



# Gloucester City Council

## Cabinet

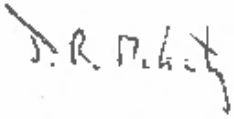
**Meeting: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 at 6.00 pm in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP**

<b>Membership:</b>	Cllrs. Cook (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment) (Chair), Norman (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) (Vice-Chair), S. Chambers (Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy), Lewis (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) and Padilla (Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods)
<b>Contact:</b>	Democratic and Electoral Services 01452 396126 <a href="mailto:democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk">democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk</a>

## AGENDA

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>  To receive any apologies for absence.
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  To receive from Members, declarations of the existence of any disclosable pecuniary, or non-pecuniary, interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item. Please see Agenda Notes.
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES (Pages 7 - 10)</b>  To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2023.
<b>4.</b>	<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)</b>  The opportunity is given to members of the public to put questions to Cabinet Members. A question may be rejected if it:  (i) Is not about a matter for which the local authority has responsibility or influence; or (ii) Is illegal, improper, defamatory, frivolous or offensive; or (iii) Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or Committee in the past 6 months; or (iv) Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or (v) Is related to confidential staffing matters; or (vi) Is relating to the personal affairs or conduct of individual Members or Officers.  To ask a question at this meeting, please submit it to <a href="mailto:democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk">democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk</a> by 12 noon on Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 or telephone 01452 396203 for support.

<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)</b></p> <p>To receive any petitions or deputations provided that no such petition or deputation is in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters relating to individual Council Officers, or</li> <li>• Matters relating to current or pending legal proceedings</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)</b></p> <p>Any Member of the Council may ask the Leader of the Council or any Cabinet Member any question upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any matter relating to the Council's administration</li> <li>• Any matter relating to any report of the Cabinet appearing on the summons</li> <li>• A matter coming within their portfolio of responsibilities</li> </ul> <p>Only one supplementary question is allowed per question.</p> <p>Questions must be submitted to <a href="mailto:democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk">democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk</a> by 12 noon on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Responses to questions will be published in an addendum to the agenda by 12 noon on the day of the Cabinet Meeting.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - REPORT AND ACTION PLAN (Pages 11 - 38)</b></p> <p>To consider the report of the Leader of the Council sharing the report and recommendations resulting from the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertaken in November 2022 and seeking the publication of the Council's response in the form of an Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY (Pages 39 - 58)</b></p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure presenting a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for the City of Gloucester.</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Pages 59 - 92)</b></p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy seeking endorsement of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) relating to planning documents and applications and recommending that Members approve to undertake a public consultation.</p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - FEBRUARY 2023 (Pages 93 - 104)</b></p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources seeking Members to note the year-end forecasts, and the financial pressures on the Council during the 11 months ended 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.</p>



**Jon McGinty**  
**Managing Director**

**Date of Publication: Monday, 24 April 2023**

## NOTES

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area.  For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and (b) either – i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with

whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, "securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

### **Access to Information**

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For enquiries about Gloucester City Council's meetings please contact Democratic Services, 01452 396126, [democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk).

If you, or someone you know cannot understand English and need help with this information, or if you would like a large print, Braille, or audio version of this information please call 01452 396396.

### **Recording of meetings**

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded. There is no requirement for those wishing to record proceedings to notify the Council in advance; however, as a courtesy, anyone wishing to do so is advised to make the Chair aware before the meeting starts.

Any recording must take place in such a way as to ensure that the view of Councillors, Officers, the Public and Press is not obstructed. The use of flash photography and/or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed and agreed in advance of the meeting.

### **FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

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- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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## CABINET

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Cook (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), S. Chambers and Lewis

**Others in Attendance**

Managing Director

Director of Communities

Monitoring Officer

Head of Finance and Resources

Head of Culture

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : Cllr. Padilla

**92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**93. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**94. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no public questions.

**95. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

There were no petitions or deputations.

**96. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no questions to the Leader or Cabinet Members.

**97. ANNUAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (ED&I) REPORT 2022**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that updated Members on the work Council Officers have undertaken regarding equalities, including that completed by the Equality and Diversity Working Group, over the last year.

The Cabinet Member for Environment summarised the report. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that it had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Minute 122) and advised that they had been supportive of the work undertaken. She expressed thanks to its authors, the Equality and Diversity Working Group and the Head of Culture.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the work undertaken by council officers, the Equality and Diversity Working Group, elected members and Council partners regarding equalities is welcomed
- (2) the 2023-2024 ED&I Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the report is approved.

**98. FOOD INEQUALITIES STRATEGY (NOURISHING GLOUCESTER PROJECT)**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that outlined the activity in relation to food inequality and seeking support for the partnership strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Environment highlighted the key features of the report. He commented that long-term solutions can be reached through fostering good relationships. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources noted the success of the Gloucester Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). She emphasised the importance of communities being made aware of the opportunities offered through HAF and asked that its activities be communicated beyond the monthly Members' bulletin.

**RESOLVED** that the approach as outlined in the strategy in Appendix 1 to the report is supported.

**99. NOMINATIONS TO THE GLOUCESTER CITY HOMES BOARD**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that sought Members to review the current approach to nominating Members to sit on the Gloucester City Homes Board.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy outlined the background to the report. She advised Members that it was important to note that Council appointees did not sit on the board of any other registered housing provider and drew their attention to changes in the regulations governing the operation of



**CABINET  
05.04.23**

providers (3.6). The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy further stated that the proposed recommendation would enable GCH to better meet their ambitions to support to support both their business and customers.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council agrees to surrender their right to appoint up to two Council Board Members to the Gloucester City Homes Board.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.10 pm**

**Chair**

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# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 May 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Peer Challenge – Report and Action Plan</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tanya Davies, Policy and Governance Manager</b>		
	<b>Email: tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk</b>	<b>Tel:</b>	<b>39-6125</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Corporate Peer Challenge Report</b> <b>2. Action Plan</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share the report and recommendations resulting from the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertaken by a team of Local Government Association (LGA) peers in November 2022, and to publish the Council's response in the form of an Action Plan, setting out how the Council proposes to meet the recommendations.

### 2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) the Corporate Peer Challenge report and recommendations be welcomed
- (2) the report be circulated to Members, officers and partners involved in the Corporate Peer Challenge and made available to the public via the council's website.
- (3) the Action Plan prepared in response to the recommendations be approved.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 As part of its approach to sector led improvement, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers a fully funded corporate peer challenge (CPC) every four to five years. The Council's last CPC took place in 2017.
- 3.2 The LGA offers the following description of the CPC process: "*By bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers, a peer challenge provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils. Peer challenge also enhances the capacity of the sector and helps to avoid insularity within councils.*"

- 3.3 A CPC involves a team of elected Member and Officer peers from other councils, who come together for a short period of time to review and challenge practice of the host authority. The peer team was selected for their relevant expertise in the areas that the Council chose to focus on. The peers were:
- Huw Bowen – Chief Executive, Chesterfield Borough Council
  - Cllr Linda Haysey – Leader, East Hertfordshire District Council
  - Jon-Paul Hedge – Director, Exeter City Council
  - Emma Foy – Director of Corporate Services, West Lindsey Borough Council
  - David Cowan – IT Manager, Copeland Borough Council
  - Helen Wilkinson – LGA Shadow Peer
  - Kathryn Trant – LGA Peer Challenge Manager
- 3.4 The CPC process is not an inspection; rather it is about continuous improvement. There is an expectation that councils share the feedback report widely to demonstrate openness and transparency about how they are led and managed.
- 3.5 The peer team considered the following five themes, which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges and are critical to councils' performance and improvement:
1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
  2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
  3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
  4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
  5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?
- 3.6 In addition, the Council asked the peer team to provide feedback on:
- How the council responded to the cyber incident.
  - Whether the work undertaken by the council to tackle inequalities is improving outcomes for residents.
- 3.7 The peer team prepared for the process and familiarised themselves with Gloucester by reviewing a range of information. The team spent three days on site, gathering information from more than 40 meetings and speaking with more than 50 people, including elected Members, Officer and a variety of partners and stakeholders.
- 3.8 The report at Appendix 1 provides a summary of the team's findings and feedback on areas where the Council could focus improvement activity.
- 3.9 The peer team praised the Council's understanding of and ambitions for its place and people, commending our comprehensive Council Plan, which sets a clear

vision and places emphasis on tackling inequalities and climate change as cross cutting themes. The team's feedback highlighted the following strengths:

- The Council is fortunate to have high quality staff, who are both proud of and passionate about the work they do.
- Governance arrangements and council committees work well. There is a collective desire for political consensus where it is in the best interests of the City and its people., and there is a good working relationship between the political leadership and SMT.
- The Council is recognised as well led and is well respected by its partners, who are primed to collaborate and support the political and organisational leadership to deliver the Council Plan.
- The Council's enviable track record of strengths-based community development work and positive relationships with Gloucester's passionate voluntary and community sectors.
- The leadership and co-ordination role undertaken by the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic which saw essential support provided to individuals and the business community.
- The Council's impressive track record of organisational and place leadership and its ambitious growth agenda, noting the scale of regeneration already achieved and the resulting economic benefits.
- The Council has achieved notable success, including funding and awards for its cultural venues, retention of the Purple Flag for provide a safe evening economy, Green Flags for three parks and a silver award in the Visit England Awards for Excellence 2022.
- The Council's ability to continue delivering facilities and services following the cyber incident, through creative workarounds and solutions.
- Examples of the Council's work to tackle inequalities in the City, coupled with a positive approach to collaboration and partnership working.

3.10 The peer team highlighted the challenges it considers the Council to be facing and made a number of key recommendations in support of continuous improvement, which are set out in the Action Plan at Appendix 2, along with the Council's response.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

4.1 The peer team highlighted and commended the Council's social value work through procurement, as part of its work on tackling inequalities, and recommended that a new strategic priority framework and corporate resource plan for tackling inequalities be developed.

#### **5.0 Environmental Implications**

5.1 The peer team noted the Council's commitment to acting on climate change, which, along with tackling inequalities, are the two key cross cutting themes that run through the Council Plan.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

6.1 The LGA expects councils to produce and publish the CPC report and an action plan, therefore no alternative options are available.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 The peer team's findings and recommendations are welcomed. Publication of the report demonstrates the Council's desire to be open and transparent and approval of the Action Plan will ensure that further improvements are made.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

8.1 The report and Action Plan will be shared with elected Members, Officers and partners who were involved in the process. They will also be published on the Council's website.

8.2 Delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored by Cabinet and SMT and, in 6 months' time, a check-in meeting will take place with the LGA to explore progress and discuss next steps and any challenges.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

9.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report, however, the resource implications of implementing the Action Plan will be assessed and considered as each element is progressed.

9.2 While not part of the main recommendations, the peer team made the following suggestions regarding the Council's financial planning and management:

- To consider carrying out a self-assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Code of Financial Management to help identify key areas to focus on in the recovery from the cyber incident.
- To consider using Internal and External Audit to support the Finance Team and provide additional assurance.
- To consider continuing to strengthen the Council's financial resilience to further protect itself from various risks.

These recommendations will be reviewed in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

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

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 Effective engagement with sector led improvement is an important part of good corporate governance. The findings of the peer challenge have provided us with assurance and its recommendations will enable further improvement of the council's processes, practice and service delivery.

## **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **13.0 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

## **14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

14.1 There are no staffing and trade union implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report, however staff and trade unions have been consulted on the Senior Management Team restructure undertaken in response to the recommendation regarding the need to increase strategic capacity.

**Background Documents:** None

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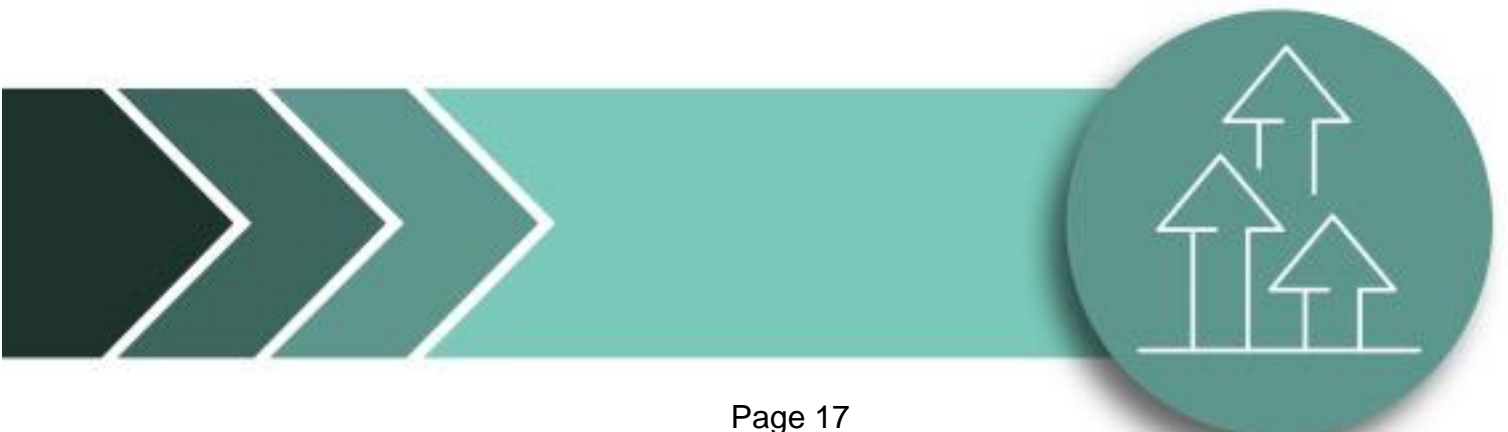



# LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Gloucester City Council

22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Feedback report





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# 1. Executive summary

Gloucester City Council (GCC) has a good understanding of and is clearly ambitious for its place and people, and that understanding has informed the development of a well-crafted and comprehensive Council Plan. The achievements of GCC should give the political leadership confidence to drive the council's ambition for 'Building a Greener, Fairer, Better Gloucester'.

As an organisation, GCC is well led and a well-respected partner; its partners stand ready to collaborate with and support the council's political and organisational leadership in delivering the Council Plan.

Utilising the Council Plan as a base document; the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that promotes timely challenge and proactive management action where needed and allows the council to better identify and celebrate its successes. For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate those successes, an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing.

GCC is blessed to have the quality of staff that it has, who evidence a real passion to do their very best for the city and people of Gloucester. The Council needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of GCC to recruit and retain the very best staff.

Whilst the scale and nature of the ambition for the growth of the city is palpable and evident for all to see, this appetite needs to be balanced and conditioned by the current economic conditions and financial challenges being faced by the sector. If GCC is going to continue on its current trajectory, it must develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements that provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis.

The priority of delivering the Forum development to time and budget is understandable, but there is a need to also maintain focus on the High Street with the opportunity for this to be fulfilled through the work of the City Commission and the development of a new vision for the future of the city centre.

The council needs to consider pulling all the strands of its growth work into one overarching Growth Strategy which should align with the Council Plan.

GCC must look to work with its willing partners to ensure that the people of Gloucester are given every opportunity to gain from the benefits of the council's ambitious growth agenda; active consideration therefore needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities.

GCC organisational leadership and management is at the limits of its current capacity and there is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector.

GCC has an enviable track record of strengths based community development work over many years as exemplified through its Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) programme; with the advent of the new Integrated Community System (ICS) this is an opportune time for the city council to take stock of its current programme of activities with the input of partners and to reset the agenda with the development of a new strategic framework and corporate resource plan for tackling inequalities.

The current political governance arrangements appear to be working well and there is evidence of political consensus between group leaders where it is in the best interests of the place and people.

GCC would however benefit from seeking external advice and support to review and address a number of current challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of a permanent Monitoring Officer, with sufficient capacity and experience would also help inform such a review and lead on any identified improvements.

In addition to the good work that the council did to support its residents, businesses, and communities through the Covid 19 pandemic, GCC has done remarkably well to also continue to deliver its facilities and services, following the cyber incident experienced in December 2021.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In December 2021 Gloucester City Council experienced a significant cyber incident that caused widespread disruption to all council services

The anniversary of the cyber incident could be considered an opportune time for GCC to take stock of its recovery programme; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery.

Whilst we have seen clear evidence of the quality of the council's internal communications activities, further consideration needs to be given to how best to keep staff updated on the cyber recovery and what it means for their respective service areas.

## 2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

### 2.1. Performance Management Framework

Utilising the Council Plan as a base document; the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that promotes timely challenge and proactive management action where needed, and allows the council to better communicate and celebrate its successes

### 2.2. Review delivery arrangements for external communications

For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate its successes, an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing

### 2.3. Review HR delivery arrangements

The Council needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of Gloucester City Council to recruit and retain the very best staff

### 2.4. Develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements

If Gloucester City Council is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it must develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements that provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and

control, and risk and sensitivity analysis, for example, it is recommended that the Forum Business Case is subject to continuous review and refresh to consider the impact of increased borrowing costs and contract inflation on delivery and the council's medium term financial plan

## **2.5. Overarching Growth Strategy**

The council needs to consider pulling all the strands of its growth work into one overarching Growth Strategy which should align with the Council Plan

## **2.6. Address worklessness and improve the skills and employability of local people**

Active consideration needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities

## **2.7. Review staff resources against the Council Plan requirements**

There is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's senior staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector

## **2.8. Review the role of members**

The council is recommended to seek external advice and support to review the role of members within the organisation and to help address a number of current challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of a permanent Monitoring Officer, with sufficient capacity, would also help inform such a review and lead on any identified improvements

## **2.9. Whole organisation review of the cyber incident**

At the anniversary of the cyber incident, it is considered an opportune time for GCC to take stock of its recovery programme; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery

## 2.10. Develop a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities

It is recommended that the council develops a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, both internally and with its partners, to be matched by adequate resource.

