

Gloucester's City Plan 2031
Shaping Gloucester's Regeneration Journey
February 2012

Part 1
Context and Key Development Principles
Consultation Document

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What is Gloucester's City Plan?

Gloucester is a transforming and growing city and these are exciting times. The City Plan will look to continue the City's regeneration journey by providing the development framework to guide the future growth predicted for the City to the year 2031. It will become a central part of Gloucester's new Local Development Plan.

The City Plan is also a key delivery vehicle for Gloucester's Vision which sets out the city's future aspirations for its people. The Vision for Gloucester is:

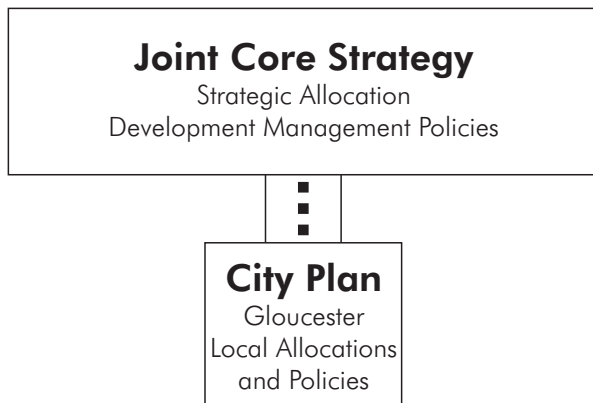
"The Partnership Board supports focus on the economy and our communities expressed by our residents. We will work to encourage sustainable economic growth for the City's expanding population by driving forward its regeneration programme. This will strengthen the City, particularly its centre and make the most of our infrastructure."

The aim of this City Plan is to identify where and how growth will come forward within the City boundary to deliver the City Vision and the housing and employment requirements set out within the strategic Joint Core Strategy* (JCS) document. It will also provide a framework for managing and enhancing the City's historic and natural environment including open spaces, areas of recreation, leisure and environmental protection. It is important that the plan's strategy and identified sites all work towards delivering the benefits associated with a growing City and support its ongoing regeneration.

The City Plan is being prepared alongside the Joint Core Strategy which together will provide the statutory planning tools to support development activity in the City until 2031. The

*The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the strategic planning document sitting above the City Plan which will establish growth requirements for the City to 2031 and is being prepared jointly with Tewkesbury and Cheltenham authorities.

Joint Core Strategy will provide the strategic housing and employment requirements for Gloucester with the City Plan sitting beneath it setting out how these requirements will be delivered through specific development sites.



Gloucester has a positive future ahead. It has a strong, diverse and growing community, a Council and community fully committed to the City’s growth and regeneration, strong partnerships working together to improve the City and development opportunities to drive forward the regeneration of the City. Taken together these elements provide a strong platform for the next exciting phase to begin. The City Plan will help co-ordinate this and establish a long term development framework for the City to 2031.

Gloucester’s Challenges

The following challenges have been identified through work undertaken to date and all need to be taken forward and addressed through the City Plan. These are not listed in any order of importance and are all key to delivering a successful City:

- **There is a need to raise the profile, image and overall attractiveness of Gloucester including a need to improve gateways into and around the City.** Gateways, including Bristol Road, Westgate Gyratory, the Railway Triangle, the gate streets, and the bus station all need to be improved where development opportunities present

themselves. In addition to improving these gateways and bringing forward development sites within the City it is important to improve the quality of pedestrian connections between development sites and the quality of streetscape. There are large areas of undeveloped land which sever the historic city core from the waterfront, the docks and residential areas of the City. Development sites need to function together and provide high quality linkages between key areas of the City. The design and layout of these areas is also important to ensure that development sites all work together to fulfill the comprehensive regeneration sought for the City.

- **Linked to the challenge above, there is a need to increase and make best use of the City's tourism and culture offer.** Gloucester attracts 5.9 million visitors each year with an annual spend of £207 million. However, 59% of visitors in 2011 said that the City did not meet their expectations. Many people stated it as a poor shopping destination with a lack of high quality places to eat. There is, therefore, a need to capitalise upon opportunities presented within the City to encourage more people into Gloucester, particularly by improving the City Centre and promoting areas such as the Cathedral, The Waterways Museum, Gloucester City Museum and Art Gallery, Gloucester Quays as well as sporting facilities of regional and national status across the City to encourage more attractions into Gloucester and improve the visitor experience.

