

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	15th October 2014
Subject:	Micro-regeneration 'hit-list'		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture		
Wards Affected:	Westgate, Kingsholm & Wotton, Matson & Robinswood		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 Location Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on work to bring about the regeneration of various important, mainly city centre, sites and buildings.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to note the information contained in the report and confirm these buildings as a priority for regeneration activity.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Leader of the Council and the City MP recently announced plans to target key sites and buildings, mainly in the city centre, for regeneration in the run-up to next year's Rugby World Cup. It should be noted that the Rugby World Cup is intended to act as a focus for activity and used to encourage investment in the city. However, the City Council would still be working to bring about the regeneration of these sites and buildings even if Gloucester was not in the fortunate position of being a RWC Host City. Indeed, work to bring about the regeneration of a number of the sites/buildings identified dates back some time and, in some cases, prior to the granting of Host City status. The sites and buildings set out in this report are those identified as priorities, but the list is by no means exhaustive. The Council has previously taken a similar approach to identifying key sites and buildings for action with a list known as "The Dirty Dozen", with sites including the former Raglan Arms in Tredworth, 2 Spa Road and the former Samsons Supplies building in Southgate Street, all of which have now been developed.

3.1.1 Former Kwiksave, Northgate Street

Discussions are ongoing between the developer and a Registered Provider. Officers have facilitated discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency to identify what grant resources can be deployed to bring this site forward.

3.1.2 Albion House, Southgate Street

The owner has agreed an option to purchase with a local developer. The developer has had pre-application advice from the Planning Team regarding a refurbishment of Albion House, plus redevelopment of the former Kitchen Shop for apartments and additional development at the rear of the site. Officers have met with the developer and discussed the eligible works regarding potential grant assistance.

3.1.3 Former Job Centre, Southgate Street

A planning application has been submitted and a number of meetings have been undertaken with the owner regarding their proposals for the building. The application is for a complete refurbishment of the building for residential to upper floors and retail use at ground level.

3.1.4 Bakers Quay

Negotiations are underway between the land owner and potential developer who are looking to bring forward a mixed use scheme.

3.1.5 HM Prison Gloucester

The property has been marketed by agents. Officers understand that a decision will be made shortly by the Ministry of Justice (the property owners), as to who their preferred developer is.

3.1.6 Former Marks & Spencer (M&S) site, Northgate Street

The building is being marketed for sale/to let. Agents are acting on behalf of M&S and have advised that they have interest from a retailer looking to take a new lease, in addition an unnamed developer is considering the freehold interest.

3.1.7 Prospect House, London Road (corner Heathville Road)

Officers have spoken to agents acting on behalf of the building's owner. They have confirmed that their client is currently undertaking a restructuring exercise. Once this is complete they are likely to dispose of the property, most probably early in 2015.

3.1.8 Former Fleece Hotel,

The property is currently being marketed by agents acting on behalf of the City Council. There has been interest although this has been subject to securing funding from the HCA. Officers are pursuing feedback following a recent site visit by a local consortium of investors who have also expressed an interest in the regeneration of this site.

3.1.9 Former Jumpin Jaks, Brunswick Road

Further information will be sought to understand the owner's intentions for this building and to encourage a regeneration scheme. The successful regeneration of the adjacent former Gloscat Media site will help to encourage bringing this site back into use.

3.1.10 26 Westgate Street (former Bookends building)

Detailed cost analysis have been undertaken to confirm the viability of this building for use as the Tourist Information Centre. The outcome of this work is that there remain challenges over resource availability and cost of works. However constructive dialogue continues with the building's owners to find a viable solution.

3.1.11 Kings Walk and Longsmith Street Car Parks

Kings Walk - through the City Centre Investment Fund, potential cladding options are being considered. Officers have met with the building's owner, Aviva, to present options and they are in agreement, in principle. The scheme is being developed further.

Longsmiths Street - a planning application has been submitted to enable the delivery of a green wall to mask the facade of this building.

3.1.12 Former Café El-Bahdja, Westgate Street

Interest has been shown by a potential occupier. Otherwise the property remains in good condition.

3.1.13 Fiveways site, Southgate Street/Trier Way

Construction has recently started on site this year for a dementia home.

3.1.14 Quayside House

The property is programmed for disposal by Gloucestershire County Council. However it is likely that it will form part of the wider master planning exercise for the Blackfriars area, to provide a comprehensive and deliverable regeneration scheme.

