

Cllr Lisa Spivey
County Councillor for the South Cerney Division
Gloucestershire County Council
Annual Report 2023/2024

This year has again been a very busy time for the County Council and my focus has been on local highways issues with much of the winter spent sorting out flooding. I have asked questions and proposed motions at Full Council meetings and set up working groups for various local issues which seem to have been positive. Here is an overview of some of the work I have been involved in as your County Councillor.

Budget for 2023/24

Proposals put forward by the Conservative majority administration for a budget of £616million were passed in February. This represents a £42m increase in the budget compared to 23/24. For a band D property, this will mean a monthly increase of £6.34. The increase is above the expected rate of inflation for this year. It is made up of 2.99% increase on council tax and a 2% precept for adult social care.

Amendments by all three opposition parties were accepted. These included the following from my Group:

£25,000 – Increased spending on Public Rights of Way

Increasing the resource available for mapping so people know which walking routes are available to them.

£25,000 – Additional money for Flood schemes

In a year with huge amounts of flooding across the County, the group felt it was important to support communities that suffered from the flooding that occurred.

£100,000 – Additional money for Road safety

Liberal Democrats are committed to reducing the amount of deaths that take place on the county's roads which continue to cause alarm and are significantly higher than statistical neighbouring authorities

£20,000 – Feasibility Study to support Foster families

Work up the governance arrangements and criteria for a scheme to allow foster carers to make improvements to their home to take extra children

This is a Liberal Democrat idea to provide more space for foster carers to take care of more children. The Policy, could save the county council millions in the future if it means fewer children being put into out of county placements.

Motions to Full Council

In recent meetings we have tabled motions, of which amended versions were passed after the Conservative administration removed criticisms of the government. Topics included:

- Shortening waiting lists for Cancer care and the NHS
- Holding the Conservative Government to account to keep their promise of restoring policing to 2010 levels (we are still a long way off this in police per person terms)
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Declaring a roads emergency

Local Bus Transport

The County Council has had a bid for £6 million accepted to introduce more electric busses in the county. The Robin bus service is due to be rolled out in the south Cotswolds in the Autumn and should provide a really useful mode of desperately needed public transport in the area.

The Council has agreed a bus improvement plan worth £4.4 million meaning some services are now more regular.

This means the trend of recent years seeing cuts to bus services is finally starting to slow. This is thanks to local groups supporting existing bus services. Services like the Robin (a bookable bus that links with existing bus routes) have been a success and are showing a blueprint for supporting rural services in the future.

Road Safety Policy

Our group is committed to the County Council's vision for reducing the amount of road accidents taking place across the County. The Council now has a pot of over £2,000,000 to tackle road safety.

Going forward, the aim will be to spend this money wisely and reduce the high casualty rates we currently see on Rural A roads.

Highways Local Fund

I was delighted to support some patching works (Ewen and A417 Ampney St Peter), flood alleviation schemes (Somerset Keynes, Cerney Wick), verge tidying (Ampney Crucis), setts (Down Ampney) and signage (Meysey Hampton).

Build Back Better – Councillor Scheme

I received many applications for the remainder of my Build Back Better pot and was able to support many fantastic groups this year including: Down Ampney Primary School, Cotswold Counselling, Meysey Hampton Guides, Ampney Crucis Village Hall, Poulton Parish Council Playground, Kemble Community Gardens, Cotswolds Lakes Trust and Cotswolds Friends. I still have some money left which has to be spent by the end of this year, so do get in contact if you have a project.

Committees

This year I was honoured to be selected by my fellow members to Chair the Adult Social Care and Communities scrutiny committee which looks at Adult Social Care, Public Health, Trading Standards and Coronary Services. This is a fascinating committee and we have looked at various topics including the use of alcohol in everyday life, how the county looks after refugees and asylum seekers, the coronary service and coroner's court and housing for the homeless.

I also sit on Corporate Overview and Scrutiny which looks at the County Council's corporate remit.

I took part in the bus Working Group mentioned above which had a very targeted remit and made a series of recommendations for Cabinet and council to consider.

This is just a brief overview of the work of the last year. Please feel free to contact me about these or any other matters.

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