

## **Cheltenham Borough Council**

**Cabinet - 7<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**Council - 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

### **Civic Pride**

#### **Joint report of the Cabinet Members for Environment and Finance & Culture**

#### **1. Executive Summary and recommendation**

- 1.1** Following significant preparatory work, the Council's Civic Pride initiative is now ready to move from the investigation, analysis and planning policy stages to the delivery stage. The approach being taken by the Council will be to present outline development briefs to the market, supported by the recently agreed Supplementary Planning Document. This will ensure that as many options as possible are considered and, by doing so, the Council will secure the best chance of delivering the overall vision and individual project aspirations.
- 1.2** At this stage, it is important that Cabinet and Council endorse some key principles and to broadly understand, based upon current best estimates, how the overall project may be funded. This report outlines the journey so far, considers some of the key issues and proposes funding scenarios based upon a number of options.
- 1.3 We therefore recommend that Cabinet / Council:**
- 1.3.1** **Agree, in principle, to the closure of Royal Well subject to acceptable alternative traffic arrangements being agreed by Gloucestershire County Council. County Council support is subject to the outcome of the revised transport modelling which is currently being considered. The closure will provide the catalyst for the improvement of Boots Corner and maximise the redevelopment potential of Royal Well.**
- 1.3.2** **Agree, in principle, to the relocation of the Council's main offices (currently located in the Municipal Offices, Promenade) to Portland Street, subject to the outcome of market testing and subsequent approval by Council. This will involve market testing the relocation of the Council offices along with the police authority including an option of providing additional space to accommodate potential voluntary sector or other partners.**
- 1.3.3** **Approve, in principle, the outline funding proposals as a basis for progressing the project subject to market testing of the Civic Pride development sites (i.e. options 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b). All options assume the potential use of £8m from the sale of Regent Arcade. It should be noted that current projections of these options do not place an additional financial burden on the council tax payer and may improve future revenue streams by between £95,000 and £232,000 per annum on completion of all phases of the project.**

- 1.3.4 Agree, in principle, to the investment in Grosvenor Terrace car park and the electronic car park management system as referred to in the report subject to more detailed costings for final approval by Council.**
- 1.3.5 Approve the establishment of a delivery vehicle and the appointment of an independent Chair to be agreed by Group Leaders and subsequently approved by full Council, recognising that the independent Chair and funders will complete the appointment of the members of an advisory board and will rename the Delivery Vehicle.**
- 1.3.6 Agree to the Civic Pride Delivery Structure (Figure 1) as a basis for managing the project and delivering outcomes, noting that partner funding from GCC and SWRDA has yet to be approved.**
- 1.3.7 Authorise the Cabinet to draw down sufficient funds from the Civic Pride Reserve to fund the Delivery Vehicle and the costs associated with preparing sites for market testing for the remainder of 2008/09, in line with the financial modelling.**

**1.3.8** Financial As outlined in the report

**Contact officer: Mark Sheldon**  
**E-mail: [mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk)**  
**Tel no: 01242 264123**

**1.3.9** Legal

It is important to emphasise that the delivery vehicle to be used in moving the Civic Pride project forward is not a legal entity in itself and has no decision making powers. Recommendations to be made by the delivery vehicle will be subject to formal approval by Cabinet. However, the governance document included as Appendix 1 seeks to ensure that meetings of the Advisory Board comply with the legal requirements concerning access to information in order to ensure openness and transparency and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

With regard to the specific projects which the delivery vehicle will move forward, these will involve many legal issues arising from property transactions, procurement and the making of appropriate statutory orders. The particular legal implications of these will be addressed in detail at such time as specific issues are brought before Cabinet for formal approval.

**Contact officer: Peter Cruden**  
**E-mail: [peter.cruden@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:peter.cruden@cheltenham.gov.uk)**  
**Tel no: 01242 264155**

### 1.3.10 Human Resources

Should the Council be minded to approve these proposals in principle, there would be significant HR implications regarding the Municipal Offices element, i.e. the relocation itself, any requirement for flexibility in working arrangements, stakeholder engagement and communications (employees and unions).

**Contact officer: Amanda Attfield**

**E-mail: amanda.attfield@cheltenham.gov.uk**

**Tel no: 01242 264186**

## 1.4 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities

1.4.1 The Civic Pride project has the potential to deliver, through place shaping, a key strand of the council's business plan and the sustainable communities plan. Civic Pride will help the Council to deliver the following corporate priorities in the Business Plan:

1.4.2 1C - Embedding sustainable construction

1.4.3 2B – To increase business investment

1.4.4 2D – Community Regeneration

1.4.5 3A – Quality design of the public realm and built environment

1.4.6 4A – Improving the range and quality of affordable housing

1.4.7 6A – Improving the health of our communities

1.4.8 7H – Good to partner with

1.4.9 Civic Pride also corresponds to the three cross-cutting principles in the Sustainable Communities Strategy; tackling inequalities, engaging with the community and tackling climate change.

## 1.5 Statement on Risk

1.5.1 There is a potential risk that the overall aspirations cannot be delivered within the site values and that decisions may be based upon financial drivers which may jeopardise the overall deliverability and aspirations of the initiative. See risk register attached at Appendix 7.

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## 2. Introduction

2.1 Following significant preparatory work, the Council's Civic Pride initiative is now ready to move from investigation and analysis stages to the delivery stage. The approach being taken by the Council is to present outline development briefs to the market in order to ensure that as many options as possible are considered in delivering the overall vision and aspirations for the individual sites and public realm improvements. At this stage, it is important to agree to some key principles and to understand broadly how, based upon current best estimates, the overall project may be funded.

### 3. Background

#### The Vision

The context for the Civic Pride project is the Council's twenty year vision for Cheltenham, as set out in the sustainable community strategy, and states:

*"We want Cheltenham to deliver a sustainable quality of life, where people, families, their communities and businesses thrive; and in a way which cherishes our cultural and natural heritage, reduces our impact on climate change and does not compromise the quality of life of present and future generations."*

Through celebrating the borough's heritage, the aim of Civic Pride is to secure Cheltenham's longer-term economic success within the context of our 20 year vision.

The project has three related objectives that were defined in the Civic Pride Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document:

#### Environmental objectives

- To provide a context for decisions on urban design, planning, transportation, street scene and maintenance issues that will produce high quality and imaginative public realm.
- To produce high quality and imaginative public realm.

#### Economic Objectives

- To stimulate economic development within the town centre. To link economic growth to skills retention and development.
- To enhance the town's reputation as a national centre of culture and encourage investment in the leisure, tourism and retail sectors.

#### Transport Objectives

- To reduce town centre traffic impact, improving accessibility for walking, cycling, disabled people, public transport users and businesses.
- To provide the context for the provision of accessible and safe public car parking and for integrating local, regional and national bus and coach stops.
- To establish a basis for reclaiming street space in order to introduce high quality public realm enhancements.

