

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Planning Policy Sub-Committee Council	Date:	17 November 2016 1 December 2016
Subject:	Draft Gloucester City Plan – Public Consultation		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
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Appendices:	1. Draft Gloucester City Plan, including proposals maps and proposed site allocations map		
	2. City Plan Part 1 – Response Report		
	3. Sustainability Appraisal – Non-Technical Summary		
	4. Consultation Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from Members to publish the Draft Gloucester City Plan for a six-week period of public consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Planning Policy is asked to **RECOMMEND** that Council:

- (1) Approve the Draft Gloucester City Plan for the purposes of a six-week period of public consultation (Appendix 1).
- (2) Note the representations made to the City Plan Part 1 during the public consultation period (Appendix 2); and
- (3) Endorse the resulting officer responses set out within the response schedule (Appendix 2).
- (4) Delegate authority to the Managing Director of the Council in consultation with the relevant Leaders of the Council to make minor changes to the draft City Plan and Proposals Map in terms of formatting, presentation and accuracy, including any minor changes following the considerations at Planning Policy Sub-committee and Council, prior to publication for public consultation purposes.

2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (5) Approve the Draft Gloucester City Plan for the purposes of a six-week period of public consultation (Appendix 1).
- (6) Note the representations made to the City Plan Part 1 during the public consultation period (Appendix 2); and
- (7) Endorse the resulting officer responses set out within the response schedule (Appendix 2).
- (8) Delegate authority to the Managing Director of the Council in consultation with the relevant Leaders of the Council to make minor changes to the draft City Plan and Proposals Map in terms of formatting, presentation and accuracy, including any minor changes following the considerations at Planning Policy Sub-committee and Council, prior to publication for public consultation purposes.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 The emerging Local Plan for Gloucester consists of two inter-related documents. The first is the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), which covers the administrative areas of Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury Borough, between 2011 and 2031. It sets out strategic level planning policy, such as defining the housing requirement, strategic site allocations and high level development management policies on areas such as affordable housing, landscape and retail. The JCS has now reached an advanced stage in preparation.

3.2 The second document is the Gloucester City Plan (GCP). This covers the administrative area of Gloucester only, and will provide locally specific site allocations and development management policies, set within the strategic context of the JCS. The plan will cover the period 2016 to 2031.

What's happened so far?

3.3 To date there have been several consultations on the GCP, but the timetable has always been staggered behind the JCS given that it is the higher level plan and the City Plan needs to be in general conformity. The public consultations held on the GCP to date have been:

- Scope – looking at the key areas for the plan to address (October 2011).
- Part 1 – setting out the context and key principles (February 2012).
- Part 2 – a consultation on potential site allocation opportunities and a draft City Centre Strategy (May 2013).

3.4 There have now been two periods of Member engagement to feed into the evolution of the GCP. The first was held in January 2015 and more recently two sessions were held in October 2016. The feedback from these sessions has been used to inform the current draft.

How has the Draft Gloucester City Plan been prepared and what does it contain?

- 3.5 The Draft GCP is prepared in the context of the JCS, which provides the strategic context. It is the job of the GCP to deliver the overall strategy and objectives of the JCS at the local level, but also to provide site allocations and development management policies that reflect and address the local issues and opportunities in the City.
- 3.6 The Draft GCP consultation includes a locally specific Vision and set of Key Principles, which have been prepared having regard to the JCS, the Council's adopted City Vision and Council Plan and responses made to previous public consultations.
- 3.7 The Draft Plan includes 23 proposed site allocations. These are sites that have been assessed through the Council's Strategic Assessment of Land Availability (SALA) process and found to be suitable, available and achievable. The proposed allocations are also informed by a range of different evidence documents, for example biodiversity and heritage assessments. Some evidence studies are continuing and are programmed for completion in spring 2017, well in advance of the next stage of the process, Pre-Submission.
- 3.8 Given the relatively small number of suitable sites and the limited availability of land in the City when considered against development needs, this consultation is also being used as a targeted 'call for sites'. This is where the community, landowners and developers are actively encouraged to submit sites to the Council, which will then be assessed through the SALA process. If appropriate, these sites will then be considered for inclusion as site allocations at the next stage of the Plan process.
- 3.9 The Draft Plan also includes 70 development management policies covering a wide range of issues such as the type of new homes that the City needs, the protection of important heritage assets and policies to support the growth of Gloucester's economy. These are policies that, once adopted, will be used to determine planning applications. These sit alongside the policies to be adopted by the Council as part of the JCS, collectively providing the Local Development Plan for the City. It is only necessary for the GCP to have a policy where it is not provided through the JCS (either partly or at all) and required locally in the City. The GCP must add to and not repeat JCS policy or national planning policy / guidance.
- 3.10 The content of the GCP has all been subject to a rigorous 'Integrated Appraisal' (IA) process. This incorporates the Council's statutory responsibility with regard to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). It also incorporates Health Impact Assessment (HIA) which, whilst not a statutory requirement, is considered best practice. IA is an iterative process and aims to ensure that all policies and proposals are the most sustainable possible options based on a thorough understanding of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the area. For the purposes of this report the IA 'Non-Technical Summary' is provided at Appendix 3.

