

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	12th November 2014
Subject:	City Centre Investment Fund Allocations and Update		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Culture		
Wards Affected:	Westgate		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Anthony Hodge Head of Regeneration & Economic Development		
	Email: anthony.hodge@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	39-6034
Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report updates Members on the projects within the City Centre Investment Fund delivery programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE:**

- (1) That the public toilet allocation of £100,000 be used to provide a new facility at the relocated Tourist Information Centre, subject to the outcome of detailed feasibility studies.
- (2) That a further £5,000 be allocated to cover the cost of the Urban Designer to develop the Lighting Schemes up to 30th September 2015.
- (3) Note the updates in respect of the specific funding proposals.
- (4) Confirm the prioritisation of Longsmith Street Car Park and the Eastgate Street frontage of the Kings Walk Car Park for the treatment of their facades.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Cabinet has set up the City Centre Investment Fund utilising some of the money (£2m) from the Tesco deal at St. Oswalds, to help support the attractiveness, vitality and viability of the centre and build on the considerable amount of successful work already being carried out.

3.2 This report provides an update in respect of allocated resources following a March 2013 Cabinet report and subsequent amendments made through a report to Cabinet in April 2014.

4.0 Allocations

The following are updates on the areas previously identified for allocation.

4.1 Better Car Parks - £200,000

4.1.1 This allocation reflects the importance that the appearance of car parks has on visitors' impressions. The works needed at various car parks have now been assessed and the following proposals identified and progressed:

4.2 Car Parks General

4.2.1 Litter bins (seagull proof) – a total of 20 have been installed in Longsmith Street, Kings Walk and Eastgate Roof top.

4.2.2 All of the old type bins have been removed.

4.2.3 Quotes have been received for the improved lighting in Hampden Way car park and an order has been placed with a contractor to install the new LED light fitting at a cost of £5,000. This work will be completed by end of November.

4.2.4 A lighting inspection has been undertaken at the start of October so that any lighting issues in the car parks can be addressed for the winter.

4.2.5 **Station Road Car Park:** The layout of the car park has been amended and re-lined to meet current standards for bay and running lane widths. This has resulted in a revised provision of 96 total spaces including 5 disabled at a cost of £1,700. Quotes are being obtained for the coloured surfacing to provide safe pedestrian walkways. Costs are estimated at £6,000.

4.2.6 **Eastgate Rooftop Car Park:** Reinstatement of lighting and refurbishment of the area above Boots – this work is now complete at a cost of £4,300.

4.2.7 Recent concerns have been raised regarding pedestrian access to the car park. In particular when the shopping centre is closed and pedestrians have to use the vehicular ramp. Officers are currently working up a scheme to improve this pedestrian route and general approach up the ramp to the car park.

4.2.8 **Kings Walk & Longsmiths Street Car Park:** There has been a series of improvement works undertaken to the stairwells at Longsmith Street Car Park. Louvered grills have been fitted to stairwell openings that prevent access for unwanted nighttime visitors but still allow ventilation of the stairwell. Initial findings are positive and assuming continued success Officers propose to use similar grills in the Kings Walk stairwell. In order to combat ongoing anti-social behaviour and fouling of the stairwells, replacement doors (£10,500) have been fitted at each entry point at Kings Walk which are now locked in the evening.

4.2.9 A deep clean of the stairwells was undertaken when these works were completed. However it is clear that the benefits of the deep clean do not provide a long term solution. Officers will investigate more permanent solutions including waterproofing and tanking membranes which prevent fluids from being absorbed into the stairwells and allow effective cleaning for both Kings Walk and Longsmith Street car parks.

4.2.10 **Westgate Street Car Park:** The works required to improve ingress and egress to the car park have been completed at a cost of circa £8,000. This included removal of the attendants hut and reconfiguration of barriers at the entrance. Further cosmetic improvements have been made to include refurbishment of the railings around the toilet block and replacement of the toilet doors at a cost of £1,300.