The achievement of the aim and objectives will make a significant contribution to the 20 year vision.

The sustainable community strategy, in addition to specifically referring to the Civic Pride objectives, also sets out three cross-cutting principles;

- to tackle inequalities,
- engage with the community, and
- tackle climate change.

Throughout the implementation phase of the project, the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership and the Civic Pride Advisory Board will be working together to make sure that they use these principles to underpin policy development and decision-making processes.

To reinforce the connectivity between the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership (CSP) and the delivery of the Civic Pride proposals, the CSP Chair will be invited to sit on the newly created Delivery Vehicle Advisory Board (section 9).

The land use planning framework for the project is set out in an already adopted Supplementary Planning Document, approved by council on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008, that will sit within Cheltenham's Local Development Framework and which sets out the long term spatial vision for the borough.

The Civic Pride proposals will also contribute to the Regional Spatial Strategy targets on housing development growth and corresponds with the Government's agenda of developing on brownfield sites.

### **Progress to date**

- 3.1** The Civic Pride project has been largely funded by grants from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) which have been used to fund key independent and professional support from Halcrow, the lead consultants on the project. The current Civic Pride proposals are the result of a significant amount of preparatory work with our partners (SWRDA and GCC) which has developed some key documents including the Urban Design Framework, transport studies, public realm strategy development briefs for each site and an economic scenario testing report.
- 3.2** Halcrow undertook some initial economic scenario testing based upon various options which placed emphasis on housing, employment or mixed use. This has been followed up by further work in order to develop financial projections for delivering the project based upon a mixed use solution.
- 3.3** The Council's approach to progressing the project is to provide the market with development briefs which fit within recently approved Supplementary Planning Documents. Therefore, at this stage, the Council is not being asked to specifically determine what should be delivered on each of the development sites. These decisions, taking into account the resources available, will be made following consideration of the responses to the development briefs. Hence, much of the report seeks 'in principle' decisions.
- 3.4** However, in order to achieve the overall aspirations of the project, meet the suggested deadlines for delivery of the public realm improvements; allow sufficient time to plan for a potential relocation of the Council offices onto North Place, some initial key decisions and funding strategies need to be broadly established at this time. The Council could wait until it receives more firm figures based upon detailed proposals for each site before fully considering funding. However since this may take many months, it is important to understand the issue of balancing receipts and aspirations before entering the next stage and to have a broad understanding of the potential funding implications. In addition, the Council needs to be mindful of any potential financial implications in forthcoming budget cycles and in the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the implications for cash flow.
- 3.5** The Council at its meeting in July 2008 formally adopted the Civic Pride Supplementary Planning Document and its technical appendices which are still subject to ratification following further verification by the County Council.

## **4. Transport strategy**

- 4.1** Transport consultants Colin Buchanan, considered various options for re-modelling Cheltenham's highway infrastructure and tested the impact of these options on resulting traffic movements. Their main conclusion was that, *'in order to accommodate the proposed urban design strategy and public realm interventions, an alteration to the existing ring road is essential'*. Following public consultation on the consultant's options it has been agreed that the 'minimal change' option, or Option 1, should be implemented. This decision was supported by Gloucestershire County Council who are the Highways Authority, subject to a satisfactory outcome from further transport modelling which is yet to be completed. The further transport modelling involves using more stringent and relevant criteria to identify the traffic impacts of the proposals for example what impact does the closure of Royal Well / Boots Corner have on congestion elsewhere on the highway network.
- 4.2** In furtherance of the Civic Pride proposals the County Council are currently undertaking a more detailed assessment of the public transport movements resulting in the closure of roads proposed as part of the Civic Pride project. Enhanced public transport provision and accessibility are key elements of the Civic Pride proposals and are essential if road capacity and reduced levels of parking are to be supported. Furthermore an analysis is being undertaken to consider the impact for deliveries, access for residents, disabled users and cyclists.

## **5. Affordable Housing**

- 5.1** The Council has a key business plan ambition to deliver affordable housing and this is reflected in local plan policy. North Place is a key site in the Civic Pride proposals and will help to deliver a significant amount of affordable housing. The Council has a commitment in its local plan for at least 40% of any housing development on sites of over 14 units to be "affordable". The commitment to affordable housing affects the total cost of development, which in turn reduces land value based on the price a developer is prepared to pay for a site. Therefore, the requirement to provide affordable housing in relation to sites brought forward through Civic Pride will be reflected by the net receipt the Council can expect to achieve .
- 5.2** The planning system initially presumes that affordable housing will be delivered without the need for public subsidy, but the cost of provision can be affected by the tenure mix of the affordable housing (social rented housing requiring more subsidy than shared ownership provision) and the planning authority can reduce planning gain (including affordable housing) where development might otherwise not be viable. This situation is more likely to occur in relation to brownfield sites, but viability for planning purposes should only take into account reasonable development costs and associated planning requirements.
- 5.3** By working in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes and/or a Registered Social Landlord, there is potential for the development to attract external subsidy that could make a significant financial contribution to the delivery of the affordable housing requirement for development at North Place.

## **6. Car parking provision**

- 6.1** One of the key issues that Civic Pride must deal with is ensure that an appropriate level of car parking provision is retained. The Council has a desire to ensure that existing car parks are used more effectively and would like to see the detrimental impact on the public realm of any car parking provision minimised. A computerised

'parking places display system' would have the benefit (if approved) of demonstrating an early win for the project by convincing the public of the capacity of existing car parks, improve usage and generate improved parking revenue e.g. in Grosvenor Terrace car park.

- 6.2** The development briefs to be presented to the market are likely to contain options for parking provision i.e. will seek options for delivering underground, under-croft or multi-storey car parking with an indication of the impact on price.
- 6.3** The work to date provides some initial investigation into the impact of providing the Council's preferred solution of underground car parking on the site values. In the same way that affordable housing impacts on site values, the provision of underground car parking also impacts on the developer's costs.