Public consultation

- 3.11 The next step in the journey of the GCP is to hold a public consultation on the contents of the Draft Plan. Officers will undertake a thorough public consultation that satisfies both planning regulations and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (July 2015). It will include: a comprehensive online presence (City Council website and social media notifications); publication of articles in the local press; electronic or hard copy notification to all stakeholders held on the planning policy consultation database; and targeted consultation events in particular localities and with certain communities. Further details can be found in Appendix 4 – Consultation Plan.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 The City Plan is a document that can be used by all members of the Gloucester community on an 'as needed' basis. Its policies will provide the context for the promotion of ABCD initiatives across the City.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility under Section 13 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare and keep up to date a development plan for the City. Therefore, given the statutory nature of the process there are no viable alternatives to be considered.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 To enable the progression of the City Plan and to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duty to maintain an up to date development plan.
- 6.2 Regulation 18 (3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate evidence of participation in the plan making process. This is achieved through the production and endorsement of a response report at each stage of the process.
- 6.3 Delegated authority is requested for minor amendments to ensure that the plan making process makes best use of officer and member resources. This will also ensure that the City Plan can be amended to reflect any approved changes that occur as part of the on-going JCS process.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 Once the Draft GCP consultation has been completed, officers will prepare the Pre-Submission version of the Plan. This will be informed by consultation responses received as well as new evidence that has been completed. The Pre-Submission consultation of the GCP is timetabled to be held in summer 2017. This will then be followed by submission to the Planning Inspectorate in autumn 2017, followed by Examination in Public (dates yet to be determined).

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 For the purposes of this public consultation, the only resource implication is officer time in preparation, undertaking and completing the consultation process.
- 8.2 After this, further officer resources will be required to prepare and consult on the Pre-Submission version of the GCP, followed by its submission to the Planning Inspectorate and subsequent Examination in Public. During this time, there will also be the need for the completion of further evidence base studies and the purchase of a licence for the continued use of the Council's dedicated planning consultation software. The resource requirements for these have been factored into existing budgets.

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

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council is required to have an up to date development plan, the lack of such a plan would mean that the Council's future planning decisions could be open to challenge by applicants and third parties if they are not based upon an up to date planning framework.

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

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 The progression and adoption of the GCP will, together with the JCS, provide a robust development plan that will be a major material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the City. The lack of a Plan would mean the Council would have to rely on outdated local development plan policies and the use of the JCS, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The existence of up-to-date planning policies will better reflect local circumstances and also reduce the risk of adverse costs awards in planning appeals.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 All draft policies proposed through this plan will have been subject to an 'Integrated Assessment'. This satisfies the City Council's statutory responsibilities with regard to Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment) and Equalities Impact Assessment. It also incorporates Health Impact Assessment which is not a statutory requirement but considered best practice.
- 11.2 Integrated Assessment is an iterative process and policy proposals have been assessed and amended on an ongoing basis to ensure they are as sustainable as possible, in the context of national requirements and local characteristics. This includes making sure that the policies and proposals of the City Plan would not affect a particular group differently in either a positive or negative way.
- 11.3 A summary of the findings is provided as part of the 'Non-Technical Summary' at Appendix 3.

11.2 In addition, the PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 None.

Sustainability

12.2 Once adopted the GCP along with the JCS will provide the planning framework for the City that will be used to inform the assessment of planning applications and investment decisions. Both the JCS and GCP have been subject to Integrated Assessment on an ongoing basis and the strategy put forward represents the most sustainable approach for the City and Gloucestershire more widely.

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 None/

Background Documents: None.