

## **Gloucester City Council**

### **Regeneration & Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020**

#### **Foreword**

Gloucester has come a long way over the last decade, with well over £700 million of investment in the city's regeneration, despite the worst recession in sixty years. The Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company deserves a great deal of credit for that success. It brought the key players from the private, public and voluntary sectors together round the table, it created investor confidence and it secured the public funding necessary to lever in private capital.

But there is much more to do in order to make Gloucester the city we know it can be. Overall responsibility for regeneration now rests with the City Council, but the task of transforming our city is very much a team game. Working with a range of partners will be crucial to delivering the outcomes we have set for ourselves.

This strategy sets out our ambitions for Gloucester and the way in which we intend to fulfil them. We hope you share our vision and support our plans. We look forward to working with you to turn them into reality.

Councillor Paul James  
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for  
Regeneration and Culture  
Gloucester City Council

From the Dean,

Regeneration takes time and commitment but it can have long lasting impact for civic pride and the common good. Regeneration is worth striving for - together.

I am pleased to partner with the City Council through the work of the Regeneration Advisory Board. We are there to encourage, to challenge and to call to action all those who can and should work in partnership to achieve a better future. I am particularly grateful to our key developers and investors who are prepared to come together and seek this vision.

The cathedral is at the heart of the city and tells its most enduring story. The vision of those who built this icon was greater than anything we hope for today but we should tune into that commitment and sacrificial example in order to achieve a future for all that lasts and has a deep rooted integrity. We can do this and we should do this as a kind of 'coalition of the committed to Gloucester.'

The Very Revd Stephen Lake, Dean of Gloucester  
Chair, Gloucester Regeneration Advisory Board

## **Vision**

*"Gloucester will be a flourishing, modern and ambitious City, which all residents can enjoy"*

(City Vision 2012 – 2022)

Gloucester's City Vision was adopted in 2012 after a comprehensive consultation exercise involving over 1,100 people responding with a further 620 people attending various events to discuss and develop the vision.

A central part of that Vision is to deliver:

- A flourishing economy and City Centre
- A vibrant evening economy
- A City which improves through regeneration and development

The City Council's role will be to create the conditions for growth to deliver our shared vision. This will be achieved through:

- 1) Clearly identified objectives within this strategy including:
  - a. The delivery of major investment sites complimented with smaller scale opportunities
  - b. Creating a vibrant city centre area
  - c. Delivering jobs and growth
  - d. Influencing growth beyond our boundaries
- 2) Ensuring a positive Planning environment
- 3) Encouraging investors and developers to work together in a complementary way to deliver our overall vision
- 4) Using our heritage assets to deliver growth, including delivering more activity around our waterways and our historic city centre streets
- 5) Using public sector assets, influence and expertise to encourage development.
- 6) Working within an engaged and informed political landscape
- 7) Setting ambitious targets to deliver a stronger future for Gloucester.

The City Council will work with partners, both public, voluntary and private, to deliver the necessary support network, whether through infrastructure, training and skills, to ensure our City, its population and businesses flourish and become prosperous through increased wellbeing and wealth.

Our key message to our communities and private sector partners is that Gloucester is a more confident city than ever . This document shows that we know where we want to go and how we will get there.

## **Key Facts about Gloucester**

### **History**

- Gloucester has been variously described as "The Gateway to the West and "The Crossroads of England"

- It is the city and county town of Gloucestershire located in the South West of England. The City lies close to the Welsh border, and is on the River Severn, approximately 32 miles (51 km) north-east of Bristol, and 45 miles (72 km) south-southwest of Birmingham
- In 1827 Gloucester became a port city following the completion of the Gloucester and Sharpness canal. On completion it was then the longest, deepest and widest ship canal in Britain. The Docks contains fifteen Victorian warehouses which make up what is Britain's most inland port and are now a major tourist attraction.
- Gloucester was home to iconic manufacturing firms including the Gloster Aircraft Company and Fielding & Platt.
- The City contains 707 listed buildings including 37 Grade 1's.
- The City is the birth place of Robert Raikes, the founder of the Sunday School Movement and John Stafford Smith, who composed the American National Anthem
- The historic Roman streets, magnificent Norman Cathedral and Victorian Docks have been used for various films and TV productions including Harry Potter and Doctor Who. Disney recently shot scenes from the sequel to Alice in Wonderland at the Docks.