- **The City needs to protect and enhance the core shopping area of the City Centre and raise its retail ranking.** Gloucester is establishing itself as a retail/shopping destination and there is significant retail investor interest in the City. Key regeneration schemes, particularly Kings Quarter will need to be secured and supported by local residents to raise the City’s profile and protect the central core shopping area.

- **There is a need to accommodate a growing population by providing a good range and mix of high quality housing to attract and retain more highly skilled workers and support current residents.**

Gloucester's growing population provides exciting opportunities for the City going forward, particularly as 60% of this predicted growth will be within the working age range. However in terms of existing homes, the City has the second lowest proportion of detached dwellings and the highest proportion of terraced housing compared to the other Gloucestershire districts. House prices are also the lowest in the County. Dwellings in Gloucester are heavily weighted towards the lower tax bands, with 30% in band A with the proportion of dwellings in the highest tax bands F to H (representing the top-of-the-market prestige homes) being the lowest of all Gloucestershire's districts. There is therefore a need to match the needs of the growing population with the provision of the right kind of homes, particularly affordable homes as well as more executive family accommodation.

- **Gloucester has a significant number of development sites which present positive opportunities. However, some of these are heavily constrained and in current market conditions are difficult to bring forward.**

The City Plan needs to ensure that all sites are deliverable and will come forward in the time period of the plan. It needs to deliver 6,500 homes within the City's administrative boundaries to the year 2031 along with an appropriate amount of employment land and land for other facilities to support its population.

- **To support economic growth the City Plan needs to ensure it delivers enough employment land in the right locations to meet a variety of needs in respect of the quality and location of development sites.**

Gloucester's economy needs to evolve by accommodating, the requirements of existing businesses and future investors and address unemployment levels which for certain areas in the City are higher than the national average.

The City has an over-reliance on the public sector for job provision (30%) which will be affected by the current and forecasted cuts in public expenditure. It therefore needs to diversify its economic base and support its important manufacturing sector, including high tech manufacturing, and improve its future resilience as it continues to grow knowledge based industries. Educational achievement is also low in the City and businesses report skills gaps within the current workforce which needs to be addressed. In addition, the City must improve its business density rates, its business start up performance and its business survival rates; and reduce the number of people claiming benefit and address worklessness. Evidence shows that the City has a lack of Grade A office and high technology and engineering space and would benefit from a Science and Technology Park in a high profile, accessible location. This will be key to delivering economic growth and ensure the forecasted young and working age population has the opportunity to live, work and spend within the City rather than having to commute elsewhere to find work or leaving the City altogether.

- **In addressing the challenge above, economic growth needs also to assist in regenerating the more deprived areas of the City to bring forward improved housing, access to jobs, services and open space.**

Gloucester is made up of a variety of well defined cohesive neighbourhoods. Gloucester is ranked 118 out of 354 in the deprivation index for local authority areas in England. Four of its wards (Podsmead, Kingsholm and Wotton, Matson and Robinswood and Westgate) are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. In addition, there are a number of areas in Gloucester that feature in the most affluent 10%. These include Longlevens and Hucclecote. Gloucester needs to improve the prospects and overall health and well being of residents in deprived neighbourhoods to foster a sense of community and togetherness throughout the City.

- **It is vitally important to provide new affordable housing to meet needs in the City, however, delivering affordable housing in Gloucester is a challenge on brownfield sites.**

In December 2011 there were 1,615 single persons aged 16-24 actively seeking affordable social housing in Gloucester City through Gloucestershire Homeseeker Choice Based Lettings scheme. Between October 2010 and August 2011, 171 young people approached the Council directly as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

- **Meeting the pressure for the growth and development needs of the City must be delivered whilst also protecting and improving Gloucester's valuable natural environment and built heritage.**

This should be positively improved wherever possible, particularly in Conservation Areas, areas of open space, flood plain and areas of sensitive landscape.