## 3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

### 3.1. The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Huw Bowen – Chief Executive, Chesterfield Borough Council
- Cllr Linda Haysey – Leader, East Hertfordshire District Council
- Jon-Paul Hedge – Director, Exeter City Council
- Emma Foy – Director of Corporate Services, West Lindsey Borough Council
- David Cowan – IT Manager, Copeland Borough Council
- Helen Wilkinson – LGA Shadow Peer
- Kathryn Trant – LGA Peer Challenge Manager

### 3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?

4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition to these questions, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on:

- How the council responded to the cyber incident
- Whether the work undertaken by the council to tackle inequalities is improving outcomes for residents

### 3.3. The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at Gloucester City Council, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 50 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.



## 4. Feedback

### 4.1. Local priorities and outcomes

GCC has a good understanding of and is clearly ambitious for its place and people, and that understanding has informed the development of a well-crafted and comprehensive Council Plan. The Plan sets the vision and priorities for the organisation with tackling inequalities and climate change identified as cross cutting themes.

GCC knows that it cannot achieve its vision alone. The council has an enviable track record of strengths based community development work over many years, as exemplified by its lead role in establishing the Gloucester Community Building Collective.

In addition to direct delivery of community based services, these past efforts resulted in local people and community groups creating their own solutions during the covid-19 pandemic. The council undertook a coordination role with the Gloucester Community Help Hub which saw thousands of individuals receive the assistance they needed to ensure the supply of essential food and medicine was delivered to those in need. Appreciation for the council's support to the business community was reflected to the peer team, for example the prompt payment of support grants to help ensure the survival of local businesses.

The city's voluntary and community sectors are equally passionate about Gloucester City and stand ready and willing to work with the council. The peer team's view is that post the pandemic GCC now needs to provide direction to those sectors to optimise and better coordinate their delivery activities towards addressing inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of the city's residents.

The evolving Integrated Care System (ICS) also offers the opportunity for GCC and its multiple partners to take stock and reset GCC's agenda with the development of a new strategic framework and corporate resource plan for tackling inequalities.

GCC has a performance management framework and examples of performance monitoring reports were shared with the peer team. There is a data driven approach to service delivery; its headline performance can be found on the LGA's free data benchmarking tool **LG Inform**.

Whilst the council understands the importance of using data and evidence to drive improvement, the performance management framework is not currently optimised to support GCC to evidence the outcomes of its actions against the vision and priorities of the Council Plan. Utilising the Council Plan as a base document, the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that will promote timely challenge and proactive management action where needed and allow the council to better communicate and celebrate its successes.

#### **4.2. Organisational and place leadership**

GCC is a council with an impressive track record of organisational and place leadership as exemplified by its city centre regeneration programme, strong commitment to culture and the Commission on Race Relations which, along with its achievements, should give the political leadership and the council the confidence to deliver on its vision and priorities and continue to make bold decisions in the best interests of the city and its residents, businesses, and communities.

The council takes its role and responsibility for place leadership seriously. It has an appetite to be creative and to take risks, but it is the view of the peer team that these risks need to be balanced and conditioned by the current economic conditions and financial challenges being faced by the sector, for example, the increased costs of borrowing to fund development and the significant hikes in pay, contract, and utility inflation.

The growth agenda is hugely ambitious. The council has already delivered at scale to regenerate areas of the city centre and should be proud of what it has achieved, not just in terms of physical expression for example, Gloucester Quays, but the aligned evidence showing strong business growth, high economic activity rates and an increasingly young and technically skilled workforce. Improving the physical environment and making culture and leisure facilities available to all will deliver better outcomes and opportunities for residents. The council has already supported the recent delivery of 640 affordable homes in Gloucester to encourage more people to live in the city centre.

The peer team recommend that the council considers the development of an overarching Growth Strategy that aligns with the Council Plan, and with an associated focus on project governance and resource planning.

If GCC is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it will need to develop and maintain robust project and programme governance arrangements that will provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis. The resource planning element will also ensure sufficient resources are allocated to deliver the growth priorities that align with the Council Plan. The priority of delivering The Forum development to time and budget is understandable, but GCC must also maintain focus on the rest of the City centre. There is opportunity for this to be fulfilled through the work of the City Commission and the development of a new vision for the future of the city centre.

An overarching Growth Strategy will help the council to be conscious of ensuring that delivery of the bigger growth projects doesn't result in detriment to other parts of the city, a concern expressed by some members and partners, and that every resident of the city has equality of opportunity to benefit from the new jobs that will be created.

It is the view of the peer team that active consideration needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities. There are still too many people of working age claiming unemployment benefits with no or low levels of qualifications, high levels of deprivation in several of the city's communities and around 20% of children living in poverty. If the better jobs go to people travelling into the city, then the value of GCC's growth agenda to the city's residents will be lost.

As an organisation, GCC is recognised as well led and a well-respected partner; its partners stand ready to collaborate with and support the council's political and organisational leadership in delivering the Council Plan, but to deliver on the growth agenda, the peer team feel that priority will need to be given to strengthening the working relationships between Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council. None of GCC's big growth projects can be achieved without the co-operation of the upper-tier authority in the timely delivery of its highways, education, public health, and social care functions. There is also an evolving county devolution context through which the present Government seems increasingly likely to route local growth funds.

### 4.3. Governance and culture

There is a collective desire within GCC for consensus working across the council. The leaders of all three groups meet regularly, and the current political governance arrangements appear to be working well. There is evidence of political consensus between group leaders where it is in the best interests of the place and the people of Gloucester city and evidence of a good relationship between the political leadership and SMT.

Council committees work well, they are seemingly well chaired and focused on their roles and areas of responsibility. It is positive that Overview and Scrutiny is opposition led, and there is a mutually respectful relationship between Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In the view of the peer team however, the council should consider an annual work programming session to develop a work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will offer the opportunity for more members to undertake policy development roles in support of the council and encourage the selection of topics that will add value for the residents and businesses of Gloucester.

Of the members that the peer team spoke to, there were a range of experiences when engaging with officers to support residents case work. The peer team felt that the Member Development Programme should be reviewed, and an ongoing learning and development programme maintained. Such a programme would ensure that new and existing members have the knowledge they need to know how the council works, who to contact about specific constituency matters, and the standards of behaviour expected of them when fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in line with the Members Code of Conduct and Member Officer protocol.

Furthermore, the peer review team felt that the council would benefit from seeking external advice and support to review the role of members within the organisation and help address a number of challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. It was also felt that urgent consideration should be given to the appointment of a permanent Monitoring Officer to help inform such a review and lead on any identified improvements. Whilst there is trust and confidence in the senior leadership team, the appointment of a permanent Monitoring Officer with sufficient capacity and experience to strengthen governance arrangements is recommended.

#### 4.4. Financial planning and management

At the time of the peer team visit, a draft money plan and budget report had been produced for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's budget meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December. These documents were shared with the peer team. The figures were subject to review and receipt of the December local government finance settlement, however, the budget report showed that at that time, a balanced budget was achievable for 2023/24.

Clearly, the cyber incident is still having an impact on available data. The peer team therefore felt that the council would benefit from carrying out a self-assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Code of Financial Management to help identify key areas to focus on in the recovery from the cyber incident.

Consideration should be given as to whether resources in the Finance Team are sufficient to deliver the Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 budget monitoring reports to time. Accountability for and governance of the project for the delivery of the recovery of financial data is not clear, for example there are no risk registers or monitoring of costs. To complete the work, the Finance Team may need additional capacity. There is an opportunity for the council to use critical friends such as Internal and External Audit to support the team and provide additional assurance. Internal Audit would be happy to provide support and assurance over the recovery of core financial systems and would move resources to do so. The peer team would also encourage an early conversation with External Audit following the cyber incident about their approach, timings and fees going forwards.

The peer team view is that the council needs to give serious consideration to continuing to strengthen its financial resilience; whilst there is evidence that the council's political and organisational leadership are cognisant of the current risks arising from the state of the economy and the financial challenges faced by the sector, potential legacy risks from the cyber incident and current construction delivery and borrowing risks in relation to the Forum development, the council would benefit from being in a healthier position in relation to the level of its Reserves and provisions.

As previously noted, if GCC is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it is recommended to develop and maintain robust project and programme governance arrangements that will provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis. It is therefore specifically recommended that the Forum Business Case is subject to continuous review and refresh to consider the impact of increased borrowing costs and contract inflation on delivery and the council's medium term financial plan.

#### **4.5. Capacity for improvement**

GCC is blessed to have the quality of staff that it has, who reflected a sense of pride and a real passion to do their very best for the city and people of Gloucester.

However, the peer team found GCC's organisational leadership and management to be at the limits of their current capacity. There is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's management and staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector. The council needs to be cognisant that if it was to lose some of its key leadership and service management personnel, there would currently be insufficient depth within the organisation to sustain the current levels of performance against the Council Plan.

GCC is a council that achieves success. In addition to the success of the regeneration projects, it has successfully applied for funding for the Museum of Gloucester to carry out repairs and improvements, the Guildhall has been chosen to join the prestigious Arts Council England's National Portfolio which will result in additional funding over the next three years, it has once again been awarded the Purple Flag national safety award which celebrates places that provide a diverse, safe and welcoming night out, it has enjoyed Green Flag success with three of its parks receiving accreditation and Visit Gloucester won a silver award in the Visit England Awards for Excellence 2022.

For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate its successes, the peer team view is that an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing. The council's external communications work appears largely reactive, and any proactive communications and marketing activity is dependent on the availability of personnel under the current resourcing arrangements through Gloucestershire County Council.

The Council also needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of GCC to recruit and retain the very best staff and to provide managers with an appropriate standard of support and advice on HR matters.

#### **4.6. Response to cyber incident**

In December 2021, GCC experienced a significant cyber incident that caused widespread disruption to all council services.

The council worked with national cyber agencies and expert cyber incident investigators and incident response to access immediate incident response and recovery advice. The impact of systems loss has been deep and has presented a real challenge to many service areas within the council, these challenges continue to impact the council at the current time.

GCC has done remarkably well to continue to deliver its facilities and services, post the cyber incident experienced; senior leadership and service managers should be commended for their creativity in developing work arounds and solutions to maintain effective service delivery for residents and businesses.

The council adopted a recovery plan to fully restore lost systems and data back to a pre-incident functional level in a measured approach and also embraced a move to cloud solutions to help improve future cyber resilience.

The adopted recovery plan appears to have been run as a predominantly IT focused recovery plan and we would recommend that a wider organisational wide recovery plan would be beneficial to adopt. This organisational wide recovery plan needs to encompass all aspects of IT application restoration, data restoration, re-entry of the data from the last 12 months into the recovered applications and monitoring the impacted services back to a pre-cyber incident level of operation and performance.

The cyber incident revealed some issues in service area business continuity plans in respect of reliance on ICT to respond, which is not possible when ICT is impacted at a major level. Since the incident response the council has taken positive steps to address this with all service areas doing full business impact analysis including ICT loss and revised service areas business continuity plans. As a result, there is now a better understanding of the impact on service delivery in case of ICT loss.



Communications concerning the cyber recovery to the wider council appear to have had mixed effectiveness, it is therefore suggested that a new organisational wide recovery plan should review an associated communications plan. Whilst we have seen clear evidence of the quality of the council's internal communications activities, further consideration needs to be given to how best to keep staff updated on the cyber recovery and what it means for their respective service areas, for example budgetary information and service demand which is critical for service planning.

As the council is now approaching the first anniversary of the cyber incident it may also be worth considering undertaking a deep review of the council's response and recovery activity to date for any possible valuable lessons learned and to help inform and ensure a wider organisational recovery plan can fully address the council's full recovery needs; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery.

#### **4.7. Tackling inequalities**

Tackling inequalities, along with acting on climate change, are the two key cross cutting themes that run through each area of the Council Plan. GCC values diversity and is committed to meeting the evolving needs of residents. It has an aspiration to tackle inequalities through everyday operational practice.

There are brilliant individual examples of work to tackle inequalities in the city supported by a positive approach to collaboration and partnership working across the board. Examples include social value work through procurement, delivering city centre focused community safety and the leisure and culture team apprentice programme offering social mobility. Tentative agreements have been established with community VCS organisations to help facilitate the four Calls to Action arising from the Commission to Review Race Relations. GCC understands that community buy in is fundamental to change and this process is designed as community led.

The cabinet member for Communities and Neighbourhoods has been able to introduce a number of initiatives for tackling health inequalities through his role working for the NHS.



The peer team feel that the council's approach would benefit from a strategically focused methodology that draws together the golden thread of opportunities across the council and ranks them against capacity and impact. Ongoing impact should then be reviewed and shared to assess if outcomes for residents are being improved.

It is further recommended that with the advent of the new ICS arrangements this is an opportune time for the city council to take stock of its current work on tackling inequalities with the input of partners and to reset the agenda through the development of a new strategic priority framework and corporate resource plan for tackling inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of the city's residents and communities.

As has been previously referenced, GCC must also look to work with its willing partners to ensure that the people of Gloucester are given every opportunity to benefit from the council's ambitious growth agenda; active consideration therefore needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities.

## 5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss, and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six-month check-in session, which provides space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.

In the meantime, Paul Clarke, Principal Adviser for the South West, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Paul is available to discuss any further support the council requires.

[paul.clarke@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@local.gov.uk).

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## LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

### Action Plan

No	Recommendation from the peer team	Our response and current/planned action	Timescale	Accountable officer
1.	<p><b>Performance Management Framework</b> Utilising the Council Plan as a base document; the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that promotes timely challenge and proactive management action where needed, and allows the council to better communicate and celebrate its successes</p>	<p>Agreed. We will review the current input-based performance reporting information provided to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny with a more qualitative, outcome-focused approach that demonstrates the Council's progress towards achieving the vision and aims set out in the Council Plan. This work had already commenced with the production of the first bi-annual Council Plan Progress Report in January 2023.</p> <p>We will retain the existing performance framework for internal monitoring of service delivery and performance, as this has proved a valuable mechanism for identifying service challenges and ensuring appropriate and timely action.</p>	December 2023	Policy and Governance Manager
2.	<p><b>Review delivery arrangements for external communications</b> For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate its successes, an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the Communications Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required to ensure that external communications are proactive and appropriately resourced. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service. As part of this, we will consider whether a dedicated LGA Communications Peer Review would assist the analysis.</p>	December 2023	New Head of Transformation and Commissioning
3.	<p><b>Review HR delivery arrangements</b> The Council needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of Gloucester City Council to recruit and retain the very best staff</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the HR Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required. The current arrangements consist of a collection of functions provided by different teams at Gloucestershire County Council and, as part of the review, we will take the time to fully understand the relationships between these functions. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service.</p>	December 2023	New Head of Transformation and Commissioning

4.	<p><b>Develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements</b></p> <p>If Gloucester City Council is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it must develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements that provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis, for example, it is recommended that the Forum Business Case is subject to continuous review and refresh to consider the impact of increased borrowing costs and contract inflation on delivery and the council's medium term financial plan</p>	<p>Agreed. We recognise that our ambitious growth agenda must be supported by rigorous governance arrangements, resource planning and risk management to ensure its success, while also maintaining the financial viability of the Council as a whole. We have begun formalising the project governance arrangements already in place for our major schemes, and the newly created Major Projects Board will provide the essential leadership and financial oversight needed to balance momentum with risk, through a robust reporting framework.</p> <p>In respect of The Forum, continuous review of the business case is already in place but will be embedded through the new major projects reporting framework.</p> <p>This work will be guided by the new overarching Growth Strategy highlighted in recommendation 5, to ensure that the Council takes a broad view across all major City-wide schemes and projects.</p>	Completed	Head of Place / New Head of Finance and Resources
5.	<p><b>Overarching Growth Strategy</b></p> <p>The council needs to consider pulling all the strands of its growth work into one overarching Growth Strategy which should align with the Council Plan</p>	<p>Agreed. The Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy expired in 2021 and, while the Council's ambitious growth agenda has pushed on at pace, regenerating the City and creating clear economic benefits, we agree that a new strategy is now needed to draw this work together. Building on the work of the City Commission, the new strategy will pull together the Council's priority regeneration projects alongside the actions and objectives of the City Commission, while putting equality of opportunity for all residents at the forefront of our plans. The strategy will also highlight the essential role that our partners play in achieving our vision.</p>	March 2024	Head of Place
6.	<p><b>Address worklessness and improve the skills and employability of local people</b></p> <p>Active consideration needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities</p>	<p>Under consideration. The role of District Councils viz-a-viz other authorities such as the County Council in relation to the skills agenda is currently under review, following the County Council's Devolution bid and incorporation of adult skills resource from the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Government's recent announcement that it is minded to cease funding Local Enterprise Partnerships from April 2024.</p> <p>The City Council is already delivering individual projects to improve the skills and employability of local people through its Social Value Policy application to various projects. In particular, it has contracted with Kier as part of the</p>	tbd	tbd

