

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>11 July 2018 12 July 2018</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Gloucestershire Vision 2050 Consultation</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Managing Director</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Vision 2050 Ambitions and Projects 2. Draft Consultation Response</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 consultation and to decide whether to submit a response.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND to Council** that:

- (1) The Vision 2050 consultation be **welcomed**;
- (2) Council **resolves** to submit a response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. A draft response submission is attached at appendix B;
- (3) Authority be **delegated** to the Leader, in consultation with the other political Group leaders, to agree the final wording of any response submission and to submit any response by the end of July.

- 2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- (1) The Vision 2050 consultation be welcomed;
- (2) Council resolves to submit a response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. A possible response submission is attached at appendix B.
- (3) Authority be delegated to the Leader, in consultation with the other political Group leaders, to agree the final wording of any response submission and to submit any response by the end of July.

### **3.0 Background and Key Issues**

- 3.1 Leadership Gloucestershire (LG) is an informal meeting of key Gloucestershire public sector and partner organisation leaders. They meet together to provide vision, leadership and strategic direction in those areas where it is vital for those organisations to work together to meet the needs of, and deliver better outcomes for, the people and communities of Gloucestershire.
- 3.2 Following on from an earlier bid to government for devolution of powers and resources, in 2017 LG decided to commission a piece of work to look at the longer term challenges facing the county, and to consider what changes might be needed to address those challenges and to deliver improved outcomes for future generations of Gloucestershire. This could then be formulated into a vision which the people and communities of Gloucestershire might unite behind, and which could be used in conversations with Government around needs and resources. By looking ahead to the year 2050, it was felt that this would be far enough into the future that short term electoral considerations would not inhibit frank debate, but close enough ahead that we could reasonably start preparing and planning now.
- 3.3 LG commissioned the University of Gloucestershire to facilitate a study which could then be put out for wider public consultation. Vision 2050 is the result of this initial study. A 'Big Conversation' with the public was launched in February 2018, with a proposed consultation end date of July 2018. In order to prompt dialogue, the University sought the help of an expert panel which came up with a set of eight 'ambitions' for the county, and six projects which the panel felt might best help achieve those ambitions – these are summarised in Appendix A. The consultation seeks views of the people of Gloucestershire on those ambitions and projects.
- 3.4 The City Council's political group leaders have agreed that Council should have an opportunity to debate the Vision 2050 consultation and decide whether or not to submit a response on behalf of the City Council. As far as possible, they wish any such response to be based on a cross-party consensus, and to be reflective of the views of the people of Gloucester (including, in particular, younger generations, who typically do not engage with council-led consultations but arguably have a greater stake in what the county will look like in 2050). In order to inform Council's deliberations, officers have met informally with each of the political groups, with our Joint Core Strategy district partners, and have also sought to engage with a number of Gloucester community representatives including:
- The Business Improvement District (BID) Board
  - The Regeneration Advisory Board
  - Rising Gloucester (a youth forum for Gloucester)
  - The G15 grouping of Gloucester schools
  - Gloucestershire College senior executives
- 3.5 The analysis below, and the draft response at Appendix B, has distilled these inputs, for consideration by Council.

#### Analysis

- 3.6 Some of the key points of consensus that have emerged from these discussions are:

- The Big Conversation has been a very worthwhile exercise, and communities are keen that it is the start of an ongoing open dialogue. Appreciating that it has not been easy to engage the wider public in this consultation, particularly younger generations, July should not be seen as the end of discussion, and we should not make undue haste to set a vision that will endure for thirty years.
- It is right to be ambitious for our county: we have great assets but serious challenges ahead, and all parties need to agree to a common vision, and then put together our collective resources and demonstrate drive to achieve this. Gloucester City Council shares that ambition and is enthusiastic about working to deliver a better, more prosperous County.
- Information on potential types of delivery vehicles is helpful but form should follow function and decisions on any new delivery vehicle should await a clear, widely supported strategy. It is true that a new delivery vehicle can help to flesh out a detailed vision, but there needs to be clarity in its remit and what it is expected to achieve.
- The eight proposed ambitions for the county are generally unarguable and were supported by all. In contrast, a number of the six projects tended to split opinion. It would be better to develop strategic plans around the eight ambitions, rather than singling out a few projects, as:
  - o the set of six projects in themselves do not go far enough in addressing all of the ambitions. The ambitions address social goals (such as inclusivity and 'happiness') and these will need more than physical infrastructure deliverables to be successful. However, it is understandable that we needed to start somewhere, and they have prompted useful debate and discussion.
  - o Aspiring to be a magnet county is very important, but it is unlikely that the projects put forward by themselves would inspire young people to want to stay in the county.
- When considering what would make young people want to stay in the county, the ability to achieve employment aspirations was identified as the greatest positive influence. This requires consideration of what would make more businesses choose to locate in the county, requiring a supportive industrial strategy, supportive local planning policy(ies), underpinned by a primary/secondary/tertiary education system and a skills strategy supporting those goals.
- A secondary identified driver to keep more young people in the county was '[fun/social] things to do'. Gloucester's bid to become UK City of Culture 2025 would be a key means of increasing the attractiveness of the county as a place to live and grow, would deliver benefits to all parts of the county, and would benefit from county-wide support to maximise our chances of success.
- The City Council does not support the idea within the super city project description of creating a 'new third centre' between Gloucester and Cheltenham:
  - o It would detrimentally impact on the economic vibrancy of Gloucester and Cheltenham;
  - o Both Cheltenham and Gloucester have their own separate identities, and these should be valued and retained;
  - o Cities evolve; whereas this is an artificial construct and would not be successful at creating a super city concept.