### **Parking Capacity Surveys**

- 6.4** Two parking studies were carried out by the Council in September 2005 and during the busy Christmas period in December 2006. These studies involved the physical counting of car parking numbers in all town centre car parks throughout the whole day on the respective Friday and Saturday. This is a standard technique for assessing town centre parking capacity. Both studies suggested that there is a significant amount of underutilised parking capacity within the car parks being operated by the Council. Transport consultants Colin Buchanan also made an assessment of public parking provision in Cheltenham and concluded that; "There is currently an overcapacity of car parking spaces to serve the town centre" (Transport Strategy 2006, p70)
- 6.5** There are currently 3,800 on and off street pay and display spaces in Cheltenham town centre. 3073 are operated by CBC and 728 are operated privately. The parking surveys above suggested that there were typically a significant number of free spaces. For example during a typical shopping day on a Saturday lunchtime in September, there were around 1,800 empty parking spaces. Even during the busiest time on a Saturday lunchtime before Christmas there were around 450 free spaces. The Civic Pride proposals would reduce overall capacity by 590 spaces but would also put in place mitigation measures to deal with seasonal spikes. Mitigation includes improving existing car parks (see 6.6 below), making public transport more attractive, increasing park and rides spaces and using the car parks of large local employers such as GCHQ during the busiest times.
- 6.6** Many of the free spaces are in the Grosvenor Terrace car park which has 480 spaces but is generally only 1/3 full, probably because it is considered to be poorly signposted. This is inefficient and costs the Council in terms of operation and maintenance. Given the concerns expressed in various rounds of consultation regarding the perceived loss in parking provision, the Council is looking to ensure that 300 spaces are maintained on North Place car park and that investment in the quality of the remaining Council-owned car parks is increased. More specifically, it is proposed that an investment is made in Grosvenor Terrace car park to improve access arrangements, security and the general quality of the car park. Also, should the need for more spaces arise, there is the potential to increase the capacity of the remaining car parks through the future provision of decked parking on existing sites, with increased income supporting the capital costs.
- 6.7** Any reduction in car parking provision needs to be effectively managed in order to ensure that motorists are accommodated as quickly as possible. The computerised parking management system will direct motorists to available spaces and its provision has been factored in as a requirement to be delivered as part of the project. An allowance for this has also been included in financial projections.

## **7. Business case for relocation of Council Offices to Portland Street car park**

### **7.1 History**

**7.1.1** Releasing the Royal Well/Municipal Offices site for new, more active and economically dynamic uses requires the Council to relocate to alternative premises.

**7.1.2** The aspiration to move the main office of Cheltenham Borough Council from its current home, a converted terrace of listed houses in a prime location fronting onto The Promenade, to a modern, purpose-built office building is not a recent initiative. On at least three previous occasions during the past twenty years, the Council has explored the viability of relocating, in recognition of the inadequate and inefficient nature of the current Municipal Offices building. On each occasion, the initiative has not progressed due to concerns about capital affordability, as a result of the shortfall between the value of the current site and buildings, and the costs of site-acquisition and construction of a replacement. In the meantime, the Municipal Offices has demanded ongoing investment into repairing, maintaining and improving the facilities and structures.

**7.1.3** The current Civic Pride proposal faces exactly the same concerns and challenges about financial viability; indeed, the scale of financial challenge facing the Council over the next five years is at least as great as any earlier period during the past two decades.

**7.1.4** There are, however, differences in 2008, which make the business-case more compelling, notwithstanding those financial challenges.

Those differences can be summarised as:-

- strategic context
  - regeneration of the western side of the Promenade
  - regeneration of Royal Well
  - regeneration of North Place/Portland Street
- modern public services
  - for our customers
  - for our partners
  - for our members
  - for our employees
  - space efficiency

A relocation to Portland Street carries with it the potential for involvement of other organisations, notably the Police Authority, University and County Council (library service). Discussions are on-going to establish the viability of these aspirations.

### **7.2 Regeneration of the Promenade**

**7.2.1** The Promenade is one of the most attractive shopping streets in the country, but needs to be enhanced if Cheltenham is to improve or even maintain its position as a retail and cultural destination against strong local, regional and national competition. In particular, an appropriate form of development of the Municipal Offices will act as a catalyst for the renaissance of the western side of the central section of the Promenade whilst preserving the architectural integrity of the Grade 2 star Listed Building.



### **7.3 Regeneration of Royal Well and improving the architectural context for Royal Crescent**

#### **Environment**

- 7.3.1** The rear of the Municipal Offices building is aesthetically disappointing and represents a poor use of prime town centre space.
- 7.3.2** The plan to divert traffic away from Royal Well Road, whilst retaining access for public transport, taxis and cyclists provides a unique opportunity to create an attractive space in this key town centre location. At the same time it creates the momentum to lift out of obscurity one of the best examples of Regency architecture that the town has to offer in Royal Crescent and to enhance the setting of the internationally recognised Cheltenham Ladies College.
- 7.3.3** Once through-traffic is diverted, the opportunity will exist to create a new building to the back of the Municipal Offices which will complement the open space and Royal Crescent. The potential linkage to the development of Chapel Walk offers additional opportunities to enhance the area.

#### **Economy**

- 7.3.4** Any activity to be undertaken by the delivery vehicle and/or sites to be developed need to be seen in the wider context of the Cheltenham-Gloucester axis. Two towns of similar size with hopefully a complementary offer to the public in terms of employment, retail, culture etc. So whilst the urban Regeneration Company in Gloucester is delivering a retail outlet centre, Cheltenham needs to focus and capitalise on its unique market position with high value shopping experiences. One way to drive this forward is by using the opportunities generated by the Civic Pride Supplementary Planning Document, approved by Council on 28th July 2008.
- 7.3.5** One of the principal aims of Civic Pride is to improve the retail/leisure destination of Cheltenham in the face of the increasing competition. The relocation of the Council offices provides the best opportunity for the future of Cheltenham to achieve this aspiration. The Municipal buildings themselves and the land to the rear facing Royal Well have been identified as having significant retail interest as noted in the retail and leisure study report of September 2006 commissioned by CBC and undertaken by DPDS Consultants. Halcrow, their partners King Sturge and other key players in the surveying/retail world (e.g. GVA Grimley) have identified the Municipal Office site as the trigger to the wider scheme; it is certainly the site likely to attract the most interest of all the Civic pride badged sites given its development potential.
- 7.3.6** Release of the site in its entirety therefore offers the opportunity, for example for a significant high quality hotel, potential high quality retail and leisure quarter which are unlikely to be attracted to any other location in Cheltenham's town centre. Such a development would ensure that Cheltenham's retail ranking was maintained and potentially improved. Throughout the consultation processes many residents, businesses and property agents have referred to the potential of the Municipal offices site and the need to create more of the quality space provided by the Promenade, but currently limited to the Eastern flank. The Municipal Offices and Royal Well site provides this opportunity.

## **Impact on Civic Pride**

- 7.3.7** Freeing up the current site to enhance Royal Well is now high profile, it is underpinned by an adopted Supplementary Planning Document and has given the Civic Pride project a degree of focus in the public mind. As such it will help support wider Civic Pride aspirations.
- 7.3.8** The results of the Civic Pride consultation exercises which are referenced in section 11 of this report, confirm the importance which the residents of Cheltenham attach to the regeneration of the Royal Well area.
- 7.3.9** The opportunity to create a new building at the back of the Municipal Offices will enhance the value of the Council's property holdings and contribute towards the funding of other Civic Pride improvements. The opportunity to create value in this area is partly dependant on a decision for the Council to relocate offices to Portland Street. Initial soundings suggest that developers are unlikely to be interested in the back of the Municipal Offices site alone, as a result of the complexities generated by the Council remaining in its current location.
- 7.3.10** Without the office move, the nature of the whole project would have to be re-considered.

