

Gloucestershire County Council
Newsletter by Cllr Dr Nigel Moor
County Councillor Stow Division
Spring 2018



GCC Budget

GCC's budget for 2018/19 was agreed at Council on the 14th February and is a total of £412.9 m based on a council tax increase of 4.49%, of which 2.0 % is ringfenced for adult care. This represents an increase in our expenditure of 1.27% compared with the 2017/18 budget and means that the county council can protect the budgets for adult care, children and families, public health, communities and infrastructure. The budget represents an increase in spending on adult social care of 2.3% and on children's services of 28%. The aim here is to reduce the case load for each social worker.

In addition our capital budget going forward to 2019 is almost £505 m and includes our £150 m investment to highways, and in addition to broadband, cycling and footways and other essential infrastructure including a roll out of electric vehicle charging points across the county. Compared with many other counties we have been able to maintain our services despite reduced grant from central government and this has only been possible because of difficult decisions taken during the period of our administration.

The Lengthsman's scheme and Highways Local will continue as well as local community budgets for councillors. This will enable each councillor to spend £30,000 over three years on community projects. The Lengthsman's scheme will start again in May and I will book some time for you and let the clerk know the programme details.

LED Street Lighting

To date the replacement project has concentrated on the conversion of street lights in residential areas, and Skanska are just about to complete year 3 of the 4 year programme. At the end of March 40,000 lights will have been replaced- 74% of the total asset of 54,000 lights. Over the period 1st April -2018 – March 2019 the remaining lights will be replaced including the more difficult wall mounted and those on wood poles. There are substantial energy savings from the replacement project, and the LED columns may offer the possibility of recharging points for electric vehicles.

The A417 Missing Link invitation to public consultation

Thanks to our lobbying and a £4m investment in feasibility work, Highways England are organising a public consultation on the possible route options between 15th February and 29th March 2018. Details will be available in Cirencester Library or online at www.highways.org.uk/a417-missing-link

This is an opportunity to have your say on this crucial project, which is also important for the North Cotswolds, as I believe with a fast route between the M4 and M5, there will be an opportunity to divert HGV's presently using the A429 Fosse Way.

A new Way for Highways

As part of our £150 m investment in the county's roads over the next five years Gloucestershire County Council announced proposals to break down the county's highways contract into three areas. These are highways maintenance contract, highways structural maintenance contract (resurfacing work) and the highways professional services contract (works design and consultancy support).

The new highways term maintenance contract will deliver around £20 m of routine maintenance on our roads each year and covers works such as pothole repairs, patching, winter gritting, grass cutting and gulley emptying. The five companies that have been shortlisted are Balfour Beatty, Griffiths, Ringway, Skanska and Volker Highways. Each prospective contractor will go through a rigorous tendering process over the coming months before an award of the contract in the Autumn 2018. The council's current highways provider Amey will continue to deliver highway services in the county until their contract ends at the end of March 2018. Tarmac have been announced as the winning contractor for the new highways structural contract and later in the spring we will announce our road resurfacing programme for the coming year.

Major Roads Network

You will recall that I have mentioned that Highways England were consulting on the National Strategic Roads Network and the A429 Fosse was not included. Now Highways England are consulting on what would be a second national tier : The Major Roads Network and again the A429 is not included and on this basis would be described as a Local Highway. The down side is that any road improvements along the A429 would need to come from the county council and or s106 contributions but the upside is that the Major Roads Network will require new signage. This change will provide the opportunity to direct HGV's away from the Fosse as map companies/satnav companies are made aware of the new designation and the need to encourage traffic onto the major roads as opposed to local highways.

Safe and Well visits

I wanted to mention these visits conducted by the Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service with vulnerable groups in the county. Nearly 6000 visits a year are now carried out and I wanted to flag up

that if there are groups in your town or village that would benefit for a visit, please let the Moreton or Stow Fire stations know.

Local Highways

Bob Skillern has been promoted to the role of Area Highways Manager for the central part of the county and Rhodri Grey (E mail address Rhodri.GREY@gloucestershire.gov.uk) is our new Local Highways Manager. I have met with Bob and Rhodri to review my local highways budget but the recent bad weather has pushed back many of the repairs and schemes in the current programme. What I can say is that these are included in the committed 2017-18 budget and will be done when we are able to catch-up in the spring. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our highway crews for keeping our strategic highway network open during the recent snow blizzards. There is a hilarious “musical” featuring Gloucestershire`s gritting heroes at www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk

You can contact me at nigel.moor@gloucestershire.gov.uk or at 07778 207034