### **Demographics**

- The City has a population of 123,439 (ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2012). It is the most populated conurbation within the County of Gloucestershire and has the highest population density.
- Gloucester will experience the greatest population growth of all county districts, expected to increase by 20.1% or 23,800 people between 2010 and 2035
- Gloucester is a relatively young city with 25% of the population aged 19 and under (highest in the South West) and 39% under 30. The City is expected to experience the greatest increase of Gloucestershire's districts in the number of children and young people between 2010 and 2035, with an increase of 16.4%
- It is a diverse City, the black and minority ethnic population (BME) stands at 9.8% with approximately 100 languages and dialects spoken

### **Economy**

- Gloucester is home to world leading advanced engineering companies providing cutting edge technical products and services e.g Prima Dental
- Gloucester has a strong finance and insurance cluster including being the location for the HQ of the specialist insurance company Ecclesiastical Insurance Group
- The City supports a growing cluster of information security, web hosting, CAD/CAM development, defence communications and security, ICT infrastructure development and IT content management businesses
- The creative community has grown rapidly in recent years with the Blackfriars and Westgate Street areas having established themselves as a hub for creative businesses. The City has

also hosted some cutting edge arts festivals including JOLT, Crucible, Paint Jam, tall ships and Quays events.

- The City has a strong independent retail and leisure sector with over 100 independent city centre shops
- Gloucester attracts 5.9 million visitor trips each year. Annually, visitor spend is £207 million
- To date, the city has secured over £700 million of private sector investment, bucking the national trend and weathering the economic recession well
- A place for business recognised by others:

**Duport Business Confidence Report** shows:

- 448 new companies set up between January and June 2013 - more than any other half year on record and a 10% rise on the same period in 2012.
- 2011 and 2012 were record years for company registrations in Gloucester when compared to any year in history.
- Gloucester also became more important to the national economy by increasing its UK company share by 0.012% (2010 – 2011).

**UK Competitiveness Index 2013** shows Gloucester is ranked:

- 19<sup>th</sup> in the index ahead of locations such as Nottingham, Birmingham, Cardiff and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

**Experian (2012):** Gloucester is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 324 local authorities for growing its business base between 2010 and 2012, the biggest growth in the South West region.

**Santander Town and City Index 2012:** Gloucester is a leading destination for business by ranking the city 18<sup>th</sup> out of 74 UK cities for business.

**Centre for Cities 2014:** the City is making large improvements:

- 6<sup>th</sup> (out of 64 cities) for having the highest number of patents approved (up from 10<sup>th</sup> in Centre for Cities report 2013)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> (out of 64 cities) for having the highest employment rate with 77.8% between Jul 2012 and Jun 2013 (up from 12<sup>th</sup> in Centre for Cities report 2013)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> (out of 63 cities) for the highest housing stock growth. Among the top-placed cities, only five (Swindon, Milton Keynes, Gloucester, London, Peterborough) have experienced housing supply growth in accordance to their population growth rate.
- Gloucester is in the top-ten cities where small businesses are investing in high growth strategies.

## **Education**

- The City boasts high performing schools and over 17,000 college and university students

- Boasts top providing education providers including further and higher education campuses for the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England and Gloucestershire College
- Over 30% of Gloucester’s working age population has achieved NVQ4 or higher

**Sport**

- Gloucester is home to Gloucester Rugby Club, officially supported by the most passionate fans in the English Premiership
- Oxstalls Tennis Centre was voted 2011 Tennis Club of the Year by the Lawn Tennis Association
- Gloucester Rowing Club is one of the oldest established rowing clubs in Great Britain
- Planning consent has recently been given for a new Gloucester City Football Club stadium which will see the long awaited return of the club to the City
- Major refurbishment of the Blackbridge Jubilee Athletics Track creating an all-weather floodlit synthetic track.