## **7.4 Regeneration of North Place, and Portland Street car parks**

- 7.4.1** The Borough Council owns both car parks and is uniquely placed to drive and enable their development in a way which is complementary to wider town centre improvement proposals and aspirations.
- 7.4.2** The Borough Council's presence would go a long way to ensure a quality 'anchor' tenant or owner being brought forward.

Cheltenham Borough Council's presence makes it more likely that other anchor public service tenants, for example the Police, Library Service, possibly the University, or CBH would be attracted to create a civic hub.

The Police have already submitted a formal expression of interest in creating a town centre presence as part of the development.

The presence of anchor tenants/owners will increase development values for other uses and thus increase land value to Cheltenham Borough Council.

Development will increase footfall north of Boots Corner and thus rebalance the town centre and add further value to the site.

Economic activity and employment will be boosted by the overall development proposals.

A decision to move the council offices to North Place also helps to increase footfall to feed into the Brewery site as well as acting as a catalyst for attracting other tenants to North Place.

## 7.5 The need for new offices

### 7.5.1 Current building – Main deficiencies

- The current building needs constant and costly maintenance, currently the annual ad hoc and reactive maintenance budget is c£65,000. In addition, the twenty year maintenance programme has scheduled spend of £3.5 million over the next 20 years, averaging £175,000 pa, on simply maintaining the building in its current condition which excludes any refurbishment to improve the service offered to customers e.g. DDA access from the Promenade.
- Its external appearance from Royal Well is shabby, unwelcoming and adds nothing to the visual integrity of the area.
- Its internal layout does not facilitate new working methods, such as flexible workspaces, open-plan offices, hot-desking, adequate meeting and break-out areas. Its cellular office structure is very inefficient in terms of floorspace, and does not encourage or facilitate 'working together'.
- It's Grade II\* Listed Building status prevents significant internal re-organisation or external alterations, for instance to improve accessibility, or to assist culture change.
- ICT and other staff work in a suite of basement offices, with restricted natural light.
- There is one staff rest room situated in the basement but no informal meeting spaces, as recommended in our recent Investors in People assessment.
- Member facilities are inadequate, particularly from a visual and audio perspective.
- The Council Chamber is largely unwelcoming and lacks proper heating and ventilation and does not include modern/integrated technology, i.e., microphone system or webcasting potential. The Chamber has fixed seating dedicated to full council meetings and thus remains empty most of the time. In general the layout of the Council Chamber is not conducive to flexible use and this epitomises the inefficiency of the building.
- The total annual running costs of the Municipal Offices are £354,700 of which significant savings could be made by reducing the building's footprint and improving its energy efficiency.
- Despite recent investments into the reception, visitors to Planning still have to travel to the second floor.
- People with disabilities or those with children in pushchairs normally access the building via the back door, which places an unwelcome burden and inconvenience on them.
- The Council is currently under represented in terms of the employment of disabled people, with currently only 1.9% of all employees. By contrast, 9.1% of the workforce in Cheltenham have disabilities.

## 7.5.2 Current building – main attractions

- The current building has housed the Municipal Offices for longer than most Cheltenham residents can remember; its history, iconic façade and location overlooking the Long Gardens and the Promenade make it unique amongst the County's local government family of authorities.
- Although it is further from Boots Corner than the proposed site of new offices on Portland Street, it 'feels' more central because of its proximity to bus stops and shops.
- We own the freehold of the site and the building.
- The Tourist Information Centre is well located on the Promenade to attract visitors to the town, however, an increasing volume of tourism business is now handled on-line, and a better town centre location would be on the ground floor of the proposed Art Gallery and Museum development.
- Theoretically, it would be possible to remain on the site and at the same time enlarge the footprint by developing the Royal Well elevation; however this is unlikely to attract any new development on the back of the offices.
- Moving offices is not a cost-free option. Moving 300 employees, their IT equipment, plus the inevitable costs of new furniture, will carry a one-off cost.

## 7.6 Financial case for moving to new Council offices

**7.6.1** In terms of capital, there is a need to be realistic about the value of the Municipal Offices site as there is, as always, a trade-off between achieving the maximum capital receipt and restricting any purchaser's options as to how the site will be used in future. Nevertheless, the commercial sale opportunity which is offered by the whole site has the potential to realise significant value and development potential.

**7.6.2** In relation to revenue costs, there are major advantages in moving to a new building as outlined earlier. The Municipal Offices place a substantial financial strain on the organisation, particularly in relation to high energy costs, poor use of space, high maintenance and cleaning costs. A new building would occupy a smaller footprint and so by definition will have lower running costs, whilst, at the same time, offering more flexible space with the potential for sharing facilities with partner organisations.

Construction methods which take advantage of the latest energy-conservation and management developments will help to reduce the Council's environmental impact and running costs, as will the lower repair and maintenance costs of a new purpose-built office building.

**7.6.3** The financial projections include the best estimate of the costs of a move to new offices but demonstrate that there is unlikely to be a sufficient business case on financial grounds alone to dispose of the current office site and replace on Portland Street. However, when all factors are taken together and the broader Civic Pride aspirations to regenerate key town centre sites are also taken into account, the arguments in favour of a move outweigh the benefits of the alternative option, i.e. to remain in the current building.

**7.6.4** Should the decision be made to remain in the existing offices, there is likely to be significant investment required, over and above the provision within the 20 year maintenance programme. This investment may be needed to address DDA issues including access from the Promenade and to ensure that services are provided from a building which meets the needs of the next generation of customer.

## **8. Public Realm improvements**

**8.1** One of the overriding aspirations of the civic pride initiative is to see a significant improvement in the standard of public realm. This is considered vital to ensuring that Cheltenham has the best chance of maintaining economic prosperity in the future. The quality of the environment is critical to maintaining the town's retail position relative to other competing centres particularly given that many are also seeing major investment which may impact on Cheltenham's offering, e.g. Gloucester docks, the new Cabot Circus development in Bristol, Worcester town centre, Swindon and Birmingham. Halcrow's economic scenario testing report provided provisional costs of public realm improvements, based upon other schemes around the country.

**8.2** Given the initial overall assessment of projected site values and uncertainties surrounding the property market, it would appear sensible to concentrate improvements to the 3 key sites which will have maximum impact on public realm i.e. Boots Corner, Royal Well and Portland Street.

**8.3** The Council clearly has choices about how much it chooses to spend on public realm and it may ultimately chose to reduce expenditure to fit the overall project budget. The financial projections model a number of deliverables which can be afforded by adjusting the investment budget for public realm.

## **9. Project Delivery**

### **9.1 Why establish a Delivery Vehicle?**

**9.1.1** Many Local Authorities have historically not been very successful in delivering capital projects either to time or to budget. The reasons are many and complex with local politics, planning issues and lack of experience or skills often cited.

**9.1.2** An analysis of why a particular form of delivery vehicle has been proposed for CBC has already been outlined in the report at Appendix 5; essentially, however, all models have certain common components aimed at reducing risk and thereby enabling project delivery.

