

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 31 October 2016

Place & Economic Update

Car Parking, Place, Economic Development & Tourism

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 Members of the scrutiny committee at a previous meeting (27th June 2016) requested an update regarding a number of initiatives that have impact on the longer term economic position of the town.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1 The Managing Director of Place & Economic Development took up this new post in February 2016. The post has been established as a response to the Athey Report commissioned by the council in 2014. This report was a trigger for focussing resources on how the Council looks to support and facilitate economic growth and regeneration, it also helped develop thinking around Cheltenham as a 'place'.
- 2.2 The Athey report, together with a wide range of other reports, helps us identify the strengths and challenges for the borough. What we can see from the evidence is that there are key work streams with interconnected objectives together with an agenda to want to deliver change for Cheltenham. The report shows focused around themes such as economic growth, tourism, communities etc. All these combine to inform and influence place shaping.
- 2.3 Since February the new MD has commissioned a large number of workstreams that will drive forward this 'Place' agenda. This report sets out some of the progress made on the specific areas requested; Car Parking, Tourism, Economic Development & Place.

3. Summary of evidence/information

CAR PARKING

- 3.1** At the previous Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 27th June 2016, it was agreed that a parking strategy, taking in to account economic, property, tourism and MTFs impacts, should be produced.
- 3.2** Acknowledgement of limited internal specialist knowledge and lack of dedicated managerial lead within the service has resulted in the need for a consultancy, experienced in this field, to be engaged.
- 3.3** At the Cabinet meeting on 12th July, it was proposed that Parking be treated as a priority workstream of the REST Commercial Transformation programme and £60k budget from additional car parking revenue be set aside to develop the parking strategy.
- 3.4** Since July, officers have been working on development of a parking strategy tender brief. To ensure the brief covers all requirements, a specialist consultant, Arup, has been engaged in an advisory capacity. Arup have been asked to provide an advice note on the parking strategy tender specification, a high level overview and analysis of CBC car parks, and an advice note on procurement.
- 3.5** The tender specification advice sets out five key areas for inclusion –
1. Background - overview of current state and why the project has come about.
 2. Establishing guiding principles – consultant’s role and responsibilities, project objectives, stakeholder engagement, contribution to and impact of parking to other policies and sense of place, relationships between parking options and requirements.
 3. Strategic assessment of parking – customer experience, charging regimes, way-finding, peak demand requirements, staffing, benchmarking.
 4. Detailed analysis of car park sites – car park performance, parking models, function, potential, alternative vehicle requirements.
 5. Key findings and proposals – recommendations should detail overall approach to parking and relationship with other providers, future management of parking services, opportunities for place making and site development and provide evidence to support these outcomes.
- 3.6** On 8th September the third Car Parking Member Working Group meeting was held, at which Arup presented their output. CPMWG members were happy with the outcomes and accepted that development of a meaningful strategy may take longer than previously envisaged. The output was also sent to GCC, to review.
- 3.7** Throughout September and October officers have been developing the full tender specification, based on the advice from Arup, with procurement and legal officer assistance. The specification includes reference to consideration of policies relevant to parking, i.e. the Local Transport Plan, JCS, Tourism strategy, Place strategy etc, and consideration of current proposals, initiatives and issues, such as coach and motorcycle parking and evening charging levels.

- 3.8** The tender has been published on 18th October and is open for expressions of interest to be returned by 7th November. The work is expected to take 3 – 4 months and we aim to report back to Cabinet in May 2017.
- 3.9** The next CPMWG is arranged for 7th November, at which point officers will be able to update members on number of expressions of interest returned. Gloucestershire County Council will also be represented at that meeting

TOURISM

- 3.10** Tourism Marketing Consultant, Kelly Ballard started work on the project at the end of July 2016. She is working approximately two days per week until July 2017 to deliver the year one recommendations as per the Creative Tourist Outcomes Review.

Stakeholder engagement

- 3.11** Introductory meetings have been held with 95% of key tourism stakeholders including the Tourism Partnership, cabinet members responsible for tourism and various other tourism businesses in the locality.
- 3.12** Cheltenham Tourism Partnership meeting – planned for 23rd November. Meetings will be held every two months.
- 3.13** Work has started with the Cheltenham Trust to get a better understanding of the work the team undertake in relation to tourism and marketing, their capacity and capabilities. Two workshops have been undertaken to develop the wider understanding and scope of the tourism market, how it effects Cheltenham, the work the trust are currently involved in.
- 3.14** These workshops will assist in providing a clear and collaborative focus on priorities, ensure buy-in from the team, give the Trust management an opportunity to reshape their marketing plans and resources and the team the opportunity to feed into the marketing strategy.

Communications Strategy

- 3.15** An initial press release has been made to launch the communications plan for tourism in Cheltenham. This was launched with a piece around the value of the current tourist economy. Evidence suggests that Cheltenham has an existing tourism economy with a value of c£150m per year. A report has been commissioned due at the end of October that will provide more detail. The strategy is intended to promote the work being undertaken and increase awareness.