Gloucester has much to offer:

• Supportive local authority	• Large catchment
• Strong growth prospects	• Affluent hinterland
• A diverse offer through the City Centre, Gloucester Quays and the Docks	• A rich rugby union heritage, including the best supported Premiership team in England
• Young population profile	• Highly skilled and flexible workforce
• Attractive rents	• Excellent education including further and higher education and training opportunities
• Excellent location and transport infrastructure	• High quality regeneration schemes
• Varied portfolio of investment and development opportunities	• Active voluntary and community sector

**Why does Gloucester need regenerating ?**

Gloucester has experienced its share of challenges over the decades. The demise in traditional manufacturing, which was a key component of the Gloucester economy, required a reinvention of the City’s economy. Gloucester is still working to tackle the legacy of those older business through the reclamation of brownfield sites and obsolete infrastructure

The City, through its desire for innovation, is now dealing with the legacy of unsympathetic 1960’s and 70’s architecture which had a heavy reliance on the use of concrete. This resulted in the loss of

some of our heritage assets and the construction of buildings which have not stood the test of time. A lack of investment in the City Centre and a failure to achieve a political consensus, meant Gloucester had for a number of years, not moved forward in investment and regeneration. We now have a political consensus and are starting to put all the other issues right

### **What we want to achieve**

We are an ambitious City and our sights are set clearly on achieving the following:

- A vibrant city centre
- Development of brownfield sites
- More people living in the city centre
- More and higher-skilled jobs
- Improved retail and leisure facilities
- Improved public realm
- Better transport facilities, especially new bus station and improved railway station
- Provide opportunity and support for those areas struggling to contribute to and benefit from the growth agenda
- New uses for heritage buildings
- Improved cultural facilities
- Enhanced tourist visitor numbers

### **The Journey So Far**

Much has already been achieved in delivering urban regeneration activity for the City over the last decade. The successes of “Team Gloucester “ include:

- Over £700 million of investment secured
- 1,000 new jobs
- 700 new homes in central Gloucester
- Completion of the Inner Ring Road
- Completion of the South West Bypass

Significant projects that have been successfully delivered include:

- St Oswalds Park – A mixed use scheme by Hammerson plc on the site of Gloucester’s former Cattle Market, including a Tesco supermarket, restaurants, retail warehouse units including B&Q and residential elements including an Extra Care Village.
- Gloucester Docks: the regeneration of the Docks has achieved a satisfying degree of maturity. The Docks regeneration project was effectively started by the Council’s pioneering 1980s move, which saved four of the historic warehouses. A combination of new build and the repair / refurbishment of many of the historic docks warehouses, typically for apartments with active commercial uses on the ground floor, have breathed new life into the docks.

There has also been considerable investment in the public realm which has set a quality benchmark that befits this unique heritage site which, along with the Cathedral, is one of the city’s most visited tourist destinations.

- Gloucester Quays: the Quays has become shorthand for the Designer Outlet Centre operated by Peel Holdings. The Gloucester Quays scheme is much more substantial than the outlet centre and covers some 25 hectares of brownfield land and includes Gloucestershire

College, Sainsbury's, Travelodge and new cinema and successful restaurant area. It represents a significant investment by the Peel Group and has made a major contribution to the regeneration of Gloucester.

- Blackfriars Priory: originally founded in 1239 and being one of the most complete surviving Dominican Blackfriars in England, it has recently been launched as an impressive cultural venue, along with the adjacent new build language centre
- Greyfriars: following the move of Gloucestershire College to its purpose built new facility at Gloucester Docks, the vacant site is now being regenerated into a significant new residential development in the heart of the city.
- Railway Triangle / Corridor: is a key arterial route into the city and had sat in an unused derelict condition for many years. The solution to the site was not easy to find. There were many constraints. However a solution was found and delivered by the developer LXB to build a Morrison's supermarket (completed) and a range of employment units (underway).

### **The Big Picture**

This Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy is consistent with other key documents, such as the City Vision, and the Council's Corporate Plan . It will also reflect and accord with the priorities as set out in the statutory planning documents that are emerging for Gloucester City and the surrounding area, the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) with Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Councils and our own City Plan. It will also reflect and build upon the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) as prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnership GFirst.