**9.1.3** The main reasons as to why such a mechanism is considered essential to move the Civic Pride project forward can best be described by the following five points.

1. It allows a clear separation of function, critically between the Council's planning and property functions and delivery.
2. It establishes an independent board with a breadth of knowledge and skills relevant to the aspirations to be achieved.
3. It provides a clear focus on project and site delivery and ensures that defined objectives and financial targets are met.
4. It can recruit or second staff with an appropriate range of skills to successfully deliver major development proposals.
5. It provides the necessary capacity to deliver.

**9.1.4** The concept of establishing a delivery vehicle has been developed in response to advice from government agencies, e.g. SWRDA over how best to deliver a regeneration agenda. Various visits and briefings have taken place involving Cabinet members and an analysis of the available options and conclusions that a local authority led model suits our circumstances is set out in Appendix 5.

## **9.2 Civic Pride Project Management Structure**

**9.2.1** The delivery of the Civic Pride project through the creation of a Delivery Vehicle will present a range of unique opportunities, but it will also create a series of challenges. The most significant being:

- the co-ordination of positive joint working arrangements between officers from both Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council;
- maintaining strategic direction towards the vision and objectives agreed in the adopted SPD;
- addressing potential differences between the client-side (i.e. development and project delivery) and control-side (planning and highways);
- the creation of efficient and compliant governance arrangements to ensure that the decision-making arrangements of the Delivery Vehicle and Advisory Board are both effective and legitimate.

In order to manage these issues, a programme management structure has been established (see Figure 1).

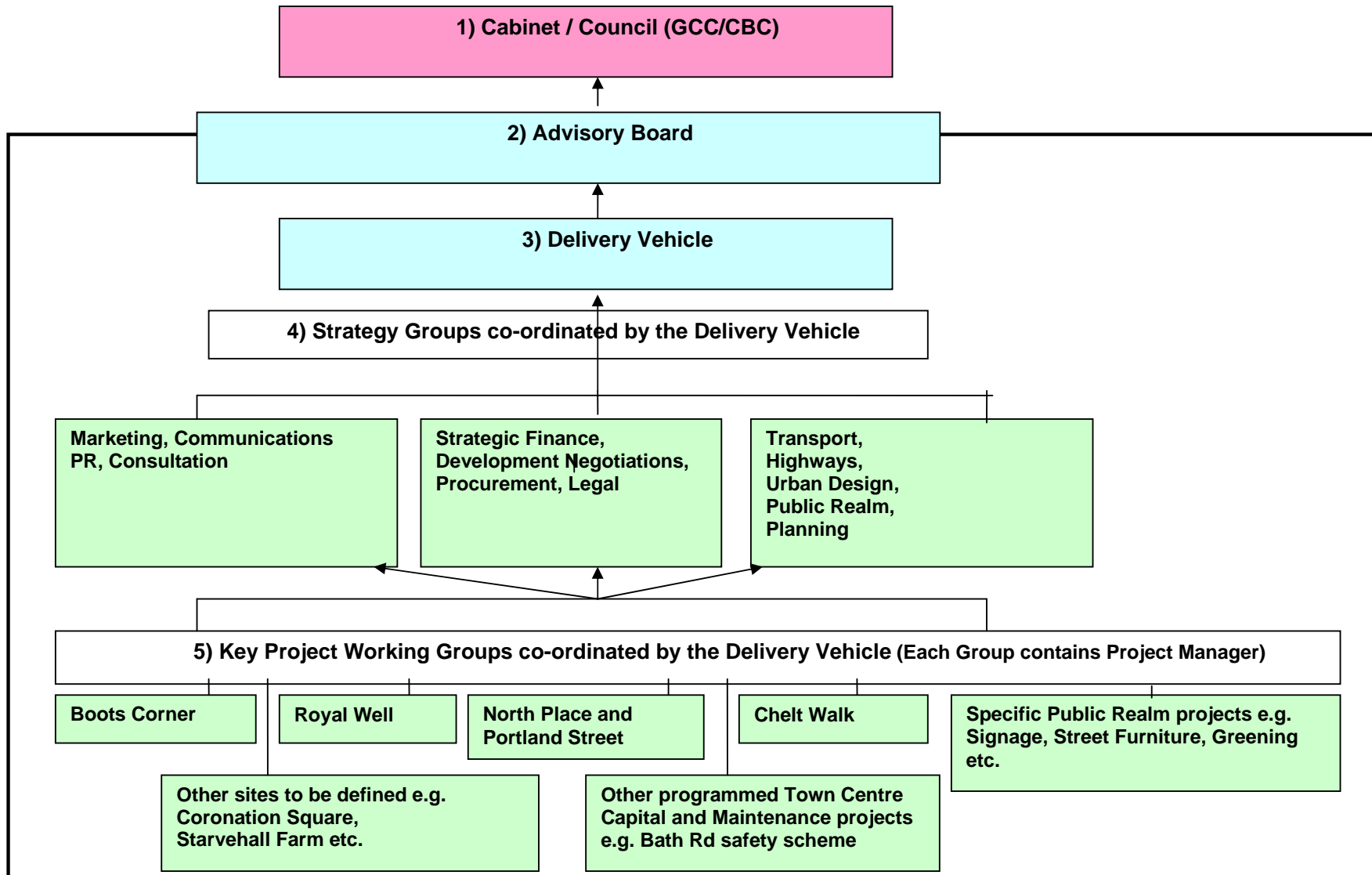
## **9.3 Overview of the Programme Management Structure (See Figure 1 overleaf)**

**9.3.1** The programme management structure will be based on the UK Government Programme and Project management methodology – Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE2). It will correspond from an audit perspective to existing corporate governance procedures. The participation of the County Council in the programme management structure has yet to be formally confirmed.

**9.3.2** The programme management structure is designed to streamline effort and ensure that all groups involved in the delivery of Civic Pride are working in the same way, and to a clearly defined set of processes and procedures. It is designed to incorporate both

- the mainstream Civic Pride projects (development sites, public realm enhancements, signage etc.) and
- a range of other programmed projects likely to be undertaken within the Civic Pride boundary which impact on Civic Pride issues, for example
  - town centre highway capital work
  - town centre highway maintenance work
  - town centre planting
  - town centre parks work
  - town centre capital works

**Figure 1: Civic Pride Programme Management Structure (Explanatory text at 9.3.4)**



**9.3.3** Below is a brief description of each 'tier' of the framework as described in Figure 1:

**9.3.4 1) Cabinet/Council:**

**Primary Role:** Ultimate decision making body in the structure.

The proposed framework is a hierarchal structure with the ultimate decisions, on issues such as disposals or development options, being made by the relevant authority in the normal manner through the cabinet or council of either Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) or Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). The difference is that those decisions will, as a result of this structure be able to be made much quicker. They will still be subject to consultation and debate, however the process will be condensed and more focused. A sound recommendation based on all relevant, detailed information will be presented to the relevant Council by the Advisory Board (See 9.3.6 below).