3.1.15 Clarence House, Clarence Street

This property is currently being converted into a budget hotel, which is due to open in Spring 2015.

3.1.16 Prince of Wales Public House, Station Road

A planning application has recently been received relating to a residential scheme of 14 two bedroom flats.

3.1.17 Tanners Building, Worcester Street

This site has the benefit of a planning approval for a mixed use scheme. Work is on going to enable delivery of this site.

3.1.18 Conway House, Worcester Street

This is currently a long-term vacant office building formerly occupied by the Learning and Skills Council. At present there are no proposals for the regeneration of this site, although the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture has been in touch with the owner's agent.

3.1.19 Former Remax, Northgate Street

The Food Bank are in discussions with regard to utilising the building for their operations.

3.1.20 Lower Southgate Street

No. 141 - the property went to auction earlier this year. Officers have met the new owners on-site and explained the issues affecting the building, namely an enforcement notice relating to the listed building, and the potential Townscape Heritage Initiative Bid (THI) grant on offer. Local architects have been appointed to look at potential proposals.

No. 174 - the owner has appointed an architect to develop a THI application for refurbishment of the property. This is very positive.

3.2 In addition to the above top 20, there are an additional dozen residual sites which are also a key component of our regeneration activity and which form part of our priority list.

3.2.1 Prince Albert Pub, Station Road

The property has recently been sold by auction to a local businessman and is currently being offered for let. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture has been in discussion with the building's owner.

3.2.21 B&M and Paddy Power, Southgate Street

Again, through the City Centre Investment Fund proposals are being developed by Officers to clad the building and reduce its impact on the streetscape.

3.2.3 Wilkinsons, Northgate Street

Cladding options are being considered using resources identified through the City Centre Investment Fund, to make a positive impact on the facade of this building.

3.2.4 27-29 Commercial Road

The Council are undertaking a number of minor works in readiness to take the property to the market.

3.2.5 Building on the corner of Painswick Road/Cemetery Road (Tyndale Mission Hall)

A planning application has been received to convert this building into 8 apartments

3.2.6 Building on the corner of 55 Northgate Street/2 Hare Lane

Further investigations are to be undertaken to consider options for this building.

3.2.7 78 Westgate Street (former Harris Butchers)

The property is a Listed Building and currently on the Building at Risk Register due to being in a very bad condition internally. The building sits within a target area for the City Centre Historic Area Grant Scheme. About a year ago the owners filed an expression of interest for grant support but have not taken forward any proposals. The unit has been on the market for some time.

3.2.8 Friary House, Southgate Street (upper levels, above Prezzo)

This property has been purchased by an investment fund whose holding company is located in Luxembourg. They are looking at options for redevelopment although no details are currently available.

3.2.9 Former KCs, Quay Street

The City Council's Economic Development team have spoken to the owner's agent. To date Officers have not been able to secure a delivery strategy for the regeneration of the building. The owners are seeking to take the property out of the ratings list, as they believe that it is not in a fit state to be occupied and has a significant rates liability.

3.2.10 Site on the corner of Wellington Street/Hampden Way

Planning consent has been granted for development. The owners have been looking to develop this site for some years, and have been in touch with the City Council to ascertain grant availability. No application has been received as yet.

3.2.11 2-4 Wellington Street: satisfying pre-commencement conditions have delayed this development, but the key matter holding the development up, approval of geotechnical proposals, now appears to be resolved and works have commenced on site.

3.2.12 1-7 Wellington Street: this site has planning permission for 19 flats. The site has been promoted on a number of occasions to Registered Providers. The primary issue has always been the land value ascribed to the site. Currently the site is proving challenging in terms of moving it forward.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 This report is to advise Members on the latest position with a number of properties, mainly in the city centre, as part of a regeneration priority hit-list.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 To consider whether the buildings/sites identified are those which should be priorities for Officers' efforts in order to bring about improvements to the physical environment and impact positively on the growth and prosperity of the city.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 Consideration is to be given as to how the Council can help to bring about the regeneration of these sites/buildings within the restrictions of third party ownership and resource availability.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications for this report.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 This report does not create any risks to the authority. It does however identify opportunities which could contribute towards the successful regeneration of the City

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 There are no direct or indirect People Impacts as a result of this report.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 None

Sustainability

11.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3

Background Documents: None