

**Draft**  
**Council Plan**  
**2017-2020**

## **GLOUCESTER: THE LANDSCAPE OF OUR CITY**

Gloucester is a dynamic and diverse city with a growing population in excess of 125,000, including a high proportion of young people. The city benefits from a fantastic heritage and environment, and has a long tradition of partnership working and a vibrant voluntary and community sector. Gloucester has a strong and growing economy, but ensuring all of our communities share in that success is a key challenge. Understanding the landscape of our city is essential to achieving our aim of working together to make Gloucester ***A City that Works for Everyone***.

### **Environmental landscape**

- Bound by the River Severn to the west with the Forest of Dean beyond; Cotswold escarpment with the Cotswold Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the east; excellent links by road, rail and waterways; close proximity to Gloucestershire, Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff airports
- Limited amount of developable land, therefore working positively with Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council to identify sites for new homes
- Over £1m of investment in the city's 48 formal play areas, however, shortages in open spaces in some parts of the city remain
- The city suffered terrible floods in 2007 and over 100 flood alleviation projects have taken place since, but parts of the city are still vulnerable to flooding.
- Air quality is poor in some parts of the city.

### **Economic landscape**

- Over £800m of private sector investment secured and progress made at key regeneration sites
- Annual visitor spend of £207m generated from approximately 5.9 million visitor trips each year
- Strong finance and insurance sector, as well as a growing number of information security, web hosting, IT and defence communications and security businesses, as well as a growing creative sector and a number of significant energy businesses
- Significant independent retail and leisure sector with over 100 independent city centre shops
- Parts of the city centre are in need of regeneration and there is a need to improve links between the Docks and Quays and the historic city centre
- High employment rates
- Significant growth in new homes
- Awarded Housing Zone status by the Government for the central area of the city.

## **Social landscape**

- Wide range of different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds, with approximately 100 different languages and dialects spoken
- Pockets of significant deprivation, including some areas in the top 10% most deprived in the country. Life expectancy is lower than the rest of the country and public health challenges include inactivity, obesity, alcohol related harm, diabetes and drug misuse
- Long term unemployment is higher than the rest of the county, but unemployment has fallen dramatically in recent years.
- Over 85% of homes are private housing, the majority of which are owner occupied. The remaining 15% are social housing.
- Higher than average rates of homelessness, but often associated with people from outside the city.

## **Cultural landscape**

- Unique history and heritage with around 700 listed buildings and some of the best heritage assets in the country, a number of which have been the subject of successful Heritage Lottery Fund bids
- Two Council-run cultural venues, but lacking a major cultural venue that could regularly hold major events
- Thriving music scene and extensive programme of festivals and events
- Culture Board established to deliver the City's Cultural Strategy to ensure Gloucester has a distinctive culture; innovative, excellent, quirky, edgy, diverse and community-based with a strong focus on young people and aspiration to bid to become City of Culture in 2025
- Investment in leisure and recreational assets including Robinswood Hill County Park, Health and Wellbeing Centre, conservation, geology, education and a working partnership with The Wildlife Trust
- Gloucester Rugby is a Premiership club, drawing large crowds and contributing to the life of the city. There are a large number of sports clubs with a diverse range of sports on offer, but a shortage of playing pitches in some areas and many requiring improvements

## OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

We recognise the challenges ahead, both in respect of the landscape of our city and the financial conditions, and this Council Plan sets out how we will go about meeting those challenges. However, we already have much to be proud of; we have demonstrated that this Council can achieve great things, especially through partnership working and by recognising and using the strengths of our diverse communities. Some of our key achievements over the life of the last Council Plan are listed below.

- Hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2015 put Gloucester on the map and the many visitors provided a massive boost to the city's economy
- Commencement of work on the city's new 21<sup>st</sup> century, state of the art bus station
- Key enabling role in the securing and implementation of the Bakers Quay scheme
- Securing land to enable the delivery of the Kings Quarter scheme
- Progression of a Local Development Order for the Blackfriars area of Gloucester
- Securing a developer for nearly 300 new student apartments on the Barbican site
- Partnership working with the University of Gloucestershire to secure the Business School and shared community sports facilities at the Oxstalls Campus and Plock Court
- Regeneration of the Blackbridge Sports Track enabling the city to compete at a higher level in athletics and other sporting events
- Introduction of a new pay on foot with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system at Eastgate and Kings Walk car parks to support city centre retailers and improve dwell time
- Supporting key heritage projects like the Cathedral's Project Pilgrim, Llanthony Priory and Discover DeCrypt.
- Acquiring a site adjacent to the railway station to provide an additional 250 space car park to free up potential public realm improvements in front of the station, funded by third parties, valued at nearly £3 million
- Instrumental role in setting up the Gloucester Culture Board to develop culture in our City
- Installation of a new high quality CCTV system has helped the police identify criminals and keep out streets safe
- Introduction of a new and enhanced recycling service, which extends doorstep recycling to include cardboard, mixed plastics and textiles, which will deliver savings and result in less waste being sent to landfill
- Clean for Queen spring clean campaign in 2016 resulting in a significant volume of litter being collected and partnerships being developed
- Implementation of the Street Aware initiative with the support of businesses, residents and partners, aimed at finding lasting solutions to issues such as street begging and street drinking

- Launch of the Gloucester Lottery in 2017 providing an opportunity for local groups and causes to raise funds
- Successful use of asset based community development to encourage more people to take an active role in their community and recognition for the important role of community builders in bringing communities together and promoting health and wellbeing
- Working in partnership to produce the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and progressing our own City Plan to set out plans for strategic development
- Being granted Housing Zone status by the Government to assist in delivering new housing on brownfield sites in and around the city centre
- Improved efficiency and reduced costs through shared services with the County Council and neighbouring District Councils
- £40 million of investment into the Council's former housing stock to ensure 100% of it met the Decent Homes Standard
- Completion of the housing stock transfer to Gloucester City Homes paving the way for new homes and investment