4.2.11 Quotes are being obtained to improve the surface of the car park, together with white lining.

4.3 Major 'Shop Gloucester' Advertising Campaign - £30,000

4.3.1 This allocation is to support a 'Shop Gloucester' Campaign and the related idea of Residents' Weekends where a week or weekend is selected, and participating businesses offer discounts or incentives of one kind or another during this period, coupled with street entertainment to make the city as vibrant and attractive as possible. The first Residents Weekend of 2014 was held in March and was widely considered to be a significant success. Uniquely the weekend was jointly marketed by the Quays, Eastgate and Kings Walk shopping centres.

4.3.2 Work is on going around city dressing for the Rugby World Cup.

4.4 City Museum Phase 2 - £500,000

4.4.1 The transformation of the ground floor of the City Museum made a great deal of difference to the museum and boosted visitor numbers. Phase 2, the redevelopment of the first floor, will enable this to go even further with an emphasis on the important moments in the history of the City.

4.4.2 The Round 1 HLF Grant bid was completed and successfully submitted in August 2014. The bid was reviewed by our appointed HLF Consultant and extremely positive feedback was offered. Our bid contained several pieces of high quality supporting information including a forward plan detailing how we will deliver the project if successful at Round 1. Fifteen strong letters of support were included. The HLF case officer has advised us that no other projects in Gloucestershire submitted a Round 1 application in August adding that the HLF are looking to offer further support to museum based projects in Gloucester. Whilst the outcome cannot be guaranteed, the proposal is being given every chance of success at Round 1 by producing a high quality and comprehensive bid. A decision will be made by the HLF in November 2014. If successful the project will progress through the development phase before submitting a Round 2 application.

4.5 A new Tourist Information Centre - £130,000

4.5.1 The relocation of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) to new larger premises is currently focussed on 26 Westgate Street. This is a significant listed building in need of re-use. The TIC would be largely contained on the ground floor of the premises and disabled access would be required along the passageway to the side with alterations at the rear. Disabled Groups have been consulted and they accept this proposal in principle, subject to design.

4.5.2 This is a Grade 1 listed building of significant importance. The Gloucester Historic Buildings Trust (GHBT) have expressed an interest to work with the owners and the City Council, to consider sustainable schemes and to contribute towards building works through appropriate grant applications, not least in support of the proposed relocation of the TIC.

4.5.3 Following investigations relating to the ground floor of the building, there remain insufficient resources to implement the improvements required to facilitate the move. The owners of the building have also advised Officers that they can no longer meet the cost of insuring the building. Work is ongoing to see if the building can be insured through the Councils insurance policy subject to the conclusion of the TIC feasibility work. This would be on a no additional cost basis to the Council.

4.5.4 The TIC would also be an appropriate location for public toilet provision, not least due to the footfall both generate. Co-location would help with management and maintenance and provide an efficient solution to provision.

4.6 Enhanced Christmas Lights / Decorations - £75,000

4.6.1 Christmas 2013 already had the benefit of additional resources being allocated. These delivered improvements which included an additional tree in Kings Square, additional lighting on the Tree of Light and lit highway trees on the Gates Streets. Through the City Centre Investment Fund Christmas 2014 will benefit from remotely operated lights on the parade route. This will improve the effect of the lights coming on as the parade passes underneath. Some refurbishment works have also been undertaken to the existing lights. During 2014/15 quotes and details of improved lights will be obtained, for approval, ready for Christmas 2015, including the potential to increase coverage and benefit more businesses.

4.7 Extended Business Grants - £100,000

4.7.1 The business grants programme is proving very successful. To date there have been 41 (14 previously reported) expressions of interest and 23 (8 previously reported) grants agreed committing £23,000. Based on the original allocation, this can be broken down as follows:

- Evening vitality grants £30,000, 2 EOI
- Flexible business support grants £18,000, 12 EOI, 6 grants agreed
- Growing Gloucester grants (existing businesses) £10,000 and Growing Gloucester grants (new businesses) £40,000, 27 EOI, 17 grants agreed

4.7.2 The below identifies those companies that have now been in receipt of the grant:

7 Bamboos Rugby Ltd	Allcap Limited
Armed Creative	Ashgreen Business Services Ltd
Café on the Cut	Cuff Security Services Limited
E G Carter & Company Limited	Envesca Ltd
Express Removals and Storage Ltd	F Norville Ltd T. A. Norville Opticians
GSC Consultancy	HR Champions Ltd
JSM Business Gifts	One to One Recruitment
Power Direct Limited	Space Interior Contracts Ltd
Target Catering Equipment	Twinkle Teepees

