

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	8th March 2017
Subject:	City Centre Action Plan –Annual Review		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economy		
Wards Affected:	Westgate		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. City Centre Action Plan January 2016 January 2019		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an annual update of progress with delivery of the City Centre Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that progress with delivery of the City Centre Action Plan as set out in the report, be noted

3.0 Background and key issues

3.1 The City Centre Action Plan

The City Centre Management Team consists of the Council and a range of stakeholders working in partnership to develop the city centre as a shopping and leisure destination. The Team meet bi-monthly to review improvement work underway and to develop new initiatives to continue these improvements. This work is focused on the Primary Shopping Area but looks to capitalise on the benefits of increased visitor numbers that are being generated by the Gloucester Quays development. This work is co-ordinated and its impact measured, through the City Centre Action Plan (CCAP). Cabinet endorsed the City Centre Action Plan in July 2011 and agreed that it be reviewed and reported annually.

3.2 Revised City Centre Action Plan

The current City Centre Action Plan has provided effective co-ordination of activity by the Council and other stakeholders to strengthen the attractiveness

and viability of the City Centre. However, there is a need for a revised Plan that reflects both a more strategic and delivery focussed approach, maximises the impact of the Together Gloucester organisational redesign, and aligns with proposals for the Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID). It is proposed to bring this revised Plan to the August 2017 Cabinet meeting for endorsement.

4.0 City centre Action Plan - Key Achievements 2016/2017

4.1 A summary of the key achievements delivered through the current City Centre Action Plan is set out below. Full details are contained in the Action Plan (Appendix 1)

4.2 Historic Grant Scheme

A report elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda provides an update on the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF), including projects delivered through the Historic Grant scheme which is funded through the CCIF. The scheme has continued to fund projects that help maintain and improve the historic fabric of the City to maintain both historic features and the beneficial use of buildings. Funding this year has been focussed on properties in Westgate Street (59-61; 97; 58; and 82) whilst the conservation team have prioritised a number of buildings on Westgate Street for targeted grants (26, 39 and 41). Those targeted consist of buildings on the City Council's Buildings at Risk Register, and those which are vacant on both ground and upper floors. The successful completion of these projects will contribute to the continued rejuvenation of the four gate streets of Gloucester.

4.3 Gloucester Street Aware

Gloucester Street Aware (GSA) brings together multiple partner agencies to co-ordinate a consistent approach across the City centre in particular; to deal with street based nuisance and anti-social behaviour. The Policy was open to widespread consultation prior to implementation, and was widely endorsed by the support, voluntary and community sectors, businesses and enforcement teams, including Project Solace and Gloucestershire Police. Since its implementation, Street Aware has focussed on street begging with associated crime and ASB. However, the approach we use is designed to be universal and can be applied to any issue e.g. street drinking, psychoactive substances, or any other issue that becomes prevalent. The approach taken by GSA is "Engage, Support, Enforce". The aim is that successful engagement and support of individuals will help to address the root causes of anti-social behaviour and resolve issues in a co-ordinated way. Where engagement and support are refused, and anti-social behaviour persists, enforcement will be taken. GSA have engaged with over 40 individuals since the project started. At present GSA are left with 8 persons who are refusing to engage and continue to sleep rough in the city. There are also approximately 5 who are still involved in anti-social behaviour or crime.

- 4.4 *Improving the condition of city centre parking provision*
Refurbishment of both Kings Walk multi-storey and Eastgate Centre rooftop Car Parks has been completed, with a new ANPR pay on foot system introduced in Kings Walk multi-storey and Eastgate Centre rooftop car parks (this went live on 3rd October 2016). This has included replacement signage. This system is designed to increase dwell time in the city centre and improve the shopping experience.
- 4.5 *Seamless links between the city centre and Gloucester Quays, bringing them together as a single, cohesive destination.*
Events at both Gloucester Quays and those delivered through Marketing Gloucester, city museums and Gloucester Guildhall continue to drive footfall between both these areas of the city. Marketing Gloucester will be launching the 'Henson Pig' trail on 3rd June 2017 running till 31st August 2017. Similar to the 'Scrumpty' trail during the Rugby World Cup, this will provide a tourist trail around the City. The revised City Centre Action Plan will look to identify new events and enable co-ordinated delivery of those events to continue to develop the City Centre as a destination.
- 4.6 *Improving the marketing of, and information about, the city centre in order to increase footfall.*
Marketing Gloucester have continued to update wayfinding signage including renewing the skins on existing maps, and have secured planning approval for digital signage on 7 displays, with planning applications submitted for a further 7 digital signs. Marketing Gloucester are producing a new Visitors Guide covering a 16 months period and are exploring a new format for the residents card to be relaunched in conjunction with the new digital signage, enabling real time offers for residents and visitors to the city.

