

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	6 March 2019
Subject:	Regeneration Sites Update		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economy		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendix:	1. Regeneration Sites Update		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Cabinet on progress of the delivery of a number of regeneration sites, commonly referred to as the 'Hit-List' that have been identified by the Regeneration Advisory Board as requiring intervention to ensure they are either physically improved, or brought back into active economic use.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) progress made on a number of the sites identified in the Regeneration Sites Update attached at Appendix 1 be noted, and
- (2) the latest position in relation to 67-69 London Road and 100 Northgate Street continues to be monitored, and in the absence of any genuine progress a further report is brought back to Cabinet to explore the options open to Cabinet to bring about their regeneration.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Regeneration 'Hit-List' was created by the Leader of the Council and the City MP in anticipation of the Rugby World Cup coming to Gloucester in 2015. The intention was to recognise, and subsequently address, a collection of properties within the City Centre with the following issues:

- Unattractive frontages or facades that have a negative impact on the public realm
- Vacant property that, through deterioration over time, has left a clear 'void' on the high street that may have an impact on footfall and impressions on the City as being an attractive destination to visit
- A site in need of regeneration or redevelopment that an owner can not realise on their own

3.2 Since the Rugby World Cup the list has become a record for the Regeneration Advisory Board (RAB), which uses it to monitor a broad range of properties and sites across the City. The City Council also uses it internally in the ongoing delivery of the Regeneration & Economic Development Strategy, in which the delivery of smaller sites is a key objective. The list was recognised in a resolution of the Council on 28th September 2017:

This Council notes that one of its key objectives within the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy is to encourage the regeneration of vacant and derelict sites within the council's administrative area. Council notes that it has a list of regeneration sites on its 'regeneration hit list'. Council notes that the hitlist is regularly refreshed in consultation with the Regeneration Advisory Board and notes that councillors are also welcome to submit sites and buildings for consideration. Finally, Council requests that the regeneration hit list is monitored using the traffic light system.

3.3 Officers within the Council's Economic Development team of the City Growth and Delivery service try to keep in regular contact with property agents and property owners, in order to assist and encourage the site to come forward for development. Updates are provided to the RAB on a bi-monthly basis.

3.4 Appendix 1 provides a commentary on all such sites. Members will note that significant progress has been made within the city centre regeneration programme over recent months, with key sites being completed (eg Barbican student accommodation and Baker's Quay ph1), others continuing to be redeveloped (such as The Royal Mail Depot on Eastern Avenue and Baker's Quay ph2), and others securing planning consent (eg the Prison, Tanner's Hall, and the former KCs nightclub).

3.5 The progress demonstrates significant investor confidence in the city, albeit balanced by long term difficult sites and new vacancies arising in the City centre. Two specific properties stand out as long term difficulties that require more focused attention, namely, 67-69 London Road and 100 Northgate Street. A Resolution of the Council on 21st May 2018 focussed on 67-69 London Road, and invited the Council to intervene actively to acquire the property for residential regeneration:

This Council notes that both 67 and 69 London Road, former offices, have been empty for a number of years and that these buildings are continuing to deteriorate. They have become an eyesore on London Road, which is a conservation area and also one of the main routes into the city centre. This council also notes that the combined site is listed in the draft city plan as being suitable for residential development. This Council, therefore, asks the leader to consider acquiring 67 and 69 London Road, either alone or by working with partners, for a residential regeneration project. This Council

also agrees that the City Council should take advice on the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the site if reasonable purchase terms cannot be agreed by negotiation with the current landowner.

- 3.6 The regeneration sites list supplied is neither an exhaustive nor fixed list, and new entries are added to the list on a rolling basis as and when requested. All Councillors are invited to nominate additions to the list, and these will be submitted to the RAB for discussion and inclusion.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Do nothing- the Regeneration Sites Hit List is a useful tool for both the RAB and the City Council to monitor progress on a number of key sites within the City, and where necessary directly intervene. Without this, sites requiring critical intervention may be overlooked and the potential benefit their regeneration and reuse could bring to the City may be lost.

- 5.2 It will also directly impact the ongoing delivery of the Regeneration & Economic Development Strategy.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1. To keep Members informed of the latest position with regard to the regeneration of key sites in the City and to focus attention on particularly difficult sites.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None directly arising from this Report. Where a specific Council action is required to progress a particular site, this will be the subject of a financial assessment to inform any decision making.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 None directly arising from this report but as set out under financial implications, any specific action by the Council will take into account legal implications.

9.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 9.1 The people of Gloucester will directly benefit from those buildings identified being brought back into active use, or made to look more visually appealing, as it will improve the townscape and overall environment of the City Centre, giving the impression the City is a vibrant location. There are no safeguarding implications of the report.

10.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 10.1 The regeneration of key properties across the City creates employment and business opportunities, and contributes to an enhanced sense of civic pride in the built environment. This may have a beneficial impact on antisocial behaviour.

Sustainability

- 10.2 The regeneration and redevelopment of land and property reduces the City's dependence on undeveloped sites to meet its housing, employment and growth needs.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 10.3 None

Background Documents:

Appendix: Regeneration Hit List, January 2019