4.7.3 In addition to the grants a budget was provided for Marketing support (£2,000).

4.8 Targeted Historic Grant Scheme - £200,000

4.8.1 The City Centre Historic Areas grant scheme was launched in July 2013, during this period a total of forty eight expressions of interest have been received. From these initial enquiries a total of seven grant applications have been received. Therefore as of September 2014 four grants have being formally offered and accepted totaling £29,442 for the following works:

- 105 - 107 Westgate Street - 15 new timber sash windows £25,410
- GA Bakers and Sons, 5 Southgate Street - repairs and cleaning to the clock and figures £4,715
- 21 St John's Lane - repairs to windows £3,045
- 50 Northgate Street – Shop front repairs £987

4.8.2 Two schemes have been completed, GA Baker and Sons and 107-109 Westgate Street. The works at 21 St John's Lane are currently being undertaken. Of the remaining expressions of interest three properties have submitted grant applications but Officers are awaiting further information and additional quotations to enable assessment.

4.8.3 Officers have also prioritised building projects for targeted grants and these are buildings which are on the City Councils Buildings at Risk Register (B@R) and also those which are vacant on both ground and upper floors to help rejuvenate the gate streets of Gloucester. The following properties have been allocated funds and are awaiting formal grant applications to be submitted:

- 24 Westgate Street
- 26 Westgate Street
- 31 Westgate Street
- 39 Westgate Street
- 41 Westgate Street
- 78 Westgate Street

4.8.4 The owners of these properties are presently undertaking further investigations to assess the condition, viability and feasibility of the projects together with subsequent planning and listed building permissions. It is anticipated that approved further grant applications will be forthcoming once this work has been undertaken. Other buildings will also be considered for grants including 60-62 Westgate Street (Hayden Taylor).

4.8.5 Officers will continue to promote the scheme working with Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership (GCCCCP), Chamber of Commerce, as well as, the Regeneration and Economic Development Team to continue cross promoting the grant schemes to assist in rejuvenating the city centre's gate streets through reusing vacant commercial and residential premises.

4.9 Lighting - £145,000

4.9.1 A total of £145,000 has been allocated to lighting within the fund. This can be broken down as follows:

1) £45,000 lighting schemes which is further broken down into:

- £25, 000 'priority schemes' top-up to the existing lighting budget, to potentially cover any cost over-runs for the developing lighting projects (St Nicholas Church, Eastgate Portico, Old Bell, Eastgate Viewing Chamber). Detail over the supply, cost and responsibility of the electricity supply will be considered and agreed as part of the project development process
- An additional £5,000 Urban Design Officer project funds (for a period of 1 year ending 30.09.14 or until the work is concluded, whichever is the sooner) . This is in addition to the originally approved £10,000 which expired early September 2014. It is proposed that the required £5,000 is identified from the contingency figure of £60,000. However Officers will continue discussions with Finance to consider if this cost can be met through alternative sources.
- £10,000 St. Michael's Tower, which is proposed to be implemented over the next 12 months following completion of the repair works. The lighting scheme will be developed in collaboration with the Civic Trust.

2) £80,000 allocated for the re-lighting of Eastgate and Westgate Streets (identified as Option 3 in Cabinet Report considered in September 2013), with a suggested 50% top-up requested from the County Council to reach a level of funding which would make a significant impact. Discussions are on-going between the County Council and the City Council and the principle of re-lighting Westgate and Eastgate Streets has been agreed.

The next stage is to develop a detailed design for the re-lighting, to provide the following costed options:

- Keep existing high-level floodlights but with some minor alterations to reduce light spill onto buildings
- A middle-ground scheme where some of the existing floodlights are retained but supplemented with a partial column-based lighting approach (at various points to enhance seating areas or where we may want to light up historic buildings).
- A column-based lighting scheme, possibly using a combination of lower-level building mounted lanterns and columns, which would tie in well to the more historic setup in Westgate Street.

3) £20,000 maintenance of existing and proposed lighting schemes. It is expected to last between 4 and 6 years, based on our experience over the previous 5 years.