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE COUNCIL

### VISION

The vision is the overarching aim that frames the strategic direction for the Council over the next four years. Our ambition is for the Council, our partners and our residents to work together to make Gloucester:

**‘A City that Works for Everyone’**

### PRIORITIES

Our priorities set out what we will be doing over the next four years to achieve our vision. Together we will be:

- 1. Working to create a vibrant and prosperous City***
- 2. Working to maintain a safe and attractive City***
- 3. Working to build strong and resilient communities***
- 4. Working to provide great services that offer value for money***

### CORE VALUES

Our core values are the principles that will guide how we do things:

- **Efficiency and value for money** – we will strive to provide great services that are affordable for all
- **Forward thinking with innovation** – we will adopt an entrepreneurial approach to find new and better ways to do things
- **Making residents lives better** – we will support our communities to use their own strengths and assets while providing universal services and supporting our most vulnerable residents
- **Passionate about the City** – our enthusiasm for, and pride in, Gloucester will be at the heart of everything we do
- **Working together to make it happen** – we will build strong and trusted relationships with communities and partner organisations to achieve the best outcomes for our residents

## **WORKING TO CREATE A VIBRANT AND PROSPEROUS CITY**

We recognise that regeneration and culture are integral to growing Gloucester's economy for the benefit of all and we are committed to continue driving development within city and providing residents with the rich cultural offering they deserve. The City Council is taking the lead, but we alone cannot realise our ambitions; we will be working with a wide range of partners and utilising the wealth of expertise we have in the city to deliver the ambitious and exciting outcomes we have set ourselves.

### **Promises**

- We will deliver on key regeneration priorities in the city centre and beyond, including the redevelopment of Kings Quarter and a new, 21<sup>st</sup> century state of the art Bus Station, as well as working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council to bring forward development at Blackfriars.
- We will work with stakeholders and developers to bring vacant sites and buildings back into use, with a particular focus on the city centre; working to attract new uses to the city centre, including more student accommodation and an increase in the number and range of hotel beds.
- We will support the Culture Board to deliver the city's Cultural Strategy, with the aim of broadening the city's cultural offer including developing our events programme, developing artists and arts organisations and providing a new cultural venue; all of which will position the city to bid to become the UK City of Culture in 2025 as well and continuing to promote all that Gloucester has to offer to national and international visitors.
- We will work with GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners to attract inward investment, new businesses and jobs into the City and we will work with the University of Gloucestershire to maximise the benefits of their new business school at the Oxstalls Campus.

## **WORKING TO MAINTAIN A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE CITY**

We want to ensure that Gloucester is a safe and pleasant place for residents to live in and visitors to enjoy. The City Council will lead by example, providing excellent environmental services and investing in key priorities while also emphasising the important role our residents and local businesses have to play. The Council will take action against those who fail to respect our environment and we must all work together to make Gloucester a city we can be really proud of.

### **Promises**

- We will work with our partners and local businesses to ensure a safe and attractive city centre during the day and at night, including achieving Purple Flag status.
- We will use the City Centre Investment Fund and other funding sources to implement a range of projects and public realm improvements to enhance the city centre environment.
- We will take robust action against environmental crimes and introduce City Centre Wardens to help keep our street safe and clean.
- We will increase community involvement in the management of open spaces and achieve at least three Green Flag parks, as well as refurbishing two play areas each year and supporting the delivery of a new visitor centre at Robinswood Hill.

## **WORKING TO BUILD STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

We value the strength and diversity of our communities and want to help improve the lives of all our residents. The City Council will drive the development of important community facilities and good affordable housing, and continue to support our most vulnerable residents, but we will also help communities to understand and use what they have to offer to begin transforming their own lives and the lives of those around them.

### **Promises**

- We will continue to invest in community building so that communities recognise and make use of their assets and become resilient and strong. We will explore opportunities to transfer the ownership and/or management of land and buildings into the hands of the communities who use them.
- We will promote community cohesion and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour with the help of our partners and the support of our residents. We will continue to invest in the voluntary and community sector to ensure that advice and support is available to the most vulnerable residents.
- We will continue to work with stakeholders to meet the city's housing needs, including facilitating the development of new and affordable homes, bringing empty properties back into use, and regenerating some of our large social housing estates. We will drive up standards in the private rented housing sector and work in partnership to find solutions for those sleeping rough on our streets.
- We will work with our health and wellbeing partners to tackle the causes of social deprivation and in addition to maximising the city's sporting legacy and encouraging the development of first class sports facilities, including a new Sports Hub for the city.

## **WORKING TO PROVIDE GREAT SERVICES THAT ENSURE VALUE FOR MONEY**

In order to meet the financial challenges ahead we recognise that the Council needs to change; from how it delivers services to how it interacts with residents. We will start by ensuring that we are both lean and efficient and that we are making best use of our people, our buildings and our other resources. The services we provide will change and evolve, reflecting the growing preference for online interaction and showing customers how they can help themselves, while maintaining high standards across key services.

### **Promises**

- We will reshape how the council works, reviewing processes and exploring the use of new and emerging technologies, to improve key services and realise our savings targets.
- We will manage our shared and outsourced services robustly to ensure value for money. We will work in partnership with other councils to provide improved services to our residents.
- We will focus on changing the way we interact with residents by making the most of the “My Gloucester” mobile app and delivering an improved, easy to use and interactive website.
- We will review our building and land assets, including our own office accommodation, to maximise revenue and bring forward income-generating development at key sites.