- However, the City Council (and informal discussions with our JCS district colleagues indicate that this is a shared view) should work more closely together with its JCS partners to achieve ambitious economic growth outcomes, including greater connectivity and acting as a spur for sub-regional growth.
- Through the JCS, we have demonstrated that individual public sector organisations can work together on complex issues for the benefit of residents across the county. There is no reason why this could not be extended to organise collective working on issues beyond principally housing matters, such as maximising the common benefit arising from the cyber park and driving and directing economic growth around the county's urban core.
- In terms of improved connectivity, the Council would support some form of improved mass transit (e.g. tram) system, linking the two centres via the airport. It would also support improved safer cycle routes between the two places, and consideration of an accessible quality green linear park (for walking and cycling) between the two.
- All acknowledged that the cyber park project was already in train and was the least controversial project put forward. The Council supports the idea of focusing on 'cyber security' as an industrial strategy focus for the county, and the urban core in particular. This complements the cluster of cyber businesses already growing in Gloucester and would help to provide high-skilled jobs for Gloucester residents,
- Whilst there were some minority views, there was a strong consensus that Gloucestershire Airport at Staverton will continue to be a key economic asset for the county, employing over 500 people, contributing in the region of £250 million to the regional economy, and handling over 80,000 aircraft in 2017. The Council does not believe that Gloucestershire could or should develop its own international airport, given its proximity to Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham and other international airports.
- Whilst Gloucestershire Airport at Staverton does not have the space to be developed much beyond its existing two runways, and thus is limited to being a general aviation airport, it has a strong and growing business model based around private charter flights, as a training base, and its property and hangarage facilities. These are likely to be strengthened by its proximity to the Cyber Park. The airport is highly regarded by GFirst LEP, Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership, featuring in their Strategic Economic Plan, and has recently received £1.9 million of Local Enterprise Funding.
- Strategically, with increasingly congested road and rail systems, regional airports such as Gloucestershire are likely to play an increasingly important role as an affordable and efficient means of providing regions with connectivity, with some routes that can only be served by smaller aircraft. Connectivity is key for business, and the Gloucestershire airport at Staverton will enhance the job creation and economic vitality of the county.
- Whilst the recently commissioned Connections Study found that the greatest immediate economic benefit for the county would arise from improving north-south transport connections, it was acknowledged that this study was constrained by retrospectively looking at existing connections and historically important industries. In the context of supporting the new Cyber Park, improved connectivity with the Oxford-Cambridge growth arc will be a key priority going

forward, and improved rail connectivity with other parts of the country would be supported.

- Council would support an ambition to increase physical activity and tackle obesity. To this end, we would support something akin to an extension of the current Gloucestershire Moves programme.
- Whilst the Council has no issue with the expansion and development of the Cotswold Water Park, any large conferencing facility/hotel would be better placed near the urban core area of the county (i.e. near Gloucester, Cheltenham and the cyber park).

#### **4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations**

4.1 There was no obvious asset-based approach to the initial proposals put forward by the expert panel for consultation. A rebalancing of the vision away from purely physical infrastructure projects and towards strategies aimed at tackling the social and wellbeing challenges facing the county should provide more opportunity for taking asset based approaches in the future.

#### **5.0 Alternative Options Considered**

5.1 Council may choose not to submit a response. Given the potential significance of the matters under discussion for the future of our county, and that no response might be taken as indicating unqualified support for the proposals, this option is not recommended.

#### **6.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

6.1 The Council has a democratic mandate to express a view as to the vision for the future of the county to best meet the current and future needs of its residents.

#### **7.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

7.1 Leadership Gloucestershire will meet in the autumn to consider the feedback received through the consultation and the way forward.

#### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

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

#### **9.0 Legal Implications**

9.1 Not yet quantified.

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

#### **10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

10.1 Not yet quantified.

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

11.1 As the Council is responding to an externally-led consultation, a PIA screening stage was not completed.

## **12.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

12.1 Not yet quantified.

### Sustainability

12.2 Not yet quantified.

### Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 Not yet quantified.

### Press Release drafted/approved

12.4 Not appropriate.

**Background Documents:** A link to the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 consultation website can be found [here](#).