**9.3.5 2) Advisory Board:**

**Primary Role:** The link between the Cabinet/Council and the Delivery Vehicle

- receives reports from the Delivery Vehicle on the progress of the overall programme and individual projects
- makes recommendations on proposals to the Cabinet/Council;
- gives strategic direction to the programme;
- ensures conformity of the programme with the Civic Pride vision and objectives;

The Advisory Board will be composed of around 13 to 16 members. It will have an independent chair and members will include Borough and County Councillors, the chair of the Local Strategic Partnership, significant local business people, local design expertise and the project's sponsors. The Advisory Board will debate proposals made by the Delivery Vehicle (see below) and then make recommendations to respective Councils / Cabinets for a decision (See appendix 2 for further information).

**9.3.6 3) Delivery Vehicle:**

**Primary Role:** Responsible for overall programme co-ordination and delivery. The Delivery Vehicle will also have specific responsibilities around development negotiations within the Strategy and Project Working Groups (see 4 and 5 below).

The delivery vehicle will consist of a programme director, programme manager and a dedicated communications support officer. It will be jointly funded by the project's principal partners, South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), CBC and GCC. The members of the delivery vehicle will be solely dedicated to delivering the Civic Pride proposals and their performance will be assessed against a pre-agreed business plan. It is expected that the initial time period will be three years at which point the Delivery Vehicle will be assessed against its outputs.

The Delivery Vehicle will be a distinct entity by name, location and branding but will not be legally incorporated and will hold no assets. The intention is to create the necessary separate capacity to allow the delivery vehicle to deal directly with developers; to avoid possible conflicts of interests by separating the Council's planning functions from its development arm; to engage with developers; and to coordinate the various public bodies and stakeholders involved in delivering the programme.

The Delivery Vehicle will, through its work with the relevant working groups make recommendations to the Advisory Board who will in turn make a final recommendation to the respective Council.



#### 9.3.7 4) Strategy Groups:

**Primary Role:** To maintain the strategic direction across a range of themes and ensure that individual projects fit the various strategies.

The Civic Pride SPD has established a number of strategic visions – urban design, transport, public realm – and implementation needs to sit comfortably within other strategic elements – the overall financial strategy, the procurement strategy, the local plan/LDF and the communications strategy for example. There may be others.

It is necessary, therefore, to establish three broad strategic groupings (communications; finance and legal; environment and transport) to ensure that individual projects are compatible with strategic objectives. The strategy groups will be thematic groups cutting across the various individual projects (see 5 below). Each partner (CBC, GCC, Delivery Vehicle) will have an option to place *at least* one representative on each group – though there is likely to be more than one representative from each. There may be a need to bring other stakeholders on board in certain areas (e.g. the Environment Agency).

Groups will be chaired by Delivery Vehicle representatives and meet when appropriate to take strategic decisions and to coordinate the work needed to help deliver the individual Civic Pride projects.

#### 9.3.8 5) Project Delivery Working Groups led by Delivery Vehicle:

**Primary Role:** To co-ordinate, develop and implement the individual projects which make up the Civic Pride programme

The project delivery working groups will be technical groups established to deliver individual Civic Pride projects, such as:

- enhancement projects
- traffic management projects
- development projects
- thematic projects (e.g. pedestrian signage).

**9.3.9** Each project delivery working group will have a designated project manager. Each partner (CBC, GCC, Delivery Vehicle) will have an option to place *at least* one representative on each group. Many groups will require a range of technical skills; consequently any one partner may need to bring more than one representative. There may be a need to bring other stakeholders on board for specific projects (e.g. the Environment Agency). Skills might include

- urban design
- landscape architecture
- valuation
- transport planning
- highway design
- heritage
- architecture
- consultation
- public art
- drainage

**9.3.10** Some projects will involve a range of mini-project teams and will need to organise themselves to achieve best representation and performance. For example, the North Place/Portland Street project, with the potential relocation of the Municipal Offices, is perhaps the most complex. It will include work on the following areas

- Space planning for Municipal Offices
- Space planning for collocation of public sector partners
- Space planning for combined university/public library
- Property negotiation with partners and developers
- Building design and planning
- Car park design and planning
- Public space design
- Transport requirements and highway layout
- Landscape architecture

Each piece of work can be undertaken within individual teams – for example space planning for the Municipal Offices is likely to be undertaken entirely by a CBC based team. However, each team will need to feed information to the main project working group and will have representation on it. Ultimately the working group should produce a seamless and cohesive proposal for internal building space, external public and highway space and the interface between them which meets all requirements.

**9.4** All the groups will be coordinated by the Delivery Vehicle to ensure that the work ties in with, and relates to, the overall Civic Pride strategy and the recently approved Supplementary Planning Document. Their work will be reported back to the Advisory Board to help inform their decisions.

**9.5** Inevitably the County and Borough Councils will be running their own projects within the Civic Pride area which impact on the Civic Pride programme's core objectives – particularly design quality. These might include highway maintenance, road safety, greening, parks development etc. It is important that these other projects contribute positively to the overall Civic Pride programme and it may be appropriate to establish working groups for these projects.

It is also likely that partners will be involved in other projects outside of the Civic Pride area where a well co-ordinated approach is important (e.g. redevelopment of Coronation Square or Starvehall Farm). The overall programme management structure lends itself well to delivering this type of project.

## **9.6 Civic Pride linkage to Joint Core Strategy**

**9.6.1** In the context of the Government's current policy with regard to the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Framework, there is a statutory duty on Cheltenham Borough, Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester City Councils to produce a Core Strategy.

**9.6.2** The preparation of a Joint Core Strategy has been agreed in principle across the three authorities, with support to joint working and infrastructure delivery being given by Gloucestershire County Council.

**9.6.3** It is essential that an effective method is developed to ensure that the Civic Pride programme links to the emerging Joint Core Strategy. It is proposed that a key member of the Civic Pride delivery vehicle or Advisory Board will sit on the Cross Boundary Programme Board to ensure this linkage exists.

## **9.7 Civic Pride Programme Management Structure – Governance Arrangements**

- 9.7.1** It is important that the new programme management structure is bound by codified operating arrangements. The draft governance arrangements for the proposed programme management structure have been prepared by the legal department and are described in appendices 1-4.
- 9.7.2** Appendix 1 describes the draft memorandum of understanding between the partners, which like the other appendices is still subject to scrutiny and agreement by Gloucestershire County Council and SWRDA.
- 9.7.3** Appendix 2 describes Advisory Board operating protocols.
- 9.7.4** Appendix 3 describes the Remuneration and Appointments Committee operating protocols.
- 9.7.5** Appendix 4 describes the Nominations Committee operating protocols.