Gloucester is committed to play its part in contributing towards the targets set out in the GFirst SEP which include:

- 34,000 jobs created
- 2,100 jobs protected
- 3,200 new houses
- 6,100 qualifications and 5,40 apprenticeships

The City Council, along with the County and adjoining authorities , are developing the JCS. The core components that are contained in the JCS and the emerging City Plan are identified as:

- 7,793 new homes of which 1,080 in and around the city centre and Gloucester Quays
- Regeneration of the Blackfriars quarter of the city centre
- Additional new employment land in the city centre (St Oswalds Road and the Docks) and at other strategic sites across the city including Eastern Avenue and land east of Waterwells Business Park
- 41,957 sqm additional comparison goods retail floorspace
- Delivery of the Kings Quarter scheme including the development of a new bus station

### **The role of heritage**

Our Urban Regeneration Company was the only "heritage" URC in the country, reflecting Gloucester's status as one of England's most historic cities. Our regeneration to date has been largely heritage-led, with the restoration of, and new uses for, many historic building including:

Docks Warehouses  
Buildings at the Quays

St Michael's Tower  
Robert Raikes' House  
66 Westgate Street

Heritage can often be seen as a constraint or an additional cost burden. In Gloucester we view it as an opportunity – to encourage visitors for business, tourism and leisure.

## The Strategy

**Objective 1: Delivering Major Development Sites:** these schemes will make a significant impact to the on-going renaissance of the City. They are regarded by the City Council as the key interventions and drivers for growth:

- 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 – regenerating this large brownfield site to provide vibrant mixed use of employment, residential, leisure, open space and parking development, thereby creating a seamless linkage between the historic docks and the city centre, including the regeneration of the historic Fleece Hotel site.
- iii) Gloucester Quays and Gloucester Docks: working with partners to complete this important regeneration scheme including the development of a water-based regeneration programme and the redevelopment of the remaining historic warehouse. Within the defined area, deliver a programme of sites, which cumulatively will make a major impact, to include:
  - Baker's Quay – mixed use scheme
  - Llanthony Priory – a potential Heritage Lottery Funded scheme
  - 27/29 Commercial Road – buildings owned by the City Council
  - Orchard Square – the delivery of an exciting new public square
  - West Quay – promoted by the Canal and River Trust
- iv) Canal Corridor – define and deliver a clear vision for this strategically important employment/ housing corridor
- v) Railway Triangle and Corridor – exploration of options for delivery of local housing and employment on the linked corridor sites

**Objective 2: A vibrant City Centre:** city centres are changing as are the habits and requirements of those who use them. With on-line retailing creating new opportunities and threats retailers are having to adapt, as are successful centres. The City Council, with its partners, will support and promote initiatives that underpin and strengthen the City Centre. These would include:

- i) The diversification of the centre to include securing purple flag status, delivering innovative housing, enhanced leisure use, encouraging our independent retail and food offer, that draws citizens into the core area
- ii) Deliver heritage projects based around our museums and other attractions, including consolidating the expected impact of Project Pilgrim
- iii) Promote sustainable alternative uses including the development and delivery of an office accommodation strategy



- iv) Underpin and promote our cultural offer including our Museums and festivals
- v) Enhance our markets offer, both indoor and outdoor, to generate further footfall into the City
- vi) Create an environment for prosperity through a programme of public realm renewal and City Centre enhancements including the cladding of unattractive facades, a new Tourist Information Centre , Car Park improvements and links to the Quays from the City Centre.
- vii) Undertake active management, including the potential implementation of a Business Improvement District, bringing a coordinated, effective response to the challenges faced by users, to create a dynamic and well looked after city that creates a sense of pride and ownership

**Objective 3 Small sites:** the major projects are important to the success of the City. However the full potential of the City can only be realised through addressing all its challenges which includes those smaller sites and buildings which collectively don't contribute to the prosperity of the City in their current state. The City Council will:

- i) Develop and continually review a hit list of sites and buildings which will be targeted for action, working with the property owners, to assist them to regenerate those property using all the tools at their disposal

**Objective 4 Local Communities and urban regeneration:** We will provide a context that empowers our communities to position themselves to create directly, and benefit from, employment opportunities.