		Forum development to develop a skills programme to create employment opportunity in construction and hospitality industries.		
7.	<p><b>Review staff resources against the Council Plan requirements</b></p> <p>There is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's senior staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector</p>	<p>Agreed. A Senior Management Restructure has been developed, consulted on, and is in the process of being implemented, with the primary aim of increasing strategic capacity by replacing the Director of Policy Resources post with two Head of Service posts, one for Finance and Resources and one for Transformation and Commissioning, along with the bringing together of a number of lines of business to provide greater synergy and cooperation, and to improve the customer journey. Increasing the Senior Management Team by one full time post will add to the capacity and resilience required to ensure that the Council is equipped to deliver the ambitions set out in the Council Plan and the focus on 'transformation' will allow important work to improve the customer journey to continue at pace, while also providing the necessary capacity to meet recommendations 2 and 3.</p>	In Progress	Managing Director
8.	<p><b>Review the role of members</b></p> <p>The council is recommended to seek external advice and support to review the role of members within the organisation and to help address a number of current challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of a permanent Monitoring Officer, with sufficient capacity, would also help inform such a review and lead on any identified improvements</p>	<p>Agreed. A permanent Monitoring Officer has been in post since January 2023, and we will undertake a programme of activity, steered by the Council's internal Corporate Governance Group and supported by the LGA as appropriate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of and update to key documents in the Constitution relevant to Member and Officer conduct and the relationship between Members and Officers.</li> <li>• Refresher training for all Members on the Code of Conduct. Training for Members and Officers to allow better understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• In consultation with the Member Development Working Group, a review of the Member Induction Programme ahead of the 2024 City Council Elections and consideration of how the ongoing Member Development Programme can build on recent positively received sessions aimed at setting realistic expectations and increasing Members' understanding of how the Council works, and the Councillor's role within this.</li> <li>• Discussion with the Overview and Scrutiny (O&amp;S) Lead Members about how, alongside the successful pre-decision scrutiny, O&amp;S can add value through policy development in areas that will have a positive impact on residents and businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>Summer 2023</p> <p>Post-elections 2024 March 2024</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Policy and Governance Manager</p> <p>Policy and Governance Manager</p>

9.	<p><b>Whole organisation review of the cyber incident</b></p> <p>At the anniversary of the cyber incident, it is considered an opportune time for GCC to take stock of its recovery programme; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery</p>	<p>Agreed. In response to this recommendation, we included questions about the initial and ongoing impact of the cyber incident in the Staff Survey in order to better understand how the incident affected and continues to affect staff morale, and to highlight any blind spots in terms of the ongoing recovery.</p> <p>We will carry out a 'stock take' with our internal staff 'Change Champions' group to delve into the detail of the Staff Survey feedback and discuss the workarounds that improved service provision and should therefore be retained.</p> <p>This work will inform the organisation-wide recovery plan and associated communications plan, to ensure that ongoing recovery workstreams are captured and progress is communicated effectively. As part of an internal review of the incident already agreed to, there will be a full assessment of valuable lessons learned.</p>	December 2023	<p>HR and Communications Business Partners</p> <p>Managing Director</p> <p>New Head of Transformation &amp; Commissioning / Communications Business Partner</p>
10.	<p><b>Develop a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the council develops a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, both internally and with its partners, to be matched by adequate resource</p>	<p>Agreed, we are in the early stages of a scoping exercise.</p>	December 2023	<p>Director of Communities / Head of Culture</p>



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 May 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Sport and Physical Activity Strategy</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Philip Walker, Head of Culture</b>		
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>philip.walker@gloucester.gov.uk</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>39-6355</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. DRAFT Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present the City’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2023 – 2028.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2023 - 2028 be adopted.

**3.0 Background and Key Issues**

**3.1 Background**

3.1.1 Gloucester City Council commissioned Active Gloucestershire to produce a Sport and Physical Activity strategy for Gloucester. Active Gloucestershire were able to demonstrate strong sector awareness, combined with excellent knowledge of sports and related activity in Gloucester and the wider county to produce the strategy.

3.1.2 The development of a Sport and Physical Activity strategy was one of a number of recommended key actions that arose from the options appraisal conducted by The Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy (SLC) in 2022.

3.1.3 SLC recommended that a Sports and Activity strategy be developed that would help articulate the changing needs and priorities in the city and which would support the city’s procurement of a company to manage its leisure facilities.

**3.2 The Process**

3.2.1 Active Gloucestershire followed a rigorous process to devise the strategy which included stakeholder engagement session with relevant council officers and members of the Cabinet, the governing sports bodies and their Gloucestershire

representatives and key stakeholders including the current leisure management company Aspire, the University of Gloucestershire and members of the Integrated Care System (ICS) within the area. Additionally,

- 3.2.2 A visioning session was held with council officers and key members of the Cabinet.
- 3.2.3 A series of interviews were undertaken with 12 Gloucester organisations to get insights from a wide range of organisations.
- 3.2.4 Surveys were sent to schools, clubs and grass-roots sports clubs to ensure that a wide sample of ideas and suggestions was captured.
- 3.2.5 The information was analysed and synthesised to form the key findings and to create the vision, objectives and the key performance indicators.

### 3.3 **The Strategy**

- 3.3.1 From the above process the council and its partners developed a clear vision statement for sport and physical activity in Gloucester: ***‘Delivering a healthier, stronger, more active Gloucester’***
- 3.3.2 This vision complements key national and local strategic plans and encompasses all aspects of a systems-based physical activity including sport, health and wellbeing and active travel.
- 3.3.3 In order to deliver the vision, the strategy identifies 4 priorities. These are;
  - 1. Achieving health and wellbeing outcomes
  - 2. Reducing inactivity, increasing participation
  - 3. Delivering a positive customer experience at our facilities
  - 4. Working with Local Clubs, Groups and the Third Sector
- 3.4 A set of 18 Key Performance indicators will be used to track progress in relation to the priorities. These draw from data from a number of sources. The majority of the data required to be able to track KPIs will be provided through Sport England’s Active Lives survey and corresponding data sets. Others will come from the leisure management company and others from the city council’s own sources.

### 4.0 **Social Value Considerations**

- 4.1 Sports and activity is closely linked to health and well-being. The Council’s new priority focused on inequality presents a significant opportunity to re-focus leisure services on contributing towards narrowing health inequalities in the city. This will require a clear strategic approach to raising physical activity levels, particularly for those groups that are inactive or have underlying health issues.

### 5.0 **Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 Leisure services, as one of the Council’s major contributors of carbon can play a significant role in the Council’s climate emergency agenda. Coupled with rising energy prices there is a major incentive for both the Council and its leisure operator to invest in technology to reduce emissions.



- 5.2 The council will continue to seek innovative solutions to reduce and minimise the carbon emissions of its own facilities and encourage, through its partners greater participation in active travel and physical activity and use this strategy in a way that supports its ambitions to become carbon neutral by 2030.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 6.1 The city has not previously had a Sport and Physical Activity strategy. The option to continue without a strategy was considered but rejected on the basis that the city needed one.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The need for a Sport and Physical Activity strategy was highlighted during an options appraisal for the future provision of sports and leisure in the city in 2022.
- 7.2 With the council plan's focus on reducing inequality there is an opportunity strengthen the link to improved health and well-being through the creation of a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 7.3 A strategy will be beneficial to support the procurement of future leisure management services of the council's facilities.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 8.1 Publish the Sports and Physical Activity strategy on the council website and share widely with partners.
- 8.2 Encourage partners to use as a guide to tackling inequality and supporting wider health objectives in the city and to inform and support other strategies.
- 8.3 Ensure that the strategy is used in support of the council's future considerations of its leisure services and management of its facilities.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The costs in delivering the strategy will not fall solely to the city council.
- 9.2 Costs will be required for supporting Sport England's QUEST accreditation. These will be a contractual obligation of the management company that manage the council's facilities.
- 9.3 The costs of managing the leisure facilities will be negotiated during a procurement process and will form part of future contract with a leisure management company in respect of the council-owned leisure facilities.

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

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation to adopt the Strategy. If required, legal advice and support will be sought on actions arising from the Strategy.

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

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 None

## **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **13.0 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 None

## **14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

14.1 None

**Background Documents:** None

## **Cover page, image and title**

### **Foreword**

We know that participation in sport and physical activity offers an enormous range of benefits to individuals, families and communities. Being physically active lowers the risk of lifestyle related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and can assist in preventing or surviving other illnesses. Participating in active recreation helps to refresh the mind, contributing to improved mental health and enhancing overall health and wellbeing. It can help build individual self-esteem and self-confidence, encourage social interaction, bring communities together and contribute to strong family relationships.

Physical activity is also an opportunity for people to get together: kicking a ball, riding a bike or watching the kids play sport are all opportunities for a families and friends to come together in an enjoyable and supportive way. Sport and physical activity also reduce healthcare costs, generate economic activity, provide opportunities for volunteering and skills development and play a role in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Gloucester City Council and its partners recognise that the City has good capacity to deliver physical activity opportunities through its sport and leisure facilities, open spaces, schools and the wider environment. However, a sustainable approach to maintaining and developing these physical community assets is required as the local area faces a challenging economic climate in the coming years.

This strategic plan for sport and physical activity, covering the period 2023 to 2028, provides a clear direction for the Council to work in partnership to support healthy lifestyles in the community by reducing levels of inactivity amongst its residents, while at the same time helping local people who already participate in physical activity and sport be the best they can be.

Supported by four leading priorities and a set of Key Performance Indicators, the strategy will guide the development of activities, programmes and partnerships that can help realise the full potential of physical activity and sport within the community. At the same time, it will help to ensure that the Council and its delivery partners are working collaboratively towards the same goals, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently and that new opportunities for participation are maximised.

### **About Gloucester**

Located in the heart of Gloucestershire, the district, county town and cathedral City of Gloucester boasts a wealth of cultural, architectural and industrial heritage alongside a thriving, well connected local economy. Its population of just over 132,000 people enjoys access to numerous open spaces and waterways and a diverse range of sport, physical activity and cultural facilities.

Despite this backdrop the health and wellbeing of Gloucester residents is often compromised by low activity levels and, in some areas of the City, poor socio-economic conditions. Gloucester also has several diverse ethnic communities who experience inequalities and barriers to being physically active.

To further establish the context for this strategy it is useful to highlight some of the key demographic and health characteristics of the district:

- The population of Gloucester has increased by 8.9%, from around 121,700 in 2011 to 132,500 in 2021, higher than the overall increase for England over the same period (6.6%). As of 2021, Gloucester is the third most densely populated of the South West's 30 local authority areas. There has been an increase of 22.3% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 6.8% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 6.1% in children aged under 15 years (2011 to 2021), all higher than the England averages.
- Public Health England's 2019 'Local Authority Health Profile for Gloucester' provides the most recent snapshot of the prevailing health conditions within our district, which are found to be varied compared with the England average. Life expectancy for men is lower than the England average, while life expectancy is 13.5 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Gloucester than in the least deprived areas. The under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases is worse than the England average, and in terms of children's health in Year 6, 23.6% (377) of children are classified as obese – this is worse than the average for England, as are the district's levels of teenage pregnancy.
- Regarding physical activity levels 60.8% of our local adult population are active for more than 150 minutes a week, slightly lower than the average across England (61.4%). However slightly more (12.4%) of local residents over the age of 16 are fairly active (30-149 minutes of activity per week), compared to the average of 11.5% across England. Between November 2018 and November 2021 levels of adult inactivity rose from 24.6% to 27.2%, no doubt due in part to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and associated lockdowns.
- Local children and young people (aged 5 to 16) are slightly less active than the national average, with 43.9% being active for 60 minute or more each day (compared to 44.9% nationally), 19.6% being fairly active (30 to 59 minutes per day) compared to 23.8% nationally, and 36.5% being less active (under 30 minutes per day) compared to 31.3% across England. Significantly fewer children and young people in Gloucester have reported doing the recommended amount of exercise than in the other Gloucestershire districts.
- Gloucester is the most deprived district in Gloucestershire and ranks as the 138th most deprived of the 317 districts in England. 10 out of 13 of Gloucestershire's top 10% most deprived Local Super Output Areas nationally are located in Gloucester district and Gloucester has the highest proportion of all districts living in the most deprived areas (23% of the district). About 16.1% (4,195) children live in low income families.
- In terms of active travel and working from home the 2021 Census shows that 24.2% of Gloucester residents work from home, compared to an England & Wales average of 31.2%. Conversely, the number of residents who either walk to work (9.0%) or cycle to work (3.3%) is higher than the averages for England & Wales (7.6%/2.0% respectively).
- Ordnance Survey publish the locations and extent of green spaces that are likely to be accessible to the public. The data include the following types of green spaces: allotments or community growing spaces, bowling greens, cemeteries, religious grounds, golf courses, other sports facilities, play spaces, playing fields, public parks or gardens and tennis courts. 2017 data shows that 11.9% of Gloucester district (excluding the parish of Quedgeley) is comprised of green space (412.5 hectares), compared with an England average of 2.2%, while public parks

and gardens cover 136.1 hectares (3.9% of the district) compared with an England average of 0.8%.

### **Making the case for Sport and Physical Activity**

Sport England, the arms-length body of government responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England, makes a compelling, evidenced-based case for sport and physical activity across five key areas:

#### **1. Physical Wellbeing:**

- Sport and physical activity can help prevent ill health as well as provide therapeutic and management effects for those suffering - particularly for people affected by cancer.
- It can also lead to improvements in strength, balance, movement and motor skills, and help in maintaining a healthy body weight.
- It can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 30-40% and can reduce the risk of a range of medical conditions, including cancer, dementia, strokes, heart disease and depression.
- Other physical wellbeing outcomes backed by evidence include improved quality of sleep, increased energy levels, healthy early years development, reduced unhealthy behaviours like smoking, reduced mortality, effective pain management and improved quality of life in ageing.

#### **2. Mental Wellbeing:**

- Physical activity can contribute to enjoyment and happiness, and more broadly to life satisfaction through increased social interaction.
- Volunteers and sports fans also have an increased sense of purpose and pride, while self-esteem and confidence are known to increase through participation or volunteering.
- Sport and physical activity also have the potential to reduce anxiety and depression symptoms.

#### **3. Social & Community Development:**

- As well as developing individuals, sport and physical activity can help build stronger communities by bringing people together.
- Sport is widely seen as a way for people of different backgrounds to interact and integrate by taking part, volunteering and spectating.
- It can provide opportunities for migrants to adapt to living in England and can bridge divides between men and women, homeless people and those who are not homeless, and people with different employment backgrounds.

#### **4. Individual Development:**

- Physical activity can have a positive impact on a person's employment opportunities and provide support to those who are not in employment, education or training.
- There's also clear evidence being active improves educational behaviour and attainment, through greater self-esteem, confidence and direct cognitive benefits.
- It can also help reduce anti-social behaviour in disaffected young people and increase willingness to volunteer and the development of soft skills, such as integrity, responsibility and leadership.

#### **5. Economic Development:**

- The sport and physical activity sector boosts the economy in two ways: directly, through job creation, and indirectly by reducing healthcare costs due to a healthier population and reducing crime.

In the context of this background of evidence, Gloucester's demographic, health and activity data illustrates not only the barriers residents face to getting active, but also provides a framework for creating opportunities and solutions.

The district's considerable population growth over the ten years between 2011 and 2021, and that of neighbouring areas such as Tewkesbury, is significant. Firstly, it is likely to be putting pressure on local sport and physical activity facility infrastructure in terms of demand, meaning that investment in upgraded and new facilities must be a priority. Secondly, the data shows a simultaneous increase in the number of children and older people over 65. Inactivity within these groups is particularly detrimental to overall community wellbeing, meaning children must be supported to develop a life-long 'habit' of being physically active, while 'active ageing' should be encouraged to help reduce age-related illnesses.

The City's health profile shows a significant gap between the life expectancy of men and women living in the most and least deprived areas of the City, as well as a relatively high under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases. This, combined with slightly lower than average rates of physical activity, suggest that taking measures to increase participation in sport and physical activity can play a critical role in reducing health inequalities among our communities. Similarly, supporting children and young people to be more active both inside and outside of school hours can directly impact on participation levels and help address levels of obesity.

The data for active travel is encouraging, with higher than average numbers of Gloucester residents walking or cycling to work. Travelling actively has a huge number of benefits and is a direct way in which people can address the impact of climate change. We are committed to working with county and local partners to improve travel infrastructure and make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to get around the City.

Also encouraging are the statistics on the provision of green and open spaces. There is strong evidence to suggest that green spaces have a beneficial impact on physical and mental wellbeing and cognitive function through both physical access and usage. Despite its relatively high population density Gloucester is fortunate to have much higher levels of green and open spaces than the national average, yet many of the organisations we consulted as part of the research for this strategy questioned how well known and accessible these spaces are. As such, there is great potential to increase the number of people accessing the natural environment, but factors such as access to transport will need to be considered.

