

Cotswold District Council (CDC): The next full Council is 18th March. In the **Overview and Scrutiny (O&S)** meeting we had an update on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This scheme to dissolve district and town councils into larger 'unitary' authorities has been dictated by the government and is currently open for public consultation. The preferred scheme voted by most Gloucestershire councils is for a single unitary covering the whole of the county – this will cost around £10m to set up, with CDC directly contributing around £1.5m. This equates to around 900 band D households! However, this only represents the 'visible' costs for such things as IT, redundancy, and other physical items, but doesn't include the significant amount of officer time in shaping and running complex programmes of work. CDC officers have picked up several key programmes, and I have asked how this will impact their 'day jobs', which is serving the people of the Cotswolds.

Litter: My little story on McDonalds bags still seems to be generating interest in the media – this week I'm filming a piece on litter as part of a wider segment for BBC Morning Live. I've been contacted by people from across the country about problem litter, especially that from fast food outlets, and had an interesting call from a company developing an automated system for recording people throwing litter out of their cars. While I think we have more than enough cameras monitoring our every move, we need to do something before we drown in a sea of litter. I am hoping to discuss a possible trial using the technology with the Head of Environmental Services at CDC, and also to explore the possibility of working with local food outlets to add details of drive through purchases to the bags – having such information encoded on the bags would massively reduce this particular problem.

My colleagues have previously asked formal questions to the Cabinet member for waste about the removal of bins from laybys in the CDC area, and the resulting increase in litter – this month I have asked about litter removal more generally, as our verges and lanes are the worst I've ever seen. We can all do litter picks in our villages, but the road network is more dangerous and should be looked after by CDC. I will publish their response next month.

Roads – these continue to be a disaster! I report as many as I can on my travels, but can everyone use the Fix My Street app to alert Highways of significant issues.

Further afield, I visited the A419 'Missing Link' site to catch up on progress. This major infrastructure project is progressing at pace, and at the beginning of May the new road will be partially opened. From Cirencester and via a contraflow, traffic will navigate a rather complex route at the old Air Balloon roundabout before continuing to Cheltenham or the motorway. To quote our host, this will be 5 weeks of hell! It will be particularly bad if approaching from the 7 Springs direction, and is likely to be problematic for several months, so best avoided if you can.

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Progress on the Missing Link



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