

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 January 2017

Development of a place strategy for Cheltenham

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 To update members on the development of a place strategy for Cheltenham since the last update on 28 November 2016

1.2 To discuss the development of our place strategy and to answer five questions:

- What do you see as the key challenges that the town faces?
- What do you see as the key strengths we can build on?
- What does a vision for 2050 look like?
- Are the 4 outcomes: “*businesses, tourists, young people and communities*” the right ones?
- Any thoughts about how we build an effective partnership that can provide a forum for strategic discussions on place?

2. Place Strategy background

2.1 The place strategy will pull together collective thinking on a range of issues that help define Cheltenham as a place. In doing so, it will help co-ordinate partners and agencies’ activities to focus on the outcomes that will support economic growth, cultural vitality and the wider well-being of our communities.

2.2 The draft place strategy that was endorsed by Cabinet in October set out a working vision to start the conversations around what type of place we want Cheltenham to be:

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.

2.3 The scope of the Place Strategy was 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;
- The development of a framework for action to deliver these ambitions – using commissioning principles to identify the key supporting outcomes and then working with partners to facilitate delivery of the vision, and with a clear sense of the priority projects that will make the biggest impact.

- 2.4** The key supporting outcomes were proposed as being:
- A place where businesses choose to invest, where skills, innovation and talent are sought and fostered;
 - A place where tourists choose to visit and return – recognising the vibrancy of the town, its offer and relevance to different age groups;
 - A place where young people study and prosper; and linked to the vibrancy of the town and its job opportunities, wish to stay after their studying is completed;
 - A place where people live in thriving communities.
- 2.5** Whilst Cheltenham Borough Council will take the lead in the development of the place strategy, we want the strategy to be owned by a wide range of stakeholders so that we can:
- Harness the ambitions for success shared by local businesses, agencies and organisations;
 - Reflect the pride that people living in Cheltenham feel for their town, and
 - Tell a story of ambition to the outside world, both nationally and internationally, to those people wishing to visit, study in or invest in Cheltenham.

3. Place Strategy engagement plans

- 3.1** To support the wider ownership of the strategy, an engagement plan has been developed to run to the end of January 2017. This will then enable officers and members to review the information ahead of the strategy coming back to Council at the end of March for approval.
- 3.2** The consultation programme is now live and was kicked off at a stakeholders' meeting on 21 November. Five engagement sessions have been held to date, and these have generated lots of positive feedback. The summary notes of these are attached as **appendix A**.
- 3.3** Whilst it might be premature to start drawing conclusions from the events so far, there are some consistent messages emerging:
- Using the place strategy to set out our ambitions for the type of town we want Cheltenham to be in the future recognising building on what we are already good at;
 - Quality should underpin everything we do;
 - The opportunity to build on our spa and cyber heritages;
 - Digital connectivity is very important;
 - Making sure our cultural offer harnesses and celebrates local talent and helps create vibrancy and a year round whole-town buzz;
 - Liveability and wellbeing are key selling points for Cheltenham;
 - The importance of our relationship with Gloucester and Gloucestershire;
 - The vision needs to be inclusive and equitable - and speak to and benefit all our communities.
- 3.4** What has also been consistent is the willingness of a diverse range of individuals and agencies to get involved in the consultation and their desire to remain involved.

3.5 The following events will take place over the next month or so:

When	Who	Purpose
12 Jan	Positive Participation Partnership meeting that includes a range of community providers, housing providers	Engage with a range of public and VCS partners about how we can use the place strategy to harness skills and resources within our communities

	and VCS organisations	
16 Jan	CBC - Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Engage with elected member to help shape the vision and the four outcomes
13 Jan	Branding workshop	Engage with hospitality trade
19 Jan	Cultural and creative workshop	Engage with cultural and creative providers to define how the place strategy can help create a buzz in Cheltenham
23 Jan	VCS forum	Engage with VCS partners and youth providers
24 Jan pm 25 Jan am 31 Jan pm 1 Feb am	CBC – staff sessions	Engage with CBC staff to help shape the vision and the four outcomes – 1 hour drop-in sessions to be held in the Pittville Room
26 Jan	Cheltenham Tourism Partnership	Engage with hospitality trade
9 Feb (provisional)	Place Strategy Stakeholders and consultation leads:	For consultation leads to share the findings from their consultation activities, and develop our collective thinking on the vision, outcomes and actions ahead of cabinet / council

3.6 One of the other considerations that we will be testing with stakeholders and members is how we build an effective partnership that can provide a forum for strategic discussions as we move into the implementation phase of the strategy.