The evidence suggests that there are numerous barriers to physical activity – including safety, location, affordability, weather, cultural and social – and that delivering change at scale is difficult. For these reasons we believe that a systematic approach is needed to harness the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

'Whole system' thinking acknowledges that multiple factors contribute to an individual's decision to adopt or sustain an inactive lifestyle. These factors are diverse, context dependent and constantly changing. To get to grips with the challenge, we need to consider not individuals and their conditions, but the holistic system and the dynamic relationships, diverse perspectives and invisible boundaries that exist within it. Changing one factor may have a cascading effect – positive or negative – on one or many more of the others.

The systems approach to solving problems begins by looking for points of convergence and evidence of shared ambitions and goals. The following section attempts to do this by taking a high-level look at the strategic landscape within which this strategy sits.

## Strategic context

This strategy is primarily guided by Gloucester City Council's overarching strategic plan, the **Council Plan 2022-2024**. The Plan has three leading priorities, one of which is '*building greener, healthier, and more inclusive communities*'. This priority aims to ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle by ensuring everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces, developed and delivered with a range of leading local partners.

The strategy's development has also been influenced by several other national, county and district level strategies and plans, which further contextualise and shape the strategic approach for physical activity, sport and wellbeing:

- **Uniting the Movement – Sport England, 2021:** this ten year plan is based on five key pillars, all of which resonate with objectives of the Gloucester City Council Plan:
  - *Recover and Reinvent* – recovering from the pandemic to create a network delivering sport and physical activity opportunities
  - *Connecting Communities* - sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together
  - *Positive Experiences for Children & Young People* - as the foundations for a long and healthy life
  - *Connecting with Health & Wellbeing* - strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life
  - *Active Environments* - creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active
- **Building Back Better in Gloucestershire 2022-2026:** Gloucestershire County Council's four year strategy outlines how the council aims to support and engage with communities to help them realise their ambitions across areas including skills, education, employment and their health and wellbeing. Gloucester City is highlighted as an exemplar of 'asset-based community development', an approach that begins with what is strong about communities, not what is wrong with them. The strategy also addresses the need to tackle climate change and highlights the role physical activity can play by creating a network of local cycling routes to make active travel the default choice for short journeys.
- **Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2030:** developed by Gloucestershire County Council and the NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group this strategy focuses on areas where a collective, system wide approach can help to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Gloucestershire. 'Physical activity' and 'healthy lifestyles' are recognised as key interventions with the strategy lending support to 'We Can Move', a social movement supported by Active Gloucestershire (the Active Partnership for the county) which aims to get 30,000 inactive people in Gloucestershire active and to make being physically active the social norm.
- **Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust Strategy 2021-2026:** the county's Foundation Trust provides provide integrated services for people with physical health, mental health and learning disability needs and a leading aim of its strategy is to work in partnership

with communities to improve the health outcomes of those who are most disadvantaged. Key to this is being an active partner at both a locality and system level to tackle the root causes of health inequality, and this way of working offers significant opportunities to harness the benefits of physical activity to achieve better health outcomes for individuals and the communities they live in.

- **We Can Move Strategy 2021-2030:** We Can Move was formed in 2017 with the aim of helping more people to get active and enjoy the benefits of a healthier life. The movement provides support, resources and systems leadership for individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of sport and physical activity within Gloucestershire, and Gloucester City Council is fully committed to supporting its work under the Council Plan's 'Leading a healthy lifestyle' priority.
- **Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2025:** this plan provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities, thereby helping the council prioritise and target resources. The vision of the strategy is 'to provide an accessible, high quality and sustainable network of outdoor sports facilities, which provide opportunities for all residents to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities'. The key priorities identified by the strategy were to develop full sized 3G Artificial Turf Pitch provision, of which there were no pitches at the time, as well to reduce grass pitch shortfalls through use of 3G pitches for match play and improvement of grass pitch quality. Since the publication of the strategy a number of these recommendations have been successfully delivered, including new 3G ATPs at the University of Gloucestershire/Oxstalls Sports Park and Council investment into grass pitch improvement at key local authority managed sites.
- **Gloucester Indoor & Built Facilities Strategy 2019:** this report enables the council and its partners to plan and develop the more modern, efficient and sustainable range of indoor community-based leisure, physical activity and sport facilities that Gloucester requires, thereby ensuring residents have the opportunity to develop their physical, sporting, health and wellbeing ambitions within their local community. The strategy notes the Council's commitment to a presumption (in Planning Policy) against any net loss of active sport and leisure facilities in the City, and that the principal opportunity/challenge for Gloucester City is to ensure that its stock of facilities is fit for the future.
- **Gloucester Open Space Strategy 2021-2026:** setting out how Gloucester City Council plans to protect, manage and enhance its open spaces, this strategy recognises the importance of formal and informal green spaces and has as a leading priority the promotion of Gloucester's open spaces as attractive places to sustain and improve physical and mental health and wellbeing. In terms of overall open space provision, the strategy identifies that the distribution of open space across the City is adequate, but rather uneven. Due to the densely built-up nature of many of the City's residential areas, creating additional new open spaces where there are shortfalls will not be possible. Instead, the strategy seeks to improve the quality of facilities and accessibility to existing green spaces, as well as providing residents with plenty of information about parks and recreational opportunities in adjacent areas.
- **Gloucester Local Football Facility Plan 2018:** developed in partnership with the Football Foundation and Gloucestershire FA, this plan builds on the findings of the Council Playing Pitch Strategy and highlights the assets and opportunities associated with the district's football facilities. The plan's Priority Project List outlines the main improvements and additions required,



including the provision of additional 3G Artificial Turf Pitches and enhanced supply of grass pitches.

- **Gloucester’s Cultural Vision & Strategy 2016-2026:** a key aim of the strategy is to ensure cultural policy runs through the heart of the City’s wider strategies, recognising the role of arts, heritage and creativity as fundamental drivers of Gloucester’s economic, social and community development, as well as health and wellbeing. Given the obvious ‘crossover’ between art and physical activity with activities such as dance, musical theatre, illusion, mime, circus arts and performance art, it is important that the strategy’s aims and objectives are reflected in this plan.

### **Consultation findings**

Another important aspect to understanding how physical activity, sport and wellbeing can contribute to wider local strategic goals is gathering insight. To ensure we met this objective a consultation process was undertaken to inform the development of the strategy, allowing our leading partners and the wider sport and physical activity delivery network the opportunity to contribute and help direct us.

An **initial visioning workshop** was held with elected members, directors and key staff from the Council, the main outcome of which was the production of a shortlist of key themes that set the agenda for further consultation and ultimately the strategy content itself.

As well as setting the Council’s vision and ambition for sport and physical activity in the context of the Council Plan, the workshop confirmed the desire to illustrate the golden thread that links it to complementary Council services and key community partners. Also highlighted was the need to evidence and articulate the leading issues facing communities, describe the positive change that is needed and ensuring that resources are assigned efficiently and effectively, and that outputs and outcomes are measurable.

The following outcomes were also prioritised by the group:

- Investing in existing and new facilities and repurposing them where viable.
- Maximising funding and sponsorship opportunities from national, regional and county level sources.
- Supporting greater community use of facilities at education sites.
- Developing new and existing partnerships, particularly with the health sector, with a focus on Asset Based Community Development.
- Increase the profile of, and investment and participation in, sport and physical activity by attracting more elite-level events to the City.
- Highlight links to the City’s broader cultural offer.
- Help develop social enterprises around facility maintenance and service delivery.

In order to get a more detailed understanding of Gloucester’s needs and opportunities a number of **face to face interviews** with leading representatives of the healthcare, community development, leisure and disability sectors were carried out. These discussions were invaluable in placing emphasis

on many of the points raised during the visioning workshop, as well as highlighting further issues for consideration, including the following:

- Tackling inactive, sedentary lifestyles amongst residents is key, particularly where individuals are in poor health. Joining the dots between primary health care providers and community sport and physical activity organisations would make a significant impact.
- Linked to this, we need to build on the success of the ‘whole system approach’ to tackling inactivity through both closer working within Council departments and with external partners and stakeholders.
- Being active needs to resonate with people of all ages in the way that it affects their daily lives – how can they walk or cycle to school more safely, how can being active more easily become part of people’s social lives, and how can the maintain physical activity into older age, especially around core strength and balance?
- Recognise the importance and influence of behavioural science and look at activity-related issues such as walkability, navigability, self-confidence and social norms.
- Improve accessibility to city-centre leisure facilities, particularly car parking, cycle storage and enhanced walking routes.
- Diversify the range of activities available at venues, for example hosting cultural events and installations encourages new users.
- Highlight more effectively where and how people can be active, particularly where there is no cost involved. Some green and open spaces are hidden away – how can they be made more accessible (particularly for disabled people) and more well-known?
- Make the link between climate change and being more physically active clearer by using language and examples that people more easily understand. Active travel can play a key role here.
- Develop an asset improvement strategy to highlight where sport and physical activity facilities require upgrade, repurposing or replacement.
- Gloucester City Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy Working Group is a Sport England exemplar of good practice - could it be used to enhance participation further?
- A lot of facilities are in the centre of the City, with much less provision in smaller outlying neighbourhoods. How can it be made easier for people to access those spaces that are local to them?
- Barriers are harder to break down if we don’t involve people in facility and programme design and provision, so we require a ‘strength-based’ approach to understanding what is available and where and how well that is matched to what local people want.

Finally, an **online survey** was carried out to gauge the views and opinions of various community-based sport and physical activity providers delivering within the district. The survey was sent out to over 220 organisations whose details were held by Active Gloucestershire and included schools, clubs and community groups.

The survey’s main findings were as follows:

- 74% of responding organisations cater for people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, a good base from which to enhance the inclusivity of sport and physical activity organisations.
- While 55% of organisations reported that the Covid 19 pandemic had caused a decrease in their user numbers, 67% believed that there would be an increase in their user numbers over the next 5 years.

- Cost, time pressures and lack of motivation are seen as the main barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.
- 59% of organisations rated the quality of the City’s sports facilities as being either ‘good’ or ‘very good’, while 13% thought they were poor. Similar figures were reported for the affordability of the facilities, while 23% described their availability as being poor or very poor.
- The leading method of travel to facilities was by car (87%). Encouragingly, travelling actively to venues (i.e. walking, cycling, running) was recorded by 57% of organisations.
- When asked to consider ‘what, if anything, would encourage your users to switch to more active forms of travel to the chosen facility?’, 33% of respondents highlighted ‘a better connected and signposted walking and cycling network’.
- In the survey’s final ‘open’ question organisations highlighted the difficulty in hiring grass pitches, the need for clubs to become more ‘multi-sport’ in their focus, greater partnership working between venues to raise awareness of the City’s sport and physical activity offer and more and safer cycleways.

## **Vision**

Having considered the findings discussed above the Council and its partners have agreed a clear vision for sport and physical activity in Gloucester:

### ***‘Delivering a healthier, stronger, more active Gloucester’***

This vision complements key national and local strategic plan and encompasses all aspects of a systems-based physical activity including sport, health and wellbeing and active travel.

## **Gloucester’s current leisure provision**

Gloucester is well served across the district by both indoor and outdoor leisure facilities. In common with most local authority areas, Gloucester’s provision of sport and physical activity facilities is predominantly a combination of council-owned venues (some of which are operated by a third party) and spaces and places operated by sports clubs, education providers and voluntary/community sector organisations. Taken as a whole, these operators host a wide range of universal leisure facilities and activities available to everyone.

The Council owns two leisure centres, GL1 Leisure Centre and Oxstalls Sports Park that are managed by Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust, created in 2008 from the Council’s previous in-house team. The contract is primarily based on a lease with the Council holding landlord responsibilities which is scheduled to end in September 2024.

Aspire offers a range of services and interventions which are focused on providing social value to Gloucester residents including the City’s largest swimming and swimming lesson programme. In 2019, Aspire launched a Health and Wellbeing Hub in GL1 working with health partners including Gloucester Community Wellbeing Team, the 2gether Trust (physiotherapists specialising in mental health services), and Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust (Macmillan Cancer Rehabilitation Specialists). Many councils are aspiring to develop similar hubs, but few have actually achieved this.

In 2022 the Council commissioned a Leisure and Cultural Services Assessment and Management Options Appraisal to better understand the Council's options for future delivery of the services. The report concluded that while procurement of a multi-site trust operator is the most advantageous management option for the Council, there is work to be done to make the service *'procurement ready'*.

This included addressing some of the physical barriers to access (such as car parking at GL1), undertaking asset condition surveys to help understand the whole life costs of key venues, developing a strategic approach to leisure and a services specification focused on contributing towards narrowing health inequalities in the City.

A key purpose of this new Sport & Physical Activity Strategy is to address the relevant recommendations not only of the Management Options Appraisal but also the three Council strategies which underpin our understanding of facility provision within the district, namely our Playing Pitch, Open Space and Indoor & Built Facilities Strategies. Each has their own action plan, and we will continue to review and act upon the recommendations made in each.

The high-level findings and recommendations of these strategies indicates that Gloucester's sport and physical activity facilities largely (with the exception of a shortfall in 3G Artificial Turf Pitch and natural grass pitch provision) fulfil the suggested quota for the population and will meet the needs of future generations, providing these facilities are well maintained and remain fit for purpose.

Gloucester has a strong sporting heritage and as such there is an equally strong presence throughout the area of teams, clubs, leagues, associations and organisations offering a wide variety of sports and leisure activities. While Gloucester Rugby Football Club proudly brings elite level rugby to the City there are a significant range of amateur clubs offering participation and progression routes, with football and rugby clubs being the most prevalent closely followed by bowling, cricket, running and athletics.

Sport clubs/organisations and their members have a wealth of knowledge and experience about their particular sport and have an important part to play in promoting, developing and delivering activity in the future. We want to do more to encourage clubs to become accredited within their own sports discipline, e.g. Charter Standard Clubs. Accredited clubs tend to be run more ethically and have to provide welfare officers, qualified coaches and be proactive in tackling issues around equality and child protection.

### **The role of Gloucester City Council in providing sport and physical activity opportunities**

Our role in sport and physical activity goes beyond commissioning the management of our leisure centres.

The City Council also has an important leadership role in facilitating and enabling an infrastructure conducive to physical activity through our planning policies, and the Council can, for example, require developers to make contributions towards the provision and maintenance of community leisure facilities.

With the increasing profile of climate change and active travel there is strong evidence to support the introduction of cycle friendly facilities and routes around the City and for excellent pedestrian access to be maintained for all areas including workplaces and public amenities. We will continue to work with Gloucestershire County Council's Think Travel and highways teams to explore ways in

which we can invest in and improve our active travel infrastructure and encourage more people to walk or cycle to their destination.

Through our presence on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Partnership and Gloucestershire Health & Wellbeing Board, and our partnerships with strategic health bodies such as NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, Gloucester Integrated Locality Partnership and Gloucestershire County Council's Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities Team we are well placed to promote and share healthy lifestyle insight and messages, ensuring that people have access to information about healthy lifestyle choices and opportunities to be more active. This extends beyond the provision of sports and leisure facilities and parks to include access to informal places and opportunities for people to walk, cycle and enjoy the natural environment.

In the past, we have been able to more easily access funding to support the provision of leisure facilities and services. However, funding for leisure is now the lowest it has ever been and the City Council is under increasing pressure to deliver more with less, meaning we will need to target limited resources far more effectively. We will build on our recent success in securing 'levelling up' funding by seeking investment from a wide range of sources, while at the same time we will strive to build resilience into the community networks in Gloucester by supporting local clubs, groups and partner organisations to become more sustainable in the future.

We will continue to support initiatives that help open school facilities for wider community use. Many of Gloucester's schools have fantastic facilities located in the heart of their communities, and there are a range of benefits to opening them up for community use in the evenings and at weekends, such as increasing the activity levels of pupils and the local community, making connections with local and national organisations that are looking for safe spaces for young people to be active and providing a vital new income stream.

Lastly, we will continue to lead the sport and physical activity sector's recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the City's residents and its leisure facilities and sporting activities have been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the impact being felt hardest by people disadvantaged because of their health condition, social isolation, economic circumstances or their ethnicity. This has naturally made it more difficult for these groups to be active.

## **Our priorities for sport and physical activity**

### **Priority 1: Achieving health and wellbeing outcomes**

To ensure that Gloucester's residents can lead a healthy and active lifestyle we will concentrate our resources on areas that will increase the health and wellbeing of our residents, with a particular focus on narrowing the gaps in health and wellbeing outcomes for different communities and groups. Consequently, areas of activity that are most popular and have greatest impact on health will be prioritised. We will do this by:

- Ensuring everyone has access to high-quality leisure facilities and thriving green spaces by working closely with organisations within our communities, our leisure provider, and through our role on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Enabling and encouraging those who are currently inactive to participate in physical activity, building up their levels of participation.
- Ensuring sport and physical activity is embedded in the wider prevention agenda.

