

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	11th April 2018
Subject:	City Centre Action Plan 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: March 2018 Update		

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 2016 - 2019.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:
- (1) progress with delivery of the City Centre Action Plan as set out in the report be noted
 - (2) the proposal for a refresh to the City Centre Action Plan be approved

3.0 Background and key issues

- 3.1 The City Centre Action Plan was created by the City Centre Management Team in 2016 to serve as a single point of reference to monitor projects designed to create a vibrant City Centre, in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities. The Management Team was set up to bring together a broad group of stakeholders to review existing projects and develop new initiatives within the City, with a focus on the Primary Shopping Area. The aims set out in the document cover:
- i). Management of a clean, safe and accessible City Centre environment
 - ii). Animate the Four Gate Streets whilst celebrating our unique heritage
 - iii). Ensure pedestrian links link the Quays with the City seamlessly
 - iv). Improve marketing to increase City footfall

- v). Improve City retail offer
- vi). Engage retailers and stakeholders to encourage them to contribute
- vii). Ensure timely data is available for measuring performance

3.2 Since the previous annual update for the City Centre Action Plan in March 2017, the Together Gloucester restructure has been implemented. This overhauled the existing structure that was in place for delivery. For example, the City Centre Manager- who previously managed the monitoring of this document and delivery of several of the services contained - was a position made redundant.

3.3 The Head of Place holds responsibility for the City Centre Action Plan within the Council, although the Management Group has not met since Summer 2017, owing to staff changes and the Together Gloucester programme. It is the intention of the Head of Place to recommence meetings serving a similar purpose to the previous City Centre Management Team meetings, including Marketing Gloucester, the BID, and other relevant parties.

3.4 Despite these changes, responsibilities for the objectives of the City Centre Action Plan have still been managed by various teams of individuals. The City Council's City Improvement Team has taken on a number of responsibilities previously held within the City Centre Manager role. The Markets Team, Environmental Services, Economic Development & Regeneration, and Asset Management have also all continued to deliver elements of the City Centre Action Plan. For a more comprehensive analysis of the specific role of each service in delivering the City Centre Action Plan, please consult Appendix 1.

3.5 The Head of Place intends leading a comprehensive review of the City Centre Action Plan to better reflect not only the resources available but the emergence of a number of new initiatives across the City including the Culture Trust, Business Improvement District and Purple Flag. A similar review was undertaken by the Docks Stakeholder Group of their own Docks Area Action Plan.

3.6 This review will result in a revised City Centre Action Plan being presented to Cabinet for consideration prior to the expiry of the current Plan i.e. January 2019.

4.0 City Centre Action Plan - Key Achievements 2017/2018

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 *Refreshed Parking Strategy:* The City Council appointed contractors LDA Consultancy to build on the work previously commissioned to Aecom, to assess and consider existing parking provision within the City and assess opportunities for future growth and development. It will also provide an evidence base for the City Council as it considers how best to integrate adequate and appropriate parking provision in light of the impact of major

development schemes such as King's Quarter. The new Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in due course for consideration.

- 4.3 *Footfall Sensors:* The City Council commissioned Marketing Gloucester to secure the services of the Local Data Company (LDC) to install 50 footfall sensors within the Primary Shopping Area. These have been able to provide unique insight into footfall, and specifically pedestrian dwell times in certain locations. The data has already been used to examine the impact of City Centre events and the footfall yield business can expect to experience. In the future, it is expected this data will allow the City Council to demonstrate the contribution its activities within the Primary Shopping Area generate for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.4 *Grant Schemes:* Funding from the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) has allowed and enabled a number of City Centre projects to be delivered. The Historic Grant Scheme has enabled capital works for 24 buildings with grants ranging from £5,000 to £20,000, with further funds remaining ring-fenced. This work has been complemented by the Gloucester Business Growth Grant scheme; that has supported capital works for seven businesses, with a number of applications in the pipeline. Additionally, the continuing success of the Townscape Heritage Initiative- now in its fourth year- means collectively, there are a number of incentives available for businesses that have played a key role in developing the prosperity of the City Centre, making it an attractive place to invest and dwell within.
- 4.5 *Gloucester BID:* After much hard work by a number of City Centre stakeholders, the Gloucester BID was successfully approved on the 29th June 2017, with 85.8% giving it their approval (of those who voted). Generating £2.3m of funding across the next five years, the Gloucester BID has published its prospectus (which can be viewed at: <http://www.gloucesterbid.uk/wp-content/uploads/GloucesterBID-Prospectus-2017-web.pdf>) which establishes key objectives these funds will be deployed to address. Providing a clear voice for the collective businesses of the City Centre, the Gloucester BID has been given a clear mandate and will be a key partner with the City Council to deliver the City Centre Action Plan.
- 4.6 *City Centre Wardens:* In partnership with the Gloucester BID, City Safe, and the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, funds were made available to employ four City Protection Officers (CPO's), operating in pairs. They are charged with patrolling the BID area (which covers the Primary Shopping Area), giving BID members a resource to call for their assistance with incidents. Their introduction has been well-received.
- 4.7 *Purple Flag Accreditation:* In partnership with a broad range of stakeholders including local businesses, publicans, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucester BID and Gloucester City Safe, the City Council has worked to produce a submission to the ATCM for Purple Flag Status. The first step of this- a self-assessment performed in cooperation with the groups outlined above- took place on Friday 24th November 2017, The group unanimously agreed to submit an application based on this for the 31st January 2018.

