

Gloucester City Council

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| Meeting: | Cabinet | Date: | 7 December 2022 |
| Subject: | Gloucester Community Building Collective | | |
| Report Of: | Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | No | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
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| Appendices: | 1. Vision, Mission and Operating Principles for Community Building in Gloucester | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the City's successful community building activities and to set out future steps for community ownership of the Gloucester Community Building Collective Community Interest Company.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) the significant success of the GCBC in delivering community building activities in Gloucester and developing as a mature and financially sustainable organization be noted
- (2) the next steps in the development of the Collective to become a community led organisation from December 2022 be endorsed
- (3) the Council withdraw from sole Membership and the Membership Agreement
- (4) authority be delegated to the Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and Council Solicitor to Implement these changes.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is about growing sustainable communities, building connections between people that live in the area and empowering people to take action on things that are important to them – which will

often be different to what statutory/public sector agencies perceive to be important. ABCD is not about setting up new services or groups, although people may come together informally as a result of building connections, but it can contribute to or complement the priorities of statutory partners. This is because building stronger communities supports people's feeling of safety, well-being and health more broadly. The focus of community building is not on providing specific outputs but about providing stronger community connections which, in turn, will provide increases in wellbeing and health. The council's commitment to ABCD was written into the previous council plan (2017-2020) with an aspiration to become a Centre of Excellence and remains in the current Council Plan. Although we recognise that there might be a financial case for this way of working, our commitment to ABCD is based on the belief that people live more fulfilling lives when they have the power to shape their own outcomes and change things that matter to them. For communities to thrive, they need to be given the tools and resources to find solutions that work for them and for the places where they live

- 3.2** In October 2019, Cabinet resolved to establish a Community Interest Company (Gloucester Community Building Collective) with the Council as the sole Member, noting the Council's commitment to the work and the national reputation which has been built including work with Key Cities, Centre for Public Impact and the NESTA 'Upstream Collaborative'.

GCBC achievements to date

- 3.3** The Gloucester Community Building Collective C.I.C was established as an independent organisation in December 2019. Since then, it has provided community building activities in the following areas:

- Barton and Tredworth
- Kingsholm (and a small amount of time in Tuffley)
- Linden
- Elmbridge/Longlevens
- Abbeydale
- Coney Hill (Younger people)
- Matson, Robinswood and White City (Younger people)

In addition, it has secured funding for a digital community builder working across the City. Future plans for which bids have been submitted to statutory and other funders include community builders in Westgate and Tuffley. A community builder is due to start working with All Nations in February.

- 3.4** The company has been successful in securing funding from a range of funders including NHS, County Council adult social care (digital) and Public Health, The National Lottery, Gloucestershire Community Foundation and Active Gloucestershire. It has submitted two sets of year end accounts and has secure funding taking it in to 2023/24.

- 3.5** The organisation has been very successful in establishing new and innovative partnerships to deliver in each area, working with schools, churches, community groups, Young Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Constabulary and others. It is a member of the Integrated Locality Partnership for Gloucester and is seen as a respected community partner contributing to plans for Gloucester in a number of areas, including The City Commission. It also hosts a peer-to-peer community of practice for anyone in the City interested in strengths based working.
- 3.6** The Members Agreement sets out the responsibilities of the City Council and the Company.

Developing the model – a phased approach

- 3.7** The Cabinet report of October 2019 ([here](#)) outlined a phased approach and the Company, led by the Board of Directors, is working on the evolution to community led ownership, albeit delayed by the Covid pandemic.
- 3.8** Phases 1 and 2 outlined in the October 2021 Report are complete. This report relates to phase 3 which is outlined below:

Phase 3 (October 2021 – on-going) – community led with evolutionary purpose- In progress

Project established and governed by community. Financial independence. High visibility locally, county-wide and nationally.

- Strong Governance rooted in communities; Gloucester City Council no longer the largest shareholder but a core and key supporter in its role as local leader and place shaper
 - Staffing structure in place – a likely mix of secondments/placements and staff directly employed by the legal entity
 - Purpose continues to evolve – but grounded in ABCD principles
 - Organisational arrangements for management are maturing
 - Financial independence
 - Explore opportunities for ‘traded services’
 - Strong visibility throughout Gloucester
- 3.9** Some elements of phase 3 above are complete. Work has begun with an expert organisation (Practical Governance) to help outline the final stages in the journey to community ownership.

Moving from a single Member model

- 3.10** Since establishment in December 2019, the Gloucester Community Building Collective has had a single Member or owner, Gloucester City Council. Now that a stable Board of Directors, with representatives from across the city, the single Member model can be withdrawn, with all Directors becoming Members. This is consistent with the Council’s vision for community building work to be led by the community itself.

3.11 The following points must be noted:

- No staff of the Company are employed by the City Council. All are directly employed by the Company or seconded by other partners.
- The financial position of the Company is positive, with oversight from the Board of Directors.
- The City Council will be in a position to completely withdraw from the company when the time is right, leaving the Company in the hands of other joint Members.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 This project supports the vision for Asset Based Community Development in Gloucester

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 N/A

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The Council could remain as single shareholder member but this would not deliver its vision of moving towards community ownership.

6.2 The Council could agree to a shared ownership model but with different shareholders from the Board of Directors. This would delay progress and potentially create uncertainty for the Company.

6.3 The City Council could withdraw entirely but this would cause uncertainty for the Company, and would also create the risk for the Council that the direction of travel changes and does not deliver the work that the Council set it up to deliver for the community.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 Community Building is fundamentally community led. By setting up an independent CIC, with shared ownership across a variety of stakeholders, we broaden the buy-in and give Community Builders greater ability to work across the whole City with everyone, rather than being placed within organisations with specific objectives (inclusion, disability, health, etc).

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 The Council will take steps to move to a shared Membership Model with the current Board becoming Members, as well as the Council continuing to be a Member.

8.2 The Council remains a shareholder and on the Board of Directors for a period of time to ensure stability for the Company.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1** The City Council has previously contributed a small amount of funding to support the Company. The money plan forecasts that this financial support ends in 2023/24. However, the Council may wish to provide some further funding to the company in future years to support the delivery of the Council's objectives, which would be taken forward within the usual budgetary planning processes and should be done via the appropriate procurement method.

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

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1** The Council is empowered to set up the company by section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 – “the general power of competence”. Although wide ranging in what it permits authorities to do, the power is circumscribed by any legal provisions applicable to the proposed activity (see paragraphs 10.2 to 10.5 below).
- 10.2** The Articles of Association contain “asset lock” provisions which ensures that the company's assets on dissolution are not distributed for the benefit of any individuals but continue to be used for the wider public good. The assets can only be distributed to Gloucester Round Table Charitable Trust Fund.
- 10.3** With regard to Phase 3 of the timetable any secondments should be documented by formal agreements to avoid any possibility of staff transferring to the company by operation of TUPE (The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) once the company transfers its governance to the community.
- 10.4** The Council's nominated Directors will be required to comply with their duties under the Companies Act 2006.

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

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1** As the Council will no longer be the single Member, the risk to the Council will be shared with others and hence reduced.
- 11.2** The risk for conflict may be increased as a result of the Directors also becoming Shareholders. Therefore, the need for strict Governance procedures will be required to ensure that Shareholders and Directors are supported in understanding the duties of their roles.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1** This project is fundamentally inclusive and aims to work with all residents in all wards over the 10 year period.
- 12.2** The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 This project is expected to have a positive impact on community safety over the 10 year period and research suggests that this will be the case

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None.

Background Documents:

Appendix 1- Gloucester Community Building Collective Annual Report can be found [here](#)