

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Planning Policy Sub-Committee Cabinet	Date: 15 September. 2016 12 October 2016
Subject:	Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester and Public Realm Strategy Drafts for Consultation	
Report Of:	Anthony Wilson, Head of Planning	
Wards Affected:	All	
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework: No
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Appendices:	1. Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester (Public Consultation Draft) 2. Public Realm Strategy 2016 (Public Consultation Draft)	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester and the Public Realm Strategy will be used to support the regeneration of the City and will form part of the evidence base for the City Plan in due course. These documents will be also be used in the Development Management process to ensure schemes are of a high quality and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment. This report seeks agreement to allow the documents to be subject to a 6 week period of public consultation prior to recommendation of adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document in the New Year 2017.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Planning Policy Sub-Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND TO CABINET:-**

- (1) That the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester, be approved for an 6 week period of public consultation.
- (2) That the Gloucester Public Realm Strategy (Public Consultation Draft) be approved for a 6 week period of public consultation.

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

- (1) That the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester, be approved for an 6 week period of public consultation.
- (2) That the Gloucester Public Realm Strategy (Public Consultation Draft) be approved for a 6 week period of public consultation.

3.0 **Background and Key Issues**

Shopfront Guide

- 3.1 The current “Shopfronts - Design Guidelines for Gloucester” was produced in the early 1990’s and is now outdated. A number of mini shopfront guides have been produced in relation to the Historic Areas Grant Scheme (Eastgate Street, Barton Street and Southgate Street). These guides were predominantly pictorial and have been received positively by tenants, home owners and developers when seeking to make alterations and therefore an updated design guide for the City as a whole has been required for some time.
- 3.2 The revised “Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester” will follow the same principles by providing design guidance on the alteration or installation of shop fronts, shop signage and security in order to maintain or raise the design quality of these features in the townscape. It applies to all buildings City wide in Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways).
- 3.3 The guidance is used by Officers in assessing planning applications for shop fronts, shop signage and security measures across the City and the Council will continue to promote its use as a guide for shop owners, tenants, architects and planning agents. The guide is also used when advising on schemes as part of the Councils grant initiatives – Southgate Street Townscape Heritage Initiative and also the current City Centre scheme. This guidance is also included within the Management recommendations of the Conservation Area Appraisals and will form part of the evidence base for the City Plan and as a basis for a development management policy within the City Plan.
- 3.4 A formal internal consultation process was carried out between 5th July 2016 and 5th August 2016. Comments were received from 12 internal consultees, from departments including Planning Policy, Development Management, Neighbourhood Management, Conservation, Landscape and Graphic Design Officers. The comments made by consultees were incorporated into the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester Draft document.
- 3.5 This guidance will ensure that forthcoming schemes are well considered and preserve and enhance the City’s unique and distinctive historic character. The City has a number of traditional and historic shopfronts, especially in the Gate Street and the aim is to ensure that these are preserved and where lost reinstated to a better quality environment.

Public Realm Strategy

- 3.6 The public realm within Gloucester has developed and changed over the 1900 years since the founding of the original Roman settlement, and continues to change as part of the various regeneration and redevelopment projects within the City.
- 3.7 There have been a series of significant public realm projects completed in recent times. The Gloucester Quays retail outlet opened in 2009 and part of that development saw the provision of very high-quality areas of new public realm. The Linkages project (the route from Gloucester Quays to the City Centre) saw the redevelopment of the public realm along the eastern side of Victoria Dock and the area around Kimbrose Triangle, Commercial Road and Southgate Street, during 2010. An area of approximately 16,200 metres sq. was covered by these two projects, which have raised the overall level of public realm quality considerably.
- 3.8 Proposals for other significant public realm projects are being developed, including for the open spaces within the Bakers Quay mixed use development, Orchard Square (part of the Docks area), the new bus station, and within the Cathedral Precincts (part of Project Pilgrim). There are also emerging plans for other strategic sites, including the former Gloucester Prison and the adjacent Greater Blackfriars area.
- 3.9 Much of the existing older public realm within the Gate Streets and other parts of the wider City Centre, dates back to the early to mid 1990s, which is now around 25 years old. The emergence of the recent public realm projects has highlighted the dated nature of some of the existing public realm provision within the City Centre, but also the need to provide guidance for new public realm proposals as they emerge. It is important to support the emerging public realm projects with specific guidance on appropriate materials, areas for improvement and broad design principles.
- 3.10 Results from an informal furniture audit, carried out as part of the initial research stages of the Public Realm Strategy, led to the identification of various issues within the Gate Streets and other surrounding streets.
- 3.11 An internal consultation process was carried out between 23rd February 2016 and 8th April 2016. Comments were received from 14 internal consultees, from departments including Planning and Planning Policy, Neighbourhood Management, Conservation and Heritage, Archaeology, Landscape and Trees, and Graphic Design. Specific meetings were arranged with a number of the consultees to get more detailed comments. The vast majority of comments made by consultees were incorporated into the Public Consultation Draft document.
- 3.12 The main alterations to the document following the internal consultation included the following items.
- The overall length of the document was reduced by 20 pages to make it more concise;
 - A 2-page executive summary at the start of the document was inserted to allow people to get a quick impression of the content of the full document;
 - Many of the context photos within the document were removed, to improve legibility and to create a more positive tone
 - The main plans which illustrate the key principles and information within the document have been made clearer;