Cotswold Partnership

- 3.16** Whilst Cheltenham develops its own business model, we have strengthened our partnership with Cotswold DMO. We have agreed to contribute £3k to the Cotswolds Partnership. This will improve our profile in the Cotswolds and provides access to their links and marketing opportunities from VisitBritain and VisitEngland; access to various communications channels including a 45k email database; TStats, a system to monitor and report on visitor footfall and occupancy rates which will help when evaluating success; Influence over their marketing plans; access to other training and visitor service opportunities for the tourism businesses of Cheltenham.

Brand development

- 3.17** It is essential that the 'Cheltenham Brand' development work is closely aligned with the emerging Place Strategy. Finding the right balance between the vision for the future Cheltenham and how this links to its heritage and cultural offer is key to getting a powerful brand. For example if the tourism strategy were to position Cheltenham as a good place for the over 60's to visit then this may have a negative effect on encouraging young people to come study and work in the town.
- 3.18** A brand specialist is being brought in to support this workstream to effectively weave-in Cheltenham's rich cultural tapestry and economic potential, along with other social and environmental factors.

Working with Cheltenham BID

- 3.19** The tourism programme has involved close involvement with the newly establish BID. Research is being undertaken that will benefit a number of stakeholders. The results are expected to give an overview of who is coming to Cheltenham, who isn't and reasons why. It will also inform perceptions of Cheltenham and marketing opportunities.
- 3.20** Work is also ongoing regarding the Christmas campaign and how this will work with the Trust and the use of VisitCheltenham.co.uk – a marketing campaign will be developed which can be a test bed for future collaborative campaigns.

Business Model

- 3.21** Work is progressing with the Trust and Cotswold Tourism to review the current financial situation as both are charging tourism businesses for services. With such a small pool of tourism businesses this is unsustainable in the long-term. Initial ideas will be discussed at the Tourism Partnership meeting on the 23rd November where the appetite to support and invest will be assessed.
- 3.22** Consideration is also being given to a 'Marketing Cheltenham' type organisation that would have responsibility for Inward Investment and wider 'place' marketing. This is in the early stages however and everything is still in the air. Other destination models need to be reviewed. Stakeholders from the Development Task force are being met to discuss the principle of this approach. It is important that we look at how Cheltenham can effectively work with other DMOs and tourism organisations in the region, and how we are able to benefit each other's economies. This is particularly the case with Gloucester and the Cotswolds.

Strategy

- 3.23** In order to engage stakeholders within Cheltenham and outside, a short, punchy strategy needs to be created from the Creative Tourism recommendations. This will be drafted by the end of November. Following on from this a marketing strategy will be developed. Both documents will be signed off by the Tourism Partnership.

PLACE STRATEGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 3.24** Considerable work has been undertaken regarding the growth agenda for Cheltenham and how the council enables and facilitates this. The July 2016 Cabinet approved proposals to proceed with a transformation project in the Place & Economic

Development Division. The commercialisation of the services was a main driver and how this would enable the refocusing of activities around priorities linked to economic development, car parking, tourism, public realm etc.

3.25 The overarching future vision and ambition for the town is set out in the emerging Place Strategy. October's Cabinet recently approved the framework and a comprehensive stakeholder engagement exercise is underway.

3.26 A working vision has been developed to start the conversations around what type of place we want Cheltenham to be. This will be tested with stakeholders and wider communities over the coming months.

We want to unlock the ambition of our communities to achieve their promising future – recognising Cheltenham's history whilst refocussing on innovation, vibrant cultural experiences, economic growth and growing our talent pool.

We will be a regional leader, well connected and have delivered a sustainable legacy.

3.27 The starting point for this has been to understand the many and varied influences of what define Cheltenham as a place and destination; whether that be around the quality of the public realm, the opportunity to bring new business/expand businesses within the borough, attracting visitors, protecting our heritage, opportunities for education, skills and creative enterprise, access to open spaces, the town's attitude and vibe etc. A fundamental output of this is understanding what makes Cheltenham unique, by establishing Cheltenham's USP, whether that be around economic aspiration or expanding cultural opportunities, it will help define a vision for the Place Strategy. Work on this baseline is continuing and Cabinet are asked to support the resource to engage with key stakeholders and our communities to harness the ambitions for success held by residents, businesses, partner organisations and agencies. The scope of the Place Strategy is proposed as follows;

- A collective assessment of the challenges that the town faces, and the strengths we can build on. What are the key risks for the town in the future and what are the key opportunities?
- A shared vision for Cheltenham – setting out our ambitions for the kind of town we want Cheltenham to be in the future. What will make Cheltenham stand out in the future, why is it special?

The development of a framework for action to deliver these ambitions – using commissioning principles to identify the key supporting outcomes and then working in an entrepreneurial way to facilitate delivery of the vision, and with a clear sense of the priority projects that will make the biggest impact.

4. Next Steps

4.1 As part of the Transformation Programme work is underway to build flexibility, resilience across Place and Economic Development Group to support the delivery of the growth agenda and Place Strategy. It is intended to refocus resources to workstreams and initiatives such as economic development, tourism, car parking public realm etc. A paper setting out the progress with this transformation

programme will be taken to Cabinet in the new-year.

4.2 The individual milestones for each specific area are covered above

Background Papers	Place & ED transformation programme – Cabinet July 2016 Place Strategy – Cabinet October 2016 Tourism Strategy – Creative Tourist
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