## **9.8 Delivery Vehicle Communications Strategy (including branding)**

One exercise that is key; is to separately brand the Delivery Vehicle, and develop a Communications Strategy to mirror its status as independent / arms length from CBC. It is clear from analysing other regeneration projects that they are differentiated from each other by the relative success of their communications strategies. A local example of a regeneration scheme that benefits from successful communications is the Gloucester Heritage URC.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1** In the early stages of the project, there was an aspiration for the project to be self-financing i.e. that the site values would finance the delivery of significant public realm improvements, relocation of the council offices, 40% affordable housing in any housing development and underground car parking. As a general principle, the deliverability of any of the 'high cost' objective impacts on the net realisable receipt from the site. Developers have to factor these costs into the development of sites, which in turn, impact on developers' profit and the price they are ultimately prepared to pay for the site.
- 10.2** The Economic Scenario testing report undertaken by property consultants, King Sturge, considered the initial deliverability of the project using a broad assessment of site values based upon a number of options which gave a differing focus to developments e.g. employment, mixed use and residential dominated scenarios. These were only preliminary scenarios to be used for testing purposes and not be construed as development options. The initial economic scenario testing report stated that 'under the scenarios tested, it is unlikely, even under the most optimistic forecasting, that redevelopment could generate sufficient revenue to fund underground parking provision, as well as 40% affordable housing, in addition to generating sufficient revenue to fund public realm improvements. It will therefore be necessary to prioritise those elements which are likely to provide 'most benefits to the town.'
- 10.3** Officer and Member feedback to the initial economic scenario testing report indicated concern as to the commercial viability of the Civic Pride initiative and the importance of generating revenue to fund public realm improvements. In addition, the need to maintain an element of mixed use throughout the development was recognised as being fundamental to the achievement of Civic Pride objectives. It is recognised that the proportion of mixed uses will be defined by commercial return and viability. In relation to parking, it is recognised that the provision of underground parking on all sites reduces the viability of options and undercuts the funding available to support public realm improvements. However a bonus of securing underground parking at Portland Street would be that the land above the car park could be released for alternative uses as it will not be occupied by a multi-storey car park.

- 10.4** More recently, further work has been undertaken in respect of site values in order to consider deliverability at this early stage in the context of the current economic climate with uncertainty around the property market. There are a number of permutations for deliverables on each site and these have been outlined in various reports.
- 10.5** The options modelled are as follows:
- The 'baseline option' - complete redevelopment of Municipal Offices site with the Council offices relocated to North Place, underground car parking, 40% affordable housing levels, £9m of public realm improvements.
  - Option 1a - relocation of the Council offices to North Place including space for the police authority with underground car parking and public realm improvements at Boots corner, North Place and Royal Well.
  - Option 1b - relocation of the Council offices to North Place including space for the police authority with multi storey car parking and public realm improvements at Boots corner, North Place and Royal Well.
  - Option 2a - relocation of the Council offices to North Place including space for the police authority and potential space for voluntary sector partners to create a 'civic hub' with underground car parking and public realm improvements at Boots corner, North Place and Royal Well.
  - Options 2b - relocation of the Council offices to North Place including space for the police authority and potential space for voluntary sector partners to create a 'civic hub' with multi storey car parking and public realm improvements at Boots corner, North Place and Royal Well.
  - Option 3, remaining in the Council current offices with public realm improvements at Boots corner, North Place and Royal Well.
- 10.6** A summary of the financial modelling is contained in Appendix 6. The detailed cash flow projections which contain sensitive commercial information (exempt information) is contained in Appendix 8. The initial modelling provides an indication of what might be delivered under various options within the overall indicative site values at this stage. The projections attempt to summarise the financing of the capital elements of the project, including the costs of the delivery vehicle and work to progress the project to the next stage over an assumed 5 year period, including early delivery of the public realm improvements at Boots corner. In addition, the projections model the potential impact on the Council's future revenue budget (Medium Term Financial Strategy - MTFS) based upon current best estimates in respect of costs / savings.
- 10.7** Each of the options, models the use of £8m of the receipt from the sale of the Council's interest in Regents Arcade which is being used to re-invest to secure improved revenue streams. In each option, the amount available for public realm has been adjusted to fit the available budget. Costs savings result from relocating the Council offices into new, smaller, more cost effective building with potential space for the voluntary sector has the potential to reduce running costs and provide additional income streams.
- 10.8** It is important to emphasise that expenditure by the Council on civic pride will be subject to the same process and procedures as other Council expenditure, and will therefore be under the control of elected Members. So far as the Cabinet is concerned, we do not want the project to place a financial burden on the council tax payer. The options recommended for further investigation at this stage have the potential to improve the General Fund position (MTFS).

**10.9** The current state of the market is of concern since values may be suppressed further and developers may not be interested in developing sites. Given the desire to see a wide range of aspirations delivered, Members are therefore asked to agree “in principle” to the options to be pursued to the next stage. However, even at this early stage, Members will note that choices will need to be made about deliverables once the market testing stage has been completed. Final ratification of the in principle proposals will be made by the Council on consideration of the responses to market testing of the development briefs.

**10.10** The conclusions at this stage are that:

- The ‘baseline option’ i.e. the original civic pride aspirations of underground car parking, 40% affordable housing levels and £9m of public realm improvements, complete redevelopment of Municipal offices site with the Council offices relocated to North Place site cannot be delivered within the indicative site values received at this stage.
- Options 1a and 1b i.e. relocation of the Council offices including space for the police authority may deliver larger budgets for public realm improvements but produce the least improvement to the MTFs i.e. provide net additional income / cost savings of £95,000 per annum.
- Options 2a and 2b i.e. relocation of the Council offices including space for the police authority and space and potential voluntary sector partners to create a civic hub may deliver smaller budgets for public realm improvements but produce the most improvement to the MTFs i.e. provide net additional income / cost savings of £232,000 per annum.
- Option 3, remaining in the current Council offices potentially adds to the MTFs, since there are no additional revenue streams to offset the projects additional costs. It may be possible to create a new building to the back of the Municipal Offices if the Council remained on site but this would have significant cost implications as it would require substantial changes to the accommodation occupied by the Council with the demolition of the current, inappropriate, extensions to the rear of the Municipal Offices and relocation of their functions into the new building. Grimleys have not been able to place a value on the site if this were to be considered since it would require much more scoping work for this to be undertaken. This option contains only indicative values for Portland /street. In reality, the Council would need to reconsider the whole of the project if this were the option to be pursued since it is unlikely that the original vision could be achieved.

**10.11** The projections indicate that a combination of most of the original aspirations can be delivered using some of the receipt from the sale of the Council’s interest in the Regent Arcade and best estimates of site values and costs. Clearly this will be firmed up at the next stage when market testing will firm up deliverables and site values. Should more detailed options lever in funding from external sources to finance affordable housing provision then the funding model will be re-visited and the Council will be asked to approve the changes.