Gloucester's Strategy for Dealing with the Challenges: Going for Growth

The population projections show that Gloucester is going to grow. Therefore, embracing the City's potential to expand and improve its economy offers an exciting prospect, particularly where the benefits of well planned growth can address the challenges already referred to above. Gloucester's intention is to drive forward its principal role as the main focus for jobs, homes and development within the County whilst also maximising opportunities to protect and enhance its important environmental and heritage assets. This will all be achieved in full consideration of the constraints placed upon the City by the flood plain.

To ensure that growth benefits the City it is vital that the City Centre is supported and regenerated into a destination people want to live in, work in and come to shop in. The priority for the City Plan's development strategy is therefore to continue driving forward the

Council's plans to regenerate the City Centre and increase the number of people using it which in turn will act as the catalyst to wider regeneration of the City, particular in the more deprived wards.

The City Plan strategy is therefore adopting a City Centre first approach to development to regenerate and enhance the City Centre experience, raise its retail ranking position, and increase its attractiveness to the market. To achieve this, the City's retail offer, economic base, cultural facilities, quality of connections, visitor management and public realm will all be improved. Redeveloping sites including Kings Square, Greyfriars and Blackfriars will all be priorities and key to delivering this. The attraction of large retailers will, however, need to be balanced with provision of smaller niche retailing, independent shops and themed street markets to provide the variety of experience which Gloucester is seeking. Westgate Street linked to opportunities at Blackfriars and on to the Docks and Quays provides the ideal location for this type of development.

To support the wider growth of the City a mix of housing types will be provided as well as a variety of employment opportunities to meet identified needs. Deliverable land will be provided in the right locations to assist with the diversification of the City's employment base and to attract robust and diverse growth sectors. The City Plan will promote development on suitable and available sites within the City including larger sites like Railway corridor as well as other smaller sites. An employment focus will be retained within the Canal Corridor and work will be undertaken to enhance the density and quality of development in this area. Flexible space for small businesses will be sought, offices promoted and support given for innovation and business start ups. Support will also need to be given to develop and diversify the workforce including working closely with higher education providers to look for opportunities to retain and attract skilled graduates/workers.

Sites within the administrative boundary of the City will be identified for housing. However, to meet all Gloucester's growth needs, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy, additional land on the periphery of the City's boundary is required. This peripheral growth as identified in the Joint Core Strategy to the north, where the City's infrastructure allows, will need to be phased and support the continued regeneration of the City. It will need to be located in places that are well integrated and connected to the services, facilities and job opportunities available within the City Centre. Integrated growth is key to ensuring growth benefits the City. To achieve this future growth, and as identified in the Joint Core Strategy, growth is best directed to the north of the City rebalancing the urban area which has over the years become artificially distorted with growth southwards along the A38. This direction of growth has led to some communities south of the City Centre feeling isolated and unconnected due to their significant distance from the services and facilities provided in the City. Perpetuating or extending this direction of growth for the urban area will exacerbate this situation and would be incompatible with the principles of sustainability.

Development to the north of the City is more accessible to the City Centre and has more in the way of available services compared to the south e.g. hospitals, employment, retail, libraries etc. Development to the north would create a more integrated settlement pattern, can be accessed by a variety of non car based modes and will support and sustain the regeneration and expansion of City Centre shopping and facilities. This supports the principle of the City Centre first approach being delivered through the strategy of the plan.

Development pressure within the City also needs to be balanced against protection of the City's built and natural environment, its flood plains and ensuring protection of its built heritage. Areas of open space and allotment provision will be improved to encourage healthier communities and protect biodiversity. The plans

proposals map will identify areas for protection including sensitive landscapes. This will include areas around Robinswood Hill, the River Severn flood plain and Alney Island. The opportunity around Gloucester Quays needs to continue building on its links with its waterscape. The City needs to look at further promoting its existing attractions and expanding its portfolio of new attractions to increase its appeal as a destination to visit.