5.0 On-going Projects and Initiatives

- 5.1 Key ongoing projects and initiatives being delivered through the Plan are summarised below
- 5.2 *Encouraging a Café Culture*
The Council continue to licence the use of tables and chairs within the pedestrianised area of the city centre free of charge.
- 5.3 *Restoring and making better use of historic assets*
The condition of listed buildings in the city continues to be monitored but reduced enforcement capacity currently means that this is focussed on buildings at immediate risk. A full survey of the city's listed building stock will be undertaken in spring 2017 (last undertaken in July 2013). Lighting improvements to enhance the visibility of the historic Eastgate remains have been completed with further works to improve the visitor experience/safety subject to securing additional funds. Works at Blackfriars are complete; and it is now operational as an event venue and attraction. Soft marketing is underway while further survey work is commissioned to assist to de risk the site. The first phase of condition surveying is almost concluded and draft reports have been received. An options appraisal is almost at completion.

5.4 Staging and attracting high quality events to take place in the city centre throughout the year.

The 2016 SoMAC festival was successfully delivered by Marketing Gloucester and partner organisations, bringing together over 300 events in the summer, including a new free classical music festival. Planning is underway for the return of the Tall Ships between 27th and 29th May 2017. In 2016 our Heritage Open Days succeeded in becoming the second largest in the UK, with excellent work undertaken by the Civic Trust. The annual History Festival went from strength to strength, selling over 2000 tickets this year. Marketing Gloucester are producing proposals for the 2017 Christmas Package to be funded through the Gloucester BID.

5.5 Improving the offer of the city centre.

Kings Quarter: The project team will in the first instance be commissioning technical work to understand, in commercial terms, the investment opportunities most appropriate for Gloucester, based on the city centres current commercial offer, any gaps and current trends. This will enable us to develop our “product” for Kings Quarter and to start to populate a detailed target list of potential tenants. This in turn will inform the scheme design, allowing us to commence the planning application preparation process later in 2017.

Bus Station: Good progress is being made with detailed design for the highway works all but complete. As part of the highways statutory consultation process the number and extent of objections has taken longer to resolve than at first envisaged and has slowed the programme. However highway works are now scheduled to commence in April 2017.

Blackfriars: Working jointly with the County Council, the City Council secured £4.13M of grant support via the Local Enterprise Partnership to regenerate this site. Peter Brett Associates were appointed to progress a Local Development Order (LDO) to reduce the cost and risk for a prospective developer. The application for the order was submitted before Christmas and is scheduled to be considered by Planning Committee in March 2017.

In tandem with this, developer City Heart submitted a planning application for over 290 student units on the Barbican car park site. This was approved at Planning Committee on 7th February 2017. The University needs to have the scheme built and open by September 2018 to coincide with the opening of the University Business School at Oxstall.

5.6 Community Toilet Scheme

The successful Community Toilets Scheme is being reviewed, and will consider the number of venues involved to improve manageability and ensure that the locations of the remaining participants are strategically placed on the

'Gate Streets' and within City Council assets, including The Guildhall, Museum of Gloucester, Gloucester Life Museum and GL1.

6.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Implications

6.1 A number of community based organisations are involved in the delivery of activities within the Action Plan and opportunities for further community based development will be considered as part of the revised Action Plan.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no additional financial implications as a result of this report. (Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report).

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no additional legal implications as a result of this report. (One Legal has been consulted in the preparation of this report).

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 Not having a City Centre Action Plan would reduce the City Council's ability to maximise the city centre as a recognised destination for residents and visitors, along with making the city an attractive offer for new businesses to set up and existing businesses to flourish.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 The actions outlined in this report will benefit the residents and businesses in the City through improving the identity of the city as a leisure and retail destination

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 Delivering a more diverse offer in the City will have a beneficial impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. This will be strengthened through the Together Gloucester organisational restructure which will be reflected in a refocussed Action Plan.

Sustainability

11.2 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 There are no direct staffing and Trade Union issues arising from this report.