- Continuing to support 'We Can Move' and encourage a collaborative 'whole system' approach to service development and delivery across Gloucester's leading sport, physical activity and health providers.
- Shaping Gloucester's sport and physical activity offer to meet the needs of the current and future population. The criteria for decisions on future provision will be based on the impact these services have on physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Addressing barriers to participation and improving access to all facilities and services, advice and information.
- Ensuring facilities and services remain diverse and delivered by a range of providers across the public, private and voluntary sector.
- Promoting the diverse range of sport and physical activity opportunities across Gloucester.

### **Priority 2: Reducing inactivity, increasing participation**

We will ensure that the facilities and services delivered on our behalf and the City's wider sport, physical activity and wellbeing offer encourages people to participate, particularly those who are inactive. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that council-owned leisure facilities and other key venues deliver increased activity in key groups, such as adults and children who are inactive, overweight and those with poor mental health.
- Supporting physical activity initiatives as a pathway to employment and to improve mental health and resilience.
- Joining with strategic partners to work with schools to maximise their physical activity offer to children, young people and the wider community.
- Promoting sport and leisure as a diversionary activity for young people at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Promoting active travel choices that reduce carbon emissions and contribute to physical and mental wellbeing.
- Promoting active workplaces and addressing the often sedentary nature of working from home.
- Developing and promoting more family focussed opportunities for physical activity.
- Harnessing the growing 'active environments' agenda and our wealth of parks and green spaces to develop and deliver more sport and physical activity opportunities.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress by running an annual resident survey based on the relevant Key Performance Indicators included within this strategy.
- Working with partners to develop qualitative insight into the positive impact of sport, physical activity and wellbeing initiatives.

### **Priority 3: Delivering a positive customer experience at our facilities**

To secure the best health and physical activity outcomes from our facilities we recognise the need to strengthen existing and future leisure services contracts. We will do this by:

- Addressing the recommendations of the Leisure and Cultural Services Assessment and Management Options Appraisal.
- Implementing a Partnership Delivery Plan with regular monitoring and reporting.
- Reviewing the provision and impact of sport and leisure facilities and programmes currently delivered at GL1 and Oxstalls.

- Assessing property conditions to ensure the facilities remain fit for purpose now and into the future, with a particular focus on energy resilience and sustainability.
- Developing a range of Key Performance Indicators upon which to base future leisure services contracts.
- Looking for opportunities to further diversify services at our facilities (for example the co-location of health services) and encourage greater collaborative working with other sport and physical activity providers.

**Priority 4: Working with Local Clubs, Groups and the Third Sector**

We recognise the very significant contribution our local clubs and community groups make to Gloucester’s sport and physical activity offer. Local clubs and groups can often engage with our residents in ways that public services cannot. We will work with these organisations to help them develop traditional and non-traditional activities within a diverse range of settings, thereby giving residents the best chance of getting active on their own terms. We will do this by:

- Ensuring Gloucester’s network of high quality, sustainable and accessible sport clubs and community groups continues to grow and thrive.
- Working with local groups, clubs and volunteers to see if more facilities and services can be provided by the voluntary sector.
- Linking clubs and groups to opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of their users alongside their tradition programme/activity offer.
- Promoting sport clubs and groups through our leisure facilities and partner NHS Primary Care settings.
- Encouraging the uptake of accreditations amongst Gloucester’s sport clubs and groups and celebrating their achievements and those of their users and volunteers.

**Key Performance Indicators**

To ensure we can monitor progress against the four priorities identified above we have developed the following suite of 18 Key Performance Indicators.

Reporting against the KPIs will provide a baseline of data for sport and physical activity projects, programmes and interventions delivered in Gloucester and, where possible, they will be used to underpin the Council’s leisure contracts.

Those KPIs marked with an asterisk are drawn from insight collected as part of Sport England’s ‘Active Lives Survey’, which gives us the opportunity to compare progress with the regional and national picture.

Priority Outcome	Key Performance Indicator(s)
<p><b>Priority 1:</b>  <b>Achieving health and wellbeing outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>KPI 1*:</b>                      a. Percentage of adults in Gloucester taking part in sport for 30 minutes once per week                      b. Percentage of the population taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p>

Priority Outcome	Key Performance Indicator(s)
	<p>c. Percentage of people physically inactive</p> <p><b>KPI 2:</b> Number of Gloucester residents aged 16-64 participating in physical activity on average 30 minutes, 5 times per week (or 2.5 hours per week) in leisure centres and outreach programmes as a percentage of the total district population</p> <p><b>KPI 3:</b></p> <p>a. Number of residents participating in physical activity on average 30 minutes, twice per week in the council’s leisure centres as a percentage of the total district population.</p> <p>b. Number of residents participating in outreach programmes (led by the operator of the council’s leisure facilities) per week</p>
<p><b>Priority 2: Reducing inactivity, increasing participation</b></p>	<p><b>KPI 4*:</b> Residents in specified Indices of Multiple Deprivation area(s) participating at least once per week in physical activity as a percentage of the total in the area(s).</p> <p><b>KPI 5*:</b> Residents with disabilities taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p> <p><b>KPI 6*:</b> Residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days</p> <p><b>KPI 7*:</b> Residents aged 5-16 years active (for 60 minute or more each day), fairly active (30 to 59 minutes per day) and less active (under 30 minutes per day)</p> <p><b>KPI 8*:</b></p> <p>a. Percentage of children achieving physical literacy</p> <p>b. Percentage of young people (11-18) with a positive attitude towards sport and being active.</p> <p><b>KPI 9:</b> Residents taking out the concessionary pricing schemes as a percentage of those eligible in the district.</p> <p><b>KPI 10*:</b> Residents over 65 years of age who have taken part in an activity at least twice in the last 28 days in council owned facilities as a percentage of the total in the district.</p> <p><b>KPI 11*:</b> Percentage of adult residents participating in active travel at least twice in the past 28 days.</p>
<p><b>Priority 3: Delivering a positive customer experience at our facilities</b></p>	<p><b>KPI 12:</b> Customer and partner satisfaction indicators captured through an on-going monthly rolling programme covering amongst others the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the overall service</li> </ul>



Priority Outcome	Key Performance Indicator(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● staff/coaches</li> <li>● access and parking</li> <li>● facilities</li> <li>● catering</li> <li>● cleanliness</li> <li>● changing rooms</li> <li>● value for money</li> </ul> <p><b>KPI 13:</b> Satisfaction with the leisure operator/s as a partner.</p> <p><b>KPI 14:</b> Quest™ Plus scores for Leisure Facilities and Sports Development.</p> <p><b>KPI 15:</b> Customer retention; fitness, swimming, courses/activities.</p> <p><b>KPI 16:</b> Relative importance of Leisure Facilities as expressed by residents responding to the Gloucester City Council Annual Budget survey.</p>
<p><b>Priority 4:</b>  <b>Working with Local Clubs, Groups and the Third Sector</b></p>	<p><b>KPI 17*:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase in the number of people volunteering in sport in the last 12 months.</li> <li>b. Club membership in the last 12 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>KPI 18:</b> uptake of accreditations amongst Gloucester’s sport clubs and groups.</p>

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<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 May 2023</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Statement of Community Involvement</b>			
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</b>			
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>			
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Claire Haslam - Principal Planning Policy Officer</b>			
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>claire.haslam@gloucester.gov.uk</b>	<b>Tel:</b>	<b>39- 6825</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Draft Statement of Community Involvement</b>			

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet’s endorsement of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and approval to undertake a public consultation.
- 1.2 The SCI is a document required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It sets out the council’s principles and requirements for involving the community and stakeholders in both preparing and revising planning documents and in the consideration of planning applications.
- 1.3 The SCI also informs the community what the council’s roles and responsibilities are regarding neighbourhood plans, should a community wish to prepare one.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:
  - (1) the content of the draft Statement of Community Involvement be endorsed
  - (2) the draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation be approved
  - (3) authority be delegated for the correction of any errors such as spelling, grammar, referencing and formatting to the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing and Planning.

**3.0 Background and Key Issues**

- 3.1 The City Council’s last SCI was adopted in 2015 and requires updating to reflect current regulations and the changing ways in which we all communicate.

- 3.2 The SCI promotes early engagement in planning and ensures that the public will be well informed of planning matters. Early engagement can foster a sense of ownership, understanding and positively shape place making.
- 3.3 The SCI sets out for both plan making and decision taking who we will inform, when, by what method, and what will be done with any comments received.
- 3.4 For plan making (Planning Policy) it informs the community and key stakeholders of the formal consultation processes we will undertake in producing Development Plan Documents, such as the emerging Joint Strategic Plan, and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 3.5 The SCI explains what each stage of plan making involves, who the key consultees are, the consultation methods and tools we may use, how people may put forward their comments and ideas, and what we will do in response.
- 3.6 It sets out a number of potential consultation methods and when they might be used. It commits the council to involving a wide range of individuals and organisations, including the local community, stakeholders and 'harder to reach' groups. It is important that the needs of those groups of people who do not usually get involved in the process, and who may have specific needs to be met or addressed, are able to get involved if they wish.
- 3.7 The SCI sets the framework for consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders. In addition, consultations undertaken during the plan making process will be individually designed with the Community Wellbeing Team to ensure they are relevant, appropriate and responsive to their nature and scope.
- 3.8 For decision taking (planning applications – Development Management), the SCI sets out what consultation and notification will take place depending on the type and scale of application. In all cases the council will meet the minimum requirements and, in some cases, exceed them. For example, there are no requirements to notify the public of reserved matters applications. However, a reserved matters application could contain a lot of detail such as the layout and design of new development. The SCI therefore requires that a reserved matters application be treated like a full planning application with neighbours notified accordingly and invited to comment.
- 3.9 The SCI also sets out what role the council as Local Planning Authority will take in supporting neighbourhood planning matters.
- 3.11 Whilst it isn't a legal requirement for local authorities to consult on their SCI, the City Council is keen to ensure that the community and stakeholders are given the opportunity to comment on how they would like to be engaged in the preparation of planning documents and in major planning applications. The consultation will also provide an opportunity for people and organisations to come forward to be added to the planning policy consultation database.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no social value implications as a result of this report.

## **5.0 Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 The SCI is fairly neutral in terms of environmental implications. There is the potential to save some paper and printing with a reduced number of hard copy documents.
- 5.3 It is the content of the consultations themselves, not a matter for the SCI, that has the potential for wider impact in terms of producing better quality developments and policies to ensure planning contributes to the council's climate targets.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 6.1 No action could be taken which would result in a conflict with the regulatory requirements.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Council is required to have an adopted SCI by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 section 18. The last SCI was adopted in 2015 and therefore in need of updating.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 8.1 Following approval by Cabinet the SCI will undergo a 6-week public consultation. All responses will be considered and the SCI amended where appropriate.
- 8.2 The SCI will then progress onto Council where it will be considered for adoption later this year.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 Having an up-to-date SCI will facilitate a modest saving in terms of printing costs. The current 2015 SCI requires a paper copy of the plan and supporting information to be sent to every library across the city. For the last plan consultation (Gloucester City Plan Main Modifications) this cost was approximately £800. The GCP has been out on regulatory consultations six times.
- 9.2 All libraries across the city have computers, staff that can help people use the computer and print relevant information. A paper copy of consultation materials will always be available to view at the council's main reception as per the regulations.
- 9.3 As is currently the case, any financial requirements for consultation will be fed into the annual budget for Development Management, Planning Policy or the Joint Strategic Plan as appropriate.

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

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

- 10.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires all local planning authorities to adopt an SCI. This has to take into account the following requirements:

1. (a) Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which states that a “statement of community involvement must set out the local planning authority’s policies for giving advice and assistance” in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. This requirement came into force on 31 July 2018.
  2. (b) Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 came into force on 6th April 2018 and requires a local planning authority to review a SCI “every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the statement of community involvement.”
- 10.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) do not require a revised SCI to go through an examination process.
- 10.3 The revised SCI sets out how the Council will meet the statutory requirements for consulting on various types of planning documents and through the development management process.
- 10.4 When adopted, the SCI must be published on the Council’s website.

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

#### **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 11.1 As set out above, the Council is required an produce and review an SCI up to date SCI in accordance with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- 11.2 Risk assessments will be used as applicable at the time of planning any public consultation events.

#### **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

#### **13.0 Community Safety Implications**

- 13.1 No known community safety implications.

#### **14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

- 14.1 No known staffing or union implications.

**Background Documents:** None

# **Gloucester City Council**

## **Draft Statement of Community Involvement**

May 2023

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Gloucester City Council (GCC) will engage with local communities and key stakeholders in the development of planning policy documents and in the determination of planning applications within the city, as well as how the Council will support communities undertaking neighbourhood planning.
- 1.2 The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development, assisting economic, environmental and social progress for existing and future communities. Planning shapes the places where people live and work, so it is important that communities can take an active part in the process.
- 1.3 There is a legal requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)<sup>1</sup>, which sets out how the Council intends to achieve community involvement in the preparation of planning policy documents and in making decisions on planning applications.

## What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.4 The SCI is a document which sets out Gloucester's guiding principles and requirements for involving the community and stakeholders, both in preparing and revising planning policy documents and in the consideration of individual planning applications.
- 1.5 The SCI describes the consultation and engagement processes and methods that may be used; it explains the statutory requirements that the Council must meet at each stage and what other consultation or engagement processes may be undertaken in addition to these. This gives the public and stakeholders certainty over what sort of engagement they can expect within the planning process and the different ways they can get involved. Any public facing workshops and events undertaken during the plan making process will be designed in consultation with the Community Wellbeing Team.
- 1.6 The aim of the SCI is to ensure that relevant local communities and stakeholders in Gloucester:
  - Are informed about the local planning documents being prepared and planning applications being considered;
  - Are involved early in the decision-making process;
  - Understand how they can share their views;
  - Have ready access to information;
  - Can put forward their ideas about issues and feel confident that there is a formal process for considering these;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/18>

- Can take an active part in preparing proposals or options to manage land use and future development in their community;
- Can comment on planning applications; and;
- Can be informed about progress and outcomes.

1.7 This SCI covers three areas where the Council is involved in planning. These are:

- a) the preparation of **planning policy documents** – comprising the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs);
- b) how the Council will support communities preparing **Neighbourhood Plans**; and
- c) the determination of planning applications through **Development Management processes**.

1.8 In setting out the consultation methods and tools that are available to be used by the Council, the SCI retains a degree of flexibility so that consultation and engagement methods can be appropriately tailored to a specific planning document or circumstance. The intention is that this will allow for future changes that may be made to the regulations or best practice guidance, and to reflect any new methods of communication and engagement that may become available over the life of the document.

## Our Communities and Stakeholders

1.9 The ‘community’ includes individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate within Gloucester City. ‘Neighbours’ are those people that share a boundary with a site.

1.10 The SCI also refers to ‘stakeholders’, these are individuals or organisations with a direct influence on the matter under discussion, such as developers, landowners or other important bodies and agencies.

1.11 Some of our consultation with stakeholders is determined by legislation, such as the Duty to Cooperate. The SCI avoids repeating legislation or statutory requirements but focusses on what we are specifically doing in Gloucester City to meet and, where possible, exceed the requirements.

## Importance of engagement and consultation

1.12 Planning is fundamental to shaping the neighbourhoods and communities in which we all live and work. The Council considers it important that communities and stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved in the process.

1.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated July 2021, stresses the importance of community involvement in both plan-making and deciding planning applications.

Engagement should be proportionate and effective and the NPPF at paragraphs 16 and 39<sup>2</sup>, stresses the value in engaging at an early stage, in both plan making and when considering planning applications.

- 1.14 As illustrated in Figure 1, effective engagement involves a number of stages from awareness raising, providing information, through to consultation and communication, to discussion and debate. Good engagement can reduce conflict, result in better outcomes from development for all and allows communities to influence the future of the places where they live.

Figure 1: Types of Engagement



Source: Planning Aid: Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

## 2. Principles for Community Involvement in Planning Decisions

- 2.1 The Council will meet and, where practicably possible, exceed the minimum standards for community involvement set out in legislation.
- 2.2 Consultation materials will be clear and concise and avoid jargon wherever possible, making it easier for groups and individuals with little or no knowledge of the planning process to get involved.
- 2.3 The scope and timing of the consultation will be clear from the start, so respondents know what they can comment on, when they need to comment and how their comments will be taken into account.
- 2.4 Consultation methods will make use of electronic and modern media techniques wherever possible to make consultations easier, quicker and more cost-effective. They will be used alongside traditional methods to avoid disadvantaging those who are unable or prefer not to engage digitally.
- 2.5 Engagement in the planning process will be encouraged from the earliest stage possible (front-loaded) when there is the greatest opportunity for the views of interested and affected parties to be reflected in decisions made.
- 2.6 Whenever possible, feedback will be given to reflect how comments received have been taken on board and what changes have been made.

