



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM COUNCIL NOTICES OF MOTION

1. **Meeting Date:** Council, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Notice of Motion:** City of Sanctuary

“For many years Gloucester has been home to a wide and diverse community with people from many nationalities, faiths and cultures living in the city. The city has been pleased to offer homes to people from all backgrounds and has strived to be a welcoming and friendly place. Gloucester recognises the contribution that people from diverse cultures and faiths make to the city and values the positive part they play. Gloucester is committed to welcoming asylum seekers, refugees and those fleeing violence and conflict.

This council therefore wishes for the good work that is already in place to be further developed and recognised by supporting Gloucester to become a City of Sanctuary.

Whilst there are many aspects of good practice in place there is still a process to go through to ensure that the whole city fully understands and meets the City of Sanctuary framework. Specifically, this would include:

- Continuing to develop a culture of welcome, respect and hospitality for people from all backgrounds and particularly for those seeking sanctuary.
- Valuing the contribution those seeking sanctuary can make to the city.
- Developing a plan to work towards greater inclusion and equality for people seeking sanctuary.
- Creating greater public awareness of the needs and issues faced by those seeking sanctuary across the whole city, through a range of initiatives, projects and activities.

**Council Resolves:**

- To seek recognition as a City of Sanctuary.

- To work to embed the City of Sanctuary Charter and its principles and values in our policies and work, where appropriate and promote these with all partners and voluntary organisations.
- To work towards the criteria to register for local authority status as part of the City of Sanctuary network.
- To bring forward a report to Cabinet to update on the progress made towards achieving City of Sanctuary status in 12 months' time to determine future actions."

#### **Update:**

The below update sets out the key steps to City of Sanctuary status and progress achieved to date in meeting those steps is highlighted in bold:

Step 1: Public Commitment via Full Council (or a public committee) motion.

- **Completed.**

Step 2:

- **Currently Seeking a Non-awarded membership.**

Step 3: The council engages with City of Sanctuary local groups (if they exist), local refugee organisations, people with lived experience, City of Sanctuary staff and the LAs Network itself.

- **We are working with GARAS however progress has been on hold due to current Refugee Crisis.**

Step 4: The council develops an action plan for how it will embed a culture and practice of welcome across council services i.e. producing a Sanctuary Strategy either as a standalone or as part of other strategies (examples can be found here: <https://la.cityofsanctuary.org/resources/sanctuary-strategies>)

- **Examples of Action Plans have been obtained and local Action Plan to be developed in consultation with City of Sanctuary Organisation. A meeting date is pending their response.**

Step 5: Work towards a Council of Sanctuary Award Application using Learn, Embed, Share.

Step 6: The council submits an application.

Step 7: The application is independently assessed by a panel of council members and officers from other LAs, local City of Sanctuary groups and other local refugee organisations, and most importantly people with lived experience.

## 2. **Meeting Date:** Council, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### **Notice of Motion:** Warm Spaces Initiative

“The rise in energy costs for the coming winter will put many people in Gloucester in a position where they will be unable to effectively heat their homes. It is predicted that many families will experience fuel poverty. There is serious concern for the impact this will have not just on vulnerable people and those already experiencing disadvantage but also on working families who are struggling to make ends meet due to the cost of living crisis.

Councils across the country are seriously concerned about the impact the increased energy costs will have and despite the price rises being beyond their control, councils are considering what they can do to help people in their areas.

A number of councils are taking a lead and setting up a ‘Warm Places Scheme’ where people can attend public buildings during the daytime to stay warm. We believe that this council can develop its own Gloucester “Warm Places Scheme” to aid information sharing of buildings within the city and its wards which are available to support residents during the winter months. By visiting such places people would not only be able to stay warm but they may also be able to access services who could help and support them with other energy related matters at certain key locations.