- The palette of materials proposed for the three main categories of spaces was finalised.

3.13 If improvements are to be made to historic and strategically significant areas within the City Centre, it is considered advisable to have the Public Realm Strategy adopted to act as a guide to future redevelopment projects. The broad main design principles are listed on page 32 and 33 of the document.

3.14 Once the document is finalised following consultation,, it is also intended that a summary leaflet will be produced to provide an accessible overview of the document and the principles within it.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 The aim of both documents is for the members of the public, consultants and developers to use the guide to assist with informing the design shopfronts and signage and the public realm within the City as part of any development management scheme. This guidance will ensure that schemes are well considered and meet the City Council's requirements leading to a better quality environment.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Failure to recommend these documents for public consultation would result in the City Council not providing a positive and pro-active approach to regeneration within City. This positive approach is also recommended with the National Planning Policy Framework and would also form part of the evidence base for the forthcoming City Plan. The work will also feed into the City Plan development control policies.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 A resolution is requested to allow the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester and the Public Realm Strategy to go out for a period of public consultation. The documents will be used to support the regeneration of the city centre and will form part of the evidence base for the City Plan in due course. A further report will be submitted for the documents to be recommended for adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents, this will enable these to be used in the Development Management process to ensure schemes are of a high quality and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 The 6 week consultation on these drafts will be available on the Council's website, at libraries and at Council offices. Letters and email notifications will be sent to a range of statutory and general consultees as well as contacts registered on the Local Plan database.

7.2 Following Planning Policy Sub Committee, Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester and Public Realm Strategy will progress to an 6 week period of public consultation. The comments and feedback received during the period of public consultation will be considered and where necessary, changes will be made to the documents.

7.3 The documents will return to Planning Policy Sub-Committee and Full Council in the New Year to be adopted by Council as Interim Adoption Supplementary Planning Documents. They are intended to form part of the City Plan evidence base in due course and will form a basis of the development management policies within the City Plan.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None

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

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 Following the initial period of public consultation, both the Shopfronts Guide and the Public Realm Strategy will gain a level of weight within the planning process, and become a material consideration in planning terms. Both documents can then be used to guide the design and implementation of shopfronts and public realm within the city, to enable the Council to promote high standards of design leading to a better quality environment. Both documents can be used to ensure that development within the City is of a high standard due to its historic importance.

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

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 A low risk has been identified as a result of this report. This low risk involves the possibility of both documents not being adopted as Interim SPDs and therefore the quality of shopfronts and public realm within the city being adversely affected.

10.2 The main opportunity is to achieve higher standards of shopfronts and public realm if both documents are adopted as planning and design guidance.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

11.1 The aim of both documents is for the members of the public, tenant, consultants and developers to use the guide to assist with informing the design shopfronts and signage and the public realm within the city as part of any development management scheme. This guidance will ensure that schemes are well considered and meet the City Councils requirements leading to a better quality environment.

11.2 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 a number of recommendations and issues identified in the Public Realm Strategy which could have implications for community safety, were these recommendations not put into practice. However, the process of carrying out the

public consultation on the Shopfront Guide and Public Realm Strategy has no community safety implications.

Sustainability

- 12.2 Both reports support the process of achieving sustainable development and will contribute to the improvement of the city centre for both residents and visitors to Gloucester. Both documents when adopted would ensure proposals have a positive impact on the environment of Gloucester.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 No impacts.

Background Documents: None