

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Planning Policy Sub-Committee Council	Date: 4 th September 28 th September 2017
Subject:	Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester	
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 2. Summary of responses from consultation 3. Public Consultation document	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester will be used to support the regeneration of the City through the planning process and will form part of the evidence base for the City Plan in due course. The guidelines 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.
- 1.2 The report is to inform Members on the outcome of the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester consultation undertaken for a 6 week period from the 21st November 2016 to 16th January 2017.
- 1.3 To seek Members agreement to the adoption of the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be used in the planning process.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) That the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester, be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document to be used in the planning process.

2.2 Council is asked to APPROVE:-

- (1) That the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester, be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document to be used in the planning process.

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- 3.1 The current “Shopfronts - Design Guidelines for Gloucester” was produced in the early 1990’s and is now outdated.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.
- 3.6 A formal external consultation was carried out between 21st November and 16th January 2017 for a 6 week period in accordance with the Town and County Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. As part of the

consultation a formal response form was drafted with three key questions and an option to provide detailed comments, the questions were:

- Do you agree that the City Council should be preserving historic shopfronts in the City?
- Are the images helpful in document to identify exemplar schemes?
- Do you agree with the content of the guidance document? Are there any changes you would recommend?

3.7 The comments received totalled 16 written responses and these are set out within Appendix 2. The comments received all supported the three consultation questions, there were some minor comments in regards to minor text changes to elaborate on suitable materials and additional paint colours. Additional information was requested to be included within the guidance in the form of Advertisement Regulations, enforcement and where to find relevant information to make an application. A full report of the comments received as part of the consultation and the Council's response can be seen in Appendix 2. A number of positive comments were received and in particular from Historic England who were very complementary and the document has already been promoted as an exemplar and forwarded to Canterbury Local Authority.

3.8 The guidance has been updated and amended where necessary taking account of the minor changes proposed in response to the comments received. The final version of the guidance is attached in Appendix 1.

3.9 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.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 The aim of guidelines is for the members of the public, consultants and developers to use the guide to assist with informing the design shopfronts and signage 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 which is welcoming and enticing.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 The positive approach to regeneration is 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 where there is a specific policy for the retention of historic shop frontages and for signage to accord with the Councils Shopfront Guidance document.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The updated guidance 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. The

guidance has been well received by owners and residents in the City and key stakeholders such as Historic England have praised the high quality and detailed guidance which has been produced and endorsed the adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. The guidance will 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 of Gloucester.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 If members adopt the guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document there will be the requirement to make a suitable announcement of this. Legislation and government guidance dictates the format that such notification and publicity takes place.
- 7.2 If adopted the guidance will immediately become a material consideration for assessment of planning and advertisement applications for shopfronts and signage applications within the City.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 None

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

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Following a period of public consultation undertaken for a 6 week period from the 21st November 2016 to 16th January 2017 the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage – Design Guidelines for Gloucester will gain a level of weight within the planning process, and become a material consideration in planning terms. The guidelines will be used to guide the design and implementation of shopfronts within the city, to enable the Council to promote high standards of design leading to a better quality environment 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 the guidelines not being adopted as an Interim SPD and therefore the quality of shopfronts, advertisements and alterations within the City will result in the loss of historic fabric and the street scene and character of Gloucester being adversely affected.
- 10.2 The main opportunity is to achieve higher standards of shopfronts, advertisements and retention of historic features if the document is adopted as planning and design guidance.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 The aim of the document is for the members of the public, tenant, consultants and developers to use the guide to assist with informing the design shopfronts and

signage 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 due to its historic nature and would preserve and enhance the City.

- 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 The process of carrying out the public consultation on the Shopfront Guide has no community safety implications.

Sustainability

- 12.2 The Shopfront Guide supports the process of achieving sustainable development and will contribute to the improvement of the city centre for both residents and visitors to Gloucester. The document when adopted would ensure proposals have a positive impact on the environment of Gloucester.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 No impacts.

Background Documents: None