are expected to understand who the preferred supplier will be in early 2024.

### **Economic Strategy**

- Cabinet will be asked to consider the adoption of the new county-wide Economic Strategy in May 2024. The Gloucestershire City Region Board, who will be responsible for ensuring the Strategy is delivered, will also consider the document.

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

- The LTP was adopted at Full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. A review of the LTP is currently being considered in 2024. 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.

### **Mass Rapid Transit**

- GCC's Cabinet approved the future (2023/24) expenditure on this project on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The relevant Business Cases will be produced 2023/24 onwards.

### **Local Plans / JLP / CIL**

- Review of the Cheltenham / Gloucester / Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan (formerly known as the Joint Strategic Plan) now underway following an 'Issues and Options' consultation which ended in January 2019;
- The Reg.18 public consultation (part one) started in January 2024 and GCC officers are currently considering a response to the document;
- Progress has been made with Cheltenham / Gloucester / Tewkesbury 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;
- Correspondence sent to all six District Councils outlining the GCC position, with offer to work collaboratively in the future;
- GCC continues to not receive a penny of CIL from Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and Cotswold District Council, although Cotswold District Council has recently asked for bids from GCC, which have been submitted;
- Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury are currently working up governance proposals to distribute the 'strategic' element of their CIL;
- Bids and Expressions of Interest have been submitted to Stroud District Council to secure CIL funding in 2024/25;
- The recently published GCC Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2023) shows that GCC received £75K of CIL throughout 2022/23 (from SDC);
- Stroud Local Plan – The Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. GCC officers and consultants are actively involved in the Public Examination, which started on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and is ongoing. The Local Plan Inspectors have written to Stroud District Council (SDC) (4<sup>th</sup> August 2023). SDC have responded (29<sup>th</sup> August 2023) requesting a 6 month 'pause' of the Examination, whilst additional work is completed. The Inspectors considered

this request and SDC, GCC, National Highways and South Gloucestershire Council were all asked for further information, which was provided to the Inspectors in November 2023. The Inspectors have asked further questions of SDC in December 2023, which was responded to in January 2024. .

- Cotswold Local Plan – ‘Issues and Options’ consultation period ended on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022. GCC officers submitted representations prior to the deadline on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022. A further public consultation is anticipated in 2024.
- Forest of Dean Local Plan – FoDDC consulted on a ‘preferred option’ – the closing date for comments was 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021. GCC officers commented before this deadline. The Forest of Dean District Local Plan Second Preferred Option was subject to public consultation (ending 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022). GCC officers formally responded prior to the deadline. A Draft Plan is expected to be subject to public consultation in 2024.

#### **4.0 Libraries**

- Arts Council England have announced that current National Portfolio Organisations will receive an additional year’s funding. This means an additional £250k for financial year 2026/27 to deliver the cultural outcomes outlined in our bid.
- A review of English public libraries was undertaken by Baroness Sanderson last year. The review has just been published, together with the Government’s response : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-independent-review-of-english-public-libraries-report-and-government-reponse>

#### **5.0 Registration**

- No new update this month.

#### **6.0 Waste Management**

- Director of Strategic Growth for the LEP, Sarah Danson, has been seconded (from 1<sup>st</sup> October) to the role of Head of Environment & Waste to replace Wayne Lewis.
- A new short-term (3 yr) Resources and Waste Strategy for the county was agreed by the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership on 25<sup>th</sup> April. The decision for GCC to adopt the strategy has been proposed and agreed. This strategy is also being simultaneously adopted by our district partners. Administration of the partnership for 2024-2025 this year will be undertaken by Cheltenham Borough Council.
- A number of repairs are being commissioned to the HRCs following a condition survey. A large capital bid submitted for a major refurbishment and renewal programme has been rejected, work to maintain the sites will continue with the available funding of £1million per site next year. Further capital investment will be required over the coming years as the centres are now ageing and in

increasingly poor condition. A capital bid has also been submitted for container replacement.

- A contractor has been appointed for the refurbishment of Wingmoor Farm HRC and work is progressing well at the site. Works to tipping wall repairs, fencing installation and general resurfacing works will be undertaken during the planned site closure after the New Year for several weeks. Permission has been granted for the planting scheme at the site. The team continue to work with Tewkesbury and Cheltenham with regards to providing additional support at the Cheltenham Borough Council Swindon Road site, and extending hours of operation at Hempsted if needed.
- Three new HRC site offices have been installed by a County based supplier to replace aging infrastructure at Oak Quarry, Pyke Quarry and Wingmoor Farm HRCs.
- The public engagement campaign focussed on 'plastic free Christmas' over the festive period. We are now developing our food waste campaign which will run through to the end of March. We will also be preparing our first draft 2024/25 waste engagement programme during the coming quarter.

### **Sustainability/Climate Change**

- Preparation is underway for 23/24 tree planting season, with project leads for 90,000 trees being explored with 50,000 trees reserved at nurseries for specific projects.

A bid for further project funding from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund managed by Forestry Commission has been submitted.

We are pleased to inform that the Gloucestershire County Council application for the 2023/24 Local Authorities Treescape Fund has been approved. Based on the information provided, Forestry Commission can offer GCC funding in principle for a total of £296,836.00

- Good progress continues to be made on developing a plan for using the £900k remaining within the Salix loan fund.