## Appendix A – Vision 2050 Ambitions and Projects

### Ambitions

#### **A magnet county**

We would like to see a growing working age population, by keeping and attracting more 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications, who want to live and work in the county.

#### **An innovative county**

We would like to see more businesses starting up, growing, and investing in research and innovation.

#### **A skilled county**

We would like to see more people with high-level skills and jobs in skilled occupations.

#### **A prosperous county**

We would like to see rising productivity and household income, offering higher living standards.

#### **An inclusive county**

We would like the economic and social benefits of growth to be felt by all.

#### **A healthy, happy county**

We would like people to have a good work/life balance and to see improved health and wellbeing.

#### **A connected county**

We would like to see improved transport and internet connections so that people and businesses can connect with each other more easily.

#### **A sustainable county**

We would like to see more efficient use of resources and more use of sustainable energy.

### Projects

#### **Super City**

Gloucester and Cheltenham could grow and regenerate by developing a third centre connecting the two communities to create a 'super city'.

#### **Cyber Park**

The development of a National Cyber Security Park, dedicated to cyber-related business and education development, is integral for the Super City.

#### **Regional Parks**

The Forest of Dean and the Severn Vale are two of the county's main assets, as well as the world-renowned Cotswolds Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB). We think they should be designated as Regional Parks, creating a wetlands area for flood management and investing in facilities.

#### **Lydney - Sharpness**

A new multi-purpose crossing between Lydney and Sharpness will create a single 'destination' with development potential for both, reflecting their individual cultures, landscapes, and heritage.

#### **Cotswold Airport**

An airport that can accommodate more air travel could be central to the county's economic success – facilitating higher value tourism, enhanced transport links, or as a base for drone technology.

#### **Cotswold Waterpark**

Cotswold Water Park could become a major tourism destination by redesigning the lake system, maintaining and expanding the range of leisure uses, and developing a 5-star hotel.

## **Appendix B – Possible draft Gloucester City Council response to the consultation**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Vision 2050 big conversation consultation. This response is sent on behalf of Gloucester City Council, following a resolution at its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> July. Gloucester City Council is the democratically elected council representing the people of the City of Gloucester, 125,000 residents and thousands of businesses and employees.

The Council welcomes and supports the aim of developing a long-term vision for the county of Gloucestershire, and has been a keen and active contributor to Vision 2050. As well as engaging internally with councillors and officers, we have also worked with local community groups, school and youth forums, business groups and other stakeholders to encourage them to engage in the big conversation and to express their views. This response captures where possible the views they have expressed back to us.

In summary, key messages from Gloucester City are as follows (with apologies that these do not fit neatly into the online consultation form structure):

- The Big Conversation has been a very worthwhile exercise, and communities are keen that it is the start of an ongoing open dialogue.
- July should not be seen as the end of discussion, and we should take enough time as is needed to develop a shared vision that will endure for thirty years.
- Whilst information on new delivery vehicles is helpful, form should follow function, and decisions on new delivery vehicles should await a clear, widely supported strategy.
- The eight proposed ambitions for the county are generally unarguable and were supported by all.
- In contrast, a number of the six projects tended to split opinion. It would be better to develop strategic plans around the eight ambitions, rather than singling out a few projects.
- Deliverables in these strategic plans need to address both social goals and key physical infrastructure.
- The ability to achieve employment aspirations was identified as the greatest positive influence on young people wanting to stay in the county. This requires a supportive industrial strategy, supportive local planning policies, underpinned by a primary/secondary/tertiary education system and skills strategy.
- A secondary identified driver to keep more young people in the county was '[fun/social] things to do'. An initiative that would help deliver this would be Gloucester's bid to become UK City of Culture 2025.
- The City Council does not support the idea within the super city project description of creating a 'new third centre' between Gloucester and Cheltenham.
- However, the City Council wants to work more closely with its JCS partners and others to achieve more ambitious economic growth outcomes, including greater connectivity and acting as a focus for sub-regional growth.
- The JCS provides a sound basis for a governance framework to take this idea forward.

- The City Council would support some form of improved mass transit (e.g. tram) system for the city region hub. It would also support improved safer cycle routes between the two places, and consideration of an accessible quality green linear park (for walking and cycling) between the two.
- The City Council supports the idea of focusing on 'cyber security' as an industrial strategy focus for the county.
- Gloucestershire Airport at Staverton will continue to be a key economic asset for the county and is a key enabler of the city region growth hub. The City Council does not believe that Gloucestershire could or should develop its own international airport.
- Improved connectivity with the Oxford-Cambridge growth arc is a key priority, and improved rail connectivity with other parts of the country would be supported.
- The City Council would support an ambition to increase physical activity and tackle obesity. To this end, we would support something akin to an extension of the current Gloucestershire Moves programme.
- Whilst the City Council has no issue with the expansion and development of the Cotswold Water Park, any large conferencing facility/hotel would be better placed near the urban core of the county.

Gloucester City Council looks forward to working with all of its partners and communities to help refine and take forward delivery of the Vision 2050.