All development within the City will seek to deliver well designed, integrated and sustainable communities that are well connected to the City Centre and its facilities and services. Regeneration opportunities within more deprived areas of the City will be progressed where resources permit. Important community facilities will be retained and enhanced with new facilities provided where needed.

Key Development Principles to Deliver the Strategy

- 1.** To ensure development contributes to deliver a transforming City which brings regeneration benefits, promotes sustainable development and reduces the need for greenfield development by making the most efficient use of previously developed land and buildings.
- 2.** To ensure that delivery of growth is supported by necessary infrastructure provision including transport, schools, medical and health centres, community facilities and youth provision.
- 3.** To continue the City's longstanding strategy as set out in previous planning documents of delivering development on a City Centre first approach. This will be delivered through the primacy of Kings Quarter redevelopment. This forms the City's priority regeneration site for delivering a step change in its retail performance, an improved City Centre environment. It will also act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the City Centre.

Development will not be supported where it will have a demonstrable negative impact on the City Centre and its regeneration.

4. To improve the health and prosperity of the City Centre and other designated centres by ensuring the provision of a balanced network of District and Local Centres which provide a range of shops and services for local people including the creation of new centres in appropriate locations that would not detract from the primacy and function of the City Centre.

5. To deliver a City to live in that provides for the growth of sustainable communities where the right choice, balance and mix of housing types is provided to meet the range of needs and aspirations of local people, including those in need of affordable housing and higher value housing. To provide for this within the current target of delivering at least 325 new dwellings in the City every year. Additional homes shall be provided through well integrated urban extensions on the City's edge.

6. To deliver a City that encourages and facilitates inward and indigenous investment and attracts innovative growth sectors, creates high and stable levels of economic growth and high quality and skilled jobs for the local population to reduce unemployment, particularly among the long term unemployed.

7. To improve educational attainment by ensuring that all residents have good access to learning establishments.

8. To deliver a City to enjoy by protecting and improving the City's leisure, recreation and environmental assets. Valuable heritage, areas of open space, allotment provision, nature conservation, sensitive landscapes and areas of recreation will be improved and protected, particularly Alney Island, the setting of Robinswood Hill and areas of urban fringe. The wide range of leisure and sporting opportunities that the City already enjoys will be supported

along with the development of a vibrant and safe evening and night time economy to deliver a city which appeals to all age groups and encourages a greater proportion of Gloucester's visitors to stay overnight.

9. To deliver a City to be proud of and tackle poverty and deprivation in the worst affected areas of the City.

10. To reduce crime and fear of crime by ensuring that community safety is a fundamental principle of all new development.

11. To ensure that development minimizes its impact on climate change through design and meeting building standards. The protection and enhancement of flood plains and their natural environment will be key as well as improving air quality, reducing traffic congestion and encouraging less use of the car, while adequate parking in new development will be provided. Development will be promoted that encourages greater use of walking, cycling and public transport through the integration of homes, jobs and services.

12. To improve the health of Gloucester's residents by improving access to informal and formal green spaces thereby providing opportunities for people to pursue healthy activities and lifestyles.

13. To deliver a connected City and ensure that all new development achieves a high standard of design, which reflects the local context and takes advantage of any opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and is well integrated with the City and its surrounding countryside.

Next Steps

Part 2: Places and Sites

Part two will identify sites to meet the City's growth requirements. There will be a proposal map for the city and in addition the city will be

broken down into areas. For each area there will be explanation of issues, vision for the area, character analysis, approach, map and list of allocations in each area, plus an inset map. Each allocation will be linked to a concept statement which will identify planning principles for key sites.

Part 3: Policies

Part three will provide generic policies to guide development. These will take account of the emerging National Planning Policy Framework, the 2006 Local Development Framework policies and the policy framework for the Joint Core Strategy.

Part 4: Delivery

Part 4 will focus on delivery and provision of an infrastructure plan to support the growth agenda for the City as well as monitoring to measure success in delivery of the plan's outcomes. In addition this section will outline City Plan's role in neighbourhood planning.