### **Travellers Service**

- A business case has been developed for capital investment which is needed to build new utility blocks, for washing and cooking, on the council owned sites; along with investment in a community hub which would support delivery of other services by the traveller liaison team to site residents.

## **7.0 Employment and Skills**

### **Employment & Skills Chapter of Economic Strategy**

- HoES and SLfIE reviewed final draft and fed back some requested changes, particularly to clarify GCC's role vs the role/contribution of other parts of the local skills system (e.g. colleges, independent training providers, etc.).

### **Social Value**

- Social Value Officer continuing to make good progress. Workplan agreed for first 6 months. Work has focused on briefing and supporting Procurement staff, ensuring Galliford Try use the Social Value Portal correctly to record their SV commitments as part of the J10 M5 project, and highlighting to the EDI Board how

SV links to EDI. Third employment and skills meeting of Social Value working group for Junction 10 scheduled for 31/01/24 to confirm links to Careers Hub, E & S Hub, and apprenticeships and early careers programme within GCC. February will include the first monthly meeting of the SV Operational Management Group and presentations and updates on SV to Scrutiny and to CLT.

### **Adult Education Service**

- Work with the FEC has been completed and positive work has come out of this with great feedback from the FEC on the progress of ongoing work. a new quality framework has been designed with key documents also being developed, these include local team improvement plans, overall quality improvement plan for the service and the draft new self-assessment report. Further FEC support will be requested for the next academic year to keep the momentum going and help with other quality improvement projects. (this is a free consultancy service).
- Support for refugees and asylum seekers – with the success of the bid, the team are working with Head of Employment and Skills to progress this project within the given timeframes. ESOL provision and the service reputation has grown significantly over the past 12 months and continues to be a strength for the service.

### **Multiply**

- Q3 report due to be submitted Feb 2024, currently on track to hit all targets by year 2 end (March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024).
- Collaboration with National Numeracy has enabled us to recruit 59 Numeracy Champions across the county – these are individuals that have completed the National Numeracy programme of learning to gain a CPD qualification to work with people to build their confidence using numbers in their daily lives. A local network of champions is currently being set up with the first networking event due to take place in February 2024 with a view to creating a sustainable legacy at the end of year 3 of Multiply. This will be the main legacy of the Multiply programme in Gloucestershire. 658 people in Gloucestershire have now completed the National Numeracy Challenge and improved their knowledge of their skills and depth of knowledge of Maths. These people are all contacted with a view to taking part in more Multiply courses.
- A large marketing programme is due to start to promote Multiply more across the county this month, a National campaign was promised but it has now been confirmed that this will not be rolled out by the DfE so we will be doing this ourselves with the support of the Marketing team. The Marketing team have completed the National Numeracy Champion training to give themselves a full insight into the programme and the challenges faced by potential learners, enabling them to design the marketing more effectively.
- Case study booklet progressing well, with partners providing case studies on a monthly basis to feed into this overall document.

### **Employment & Skills Hub**

- Over the last quarter the Hub averaged 100 new referrals per month.
- With staff leaving we are experiencing some higher-than-average caseloads however these are currently being managed through effective reviewing processes

- The first meeting of the newly formed Gloucestershire Employment Alliance met and was well attended with all attendees wholly committed to working in partnership to help build a collaborative approach to supporting people to gain and sustain employment.
- We are currently working on migrating our data systems to a new CRM which will help with the effective collection and analysis of the E&S Hub data. This has proven to be problematic due to the large number of people being referred to the hub and allow us to produce more accurate information going forward.

### **Employment and Skills Hub Outreach Project**

- We are seeing a slowdown in the number of referrals into the project now due to some partners losing staff, with 26 referrals in January.
- Five of the six Districts have now confirmed commitment to fund ESHO in 24/25 and we are still waiting on the decision from Tewkesbury BC.
- 33% of those participating in ESHO are aged between 35 and 54 years old and a further 19% aged over 55. This supports the evidence that more older people are looking to return to the workforce and our 50/50 Challenge participants now stand at 102 – many of whom have been referred by our ESHO Partners.

### **Employer Engagement**

- A well-attended Employer Forum was hosted by the RAU where employers discussed supporting neuro-diverse employees and the development of the Inclusivity Works online toolkit.
- The EE team are supporting the Autism Strategy where there are development opportunities with employers. Currently working on lunch and learn sessions for employers and Autism Jobs Fair, both scheduled for April.

### **National Picture**

- Working with colleagues from Health and Public Health we submitted an EoI for the WorkWell programme – this was submitted by the ICB but if successful will be delivered by GCC Employment and Skills Hub.
- We continue to have meetings with DWP about the Universal Support Programme.

### **Young People**

- We hosted a Supported Internships Forum in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI), which included a number of LAs from the South West, East Midlands and West Midlands. The event showcased our unique approach to Supported Internships in Gloucestershire and the unusual partnership we have between Employment and Education. We have been asked to host another one in early 2025.
- We are looking at the governance of our Step Forwards (Care Leavers) Steering Group with a view to it reporting into Corporate Parenting Board.

- **REPORT END** -