

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	8 November 2017
Subject:	Royal City Status Consultation Results		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report presents the results of the public consultation on Royal City Status.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) Royal City Status is not pursued at the present time.
- (2) The matter be revisited at such time as the Leader of the Council deems it appropriate.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Council approved the following motion on 28 January 2016 Council:

“This Council:

notes that 2016 is the 800th anniversary of the coronation of Henry III in Gloucester Cathedral and resolves to work with the Cathedral, Marketing Gloucester and other partners to maximise the benefits in social, cultural and economic terms of this important occasion;

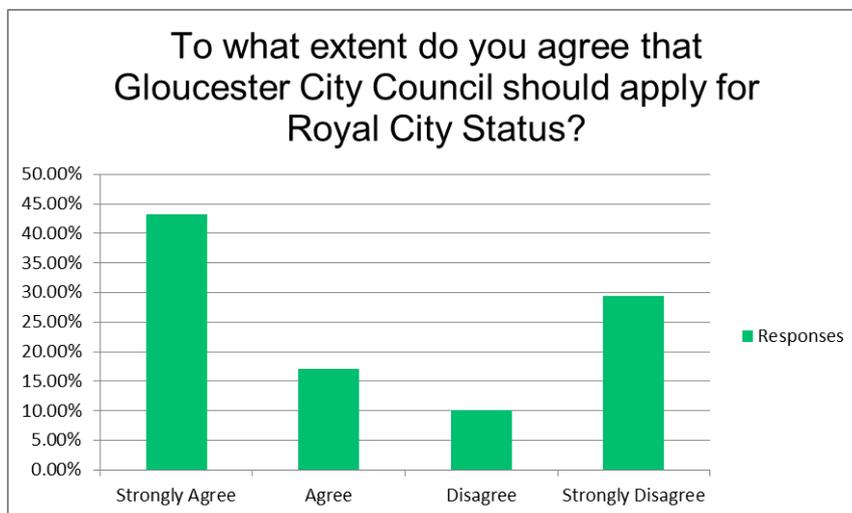
notes the suggestion made on social media that Gloucester should petition to be granted Royal City status on the basis of the Henry III anniversary and the city’s many other royal connections and resolves to consider this at an all-party working group ahead of consulting the public and key stakeholders, including the City MP, as to whether this suggestion should be pursued.”

3.2 A cross-party Working Group was set up to consider the relevant factors prior to consulting the public and stakeholders on whether to proceed with petitioning for Gloucester to be granted Royal City Status.

3.3 The Working Group agreed the details of the consultation exercise and information leaflet was produced to accompany the questionnaire; the council would like to thank former Mayor and Councillor Chris Chatterton for his support in producing the consultation material. The consultation ran from the end of July to the end of September and is was promoted via the Council website and social media channels, a press release was issued and the Town Crier, Mr. Alan Myatt, was enlisted to raise awareness and hand out questionnaires in the city centre.

3.3 514 people responded to the consultation, 76% of whom were Gloucester residents, 23% were Gloucestershire residents and 1% were from businesses. This is one of the Council's most successful consultation exercises of recent times, reflecting the strength of feeling on both sides, with responses outnumbering the Council Plan consultation by four to one.

3.4 In response to the key question, 60.5% of respondents agreed that the council should pursue Royal City status and 39.5% disagreed. The graph below shows the results in full.



3.5 Some of the benefits identified by those supportive of the idea included raising the city's profile, both nationally and internationally, wide-ranging economic benefits associated with attracting more visitors, celebrating the city's history and heritage, and contributing to a sense pride in our city.

3.6 Some of the disadvantages identified by those who were not supportive of the idea included the costs associated with petitioning for Royal City status and the costs of rebranding should the petition succeed, the pressures resulting from increased visitors and a perceived conflict with the city's role in the civil war.

3.7 The results have been deliberated and there are strong opinions on both sides. Although a clear majority of respondents were very supportive of the idea of applying for Royal City status, it is considered that the level of support is not sufficient to commit resources to pursuing the matter at the present time. There are no set criteria for being successful in petitioning for Royal City status, but it is believed that a demonstration of strong support from people in the city would be necessary. Although it is a subjective judgement it is felt that a 60/40 split does not show a sufficiently clear level of support.

3.8 The new Council Plan, 'A City that Works for Everyone', includes important objectives around improving the cultural offering and celebrating our rich heritage. A number of respondents highlighted the need to promote particular elements of our Royal heritage, including the burial of Aethelflaed at St Oswalds Priory. A series of events and activities are planned to mark the 1100th anniversary of this next year, which have been the subject of a Cabinet report earlier in the year. A fairly consistent theme in other responses was that people felt the city should be further along its regeneration journey before petitioning for Royal City status. In light of this and taking into account the existing level of support for the idea, given that it is possible to petition for Royal City status at any time, it is important to ensure that it can be revisited in the future at a time when the City's political leadership deems it appropriate and when there may be even greater public support for the proposal. It is likely that it would be several years' time before the circumstances were sufficiently different to consider this matter again.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 There are no specific ABCD implications; however, the idea underwent public consultation to take account of the views of the city's residents.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Consideration has been given to pursuing Royal City status on the basis of the favourable results. The report outlines why this has not been recommended.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Pursuit of Royal City status is not recommended at present as the level of support is not considered sufficient to divert resources from other work streams.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 As stated in 3.8 above, the pursuit of Royal City status may be pursued again in the future.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. The total cost of the consultation exercise was £1,197, including printing, advertising and promotion.

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

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

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

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 There is a risk that those who were supportive of the proposal are disappointed that the idea is not being pursued; however, on balance it is the right outcome at present and the door is being left open to revisit it an appropriate time in the future.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

11.1 The recommendation requires no action to be taken therefore a PIA is not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 There are no community safety implications.

Sustainability

12.2 There are no sustainability implications.

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 There are no staffing implications.

Background Documents: None