4. Questions for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 The session at Overview and Scrutiny Committee gives us the opportunity to engage with elected member to help shape the vision and the four outcomes. The questions we would like discussed are as follows:

- What do you see as the key challenges that the town faces
- What do you see as the key strengths we can build on
- What does a vision for 2050 look like?
- Are the 4 outcomes: “*businesses, tourists, young people and communities*” the right ones?
- Any thoughts about how we build an effective partnership that can provide a forum for strategic discussions on place?

5. Place strategy – next steps

5.1 In consultation with key partners and elected members, a draft place strategy will come forward to council on 27 March 2017 for approval. This will include:

- A working vision statement sets out our broad ambition to 2050 and that broadly aligns to our strategic tourism work – but this might not be the finished article;
- A broad document setting out Cheltenham’s strengths and challenges and the rationale for vision and outcomes;
- A set of robust outcomes – the stepping stones to deliver the vision;
- An aligned action plan setting out some key actions that partners and elected members are committed to.

5.2 But time is short, and we want to highlight that the 2017 place strategy may just be the start of a journey and that we will need to commit more time to continue the conversation with partners and residents to define what the vision for Cheltenham should be.

5.3 In addition, elected members may also be aware that there is parallel work ongoing at the county level on the Vision 2050 work. With much work ongoing both at the Gloucestershire level and at the Cheltenham level on defining and articulating our common vision for our respective places, there are some significant opportunities to

work collaboratively. Our place strategy is only the start of a journey, but one that we will be sharing with our local partners as much as our county partners.

Background Papers	Report to Cabinet, 11 October 2016, "Place Strategy Scoping" Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 31 October; "Place and Economic Development" Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28 November 2016; "Place Strategy – engagement plans and links to the devolution agenda"
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Accountability	Cllr. Steve Jordan, Leader of the Council

Place Strategy – initial engagement workshop

21st November 2016

Strengths

- Cheltenham is like a small city but without the overwhelming mass of a metropolis – a city on a human scale
- Our festival and wider cultural offer gives us an international reach
- The quality of our offer is well recognised
- Cheltenham is a great place to bring up a family and is very liveable.
- We have recently seen a cluster of new legal firms setting up in Cheltenham

Challenges

If we set out an ambition to grow business investment, we need to understand who the decision-makers are and what their criteria are – what role will Cheltenham play in a truly globalised economy? How do we make ourselves attractive to new investment?

We need to be ambitious about our liveability, what makes Cheltenham a special place to live now and what are we going to emphasise in the future.

Connectivity is going to be hugely significant for our future success; be that the physical infrastructure connections we have with the outside world (the M5 corridor, mainline rail services), our education links, investment flows, broadband connectivity, how we connect new communities with the existing communities.

We need to generate a buzz about Cheltenham that can appeal to many people but especially young people.

How do we ensure that all children and young people benefit from our fantastic education establishments and make sure that this is seen as a priority

How do we make sure that the benefits of growth and investment are shared equitably

Risk that we don't fully develop our relationship with Gloucester.

What does a 2050 vision look like

The place strategy vision needs to recognise and celebrate what is special and unique about Cheltenham.

The vision should be specific to Cheltenham and not to any other town in the UK.

Our cultural and festivals offer is really important, but other unique selling points are our spa heritage, our cyber success, the Gold Cup, our green spaces and our education offer.

The vision needs to map Cheltenham's spatial scale and define the reach of our ambition – are we bold enough to have an international reach?

We need to define the qualities that will inform how we deliver the 4 outcomes of place-shaping that links our heritage to our future; can we redefine what a mid-21st century spa town looks like? Is there a link between cyber and spa?

We need to make sure that our branding and marketing tells a consistent story of ambition to the outside world

The vision needs to be inclusive and speak for young people, and for those from less affluent backgrounds

The vision should recognise that quality should be part of what we do making sure visitors come back.

Place Strategy Engagement Workshop with youth workers –

Tuesday 29th November

Key messages:

Strengths

- There is a lot of uncertainty in young people's lives hence the importance of community development in building sustainable communities
- In terms of good examples, Charlton Kings has already developed a community plan that young people were able to contribute to.

Challenges

- In terms of issues facing young people in the future, the supply of affordable housing is absolutely critical.
- Also we need to make sure that there are sufficient appealing jobs for young people and then good public transport so that young people can access jobs.