4.10 Treatment of Unattractive Facades £150,000

4.10.1 Following approval Officers have been working on developing architect designed schemes after receiving quotations for a variety of approaches including cladding, possible art work and green walls. The following schemes are being developed:

- a) **Kings Walk Car Park, Eastgate Street elevation:** Officers have been in discussions with the lease holder and to date they have been productive. Cladding has been agreed as the most appropriate way forward in terms of costs and visual impact and to date a number of Computer Generated Images (CGI) have been produced, showing what could be achieved.

Designs will be refined and will be subject to consultation through a targeted stakeholder seminar October/November time. It is proposed that a planning application can be submitted before Christmas with work starting late winter early spring.

- b) **The Eastgate Link Bridge:** Officers have been in discussions with the Shopping Centre and there is interest in the scheme subject to further detailed proposals being developed. This will probably be progressed as a separate application due to the Kings Walk scheme being further developed. Permission will be required from the Eastgate Shopping Centre, as well as, planning applications submitted for the re-cladding. Similar to the Kings Walk scheme consultation will be undertaken with local stakeholders and the shopping centre. The intention is to submit a planning application by January 2015 for approval in March 2015.
- c) **Eastgate Shopping Centre:** This is on a long lease from the City Council, however, permission will be needed from the Eastgate Centre's owners and a planning application will be needed. The facades which are considered to be the most appropriate for a Tromp l'oiel (a form of building wrap) is the area above Paddy Power and B&M. This is due to the area being visually uninteresting. Officers are presently focusing on the building wrap treatment though cladding has not been ruled out. Wraps are a canvas sheet set on a frame and have a life span of approximately 5 years, after which they may have to be renewed or removed. Designs have been researched and initial thoughts have focussed on a recreation of the 19th century hotel that previously occupied the site. Subject to further meetings with the Shopping centre and leaseholders the intention is to submit a planning application by January 2015 for approval in March 2015.
- d) **Longsmith Street Car Park:** A planning application has been submitted for the planters and guide wires in order to create the green wall. Trials of various plants have been on going over the summer to ascertain the most appropriate species/cultivar to use in the scheme. On gaining planning permission and a licence from the county council it will be built out over the winter months.
- e) **Wilkinson Northgate:** this is seen as a lower priority scheme due to its less central location. However it will be considered following the successful completion of the other façade works.

f) **Public Art Coordinator:** The use of a public art coordinator will depend on the detail required for the Tromp D'oeil on Eastgate Shopping Mall

4.10.2 Overall Officers are proposing to prioritise work on Longsmith Street Car Park and Kings Walk as the City Council own the former and have a good in principle support for the latter. Eastgate Link Bridge and Southgate Street schemes while having in principle support the owners are not able at this juncture to give assurances that they will want to progress a scheme. There are also issues around sub-leases with some of the tenants.

4.10.3 The timetable for implementation will be over the following 12 months and it is still the intention to have the sites delivered in time for the Rugby World Cup.

4.11 Heritage Interpretation, Signage and Street Banners

4.11.1 **Heritage Trails survey - £10,000:** A review of the existing Heritage Trails was undertaken by Conservation Staff with help from the Civic Trust. The Conservation Projects Officer has been working with Marketing Gloucester to implement a Heritage Trails web based application. Local firm ICON.net has been chosen to develop this application. This completed and launched at the end of August. The company have been contracted to provide web management for 12 months to monitor web traffic and trends, so that we can see how popular it is and how people use it.

4.11.2 **Interpretation Boards £40,000:** A design brief was produced and forwarded to suitable companies to provide quotations for two further heritage interpretation boards at Eastgate Chamber and also within the new public realm created at Kimbrose Triangle. The designer has drafted the two boards and these have been subject to two rounds of public consultation with local heritage groups providing expertise and guidance. The final designs are due to be received in early October. Once received a contractor will be appointed to construct and install the boards in a style to match those already in existence in the gate streets.

4.11.3 Marketing Gloucester are leading on the installation of further signage boards/finger posts being installed across the City similar to those for the public realm improvements to the docks and Kimbrose. £36,000 has been allocated to these improvements. This will include reference to City tourism attractions including the Folk and City Museums and the Guildhall.

4.11.4 **Event Banner Holders £10,000:** This is being coordinated within the larger banner project for the Rugby World Cup. The objective is to ensure the City Centre Investment Fund contributes towards additional banners that benefit the city centre.

