

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	26 January 2015
	Cabinet		28 January 2015
Subject:	Regeneration & Economic Development Strategy		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Anthony Hodge, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development		
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Attachments:	1. Regeneration & Economic Development Strategy		
	2. City Centre Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report presents to Cabinet the proposed draft Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2015 – 2020, for the City of Gloucester. The Strategy identifies 6 key regeneration and economic development objectives to be delivered over the next 5 years.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted, subject to any recommendations the Committee wishes to make to Cabinet.

2.2 **Cabinet** is asked to **RESOLVE**:

- (1) that the contents of this report be noted;
- (2) the broad direction of the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy is approved and
- (3) that the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy be subject to a public consultation exercise.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Gloucester has been the subject of a major programme of regeneration over the last decade or so, with over £700 million of investment attracted into the city. Over much of this time, regeneration activity was co-ordinated by the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company (GHURC), although projects were delivered by a

wide range of public and private sector organisations. With the winding up of the GHURC, the Council has taken a much more hands on approach to regeneration delivery. In the light of the new regeneration environment, Cabinet requested that a detailed strategy be prepared for approval and that an advisory board be recruited to oversee the new regeneration programme.

3.2 That report identified a number of priorities which have been driven forward with major achievements. These include:

- 1) Kings Quarter: £6.4M of grant has been secured towards the delivery of this scheme. This can be broken down into Gloucestershire Local Transport Board (£1.7M) and the GFirst Strategic Economic Plan (£4.6M). The City Council now has control over the majority of the site, enabling the delivery of the scheme to progress. Now that there is certainty over the land, work will start in January to procure architects to commence the design of the city's new bus station, with a planning application to follow shortly afterwards.
- 2) Blackfriars: with the rationalisation of the County Council's property portfolio and their plan to vacate Quayside House, this has presented an excellent opportunity to work with the County to deliver a scheme for this prominent site and the city's Barbican site. Both councils have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, thereby bringing together their landholdings at this location, for redevelopment. A bid has been submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership to create "shovel ready" development plots, through reclamation and the provision of infrastructure (access roads).
- 3) City Centre Project: this is a programme of projects designed to help support the attractiveness, vitality and viability of the centre and build on the considerable amount of successful work already being carried out. This programme includes car park improvements, working to clad "unattractive facades", business support grants and the provision of a new Tourism Information Centre.
- 4) Greyfriars: the residential development by Linden Homes on the former Gloscat sites is designed to lead to significant improvements to this part of the city. In 2013 work started by Linden Homes to build 250 homes over two sites. This is now well advanced with over 80% of Phase 1 now sold.
- 5) Railway Triangle – the city has seen the development of the new Morrisons store at the Railway Triangle. The developer, LxB, is looking to move forward with the construction of the employment components of the scheme.

3.3 The Regeneration Advisory Board has also been set up and held its first meeting in July 2013. The Board is independently chaired by the Dean of Gloucester Cathedral and is made up of representatives from the private, public and community sectors with a broad range of skills and experience.

3.4 The Board has also successfully set up a sub group constituted of major investors in the city. These are:

- Peel Holdings
- Rockspring

- LxB
- Canal and River Trust
- Aviva
- Stanhope
- Rokeby

N.B. Rockspring are in the process of selling the Eastgate Centre to Lone Star who will be invited to replace them on the Investors sub group.

3.5 This group of investors has met on a number of occasions and has made a significant contribution to the development of the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy.

3.6 Attached in Appendix 1 is the draft proposed Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy for Gloucester which is based on the following 6 key priorities:

Objective 1: Delivering Major Development Sites:

Objective 2: A vibrant city centre

Objective 3: Bringing forward small sites

Objective 4: Community Regeneration

Objective 5: Jobs and Growth

Objective 6: Strategic and sub-regional growth

3.7 The concept of the strategy is to primarily focus activity on the city centre area as defined by the plan contained in Appendix 2. This is to deliver key city centre projects whose impact will be felt across the city. These are:

- i) Kings Quarter Regeneration scheme: delivering the “step change” 15,000 sq metre retail led scheme including a new Transport Hub/Bus Station
- ii) Blackfriars Project, including the former Fleece Hotel
- iii) Gloucester Quays and Gloucester Docks
- iv) Canal Corridor
- v) Railway Triangle and Corridor

3.8 These priorities relate to large capital projects which will take a number of years to deliver and in a phased way. In some cases e.g. Gloucester Quays, this will be about maintaining the momentum already created through further phases of activity. These projects are vital to the on-going prosperity of the city, ensuring the city has a broad offer to maintain a vibrant and healthy city centre and to attract investment. Much progress has been made to deliver these projects.

