

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 June 2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>City Centre Commission</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</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>None</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to seek approval to the establishment of a City Centre Commission for Gloucester;

### 2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) The Council invites the Dean of Gloucester, the Very Reverend Stephen Lake, to establish a City Centre Commission for the purpose of developing and overseeing the delivery of a 10 Year Vision for the City Centre
- (2) The Regeneration Advisory Board be replaced by City Centre Commission
- (3) A budget of £10,000 be made available from the Regeneration Reserve to support the administration of the Commission during 2020/21
- (4) Cabinet receives an annual progress report on the City Centre Commission and, subject to satisfactory progress, consider a further annual grant of up to £10,000 to support the work of the Commission

### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 In March 2013, the City Council established the Regeneration Advisory Board (RAB) The role of the RAB being to:
- (i) advise the Council, both Members and officers on matters relating to the regeneration of the City
  - (ii) comment on whether regeneration proposals are consistent with the vision for the City, and to contribute to the evolution of that vision
  - (iii) to act as a forum for consultation on regeneration related matters

- (iv) to reflect the views of residents and other stakeholders in relation to regeneration related matters
- (v) to consider and suggest options and help obtain resources for the regeneration of the City
- (vi) to monitor progress of the City's regeneration.
- (vii) to invite and receive presentations from developers.

3.2 The RAB has also had a significant role in the formation and implementation of the Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy 2016 – 2021 ([https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1378/regeneration\\_economic\\_development\\_strategy\\_2016\\_2021.pdf](https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1378/regeneration_economic_development_strategy_2016_2021.pdf)). This has resulted in many significant successes including:

- (i) The redevelopment of Bakers Quay
- (ii) New student accommodation at Blackfriars
- (iii) Planning permission granted for the redevelopment of Kings Quarter
- (iv) A new, award winning Transport Hub

3.3 Since 2013, it has continued to meet bi-monthly and maintain regular engagement with members from all parties, developers, business organisations and individual businesses under the constant and valued leadership of Stephen Lake.

3.4 For the past 12 months, the RAB has reflected on its future role and is of the view that in its current guise, it has probably run its course. Perhaps a more broad ranging partnership with a different focus is required to support the City Centre in particular in achieving the Vision established in our 2019 Future High Streets proposal. Namely:

*“By 2025, our city centre will be transformed from one based on a traditional retail offer serving a relatively local population to one that is repopulated with residents, workers and visitors enjoying a variety of experiences throughout the day and night, building on the city's rich heritage and the diversity of its culture. It will be the place the city comes together to access services and participate in civic and community activities and events. Gloucester city centre will be a place where innovation and heritage go hand in hand and is accessible, inclusive and welcoming for all.”*

3.5 A Vision that is all the more relevant in the current climate.

#### **4.0 A City Centre Commission for Gloucester**

4.1 In the second of his reviews of the high street (<http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GrimseyReview2.pdf>) Bill Grimsey, the former Chief Executive of a number of national retailers, identified 25 recommendations for that a city centre should consider. Prime amongst these was the establishment of a Commission to undertake a high profile review of the future of its local centres. Each Commission to be drawn from local stakeholders and experienced practitioners and collect evidence from a variety of sources to support the development of a long term strategy and delivery plan, referred to in the Review as a 20 year Business Plan.

4.2 We have a vision, but the world has changed even more since Covid-19. We can't go back. We need a small group who represent the different constituents and stakeholders of the City, plus some radical thinkers and thought leaders who can design a roadmap that is innovative and radical yet grounded in reality; and who have

the confidence of stakeholders whilst being sufficiently independent to challenge the status quo.

- 4.3 The City Centre Commission would replace the RAB and membership would be by invitation only and restricted to a relatively small group of individuals and organisations that share a common purpose.
- 4.4 The proposal is to invite the Very Reverend Stephen Lake, Dean of Gloucester to lead the Commission. During his time leading the RAB, the Dean has consistently demonstrated independence and is widely respected by all sectors.
- 4.5 The Dean is to be invited, in consultation with the Head of Place and Leader, to establish the formal terms of reference as well as identifying membership. Its initial work being to use the Vision identified at 3.4 as a guiding principle to develop a 10 Year Business Plan for the City Centre

## **5.0 Social Value Considerations**

- 5.1 The work of the Commission will be guided by the recently adopted Social Value Policy for the City Council. This will be augmented by the social value ambitions of all those organisations that have a stake in the success of the city centre.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 6.1 Alternative options have been considered as follows:
  - (i) Retain the RAB – this has been dismissed as it was universally felt that the RAB had successfully served its purpose and it was time to refocus activity on the future direction of the city rather than the delivery of an existing regeneration strategy which expires in March 2021
  - (ii) Utilise existing partnership to perform the function of the Commission – the two State of the City events revealed an ambition for a single group to draw together the interests in the City to support the delivery of such an holistic vision. The absence of such a group would be addressed by adopting the Commission model
- 6.2 It should be noted that the current Covid-19 situation has resulted in the formation of a number of new groups to address the economic, social and environmental recovery of the City and County. It is not intended for the Commission to play any role in the short term recovery of the City. However, it is acknowledged that there is likely to be an overlap of individuals and organisations represented in both activities.
- 6.3 Equally, the Commission is not intended to have any implied management/supervisory responsibility for any other organisation or partnership in the City. The relationship will be defined by the Commission holding to account any partner responsible for the delivery of any specific action in the Business Plan.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 To develop a radically different way of working and working with partners to realise the vision in 3.4. A time bound Commission will be able to design a business plan working with key organisations and individuals in the City but also providing challenge and transformation.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 A request is being made for a £10,000 contribution to the administration costs of the Commission for 2020/21. This budget will not be used to cover the time of Council officers engaged with the Commission but to allow the staff of the Dean of Gloucester to actively support the work of the Commission.
- 8.2 Such costs can be met from the Regeneration Reserve for 2020/21.

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The City Centre Commission will be not be part of the City Council but a separate body with no decision- making powers or status within the constitution.
- 9.2 The £10,000 referred to in this report will be a grant payment by the City Council, the terms of which should be set out in writing.

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

- 10.1 The main risks arising from this Report relate to:
- (i) the inability of the Dean of Gloucester in collaboration with the Leader and Head of Place to define a clear Terms of Reference for the Commission
  - (ii) the inability of the Dean of Gloucester in collaboration with the Leader and Head of Place to attract suitably qualified members to the Commission
  - (iii) overlap of purpose with other existing partnerships in the City
  - (iv) failure of the Commission to agree a 10 Year Business Plan for the City Centre
  - (v) loss of focus and credibility of the Commission given the long term nature of the role
- 10.2 It is suggested that these risks are initially mitigated by the experience of the Dean of Gloucester in leading the RAB and the evident desire of partner organisations to engage in such activity.
- 10.3 It is proposed that Cabinet receive a progress report six months after the first meeting of the Commission and annually thereafter.

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

- 11.1 The actions proposed in this Report will benefit residents and businesses through the co-ordinated repurposing of the City Centre.

## **12.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

- 12.1 The Commission will consider all aspects of community safety including the principles of designing out crime.

### Sustainability

- 12.2 The Business Plan developed by the Commission will consider sustainability in the context of the re-purposing of our City Centre.

Staffing and Trade Union

12.3 None

**Background Documents:**

Report to Council 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013