- i) Develop and implement an Asset Based Community Development Programme that gives our citizens the confidence and opportunities, particularly in areas suffering from persistent deprivation, to find solutions that will enable them as individuals and communities to become part of the City's growth agenda
- ii) Develop and implement an Estate based regeneration programme that will contribute towards a better standard of living in areas that have not realised their full potential
- iii) Promote recruit local policies and opportunities. Connecting people and communities to economic opportunity. Work with partners to ensure new work opportunities target those in disadvantaged communities who have the support to ensure they are well placed to benefit from such opportunities
- iv) Work with employers and skills providers to ensure there is a direct correlation between skills supply and demand
- v) Work with our communities and other Agencies including the Voluntary and Community Sector, to improve health and address issues of deprivation. Seek to secure funding opportunities, and to pool resources, including Big Local, to give local people the opportunity to positively impact upon the economic prosperity of their area
- vi) Develop our grants programme that supports entrepreneurs and is co-ordinated through activity such as the Star People funding and Business Support grants, contributing towards self-employment and social enterprise

**Objective 5: Jobs and Growth:** promote and support business formation and growth and target high growth companies in key sectors to grow our business base. This will be delivered through:

- i) Working closely with the University of Gloucestershire's Growth Hub and Business School, targeting high growth key sector companies through targeted inward investment campaigns to reach over 5,000 potential investors, including developing appropriate marketing materials and channels
- ii) Develop our business engagement programme which establishes working relationships with our primary and small businesses who will become our main employers of tomorrow, opening communications and collaborative working
- iii) Identifying key issues impacting on our businesses, such as Broadband, and work constructively to find solutions and deliver growth
- iv) Deliver business grants to assist new start-ups, expanding businesses and those businesses looking to relocate to the city. Extend business start-up / business support provision for small-medium sized businesses (SMEs) through Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd, Gloucestershire Adult Education, The Prince's Trust and other partners
- v) Work towards the delivery of mechanisms supporting growth including identifying an appropriate location for, and delivery of, a locally defined Enterprise Zone and Business Improvement District.

**Strategic Objective 6: Work in partnership with GFirst and adjoining local authorities to influence and achieve opportunities for growth beyond our boundaries:** as Gloucester grows its opportunities to accommodate that growth will become increasingly restricted through the availability of sites for sustainable housing and employment development. As a consequence the City will explore opportunities to deliver growth opportunities identified through the Joint Core Strategy by working collaboratively with other impacted local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership GFirst. We will:

- i) Support the delivery of Strategic Housing and Employment sites outside of the City's boundary
- ii) To explore with GFirst and impacted adjacent local authorities opportunities for joint capacity building to deliver physical regeneration schemes and economic growth opportunities
- iii) Actively support and promote the delivery of Joint Core Strategy sites allocated outside of the City's administrative boundary but which can play a role in the growth and prosperity of Gloucester.

## **Delivering our Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy**

### **The City Council's role**

The City Council will play a lead role in the delivery of this strategy, through direct action or supporting and assisting others in the delivery of their priorities. The City Council will proactively coordinate partners, establishing Gloucester as a leading regenerator within the sub region, underpinning the role of the City as the County Town of Gloucestershire.

The City Council will provide strong community leadership acting as a voice for Gloucester. It will ensure all communities have access to opportunity and that the strengths of the City are fully realised. It will provide financial support within the context of limited resources. It has already made a significant contribution towards the delivery of the new bus and coach station as part of the Kings Quarter scheme. The City Council was instrumental in the acquisition and demolition of the local landmark building, the Golden Egg, which had become a major blot on the City's streetscape. The City also purchased the former Regional Development Agency assets with a view to taking forward complex sites and bringing them back into active use.

The Council will also use all its assets to deliver growth. Whether this be the use of its land, to use its professional expertise to draw in significant grant funding, or as a proactive local planning authority, it will work tirelessly to deliver this ambitious programme.

The City Council will foster a culture and deliver values that are pro-business, pro-growth and will work to find solutions that benefit our communities.