4.12 Gate Street Public Realm Improvements - £100,000

4.12.1 Cabinet at its meeting on the 6th February 2013 approved the improvement to traffic restrictions in the Gates Street area. This included changes to the existing four Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which will restrict access to all vehicles apart from emergency services and certain specific exemptions between 10.00 am and 4.00pm seven days a week. The main objective being to create a much more clearly defined and enforceable pedestrian zone, so that a safer and more attractive

shopping environment is maintained. The TROs are to be enforced through the installation and operation of a series of hydraulic bollards.

4.12.2 Work to implement the hydraulic bollards has been completed. They are expected to be operational at the end of November 2014

4.13 Quality Public Toilet Provision - £100,000

4.13.1 This allocation recognised the need for high quality public toilet facilities in the City Centre. We are awaiting clarity regarding the Kings Square redevelopment which is expected to provide additional facilities which may remove the need for a further separate facility. In addition the possibility of a public toilet provision as part of the relocation of the TIC has merit.

4.14 Kings Square Refresh - £20,000

4.14.1 £20,000 of the City Centre Investment fund has been allocated to improvement works in Kings Square. Officers have now ordered new bollards to be placed in strategic parts of Kings Square so as to both restrict vehicular access and to identify the curtilage of the square. Spend to date is £10,000. The bollards will be installed in the next few weeks. All remaining works are subject to the identification of capital budgets.

4.15 Replace Westgate Mosaics £30,000

4.15.1 As detailed in the September 2013 report, these are being regularly damaged. Their replacement will add to the attractiveness of a key historic street and has now been completed.

4.16 St Michaels Tower stonework repairs. £100,000

4.16.1 Works to repair the tower have been successfully completed and the scaffolding removed.

4.17 Public Realm Strategy

4.17.1 Cabinet in April 2014 agreed to reallocate £40,000 that had been identified for the replacement of the Station Road Car Park boundary wall with railings, to develop a Public Realm Strategy (PRS) and deliver some early improvements. Work is progressing and to date the following has been achieved:

- A street furniture database has been created to record all of the characteristics of the furniture.
- The boundary of the street furniture survey work has been established and the plan drawn up using the GIS map base, set within the boundary of the Primary Shopping Area.
- Surveys of existing street furniture has been undertaken. So far, Kimbrose Triangle, Commercial Road, Southgate Street and half of Westgate Street have been surveyed and the information entered into the database, including photos for each individual piece of furniture.

- Research of existing PRS documents in surrounding areas + other notable examples, including Stroud, Cheltenham, Swindon, Oxford and Bristol.
- Research undertaken into a potential palette of street furniture, focussing on the types and specifications of bins, including establishing the requirements for any proposed bins including refurbishment, such as seagull proof, metal body, cigarette facility etc.
- Consultation and discussions with colleagues and representatives from manufacturers to form appropriate designs, including branding, colours, and features.
- Setting out structure of PRS document and forming best framework to present ideas.

4.17.2 The first draft of the Public Realm Strategy will be produced by the end of this calendar (2014) for Members review and approval, with alterations and proposed public consultation on that document to follow in the New Year.

4.17.3 However in advance of the Strategy, to tackle a pressing issue, a pallet of replacement and refurbished bins has been developed. A trial is proposed to ensure that the proposed bins are fit for purpose and work well. This will enable the bin component of the strategy to be expedited to address the pressing issue of current bins being obsolete.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 The alternatives for the allocation of the remaining money in this fund were assessed in Section 5 of the September 2013 Cabinet report.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The recommendations for further allocations have been based on the objectives of the City Centre Investment Fund which is to improve the attractiveness of the City Centre.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 A considerable amount of further specific work will be required. A six monthly update report will be brought back to Cabinet so that progress and potential re-allocations can be considered.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The report proposes the spending of an element of a capital receipt received as a result of the sale of a piece of land to Tesco.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising out of this report although there will be specific issues where it will be necessary to involve colleagues from Legal Services.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 The recommendations offer an opportunity to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the City Centre.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 There are no community safety implications.

Sustainability

- 12.2 There are no sustainability implications.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 There are no staffing implications.

Background Documents: None