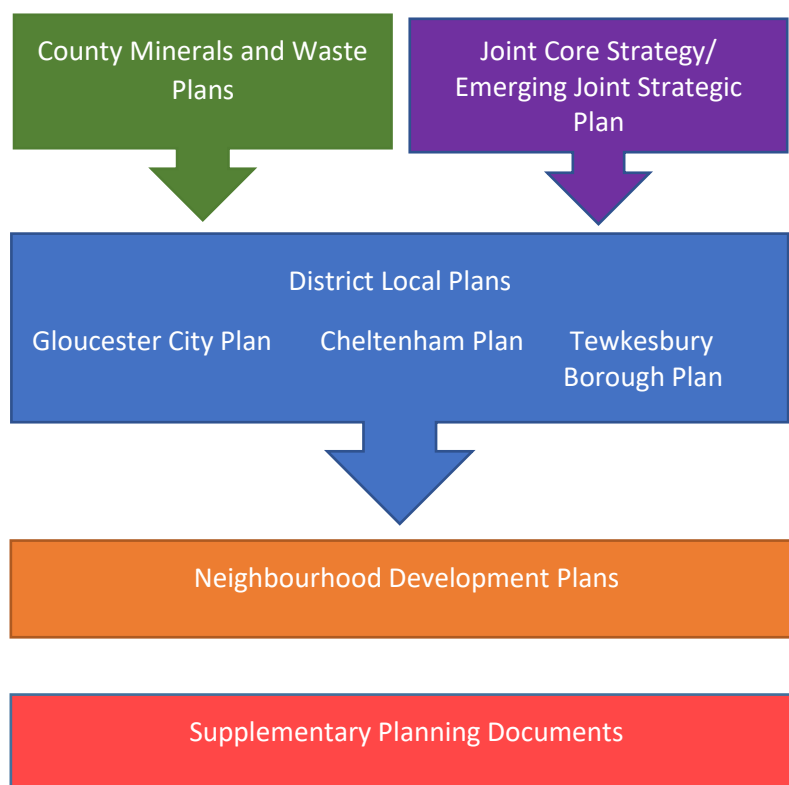
### 3. Community Involvement in Planning Policy

- 3.1 This section of the SCI explains how the Council will give those with an interest in the future development of the area the opportunity to have their say when new planning policies are being developed. The Council will take a flexible, proportionate, and effective approach to consultation that will be tailored to the nature of the document being prepared.
- 3.2 From time to time, the Council will publish other documents on its website which are related to the plan-making process but which are not normally subject to public consultation. These documents include a wide range of technical studies that provide background evidence for the preparation of policies and are described in more detail later in this section.

#### Which planning policy documents do we consult on?

- 3.3 The most common policy documents which involve public consultation are 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs). These are prepared by local planning authorities and outline the key development goals for the area. DPDs include Core Strategies, Local Plans and Area Action Plans which provide specific planning policy and/or guidance for a particular location or area of significant change.
- 3.4 In Gloucester, as set out in Figure 2, the Development Plan consists of the Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031 (the JCS), the Gloucester City Plan 2011 – 2031 and Neighbourhood Development Plans (none at present).
- 3.5 In addition, the Council may prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which provide detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in DPDs should be implemented.
- 3.6 The processes for producing these documents vary, and consequently, so do consultation arrangements and procedures. Further details on these documents and their consultation procedures are set out below.

Figure 2: The Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents



## Development Plan Documents

- 3.7 The JCS provides the strategic policies and requirements for housing, employment and associated infrastructure across the JCS area of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. It also provides larger scale strategic sites for the delivery of that development. The JCS is currently under review and will be replaced by the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).
- 3.8 Gloucester City Plan provides for smaller scale sites to meet the development requirements set out in the JCS. It also provides the development management policies for Gloucester City and addresses local issues and opportunities.
- 3.9 A timetable for plan making can be found in the Council's Local Development Scheme.
- 3.10 The legal requirements for consultation and public participation for plan making, is currently set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the 2012 Regulations), including consultation on the key stages of preparing a plan, the gathering of evidence, identifying issues, and developing options and public participation on a final version of the plan prior to it being submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- 3.11 The preparation of Development Plan Documents follows a number of distinct stages, which are summarised in Table 1 below alongside the key consultees and consultation methods that may be used. Prior to the start of any consultation stage a Consultation Plan will be prepared to ensure the right level of consultation using the most appropriate methods is undertaken.

Table 1: Stages in Development Plan Document Preparation

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
<p>Preparation: Issues and Options / Preferred Options (Regulation 18)</p>	<p>This stage can be repeated as necessary and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey and evidence gathering</li> <li>• Consultation on issues and options</li> <li>• Consultation on preferred options</li> <li>• Consider consultation responses</li> <li>• Policy formulation</li> </ul>	<p>At the survey and evidence gathering stage, the Council will contact key consultees particularly those with technical knowledge to assist in the identification of issues and options.</p> <p>Formal public consultation is for a minimum of 6 weeks and will involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations and set out in Appendix A</li> <li>• Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B</li> <li>• Parish and town councils adjoining or within the city.</li> <li>• Residents or other persons carrying on business in the area who are on the council's database</li> </ul>	<p>See Table 3 for more detail on potential consultation methods.</p> <p>During the survey and evidence gathering stage consultation methods will focus on targeted meetings and workshops with technical stakeholders in particular.</p> <p>The Council will publicise any consultation documents by notifying all stakeholders using the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Social media and other forms of on-line engagement</li> <li>• Public exhibitions (physical and on-line) as and if appropriate</li> <li>• Public meetings, as and if appropriate</li> <li>• Site notices when development allocations are proposed</li> </ul> <p>The consultation documents will be made available for public inspection at the Council offices.</p>
<p>Publication and Submission (Regulation 19)</p>	<p>Publication of the plan for consultation.</p> <p>Submission of the plan to Secretary of State including all associated documents.</p>	<p>The formal period of public participation into the 'soundness' and legal compliance of a plan is for a minimum of 6 weeks and will involve the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations</li> </ul>	<p>The Council will publicise the draft Plan to notify all stakeholders using the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Social media and other forms of on-line engagement</li> <li>• Public exhibitions (physical and on-line), as and if appropriate</li> </ul>

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B</li> <li>• Parish and town councils adjoining or within city.</li> <li>• Residents or other persons carrying on business in the area who are on the Council's database</li> </ul>	The Plan, proposed documents, and supporting documents <sup>3</sup> will be made available online and for public inspection at the Council offices.
		<p>Following the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State, the Council will make a copy of the Plan and its supporting documents available at the Council offices.</p> <p>The Council will also notify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the general, specific and other consultation bodies who were consulted at previous stages, and</li> <li>• anyone who asked to be notified of the submission of the Plan as to where and when the Plan, proposed documents, and supporting documents<sup>4</sup> can be inspected.</li> </ul>	
Examination (Regulation 23, 24 & 25)	<p>The Planning Inspector holds an examination into the Plan usually including public hearings as well as consideration of written representations.</p> <p>Changes (modifications) to the submitted Plan are proposed by the Inspector and then consulted on.</p> <p>An Inspector's report is published – determining if the plan is 'sound' and whether it can be put forward for adoption.</p>	<p>The Inspector will consider which individuals or organisations ought to be involved at the Examination in Public.</p> <p>If the Inspector suggests modifications are needed to make the plan 'sound', a consultation on proposed Main Modifications will be held.</p>	<p>Consultation on Main Modifications will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Social media and other forms of on-line engagement</li> </ul> <p>The Main Modifications and supporting documents will be made available for public inspection at the Council offices.</p>
Adoption (Regulation 26)	Council adopts the plan	<p>The Council will make a copy of the plan, the adoption statement, and the sustainability appraisal available for inspection at the Council offices.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>The Council will send a copy of the adoption statement to any</p>	

<sup>3</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Schedule 2 para 10

<sup>4</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Schedule 2 para 10

<sup>5</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) para 26 (a)(i-iv)



Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
		person who has asked to be notified and the Secretary of State. <sup>6</sup>	

## Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.12 The statutory requirements for preparing SPDs are laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). SPDs provide detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in DPDs should be implemented. Although they are not subject to independent examination, SPDs undergo public consultation, and must be consistent with national and local planning policies. The regulations set a minimum of 4 weeks for consultation on a draft SPD, although best practice is to consult for longer.
- 3.13 The process for preparing an SPD is simpler than that for preparing a DPD and it does not require an examination. In some cases, it is helpful and informative to the preparation of an SPD, for the Council to undertake some informal engagement and consultation at an early stage. Such informal engagement can identify key issues and challenges for the SPD to consider and can also be used to test evolving ideas and move towards consensus, especially where a masterplan or site-specific framework is being produced.
- 3.14 Prior to the start of any consultation stage a Consultation Plan will be prepared to ensure the right level of consultation using the most appropriate methods is undertaken.
- 3.15 Following consultation, a Response Report will be prepared that summarises who was consulted, the main issues raised, and how they have been addressed.
- 3.16 The key stages in the preparation of an SPD, together with the key consultees and consultation methods likely to be used are summarised in Table 2 below:

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<sup>6</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) para 26 (b)

Table 2: Stages in Supplementary Planning Document preparation

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
Gathering the evidence base and preparing the SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence gathering.</li> <li>Opportunity for informal (non-statutory) consultation and engagement and/or discussion of issues with relevant partners and groups. Formulation of options.</li> <li>Prepare draft SPD for consultation.</li> </ul>	<p>At the evidence gathering stage, informal engagement may be undertaken; at the very least, this should include key stakeholders, particularly those with local and/or technical knowledge.</p> <p>The consultees at this stage are likely to be determined in part by the nature of the SPD (whether site/ area based or topic based).</p>	<p>During the evidence gathering stage consultation methods will focus on targeted meetings and workshops with local and technical stakeholders in particular.</p> <p>The Council may also make use of a range of other methods to raise awareness and seek input from local residents and businesses.</p>
Consultation on draft SPD  (Regulations 12 & 13)	<p>Legal requirement for the consultation is a minimum of 4 weeks. The Council will consult for 6 weeks.</p> <p>Consider comments and representations received during the consultation period.</p>	<p>The formal public consultation stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations and set out in Appendix A</li> <li>Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B</li> <li>Parish and town councils within the city or area covered by the SPD</li> <li>Residents or other persons or groups carrying on business in the area covered by the SPD who are on the council's database</li> </ul>	<p>At the formal consultation stage, the Council will consult using methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press release</li> <li>Information on the Council website</li> <li>Social media and other forms of on-line engagement</li> <li>Public exhibitions as and if appropriate (physical and on-line)</li> <li>Public meetings as and if appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Copies of the consultation draft SPD, together with any other supporting documents will be made available for public inspection at Council offices.</p> <p>If the SPD is area based the information will also be put on display in the area concerned if a suitable publicly accessible venue can be found.</p>
Adoption of the SPD  (Regulation 14)	<p>Amend the draft SPD where necessary based on the comments received. Council adopts the SPD.</p>	<p>Following the adoption of an SPD, the Council will make a copy of the SPD, the Adoption Statement and the Response Report available at the Council offices.</p> <p>The Council will also send a copy of the adoption statement to anyone who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD.</p>	

## Other planning documents

- 3.17 The Council produces a number of other documents. Those which would usually be subject to consultation include:

**Masterplans and Development Briefs:** these documents may be prepared to provide additional site-specific guidance for new development or the redevelopment of an area. They are often brought forward as SPDs, and, in that case, will be subject to the SPD consultation requirements. In other cases, they may be produced as non-statutory planning guidance. Consultation on Masterplans and Development Briefs will usually be similar to that for SPDs in that the Council will publish a draft for consultation and the comments received will inform the final document.

**Local Development Orders (LDOs):** LDOs provide permitted development rights for specified types of development in defined locations. LDOs are promoted by national planning guidance as a flexible tool to simplify and streamline the planning process, creating certainty for new development and saving time and money for those involved. The process for preparing an LDO includes a formal consultation stage which must include consultation with statutory consultees and any person who would have been consulted on a planning application; publishing the documents on the LPA's website with paper copies available at the LPA's principal offices; advertising the LDO consultation in a local newspaper and displaying site notices. Other consultation methods set out in Table 3 below may also be used to ensure that residents and stakeholders have the opportunity to be informed and have their say

**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SA and SEA):** the purpose of the sustainability appraisal process is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset. In doing so it will help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development. The sustainability appraisal is not a one-off exercise; it needs to be integrated into each stage of plan making and tests the policies and proposals against sustainability objectives enabling them to be modified where appropriate to mitigate potential adverse effects. The Sustainability Appraisal will be published for public consultation alongside DPDs where appropriate.

**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):** this is an assessment of a plan's impact on European protected species, the process for which is laid out in Government guidance<sup>7</sup>. The HRA is subject to consultation with Natural England and it carried out in conjunction with the Sustainability Appraisal as set out above.

**Community infrastructure Levy (CIL):** the CIL allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects in their area. The money raised is used to pay for infrastructure required to support the new development. CIL must be administered in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended); the Regulations set out when and how the Council must consult at specific stages of the CIL preparation process. The Council started charging the CIL on planning permissions granted from 1 January 2019. For more information about the CIL and how it applies in Gloucester, please see the Council's CIL webpage<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> HRA GUIDANCE LINK

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

- 3.18 Other planning documents which the Council produces and are not normally subject to consultation include:

**Local Development Scheme:** this sets out the Council's work programme for the preparation of new Development Plan Documents, including a description and timetable for each document. The Local Development Scheme is published on the Council's website: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/> This is not subject to public consultation.

**Monitoring Reports:** the Council produces housing and employment monitoring reports which provide details on the progress of planned development and how the Council is meeting the development requirements as set out in the Plan. There will not be consultation on these reports as they are factual documents, but the Council may contact specific groups to obtain some of the data required.

**Evidence Base:** this includes a range of background studies on specific issues that help to support the preparation of local plan policies. These are technical studies and are not normally subject to consultation although we may contact specific groups to obtain information or data.

### Who will we consult?

- 3.19 The Council wants to give the community and stakeholders the chance to have their say on Local Development Documents. The Council will seek to involve and consult a wide range of other interest groups and organisations, developers, and consultants, as well as local residents and businesses.
- 3.20 The Council is required to consult certain organisations and bodies, and is advised to consult others, depending on the type of policy document. This is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.21 The 2012 Regulations set out who must be consulted at the defined stages of plan production by identifying the Specific Consultation Bodies (also known as statutory consultees) and a number of General Consultation Bodies, who are groups or organisations representing the interests of certain parts of the local community. Appendix A to the SCI sets lists the Specific and General Consultation Bodies for the city.
- 3.22 The Council is also committed to involving a wide range of other individuals and organisations, including the local community, 'harder to reach' groups and young people. It is important that the needs of those groups of people who do not usually get involved in the process, and who may have specific needs to be met or addressed, are able to get involved if they wish. The methods used for involving the community in planning policy matters need to be varied and responsive to different needs. The Planning Policy Team will work with the Community Wellbeing Team to design a consultation that is relevant, appropriate, and as accessible as possible. Young people are especially important to reach as they will inhabit the places we plan for.
- 3.23 The Council will maintain a database containing the contact details of individuals, groups and other bodies that wish to be kept informed of consultations relating to planning policy

documents. Individuals and organisations on this database will primarily be contacted when the Council consults on relevant planning policy documents and subjects. This will primarily be through the use of email, with paper and post only being used if there is a specific accessibility need or no email address available. The database will be administered strictly in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and will be regularly updated.

## The Duty to Co-operate and Statements of Common Ground

- 3.24 The Localism Act, 2011, introduced the ‘duty to cooperate’. Neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations are required to work together on strategic planning issues that cross local authority boundaries and affect their areas.
- 3.25 The Council will make sure that it fulfils its legal requirements and will prepare ‘statements of common ground’ with relevant neighbouring local authorities and other strategic organisations and stakeholders where appropriate. The progress made to address strategic cross-boundary matters will be included in the statements of common ground and those statements that are prepared by Gloucester City Council will be made available on the Council’s website.

## How will we consult on planning policy matters?

- 3.26 Table 3 sets out a range of different consultation methods which may be used for consultations, depending on the subject matter, scope and stage in the plan-making process. The table suggests when certain methods might be used:

Table 3: Potential consultation methods and where they might be used

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
Website	The Council’s Planning Policy web pages will provide information on the preparation of policy documents and current consultations. For current consultations, the website will show the relevant documents, guidance on how to comment and comments forms, where relevant.	Suitable for all consultations
Digital Engagement methods	There is an evolving range of digital tools and approaches which can be used for consultations, especially at the early stages of plan preparation. Digital methods need to be cost effective and relevant to the type of consultation and the needs/ nature of the community to be involved. Tools include:	Early stages of preparing a plan or other document  Webinars/ online events appropriate for all consultations.