**10.12** This important next stage will be the focus of the work of the delivery vehicle. In order to ensure that this work progresses as quickly as possible, the Council is using the remainder of the Civic Pride Reserve, £190,000 as at 1st January 2009, to pump prime the delivery vehicle and up front costs. The Council is hopeful that part of the cost of the delivery vehicle over its 3 year life of £525,000 will be met by contributions from SWRDA and GCC (subject to approval processes) totalling £390,000, leaving £135,000 to be funded from the Council. The Civic Pride reserve is modelled to be used in 2008/09 to support the funding of the next stage and as such, authorisation for the Cabinet to draw down sufficient funds from the Civic Pride Reserve to fund the next stages is sought.

**10.13** Given the above conclusions, the Cabinet is recommending that Council approves the outline funding options in principle as a basis for progressing the project subject to market testing the development briefs. This will involve market testing the relocation of the Council offices along with the police authority including an option of providing additional space to accommodate potential voluntary sector or other partners (i.e. options 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b). All options assume the potential use of £8m from the sale of Regent Arcade. It should be noted that current projections of these options do not place an additional financial burden on the council tax payer and may improve future revenue streams by between £95,000 and £232,000 per annum on completion of all phases of the project.

## **11. Civic Pride Consultation**

**11.1** There have been three separate rounds of formal public consultation including being part of the 20:20 consultation and a final statutory consultation period. In total there have been 22 separate events. The dates and details are listed below. There has also been ongoing informal consultation with stakeholders and members of the public.

**11.2** Civic Pride was well publicised in the local and national media. In the Gloucestershire Echo there were two major stories, two editorials, four smaller stories, a double page business supplement and around fifty letters and online comments. There was also a story in the national property magazine 'Property Week' and the project coordinator gave four radio interviews. Cheltenham Borough Council banner advertised the consultation exercise on the [thisisgloucestershire.co.uk](http://thisisgloucestershire.co.uk) website.

### **11.3 Consultation Events**

#### **1. First round Nov 2006**

- 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006 – Stakeholder workshop – 50 relevant stakeholders helped to form initial ideas on transport and urban design strategy.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006 – Launch Event Town Hall in conjunction with the 20:20 visioning exercise. 1000 people attended. Gained understanding of scheme priorities, i.e. Boots Corner, Royal Well, North Place.

#### **2. Second round June 2007**

- 8<sup>th</sup> June 2007 – Second Stakeholder workshop – 50 relevant stakeholders helped to form ideas on site development priorities and feedback on traffic modelling exercise.
- 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> June – Public Exhibition Regent Arcade – over 1000 people attended.

#### **3. Third round - Statutory Consultation – 3rd March – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

- Regent Arcade Public Exhibition - 7/8<sup>th</sup> March – 800 attendees
- Lower High St Resource Centre - 12<sup>th</sup> March
- Hester's Way Resource Centre - 18<sup>th</sup> March
- Springbank Resource Centre - 18<sup>th</sup> March
- Oakley Resource Centre - 19<sup>th</sup> March
- Charlton Kings Library - 25<sup>th</sup> March
- Hatherley Parish Council AGM - 26<sup>th</sup> March
- Suffolk Traders Association - 22<sup>nd</sup> April
- Benhall Residents Association - 23<sup>rd</sup> April
- Staff Consultation – In Motion publication

#### 4. Ongoing Consultation Events

- 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007 – Member Seminar
- 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 - MAD Youth Council presentation
- 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007 - Public Realm workshop 1
- 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007 - Public Realm workshop 2
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2008 – Member Seminar
- 3 x Consultation events with the College Road and Bayshill Road schools and residents groups
- 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2008 – Disability Forum - Star College
- 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008 – Presentation to members of Cheltenham’s Business community

#### 11.4 Key Conclusions

As would be expected for consultation covering a topic as diverse and emotive as Civic Pride, there was a great variety of different responses from a diverse cross section of the public. During the statutory consultation 1001 official representations were made. There were significantly more supporting statements than objections which is unusual for a public consultation event of this type as typically those that support a project do not feel the need to respond.

Support	349	35%
Object	239	24%
Other Comments	413	41%
<b>Total Representations</b>	<b>1001</b>	

Despite the general level of support for the public realm enhancements there were two major issues that concerned many of the respondents. These were as follows:

- **Parking:** Concern over the loss of parking capacity at North Place. The response to this concern was that there are numerous mitigation measures that can be put in place, including: 1) Park and Ride 2) Improved Public Transport 3) Retaining and improving existing car parks 4) Provision of seasonal spaces
- **Boots Corner:** There were concerns over where traffic taken out of Boots Corner would be redistributed. However, the Transport Strategy suggested that there would be no particular hotspots of traffic and that the existing road infrastructure could accommodate the proposed changes. This assumption is currently being verified by GCC and any implications will be reported as soon as possible.

Consultation will continue to be an important part of the process as we move from the planning phase into the delivery phase.

#### 12. Conclusion

The Council has been working on the development of its Civic Pride proposals for several years and has rightly taken its time to carefully consider and progress the project to where it is today.

- 12.1** Appropriate levels of analysis, research and consultation have now been undertaken and all key partners and stakeholders have confirmed their overwhelming desire to see the project deliver tangible benefits for the town. The project is not about piecemeal redevelopment of the town centre, it is however about the strategic use of land, buildings and open space to dramatically change prime locations and to fundamentally alter the dynamics of how the central core of the town operates. For example, the Promenade and Long Gardens are internationally renowned as a high quality retail destination and exceptional open space

overlooked by a magnificent Regency terrace. However, the Promenade only functions on one side with the space in front of the Municipal Office building largely free of activity, particularly during evenings and weekends. The Municipal Office building also creates a physical barrier to the west of the town centre and its rear is hugely unattractive and must be a grim first impression for those new to the town. Allowing some 18,000 vehicles per day to use the high quality space in front of the Royal Crescent does nothing to enhance its beauty and is widely regarded as being a wholly inappropriate use in such a location.

- 12.2** The Civic Pride project therefore provides what many see as an enviable opportunity to bring forward really positive changes which will significantly enhance sustainability and deliver major environmental improvements and interventions. The proposals also provide a powerful catalyst which will support the future economic vitality of the town and create a platform which can positively challenge the town's wider competition. This kind of opportunity presents itself very infrequently and it could be argued that the decisions the Council are about to take are about the biggest in terms of town redevelopment proposals since Pitt laid out his grand design and built the Pittville Pump Rooms in 1830. It is though an opportunity which should not be missed and one which should be positively embraced.

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<b>Background Papers</b>	Halcrow Group Ltd – Cheltenham Civic Pride – Phase 2 Scenario testing report July 2007  Halcrow Group Ltd - Masterplan options – May 2007  Halcrow Group Ltd - Cheltenham Civic Pride Phase 3 Masterplan report – September 2007
<b>Report Author</b>	Grahame Lewis, Director of Environment, 01242 264312, grahamelewis@cheltenham.gov.uk  Mark Sheldon, Chief Finance Officer, 01242 264123, mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk
<b>Accountability</b>	Council
<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Environment and Economy and Business Improvement Overview and scrutiny committees