### **Our Partners**

The City Council is committed to working with our partners in a positive and yet challenging way. We already enjoy strong working relationships with our major investors including:

- Peel Group
- LXB Retail Properties plc.
- Hammerson plc
- Stanhope plc
- Aviva
- Rockspring
- Linden Homes
- Bloor Homes

We also enjoy and will work hard to secure the success of a large number of smaller investors. The City will also work with all public bodies, and the Voluntary and Community Sector, engaged in services and the delivery of growth and prosperity to all our citizens, including addressing areas of deprivation. This includes:

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Homes & Communities Agency
- GFirst
- Gloucester Civic Trust
- Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce
- Gloucester Federation of Small Businesses
- Gloucestershire Constabulary
- The Voluntary Sector
- Gloucester City Homes
- Canal and River Trust

Most importantly, the businesses and people of Gloucester – who are as enthusiastic about our City's regeneration as we are.

**Resources;** this strategy has been prepared on the basis that there will be limited funding required from the local authority. The objective is that the programme is self-financing or resourced through alternative funding programmes. The delivery of the strategy's development projects, particularly

those that relate to local authority owned land, and the re-investment of income generated is, therefore, crucial to the success of the overall Strategy and achieving the vision.

**Governance:** Within Gloucester City Council a Regeneration and Economic Development Team has been established. This brings together a number of disciplines to deliver major regeneration and economic development projects and programme.

The Gloucester Regeneration Advisory Board , made up of key experts across many aspects of regeneration, will offer the Council advice and guidance on delivering regeneration activity, challenging the Council and contributing towards solutions.

### **Programme**

This strategy is defined over a 5 year period although a key objective is to deliver a significant amount of activity within the first 3 years. It will be continually assessed against the following milestones to ensure progress is made to deliver the on-going regeneration of Gloucester.

Delivery Programme		1 to 3 Years			3 to 5 Years			
Priority Projects 1- 3 Years		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	onwards
<b>A</b>	<b>Objective 1: Delivering Major Development Sites</b>							
A1	Kings Quarter Regeneration Scheme							
1a	Bus Station							
1b	Retail & Leisure Scheme							
A2	Blackfriars							
2a	Reclamation & Servicing							
2b	Investment and delivery							
A3	Gloucester Quays & Docks							
3a	Bakers Quay							
3b	Llanthony Priory							
3c	27/29 Commercial Road							
3d	Orchard Square							
3e	West Quay							
A4	Canal Corridor							
A5	Railway Triangle & Corridor							
<b>B</b>	<b>Objective 2: A vibrant City Centre</b>							
B1	Deliver 1,000 new city centre homes							
B2	Achieve 90% city centre occupancy levels							
B3	Improved Heritage attractions inc City Museum							
B4	Deliver an Office Accommodation Strategy							
B5	Enhanced Markets offer							
B6	Cladding of unattractive facades							
B7	Public Realm Strategy							
B8	Improved Public Realm							
B9	Car Park Improvements							
B10	New Tourist Information Centre							
B11	Deliver a Business Improvement District							
<b>C</b>	<b>Objective 3: Smaller Sites</b>							
C1	Deliver improvements to 20 identified small sites							
<b>D</b>	<b>Objective 4: Local Communities &amp; Urban Regeneration</b>							
D1	Develop & implement an Asset Based Community Development Programme							
D2	Promote recruit local policies & opportunities							
D3	Align skills development with employment opportunities							
D4	Develop and deliver a grants programme that supports entrepreneurs							
<b>E</b>	<b>Objective 5: Jobs and Growth</b>							
E1	Target over 5,000 key growth sector companies							
E2	Develop a business engagement programme							
E3	Implement a dynamic business grants programme							

## Monitoring and Review

The successful regeneration of a City needs a long term plan. The Gloucester Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy aims to drive forward regeneration activity for the period 2015 – 2020. It will also look beyond that period to ensure that the momentum is retained. We will monitor activity on an on-going basis against the Strategic Objectives and Key Actions and carry out a formal review annually. These reviews will also examine the local, regional, national and international environments to make sure that the Vision and Strategic Objectives remain valid. However, we recognise that regeneration and development is a long-term business and that certainty is a crucial condition for investment.