What does a 2050 vision look like

The place strategy should offer hope to young people, its vision should be aspirational and be able to engage their dreams – the strategy should celebrate the positives of young people.

Can the place strategy also articulate a vision about Cheltenham valuing young people and being a child-friendly city (in-line with Unicef).

How would you like to be involved

In terms of engaging with young people, there is widespread support for looking at different ways of engaging with young people eg social media being favoured rather than a young person's forum.

Any particular actions / requests?

There was a suggestion that CBC should put the aspirations of the place strategy centre-stage when looking at options for the Municipal Offices / Town Hall.

Place Strategy - Engagement Workshop with Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group

Monday 12 December

Summary of discussion

Strengths

- Make sure that the young people outcome reflects our aspirations for our home-grown young people

Challenges

- Ensure the strategy makes linkages to the wider wellbeing agenda being articulated through county-wide prevention and self-care, enabling active communities agendas
- Ensure the strategy engages with the young people and young adults 20+

What does a 2050 vision look like

- Ensure that the Cheltenham Place Strategy vision interacts and reflects the Gloucestershire 2050 vision work
- Ensure the vision and strategy recognises our relationship with Gloucester
- Ensure the vision and strategy is clear about the type of economic growth we want to see
- Ensure the vision and strategy celebrates the strengths of diversity
- Ensure the vision and strategy confirms the importance of the liveability of Cheltenham to support all four outcomes

How would you like to be involved

- Role of the Strategic Leadership Group potentially to build an effective relationship including the Development Taskforce and the Business Improvement District
- Role of the Strategic Leadership Group to bring it all together

Place Strategy - Engagement Workshop with Cheltenham

VCS Forum

Tuesday 13 December

Strengths

- Our cultural offer, including retail and dining out
- Older people, what can retirees offer?
- Build on our heritage
- Pittville park
- Racecourse
- Spa town heritage - make sure it is as beautiful as it can be
- 300 year anniversary of Spa waters

Challenges

- Tight boundaries around our urban area
- The need to champion diversity
- The need to tackle disadvantage within our communities
- Not much for young people
- Affordability of cultural offer
- Lack of vibrancy and buzz
- Transport infrastructure is poor, road, rail
- Ensure young people want to stay in Cheltenham

What does a 2050 vision look like

- Make the best of what we've got
- Make sure that focus is wider, not too limited on a narrow demographic
- Ensure that the Vision is equitable to make sure that scarce resources are distributed more equitably
- Make sure that vision works for local people, not just tourists
- Make sure vision related to improvements today

How would you like to be involved?

- VCS involvement is critical, to make sure that disadvantaged get a voice
- Make sure that we share best practice
- Capture feedback from neighbourhood plans
- Need for governance, that brings together private, public and VCS sectors together

The VCS forum agreed to hold another place-shaping workshop in January to support the engagement plans

Place Strategy Engagement Workshop with the Wilson Arts Collective

14 December 2016

What is Cheltenham good at?

- Presence of the University
- Lots of events and activities going on
- Picks up cultural over-spill from Bristol, a sense the Cheltenham and Gloucester are well – placed to develop their links with Bristol.
- The role of the Trust and the Wilson as a venue and the Arts Collective to support cultural ambitions of young people

What could it be better at?

- Ensure cultural offer is more inclusive
- Make sure that Cheltenham is known as a creative place
- Supporting young people harness their ambitions – ensure the vision fosters creativity in the town and taps into mentoring support.
- Lack of support mechanisms for budding artists, plus lack of marketing

What is missing?

- Links between young people and businesses – request for mentoring schemes to help them develop their skills and talents
- Skills support eg around life skills and business skills
- Establish talent pathway; linking space for young people to establish creative enterprises, with support, advice and mentoring, with showcases for their talents and awards.
- Lack of access to theatre/performance spaces for performance art and music
- Access to affordable dance classes for 13-18 year olds
- Lack of forum for independent business sector to support each other through cross-promotional activities
- Spaces for young people to try out business ideas

How would young people like to contribute to shaping a sense of place in the future – what could be put in place

- Young people want to be heard.
- Respect for ideas, innovation and creativity – a place that enables young people
- A request for young people to have some responsibility for an element of our cultural offer
- Make sure that we are doing things with young people, not for young people

Is there anything that is needed for Cheltenham? If you had to choose one thing, what would it be?

- Celebrate the talent of young people
- Create the talent pathway concept
- Create business incubator / start-up space
- Lift Cheltenham out of its comfort zone