

Cllr Lisa Spivey
GCC Report
Jan/Feb 2024

Please find a general update on areas of interest. For specific issues or casework please email me directly or give me a call.

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Highways and Flooding

I have been very busy with all matters highways and localised flooding. I believe that the majority of the most urgent issues are in hand, with action planned, being taken or been taken. Please let me know if there are any flooding issues that you need some help with.

It's "pot hole" season and I am very aware of the general state of dis-repair on our local road network.

The "Fix My Street" tool is the most efficient way of reporting potholes, broken drain covers, overgrown hedges and a large number of highways related issues, including fly-tipping and pavement issues.

<https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>

It's important to log the issues as that way should an incident occur, then there is a trail to follow on when the repair was made (or not!).

I am working with the local highways manager, Richard Gray who retires at the end of March, and his successor, Gill Portlock on identifying areas where my councillor "Highways Local" funds can be best used in the new financial year, so do let me know if there are small schemes you think are relevant.

I continue to lobby for more funding (and a different, non quantitative set of criteria) for our rural roads. It often feels like the big towns get all the money and we are forgotten because the numbers don't stack up.

Budget Setting

The County Council will set its budget for the financial year 24/25 on the 21st February. The budget is presented as a growth budget in that, at £610 million, it is more than the previous year, but this does not take into consideration the inflationary and staff pay pressures which mean that, at best, this is a standstill budget.

As in previous years, Adult Social Care and Children's Services take a whopping 75% of the total budget, leaving very little in real terms to deal with the many, many other services the County Council delivers.

This pressure is not unique to Gloucestershire and I am sure you will be aware of mounting national pressure on councils across the UK to balance their budgets whilst delivering core services.

Corporate Peer Review

The County Council recently underwent a Corporate Peer Challenge where officers and lead members from other authorities come along to review the council and evaluate how it is working against expected standards. This is conducted over a number of days with many staff and councillors being interviewed about their various dealings with the Council. The peer group is seen as a critical friend and offers an overview at the end of the visit with a report following with recommendations.

Key areas for improvement at GCC include staff IT which is often cited as a reason for leaving at exit interviews, a clearer vision of what the council stands for and wants to achieve via its partnership working, a need to ensure that proper scrutiny can be carried out by being much more open about forward plans and timing of scrutiny and decision making, better strategic and greater corporate leadership, valuing employees and ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are truly embraced by the Council.

Bus Task and Finish Group

The bus working group which I was on last year published its full report ahead of January's cabinet meeting.

This was a fascinating group to be part of and the recommendations to Cabinet include some simple quick wins

which I hope the council will deploy. These include a multi-modal map showing real time connections for different types of transport, and surveys on bus use and what the barriers are to increased use.

Here is a link to the final report:

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s97237/Final%20Report%20-%20Improving%20Gloucestershires%20Bus%20Services%20Scrutiny%20Task%20Group.pdf>

The Robin

The Council will be expanding its offer of Direct Response Transport (DRT) via The Robin service in the South Cotswolds hopefully late summer. This scheme has now been running successfully in the north Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean and I have been keen to see it used in this area.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/the-robin/>