Inspectors for the scheme will come to Gloucester to conduct their assessment on Friday 23rd March. If successful, the award will raise the profile of Gloucester's night-time economy and improve its public image.

5.0 On-going Projects and Initiatives

5.1 Key ongoing projects and initiatives being delivered through the City Centre Action Plan are summarised below. Full details are outlined in the Action Plan (Appendix 1).

5.2 *Business Investment:* A number of City Centre projects have been brought forward, and works are underway to deliver them. Major sites include:

i). Kings Quarter: LDA Design was appointed as lead consultants to create a project for the area of the City known as King's Quarter. A City Council ambition for a number of years, significant progress has been made in creating a viable proposition. Following extensive consultation and key preliminary research, a full planning application for the site is anticipated for late summer 2018. Works on the Bus Station- the first stage of this wider scheme- continue to progress, with construction now on site. Negotiations on the finer details are ongoing, but it is expected that through the successful delivery of this site, the City Centre will have a key point of interest to complement the Docks area, allowing both areas to benefit from the others footfall and trade.

The City Council's partnership with Reef Estates to regenerate Kings Walk shopping centre will have a major impact on the city centre, starting with works to enable the occupation of the former BHS unit in Eastgate Street, followed by improvements to the covered mall and car park.

ii). Blackfriars: A cooperative development between Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, University of Gloucestershire and developer City and Country, this site will deliver new homes, student accommodation and retail space. Construction is currently underway and projected for completion in time for the 2018 summer intake of students. The expected student population influx will have an impact on the City Centre and the City Centre Action Plan will need to be used creatively to ensure the opportunity presented by these students is fully utilised for the local economy.

iii). Project Pilgrim: Gloucester Cathedral serves as a major draw for tourists nationally and could be seen as the 'anchor tenant' of the City Centre. Project Pilgrim has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the City Council to deliver a ten-year programme of capital development and regeneration. Landscaping works are approaching completion (eta Spring 2018), and will create a new space for residents and visitors alike to make their own and take civic pride in.

A number of smaller projects also make up a part of the inward investment within Gloucester at this point in time. Further information on this can be found in the latest update from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Economy.

- 5.3 *Shopmobility Service:* The City Council continues to offer the Shopmobility service, and have taken the decision to consult on possible changes to its charging structure. At February Cabinet changes to the current model were agreed and will be implemented Sunday 1st April 2018. Changes include:
- Those paying the annual fee of £24 to use the service will also have to pay £2 every time they use a scooter
 - Non-members now pay a new fee of £6; an increase of 100%. However, this is still competitive on a regional level.
 - Charge for a weekend hire will increase from £10 to £12.
- These changes are vital to keep the service financially viable and sustainable.
- 5.4 *Public Art Strategy:* A renewed Public Art Strategy is currently being prepared, with a report for Cabinet expected for late Spring/Summer. As the Culture Trust continue to deliver on the adopted Cultural Strategy, it is anticipated that the City Centre Action Plan will incorporate these objectives to ensure it is understood how they align with the work of others.
- 5.5 *Festivals and Events Programme:* A separate report covering the Festivals and Events programme has previously been reported to Cabinet and to avoid confusion, this information has not been repeated within this report..
- 5.6 *Digital Economy:* Marketing Gloucester is currently leading on the delivery of a Digital Strategy for Gloucester City Council. The UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre (UK:DRIC) has secured £400,000 of funding from the GFirst LEP and will provide specialist incubator space on the first floor of the Eastgate Shopping Centre. Whilst not mentioned in the structure of the current City Centre Action Plan, it is intended that elements of the Digital Economy (including the work of Maybe and the #WDYT campaign) will feature in future revisions of the plan as this new sector of the local economy in Gloucester is developed.
- 5.7 *Business Engagement and Support:* The Economic Strategy, also being considered by Council in April 2018, has identified a need for stronger and more co-ordinated business engagement. This will be achieved in a number of ways; for example, in the near future, representatives of the Place Service will have a stall at the Gloucestershire Business Show to promote the service we have available, and to network with key individuals. In addition, we will increase our engagement with other business facing organisations including Business South West, Department for International Trade and the Growth Hub.

6.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Implications

- 6.1 A number of community based organisations are involved in the delivery of activities identified within the Action Plan and opportunities for further

community based development will be considered as part of the revised Action Plan.

7.0 Alternative Options Considered

7.1 None considered

8.0 Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 To provide Members with an annual update of progress with delivery of the City Centre Action Plan 2016 - 2019.

9.0 Financial Implications

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

10.0 Legal Implications

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

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 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.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

12.1 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

13.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

13.1 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

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

Staffing & Trade Union

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