Appendix 1: Gloucester's Story

Gloucester is a historic city which has evolved over the past 2000 years from a Roman town, military port, centre of trade and administration, place of religious worship, royal City and a place of industry. All of these previous roles are evidenced in the City that exists today, both in terms of its diverse population, its natural and physical environment and richness of its heritage. The strong historical, industrial and administrative roles of the City are still evident today with it being the administrative centre of Gloucestershire and the largest economic hub in the County. Almost a quarter of all Gloucestershire's jobs are located within the City.

Environmentally, the City is extremely rich and diverse with nature reserves, areas of conservation and accessible open countryside all within a short distance of the City Centre.

This is also complemented by parks and areas of open space and recreation for formal and informal play. The Council takes a lead role in ensuring that the City's environment is managed and enhanced for the people of Gloucester and importantly for the natural habitat itself. It manages three areas of conservation at Alney Island Nature Reserve, Hucclecote Hay Meadows and Quedgeley Nature Reserve. In addition Gloucester has significant sporting pedigree with Rugby at Kingsholm, GL1 Leisure Centre, premier tennis centre at Oxstalls, an indoor climbing centre and dry ski slope

Gloucester's population has grown from its Roman origins to the City it is today; from an early settlement recorded in the Domesday Book 1086 as having 3,000 people to an estimated population of 120,500 people in 2010. Between 1992 and 2009 the city grew at a rate of some 1,000 people annually. Looking forward the City is predicted to grow significantly to a population of 151,700 by 2031. The drivers of this are the critical trends in the City's growing young and working age population. Estimates published in 2010 indicate that the population will comprise 60% of people within the working age (20-64yrs) and 26% within the ages of 0-19yrs. This is a healthy profile for the present and future and it is predicted to drive forward the growth of Gloucester and in turn the County.

Alongside growth in young and working age people, the City is also expected to experience a significant increase in the 65+ age group reflecting national trends as the population grows older in the UK. Overall this provides a healthy balance range of future age groups for Gloucester as it drives forward the population of the county. These figures relate to the Gloucester only and do not include the growth of population from locations on the edge of the City within Tewkesbury and Stroud. Together these areas will also increase the population demands of the wider Gloucester area.

Gloucester is a multi cultural city with a black and minority ethnic population of 9.8% which is almost the same as Bristol and illustrates the rich diversity of Gloucester.

Gloucester now accommodates some 53,400 dwellings and is successfully continuing to provide new homes for people even during recession times. If trends are to continue with the local population serving as a major driver of household growth, it is predicted that the City will grow to some 70,000 households in 2031.

While the City of Gloucester has been and continues to be a focus for population growth, it has also been an economic driving force within the UK since Roman times. In the 1700s the City's importance as an agricultural, ecclesiastical and administrative centre was being developed. This was expanded through the 1800s where Gloucester fulfilled a key role for the UK as an industrial centre with its good communications and strategic position. The Gloucester and Sharpness canal was key in this and opened up links for the inland water areas of the country to access a major seaport. The railways were also important for Gloucester as were links to aircraft manufacturing and it was home to the Gloster Aircraft Company Limited. These industries are still in evidence today and have planted the seeds for the economy of today's Gloucester.

Over the last few years the City has achieved substantial gains by attracting evermore higher value businesses and highly skilled people particularly around the knowledge based sector focused on advanced engineering and finance industries. In 2008, 24% of Gloucester's employees were employed in the Knowledge Economy, which increased by 8.4% since 2004 (ABI 2004-2008, ONS). In addition, over the last 24 months over 230 new or expanded businesses have been secured for the City.

In terms of moving forward and future employment, it is predicted that Gloucester will maintain its central role within the County with employment projections expected to generate at

least an additional 2,900 jobs in the period 2009 to 2020. The main rises are expected in the Knowledge, Manufacturing and Creative Industry Sectors.

In taking the City forward Gloucester has benefited from a £1 billion heritage led development programme which was established as a public private sector partnership to align regeneration alongside core development strategies. The programme has already secured £429 million of private investment to date. This includes the regeneration of Gloucester Docks, the Gloucester Quays Designer Outlet Centre, new homes and cafés and linkages from the City Centre to the Quays.

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