3.9 Whilst **Objective 1** concentrates on large physical projects **Objective 2** (a vibrant city centre) looks to broaden the offer of the centre through both capital projects and the promotion of specific initiatives within the city. It aims to deliver a high standard of city centre management, through securing Purple Flag status for the evening economy, to complement financial investment. It also looks to encourage the expansion of the resident population of the city centre, to create more footfall during the day and night, with increased passive surveillance. It will diversify the offer through office accommodation, improve our public realm, markets and to use our heritage assets (including the museums and Gloucester Cathedral) to deliver tangible regeneration benefits.

- 3.10 Whilst the larger scale regeneration activity is a primary part of the strategy, a key component is a schedule of smaller sites which make up a “hit list”, **Objective 3**. The City Council will maintain a rolling database of sites that do not make a positive contribution towards the economic activity of the city in their current form. Working with the site owners or developers, the City Council will strive to bring these back into economic use. Cumulatively their impact will be significant.
- 3.11 Successful urban regeneration also needs to consider and benefit the communities that live in the target area. **Objective 4** aims to provide an environment that empowers our communities to position themselves to create directly, and benefit from, employment opportunities and work with employers, encouraging them to recruit locally.
- 3.12 The city suffers from a small number of areas that experience persistent levels of deprivation which is not acceptable. The Council will work with those communities, and through partners including the Voluntary and Community Sector, to empower and resource them so that they too can benefit from regeneration activity and economic growth. But our objective is not for those communities to simply benefit from growth through the action of others, but to give them the tools and opportunity for them to directly deliver that growth through business start-up, entrepreneurial activity and other support mechanisms including promoting childcare opportunities.
- 3.13 Successful businesses are a key part of successful urban regeneration. The City Council already has a proven track record in business support and growth. But now we need to move to the next generation of support and adapt to changes to both business and business support mechanisms. **Objective 5** aims to continue to develop and support new business but to also complement the University of Gloucestershire’s Growth Hub. The City will engage more with our established businesses and to use all mechanisms at our disposal to support private sector growth.
- 3.14 This strategy is ambitious and rightly so. Through **Objective 6**, the City will work in partnership with all those who are striving to deliver economic growth, prosperity and to tackle deprivation locally, city wide and beyond our boundaries. The strategy acknowledges that the City will work with adjoining and sub-regional bodies to ensure our citizens and businesses have every opportunity to flourish and grow.
- 3.15 This Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy will be a core document in setting the Council’s regeneration and economic development priorities. It will be based on and consistent with the City Vision and the Council’s Corporate Plan. It is an ambitious strategy for an ambitious city. However it will also reflect and accord with the priorities as set out in the statutory planning documents that are emerging for Gloucester City and its environs, the Joint Core Strategy and the City Plan. It will also reflect and build upon the Strategic Economic Plan as prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnership GFirst.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative options considered are to remain with the previous draft strategy or to take regeneration opportunities as they arise. Neither option is recommended as many factors have changed since the previous draft strategy was written and a

clear and up-to-date strategy is needed to maximise the benefits to the city from regeneration and economic development activity.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The preparation of the draft strategy has included working closely with the city's major investors. Whilst an important part, they are only one part of the regeneration equation. If there is to be real buy in and success, all elements of the city's communities should be given the opportunity to be consulted.

6. Future Work Conclusions

- 6.1 The strategy sets the framework for ongoing project and programme delivery. It is the reference point to ensure a clear sense of direction and message to all. It will create significant activity, both for the City and its partners, to facilitate delivery

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Council will continue to support regeneration activity both through its revenue budget, and in particular through the ring-fenced regeneration account linked to former SWRDA assets, and through the Capital Programme in line with approved Council priorities. The majority of investment in regeneration will come from external partners and securing this external funding has been and will continue to be an important role for the Council.

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

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications of the decisions associated with this report.

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

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct risks associated with this strategy other than the reputation of the City Council. This will be managed through careful consultation and engagement with organisations and the community to deliver a strategy that the Council and City can get fully behind.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 10.1 A PIA screening review was undertaken. It did not identify any potential or actual negative impact. For this reason, a full PIA is not required.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 11.1 None.

Sustainability

11.2 None.

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 None.

Background Documents: None