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	<p><b>Digital Engagement Platforms</b> that enable a range of different digital engagement activities specific to a project or series of projects</p> <p><b>Online polling/surveying</b> enabling responses to questions or themes which can stand alone from other software/approaches</p> <p><b>Webinars/online events</b> enable meetings &amp; workshops to occur in a digital setting as opposed to physical locations;</p> <p><b>Digital collaboration tools</b> including software and tools that can be used to support consultation and engagement, such as interactive whiteboards</p> <p><b>Map based &amp; spatial tools</b> that can present spatial information in a more engaging way than traditional print documents</p>	
Email and letters	<p>The Council maintains a database of people and organisations who wish to be kept up to date on planning policy document preparation. To help minimise costs, the Council will encourage people to register using their email address. This method will be used as a default unless consultees indicate they require communication by letter. The database will be administered in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p>	Suitable for all consultations
Local Media, Social Media and general communications	<p>Effective use of local printed and broadcast media can reach a lot of people and help to stimulate conversations and give the project an air of 'legitimacy'</p> <p>The use of social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, are useful for announcing consultation events and directing readers to web resources.</p> <p>The use of leaflets and posters as part of a communication strategy helps to publicise and convey simple messages,</p>	Suitable for all consultations

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	disseminating information to support more in-depth forms of engagement	
Meetings; workshops and design events including Planning for Real	<p>Meetings allow people to raise issues, ask questions, and be given answers that can be heard by others in the room. However, they can be dominated by outspoken individuals and not everyone is comfortable speaking in public. An independent facilitator can help to ensure the smooth running of the event and equal participation.</p> <p>One to one meetings with key people can help to achieve alignment with other strategies and initiatives. However, they can be resource intensive and requires senior level officer involvement.</p> <p>Workshops encourage active collaboration and joint working to solve problems. The process can help to build a sense of ownership of the results.</p>	<p>Meetings can be used for all consultations.</p> <p>Workshops are useful at early stages of policy formulation and preparation of area-based plans and documents.</p>
Roadshows/ pop-up stalls/ public exhibitions	These provide an opportunity to disseminate information and have in-person conversations using printed material such as maps and plans. They can be combined with other events such as school events or summer fayres and are an effective way to reach a large number of people in a short space of time.	Suitable for all consultations
Surveys and questionnaires	These can be useful for gauging public reactions to ideas and proposals. They are especially useful at the early stages of policy development, to understand the issues and opportunities and the community's aspirations for an area.	Early stages of plan preparation.
Stakeholder Groups/ Community Reference/Liaison Groups/ Focus Groups	When planning for large scale new development, it can be helpful to establish a stakeholder group bringing together representatives of the local community. In the early days, the Group can provide the opportunity to discuss the vision and objectives of the new development and help to inform the preparation of planning policy, enabling the developer and the local	Focus Groups useful for policy testing.

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	<p>authority to hear the community's views and take them on board.</p> <p>Focus Groups of around 6-12 people selected to be representative of a designated part of the population can improve understanding of how people think and feel about issues. The approach is not, however, an effective way of reaching large numbers of people and, as such, is not a replacement for wider engagement tools.</p>	
Documents available for inspection	<p>The Council will make it clear how and when people should respond.</p> <p>Council offices and documents should be accessible to those with disabilities.</p> <p>Documents will also be available on the Council's website</p>	Suitable for all consultations

### When will we consult on planning policy documents?

- 3.27 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) will give an indication of the timescales for the preparation of DPDs in the Council's area, including the Joint Strategic Plan. This should enable people to broadly know when to expect consultation. Each formal consultation stage will be publicised by the Council.
- 3.28 The regulations relating to each type of planning document set out the requirements for consultation at each stage of the preparation process. The Council will always meet these requirements, but in addition we may undertake additional engagement at appropriate points through the process. In particular, there should be significant effort made at the early stages of preparing our local plan documents, at the point in the process when there is the greatest opportunity to influence the shape of our strategies and policies.
- 3.29 The Council will endeavour to give advance warning to stakeholders of upcoming consultations so that they can arrange to respond within the consultation period. The regulations that most planning documents must follow generally require a minimum of six weeks for consultation. Consultations that take place over a holiday period (e.g. school summer holidays, Christmas and New Year) will normally be no less than eight weeks in duration for the convenience of those who may need more time to respond.

### What happens after a consultation has closed?



- 3.30 After a consultation period ends, comments will be reviewed and considered by officers. A Response Report will usually be produced which sets out the comments received (either individually or in summarised format, dependent on the volume and complexity), the Council's response to those comments and details of how the outcome of the consultation has been reflected in the next stage of the document preparation process. In some cases, it may be appropriate to identify the specific amendments that have been made to a document in response to comments received, however, this will not always be possible, particularly on complex documents or where a large volume of comments have been received.
- 3.31 The Council will notify anyone who has responded to a consultation upon the adoption of the document and when the Response Report is made available, so individuals can see how their comments have informed the process.

## 4. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans and Development Orders are community-led planning documents, led by a parish council or a designated Neighbourhood Forum. Gloucester only has one parish – Quedgeley Town Council (QTC). The City Council is committed to supporting the formation of Neighbourhood Forums and the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans as they are an important way in which local communities can be engaged in the planning system. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)<sup>9</sup> set out the legal requirements for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders. Consultation as part of the preparation process is undertaken by the town council or designated neighbourhood forum, and whilst they do not need to meet the requirements of the SCI, the information in this document may provide useful guidance.
- 4.2 The City Council has a duty to support local communities wishing to undertake Neighbourhood Planning. The SCI is required by legislation<sup>10</sup> to set out the council’s policies for giving advice or assistance to organisations preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Development Order. The table below sets out the support that Gloucester City Council will provide in terms of neighbourhood planning. The Council cannot write a neighbourhood plan for a community but it will provide guidance and support throughout the process.
- 4.3 Further advice, guidance and support can also be found on the council’s webpage: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

Table 4: Support for Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning Stage	Responsibility	Gloucester City Council Support
Deciding to prepare a neighbourhood plan or development order	Quedgeley Town Council (QTC) or Designated Neighbourhood Forum in non-parished areas.	We will discuss your ideas for doing a neighbourhood plan to establish if a plan is suitable for your community. We will outline some initial aspects to help you consider whether to proceed. If you are in a non-parished area we will tell you how to apply to be a Designated Neighbourhood Forum.
Designating the Neighbourhood Area	QTC or Designated Neighbourhood Forum.	We will review the application and make the necessary arrangements to designate the neighbourhood area. Where necessary, the Council will undertake a consultation on the proposed area.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/section/6/enacted>

<b>Neighbourhood Planning Stage</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Gloucester City Council Support</b>
Preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum prepares the plan.	
Public consultation on a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (Regulation 14)	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum Responsible for the consultation arrangements on the draft plan and for bringing it to the attention of people who live, work or run a business in the designated neighbourhood area.	We will review the plan for environmental assessment requirements and other legislation including general conformity with the adopted Development Plan and national policy, as well as a more general review of the plan, to help ensure the plan is on track to meet the basic conditions.
Submission of the draft neighbourhood plan to the local authority (Regulation 16)	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum submits the plan.  Gloucester City Council responsible for next steps	We will make the arrangements to publicise (consult on) the plan for 6 weeks and will appoint the examiner.
Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan	Gloucester City Council	We will make any necessary arrangements for the holding of the examination. On receipt of the examiner's report, we will work with the Parish or Designated Neighbourhood Forum to incorporate any recommended changes to the plan.
Referendum	Gloucester City Council	The City Council is responsible for arranging and holding the referendum.

## 5. Planning Applications

- 5.1 Every year the Council processes a large number of planning applications. The nature and scale of these applications vary from householder and minor applications to large scale major applications for residential, employment, retail developments. The nature, scale and type of application will determine the level of consultation and community engagement undertaken.
- 5.2 Gloucester City Council places great importance on public involvement in the planning application process. This section explains how the Council will encourage the community to become involved in this process and also explains the Council's expectations of applicants. Finding out what local residents and businesses think about new development is a fundamental part of the Council's Development Management Service and Gloucester City Council undertakes its legal obligations in a proactive manner. It understands that local people have local knowledge and can provide a useful insight into local matters.
- 5.3 In terms of carrying out consultation, the Council is chiefly guided by the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Procedures for planning applications that are related to Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas are covered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.4 Gloucester City Council ensures that every planning application is given a level of publicity that is commensurate with the size and nature of the proposal. In many instances, however, Gloucester City Council goes beyond what is legally required. For example, the Council undertakes neighbour notification in relation to Reserved Matters applications (i.e. approval of details following the granting of outline permission) despite the fact that this is not a statutory requirement. Similarly, when amended plans are submitted with significant changes, the Council may re-consult with neighbours and relevant consultees. Change of use applications are also given site notices, which few authorities do.
- 5.5 Gloucester City Council will also seek to consult an appropriate range of statutory and non-statutory consultees. These could include organisations such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and Severn Trent Water. Officers will also use their judgment and consult an appropriate range of non-statutory consultees.
- 5.6 Neighbour notification letters are sent to residents that adjoin the application site and those the Council determines to be most likely affected by a proposed development. As part of this process, a list of material considerations is enclosed to ensure that any representations that the neighbour wishes to submit are kept solely to planning issues and not with regard to any personal matters.
- 5.7 Other measures adopted by Gloucester City Council include the application of a 40m neighbour notification radius in respect of applications that involve a change of use to hot food takeaway. In addition, where objections are received to such proposals and the Council is recommending that permission be granted the application will be taken to planning committee for determination.

- 5.8 The City Council keeps a register of all current planning applications which can be viewed on the public access system. In addition, a 'weekly list' of planning applications and can be viewed on the Council's website via public access. <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-applications/view-planning-applications-online/>
- 5.9 The Council operates a system of public speaking at Planning Committee allowing individuals the opportunity to make their views about specific proposals known. This is supplemented by high-quality PowerPoint presentations on all Planning Committee items including plans and colour photographs. Officers will use plain English in their presentations and avoid acronyms.
- 5.10 In its drive towards a more transparent and accountable planning system and in the spirit of localism, the Government is encouraging local authorities when considering significant development proposals, to build on minimum consultation requirements and in particular to encourage more pre-application discussions and early community consultation.
- 5.11 For the purposes of this SCI, Gloucester City Council considers development to be significant if it meets any of the following criteria:
- Applications which constitute a significant departure from the most up to date Local Plan.
  - Applications for 50 or more homes.
  - Proposals which entail more than 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross floorspace .
  - Applications which are accompanied by an Environmental Statement.
- 5.12 This schedule is based on the Council's Delegation Scheme under which certain applications go to the Planning Committee for determination.<sup>11</sup>.
- 5.13 There may also be occasions when applications are submitted that do not necessarily fall into any of the above categories but for various reasons may be considered to fall into the significant category. Officers will use their discretion in such instances.
- 5.14 In dealing with applications that meet any of the above criteria, officers will normally:
- Publish a newspaper advertisement, put up a site notice and notify an appropriate number of neighbouring properties.
  - Publish details of the application on the Council's website.
  - Report to the Planning Committee any additional representations that may have been received following the publication of the report.
- 5.15 For major developments, Gloucester City Council strongly encourages applicants before the application is submitted to arrange a public meeting or exhibition at a suitable location such as a local hall in close proximity to the application site, in order to allow the proposal to be more fully understood by the local community prior to submission.
- 5.16 When they submit their application, Gloucester City Council also encourages applicants to:

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<sup>11</sup> Gloucester City Council's constitution can be viewed online at <http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/council/more/Pages/council-constitution.aspx>

- Submit a brief statement as part of the application submission outlining how the results of the Pre-application Consultation Exercise have been taken into account in the final application documentation.
- Attend meetings with local groups that are likely to have an interest in the application proposal.

5.17 Although there is no legal obligation for applicants to undertake the above steps, failure to consult properly may lead to objections being made by interested parties such as neighbouring residents, which could be material to the determination of the application.

5.18 Gloucester City Council aims to encourage discussions to take place before any major application is submitted in order to try and achieve a degree of consensus and/or at least a clearer understanding of what the proposal is trying to achieve. The City Council has a pre-application service to provide applicants with guidance prior to the submission of an application. There is a reasonable charge for this service and full details can be found on the Council's website <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-applications/pre-application-advice/>

Type of	Statutory Publicity Requirements	GCC Publicity
EIA Screening	None	None
Application accompanied by environmental statement	Press and Site (as EIA Dev)	Press and Site
Departure from Development Plan	Press and Site	Press and Site
Affecting public right of way	Press and Site	Press and Site
Major Development	Site or neighbour And Press	50 + dwellings or 1000+ square metres floorspace Site notice
Minor Development 1-9 dwellings, less than 1,000 sqm non- residential, change of use	Site or Neighbour	Neighbour Letter for all dwellings that adjoin the site and neighbours directly opposite  Site notice in exceptional circumstances, e.g. no neighbours nearby to notify,
Householder	Site or Neighbour	Neighbour letter for all dwellings that adjoin the site. if the extension is visible from the street, notify neighbours directly opposite .
Affecting setting of a Listed Building	Press and Site	Press and Site

<b>Type of</b>	<b>Statutory Publicity Requirements</b>	<b>GCC Publicity</b>
Affecting character or appearance of a Conservation Area	Press and Site (for physical works) judgement on whether change of use requires publicity	Press and Site
Change of Use	Site or neighbour	Site notice all and neighbour
Change of use to a hot food take away	Site or neighbour	Site notice for all & 40m consultation radius
Adverts (listed building consent for advert will have LBC publicity)	None	Site notice in C/A Judgement elsewhere Significant amenity
Permitted development requiring prior notification to Local Planning Authority	Only by applicant	Site Notice
Householder Development	Neighbour or site	Neighbour letter
Telecommunication Masts more than 20m		Site and neighbour 15-20m
Tree matters	None	Tree Officer to consider site notice or letters to notify residents
Variation or Discharge of Conditions	None	None
Variation or Discharge of Conditions on Listed Building Consents S.73	Site and Press Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings	Site and Press Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings
Listed Building Consent	Press and Site Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings	Press and Site Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings
Demolition in a Conservation Area	Press and Site	Press and Site
Reserved matters	None	Same as full application
Amended plans	None	For significant changes, i.e. there would be a material change in the impact on neighbouring properties, re-notify neighbours and/or site notice & relevant consultees

## Contact Details

Website: [www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning)

Email: [cityplan@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:cityplan@gloucester.gov.uk)

Phone: 01452 396396

Write to: Gloucester City Council

PO Box 3252

Gloucester

GL1 9FW



## Appendix A - Relevant specific and general consultation bodies

Indicative consultee list. Others may be included or excluded to reflect the latest regulations.

### Specific consultation bodies:

- (a) Coal Authority,
- (b) Environment Agency,
- (c) Historic England,
- (d) Marine Management Organisation,
- (e) Natural England,
- (f) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited,
- (g) Highways Agency,
- (h) a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area (a local planning authority, a county council, a parish council, a local policing body)
- (i) any person—
  - i. to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
  - ii. who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the local planning authority's area,
- (j) if it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area—
  - i. a Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006 or continued in existence by virtue of that section;
  - ii. a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
  - iii. a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
  - iv. a sewerage undertaker; and
  - v. a water undertaker;
- (k) Homes England

### General consultation bodies:

- a) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area,

- b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area,
- c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area,
- d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area,
- e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area.

## Appendix B - Other groups and organisations

The following list will be updated in response to requests for changes or additions once they arise.  
The full list will be monitored and updated as necessary:

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# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 May 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Financial Monitoring Report – February 2023</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Hadrian Walters, Accountancy Manager</b>		
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>hadrian.walters@gloucester.gov.uk</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>396231</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Capital Outturn</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to members the Council's forecast General Fund Revenue, and Capital outturn positions against agreed budgets for the 2022-23 financial year, and report on the performance of the Council against certain key financial performance indicators.
- 1.2 For Cabinet to note the year-end forecasts, and the financial pressures on the Council during the 11 months ended 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that it be noted that the:
  - (1) forecast year-end position for the financial year is currently a decrease to the General Fund balance of £287k against a budgeted net zero position;
  - (2) details of specific budgetary issues identified by officers and the actions being taken to address those issues;
  - (3) current level of Capital expenditure as shown in Appendix 1;
  - (4) work to reconstitute the large volume of data from the manual transactions processed following the cyber incident in December 2021 into the system is in progress. The volume of manual data being analysed and reconciled means that there will be movements between the outturns forecast for the detailed categories, and that the figures provided are the best estimates based on current analyses.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council approved the 2022-23 Budget in February 2022. This report sets out the forecast financial position at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. It is based on an analysis of the manual payment and income records that have been maintained whilst the finance systems were being recovered, along with the items processed through the new cloud-based systems.
- 3.2 The financial year 2022-23 was dominated by higher than budgeted cost inflation resulting from the impact of the war in Ukraine on energy costs, and its wider economic impacts. This has seen further financial challenges for the Council with higher than expected increases to costs, leading to further budgetary pressures on the Council that are being managed to ensure that the Council has sufficient financial resources to achieve its ongoing service delivery obligations and continue its wider regeneration activities.

### 4.0 Whole Council Summary

- 4.1 The summary table below shows the forecast outturn position for the Council by Cabinet portfolio.

<b>Council Summary</b>	<b>22/23 Budget</b>	<b>Year End Forecast</b>	<b>Grant or Reserve Funded</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>Final Variance</b>
Communities & Neighbourhoods	995	991	-	991	(5)
Performance & Resources	196	1,754	(152)	1,602	1,406
Culture & Leisure	1,361	1,874	(65)	1,809	448
Planning & Housing Strategy	1,226	1,388	(64)	1,324	98
Environment & Leader	6,578	6,634	(45)	6,589	11
Corporate & Funding	(10,356)	(11,299)	(728)	(12,027)	(1,671)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>(1,053)</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>287</b>

- 4.2 The General Fund and Earmarked Reserves balances continue to place the Council in a stable financial position in the current uncertain climate of Local Authority funding and inflationary cost pressures. However, robust budgetary management and control will be necessary during 2023-24 to maintain the stability of the Council's finances.
- 4.3 The table above highlights the forecast outturn position on the General Fund for the Council at February 2023. The figures included are based off an initial analysis by the finance team of the over 11,000 manual records maintained as a result of the systems implemented following the cyber incident in December 2021.
- 4.4 The financial systems are now operational and have been moved into the Cloud. The process of reviewing, analysing, and reconciling the vast quantum of manual data for upload into the system is in progress. The volume of data concerned means that there will be movements between the detailed categories and that the figures provided are the best estimates based on our current analyses.