In order to establish a “Gloucester Warm Places scheme” this council resolves to:

- Take the lead to urgently establish a “Gloucester Warm Places” initiative across the city, ensuring that dedicated website information is generated sharing locations involved in the scheme and signposting residents to the support available from government and other bodies.
- Undertake a social and mainstream media campaign to promote the support available to Gloucester residents.
- Work with partner agencies including the County Council to determine which public buildings can be made available for use in the scheme. This could include places such as libraries, museums and other publicly owned buildings, after due consideration of staffing and HSE requirements.
- Enlist the support of the business community who can provide support to the residents of Gloucester, with nominal or no financial outlay needed for residents.
- Enlist the support of community and voluntary sector organisations to include community centres and neighbourhood buildings.
- Contact churches and other religious organisations to include them in the scheme.
- Encourage Members to contribute part of their grant allowance to assist VCS organisations with their costs.”

## **Update:**

The below update sets out the agreed actions and progress achieved to date is highlighted in bold:

- 1) To take the lead to urgently establish a “Gloucester Warm Places” initiative across the city, ensuring that dedicated website information is generated sharing locations involved in the scheme and signposting residents to the support available from government and other bodies.

**This has been completed and a list has been published here:**

**<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/community-living/warm-spaces/>**

- 2) Undertake a social and mainstream media campaign to promote the support available to Gloucester residents.

**Communications have been facilitated by the communications team and direct contact has been made with known and potential warm spaces.**

- 3) Work with partner agencies including the County Council to determine which public buildings can be made available for use in the scheme. This could include places such as libraries, museums and other publicly owned buildings, after due consideration of staffing and HSE requirements.

**A list of Public Building Warm Spaces has been published at:**

**<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/community-living/warm-spaces/>**

- 4) Enlist the support of the business community who can provide support to the residents of Gloucester, with nominal or no financial outlay needed for residents.

**All premises have been encouraged to provide a suitable space and the list includes those that have done so as existing sites. Community Wellbeing Officers have engaged directly with them to establish our current list.**

- 5) Enlist the support of community and voluntary sector organisations to include community centres and neighbourhood buildings.

**All premises have been encouraged to provide a suitable space the list include those that have done so as existing sites, Community Wellbeing Officers have engaged directly with them to establish our current List**

**The Published Warm Spaces List is updated regularly and he City Council has also been able to set up a grant fund of up to £1000 per application to support Warm Spaces. <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/community-living/community-warm-spaces-grant/>**

**Notice of Motion: Customer Services: Face-to-face interaction**

“Relocating the office accommodation of this council to The Eastgate Centre is to be welcomed as a positive and progressive move. It places the Council in the heart of the city centre where its presence and services can be easily identified and accessed.

To complement the office relocation the council should undertake a review of the provision of Customer Service and Housing Support, currently managed from The Gateway to determine the best options for Gloucester residents in the short, medium and long term.

Prior to Covid, The Gateway was providing face to face services to the public from its Westgate Street base, near to the council offices in Shire Hall. However, once the council moves to Eastgate The Gateway will become remote from the rest of the Council, being located in a different part of the city. This has the potential to cause confusion among the public in identifying exactly where council services are located and accessed.

As the impact of Covid and the council’s cyber incident reduces, the Gateway should resume its appointment service for residents to aid the review for next steps for the service.

Having all city council services at The Eastgate Centre, in a central location could be a positive move and make them more easily identifiable and accessible to all council customers, however all council owned locations should be considered if relocation were to take place.

This council therefore resolves to:

- Complete a review of the face-to-face Customer Service & Housing Support provided to Gloucester residents from The Gateway to determine the best options for the future of the service.
- Should relocation be determined as the appropriate action, all council owned buildings should be considered.
- Publicise and promote any future changes to the provision widely.”

**Update:**

In September 2022, Council approved a notice of motion agreeing to review the Face-to-Face interaction of Customer Services. This review has been broken down into stages as follows:

Stage 1- Reopen the Gateway for appointments only on two half days per week, continuing the provision which was halted by the cyber incident.

Stage 2- Monitor appointment levels and publish survey for customer feedback on this issue.

Stage 3- Review responses to survey, customer feedback, appointment levels and

make recommendations (from end March 2023)

Stage 4 (if required)- Review alternative options for provision which better meets the needs of customers.

We are currently in stage 2 and the survey ends in February when we will start to analyse responses.