## 5.0 Significant items of note

### *Communities and Neighbourhoods*

	22/23	Year End	Grant or	Forecast	Final
Communities & Neighbourhoods	Budget	Forecast	Reserve	Outturn	Variance
Community Strategy & Other Projects	807	829		829	22
Community Grants	125	106		106	(19)
Shopmobility	64	56		56	(7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>(5)</b>

- 5.1 The forecast outturn for this portfolio is a minor underspend as a result of the performance of Shopmobility. Similar to 2021-22 the Communities teams have continued to work collaboratively with the County Council and the neighbouring districts to ensure a co-ordinated response to a series of community and social wellbeing projects; where appropriate costs have been shared to ensure the efficient use of funds. This along with a variety of targeted Government grants has enabled spend to be maintained within the budgeted levels.
- 5.2 During the year the Communities team has received grants and shared service funding for which it has managed the spend on a variety of projects from the provision of community protection officers, food safety inspections, and various community school holiday and meal projects. The Communities team has managed the distribution of Household Support Fund grants of £0.371m received from the County Council to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills and other essential items; £0.12m having been received in March 2022.
- 5.3 The Communities team has also commenced work on the Health Inequalities Project and has received a further £260k of grant funding from the NHS towards this project during 2022-23. These grants have been placed in an earmarked reserve to match to the spend in 2023-24.

### *Performance and Resources*

	22/23	Year End	Grant or	Forecast	Final
Performance & Resources	Budget	Forecast	Reserve	Outturn	Variance
Financial & Corporate	901	745	178	923	22
Revenues & Benefits	766	496		496	(269)
IT	1,916	2,281	(380)	1,901	(15)
Parking	(1,566)	(1,318)		(1,318)	249
Business Support	335	371		371	35
Democratic Services	791	757		757	(34)
Asset Management	807	1,093		1,093	286
Commercial Property	(3,402)	(2,569)		(2,569)	832
SWRDA	(153)	(388)	50	(338)	(185)
Cemeteries & Crematorium	(1,481)	(1,257)		(1,257)	224
Internal Audit	194	187		187	(6)
Transformation/Commercialisation	145	131		131	(14)
HR & Communications	448	469		469	21
Legal Services	465	508		508	43
Housing Subsidy	(377)	(177)		(177)	201
Customer Services	407	424		424	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>(152)</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>1,406</b>

- 5.4 This portfolio includes many of the income generating activities of the Council that were disrupted by the Covid pandemic, the cyber incident, and which have also been impacted by the high rates of inflation and energy costs during 2022-23.
- 5.5 The number of people parking in the city centre has continued to increase across the financial year and is now at normal pre-Covid levels. The inflationary pressures noted above have led to an increase in the costs of providing the service (addressed by the tariff increases agreed in the 2023-24 Budget), along with the slower than expected return to normal parking levels in the early months of 2022-23, has led to a forecast adverse position of £249k.
- 5.6 The cyber incident has led to significant IT spend during 2022-23 as projects have been undertaken to restore services, replace hardware, and make the IT provision more robust for the future by moving software packages into cloud-based services. The reserve of £380k set aside at the end of 2021-22 has been utilised in full to cover the additional revenue costs of the systems restoration, and where appropriate hardware spend has been capitalised. The bringing back in-house of the IT Service provision has also contributed towards an initial cost-saving.
- 5.7 From June 2022 the Revenues and Benefits service were brought back in-house. This has led to cost savings that along with various new burdens grants from the Government, to cover the administrative costs of the additional work that has been required of the Council to distribute a variety of new grants (including Homes For Ukraine and Energy Subsidy) to the population of Gloucester, has led to this area being favourable to budget by £269k. Following the removal of statutory restrictions as the pandemic eased, the Council has also been able to commence the follow-up bad and doubtful debtors through the courts, enabling greater levels of recovery of outstanding debts.
- 5.8 As noted in previous monitoring reports, the Council manages more than £30m of Housing Subsidy and benefit payments, and the smallest percentage change can have a significant impact on the final outturn. The forecast outturn for 2022-23 is an overspend of £201k. This cost is out of the Council's control. This pressure is mitigated by the favourable variance from Revenues & Benefits, new burdens funding from the Government and the recovery of historic housing benefit overpayments by the Revenues & Benefits service.
- 5.9 The Commercial Property portfolio is adverse to budget by £0.8m but has still contributed a net income to the Council of £2.57m. The Council has purposefully invested in city centre real estate as part of its regeneration agenda. Given its location, much of this estate is retail based. Gloucester, along with the majority of towns and cities across the country, has experienced significant downward trends in centre based retail for well understood reasons (e.g. COVID, Cost of Living etc). This along with the delays that were caused to the regeneration of the Kings Walk Shopping Centre by the pandemic (works which are now to take place during the first half of 2023-24), has led to a short term budget pressure. Discussions are ongoing with various prospective tenants at the various locations, and the position is improving in relation to Kings Walk following the Kings Square redevelopment and is expected to do so as The Forum and University of Gloucestershire developments approach completion later in 2023-24. The historic investment property portfolio is slowly recovering as new arrangements are reached with tenants. The delayed disposal of the HKP warehouses has also meant that the Council has faced an unforeseen business rates charge of £234k in year.
- 5.10 The Cemeteries & Crematorium service has performed well in the year and the Arbor has seen an increase in demand for wakes. The costs of the Crematorium have seen



unexpected increases in the year because of the increasing cost of energy, increases to the costs of regular cremator maintenance, and the continued need for good sanitisation of the chapel following the pandemic. This has led to an adverse forecast year end position of £224k.

- 5.11 The overspends in the various shared services areas (Human Resources, Communications, Legal Services) are a result of the increased staff costs following the annual local government NJC salary settlement.

### **Culture & Leisure**

	22/23	Year End	Grant or	Forecast	Final
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Museums	598	590		590	(7)
Guildhall & Blackfriars	445	550		550	105
Events	285	280		280	(5)
Destination Marketing	143	208	(65)	143	-
Aspire	(30)	360	-	360	390
Markets & Street Trading	(79)	(113)		(113)	(34)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>1,874</b>	<b>(65)</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>448</b>

- 5.12 The Culture & Leisure team have had a busy year managing improvement works to their venues as a result of their successful grant applications during 2021-22. The venue improvement works at the Guildhall took place during the summer of 2022-23 using the ACE Guildhall Galvanised grant funding, and the planning of the works at the Museum to utilise the MEND grant funding in 2023-24 is in progress. The Guildhall team have also been successful in their application for ACE National Portfolio Organisation funding for the next 3 years that will allow it to continue to develop and expand its exciting programme.
- 5.13 Inevitably, there is an impact of the summer closure of the Guildhall on the forecast outturn as it was not included in the original budget, and so for 2022-23 the outturn is forecast to be £104k adverse to budget. However, the positive results from the works on the venue and the implementation of a new EPOS system are already being seen.
- 5.14 The Council has continued to support the leisure trust in the wake of the effects of the pandemic and the increased energy costs on its business. This has led to the Council contributing an additional £360k to assist it with the additional energy cost pressures during the year, leading to an overspend of £390k.

### **Planning and Housing**

	22/23	Year End	Grant or	Forecast	Final
<b>Planning &amp; Housing Strategy</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Planning	(17)	62		62	79
Planning Policy	242	306	(64)	242	-
Community Infrastructure Levy	-	-		-	-
Land Charges	(73)	(72)		(72)	1
Private Sector Housing	209	256		256	47
Housing Strategy	122	103		103	(19)
Homelessness & Housing	743	734		734	(9)
County Homelessness Partnerships	0	(0)		(0)	(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,226</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>(64)</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>98</b>

- 5.15 This portfolio was adverse to budget by £98k. The initial months of 2022-23 continued to be affected by the cyber incident and the need to utilise manual processes to allow the continued provision of the service at a basic level.
- 5.16 Accordingly the planning service was £79k adverse to budget. The Planning Service also faces issues that are common within planning councils around the country because the statutory nature of the fees that can be charged in many cases prevents the full costs of the service provision from being recouped. There is a Government consultation currently underway to review planning processes and costs, this will hopefully lead to a more equitable position for the Council. The Council has also received a grant from the Government to work on a project in co-ordination with other Councils towards transforming and digitising planning processes.
- 5.17 The City Plan review process finally reached its conclusion during 2022-23 and the Council successfully adopted the City Plan (its first in 30 years), the costs incurred in relation to this process have been met by the earmarked reserves specifically put in place for this purpose in the 2020-21 financial outturn.
- 5.18 The overall homelessness budget for the year is forecast to be favourable as a result of a combination of the positive steps taken by the Council over the past few years to increase the temporary accommodation capacity available to it, and the positive actions taken to ensure all Government grant and benefit funding is being promptly claimed. The increase in the cost of living presents a potential risk to this and work continues within the Housing team to identify further properties to alleviate future pressures.

### **Environment**

	22/23	Year End	Grant or	Forecast	Final
<b>Environment &amp; Leader</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Waste & Recycling	4,857	5,037		5,037	180
Streetcare & City Centre	751	710		710	(42)
Environmental Health	194	89		89	(105)
Licensing	(137)	(147)		(147)	(10)
Parks & Countryside	204	239	(45)	194	(10)
Economic Development	326	283		283	(43)
Heritage	121	120		120	(0)
Climate Change & Environment	73	73		73	-
Senior Management	188	229		229	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,578</b>	<b>6,634</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>6,589</b>	<b>11</b>

- 5.19 This portfolio is forecast to be adverse to budget by £11k. The unexpected high inflation rates causing increases to fuel and labour costs impacted on the costs of the waste and recycling contract. These increased costs have been mitigated by the continued high prices being obtained for the sale of recyclable materials. The net position is an adverse favourable variance on the waste contract of £180k for the year.
- 5.20 Some of the overspend in waste and recycling is mitigated by the favourable positions in Streetcare & City Centre and Environmental Health, both of which utilise elements of the waste service. The cyber incident and the manual processes being applied have prevented a thorough analysis and allocation of the spend.
- 5.21 The final position for the Economic Development service is a favourable variance of £43k, after taking into account the Regeneration Reserve funding of staff working on the Forum Project, and the Levelling Up funded works. The Economic Development team have also been busy working on developing criteria, assessing grant

applications and managing the distribution of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund received from the Government during the year to assist local projects and businesses.

- 5.22 During the year the Heritage team have continued to successfully manage the spend of the High Street Heritage Action Zone grants towards the development and improvement work occurring within the Cathedral Quarter and Westgate areas of the City.
- 5.23 The Council has opted to contract-in the services of a Monitoring Officer to cover this statutory role following the retirement of the individual who held that role leading to the additional costs shown.

## 6.0 Movement in Earmarked Reserves

- 6.1 The Council continues to hold an earmarked reserve balance of over £4.2m as shown below:

Reserve Name	Opening Balance	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Closing Balance
Historic Buildings	53	-	-	53
Housing Survey	60	-	-	60
Shopmobility	29	-	-	29
Regeneration	145	412	(337)	220
Insurance	10	-	-	10
Land Adoption	873	-	-	873
VAT Shelter	167	228	(228)	167
Business Rates	1,023	-	(290)	733
Environmental Insurance	900	-	-	900
Repairs	23	-	-	23
Community Builder	29	-	(29)	-
Planning Strategy	165	25	(64)	126
Flooding Works	10	-	-	10
Lottery	20	-	-	20
Museum Bequest	305	-	-	305
Transformation	100	-	(75)	25
Budget Equalisation	243	-	(210)	33
Destination Marketing	150	-	(65)	85
Homelessness	100	-	-	100
Planning Appeals	50	-	-	50
Communities	18	-	-	18
Climate Change	66	-	-	66
Neighbourhood Spaces	57	-	(45)	12
Defibrillator	6	-	-	6
Cyber Recovery	-	380	(380)	-
Monuments	-	10	(10)	-
Health Inequalities	60	260	-	320
Collection Fund Timing	2,811	-	(2,811)	-
<b>Reserves Total</b>	<b>7,473</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>(4,544)</b>	<b>4,244</b>

- 6.2 The Council has drawn down previously reserved funds to pay for their intended usage during 2022-23 and where applicable carried forward amounts for future use.

- 6.3 There has been a net transfer to the Regeneration reserve in the year. The net surplus from the SWRDA assets generated £412k to contribute to the reserve. The reserve was earmarked to contribute towards the Council's regeneration projects in 2022-23, £337k was spent in year towards this project leaving an overall net transfer to the reserve of £75k. The balance will continue to be used to support future regeneration work.
- 6.4 The authority continues to receive funding relating to the arrangement for a "VAT shelter" relating to the Housing Stock transfer of 2015. In 2022-23 funding of £228k was received. £228k was allocated from the reserve to contribute to the borrowing costs for the redevelopment of Kings Square and Kings Quarter – the Forum.
- 6.5 As forecast in the Money Plan and Budget, amounts have been drawn down against various of the earmarked reserves for use against expenditure included in the 2022-23 budget papers.
- 6.6 During 2022-23 an amount of £260k has been received from the NHS in relation to the joint Health Inequalities programme. This work for this programme is being planned and the amount has been earmarked for spend during 2023-24.
- 6.7 The Government pays Section 31 grants to the Council to compensate for changes to the increases in business rates that it implements centrally that reduce the amount of business rates collectable. In 2020-21 and 2022-23 due to the significant nature of this timing differences amounts were included in the Collection Fund Timing Reserve was created to account for the repayment in the following years of the grants received early. During 2022-23 the amount repaid of £2,811k was released from the reserve. Similar early payment of the section 31 grants are not expected in relation to 2023-24.

## **7.0 Capital Programme**

- 7.1 The current position for the Capital Programme £30.11m against the budget for the year of £27.3m.
- 7.2 Expenditure for 2022-23 has seen continued progress with The Forum development, including the completion of White Friar apartments. Budget on this project has been brought forward from 2023-24 as the development continues at pace.
- 7.3 The Council continues to work with partners to deliver projects, such as Cathedral Quarter as part of the Heritage Action Zones with The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. The agreement to join Ubico for waste services has seen the Council purchase new domestic waste vehicles in year for this partnership.
- 7.4 The nature of capital projects means that many of them span a number of financial years; budgets are set per project any unspent budgets at the end of any one financial year may be carried forward into the next
- 7.5 A summarised table for the Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

## **8.0 Prompt payment performance**

- 8.1 The Council aims to make payments to all suppliers promptly and in accordance with contract terms. Due to the cyber incident that occurred in December 2021 we do not have access to sufficient data to provide these statistics. Following the cyber incident processes have been put in place to ensure the continued payment of the Council's creditors as promptly as is feasible in the circumstances.

## **9.0 Social Value Considerations**

9.1 There are no social value implications as a result of this report.

## **10.0 Alternative Options Considered**

10.1 A wide range of options are explored by officers in order to reduce budgetary pressure, to achieve savings targets, and to ensure value for money.

## **11.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

11.1 It is a good practice for members to be regularly informed of the current financial position of the Council. This report is intended to make members any of any significant issues in relation to financial standing and any actions that officers are taking in response to identified variances.

## **12.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

12.1 Work will continue to review, analyse, and reconcile the vast quantum of manual data for upload into the system. Steps will continue to be taken to limit in year and future budget pressures.

## **13.0 Financial Implications**

13.1 All financial implications are within the report, which is of a wholly financial nature.

## **14.0 Legal Implications**

14.1 There are no legal implications from this report. One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.

## **15.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

15.1 There are no specific risks or opportunities as a result of this report.

## **16.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

16.1 A PIA screening assessment has been undertaken and the impact is neutral. A full PIA is not required.

## **17.0 Other Corporate Implications**

Community Safety / Sustainability / Staffing & Trade Union

17.1 None.

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Scheme	Budget	Actual	Variance
	2022/23	Spend to date	
Kings Quarter - The Forum	20,000,000	25,335,637	(5,335,637)
Food Dock	3,000,000	950,000	2,050,000
High Streets - HAZ	606,000	374,668	231,332
GCC Building Improvements	100,000	378,546	(278,546)
ICT Projects	50,000	257,504	(207,504)
Housing projects	648,372	747,668	(99,296)
Drainage and Flood Protection Works	95,000	72,522	22,478
Horsbere Brook Local Nature Reserve works	50,000	5,001	44,999
Play Area Improvement Programme	60,000	31,957	28,043
Crematorium Cremator Improvements	45,000	-	45,000
GWR Railway Improvement Scheme	2,500,000	18,191	2,481,809
Domestic Waste Vehicles	-	1,453,237	(1,453,237)
St Oswalds	-	61,020	(61,020)
Grant Funded Projects	182,723	431,454	(248,731)
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>27,337,095</b>	<b>30,117,405</b>	<b>(2,780,310)</b>

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