

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Council – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017**  
**Place Strategy - Cheltenham Placemaking Vision**

**Report of the Leader**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Leader</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Director of Planning</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key/Significant Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 Cabinet agreed the scope of the Place Strategy including a working vision to start the conversations with stakeholders around what type of place we want Cheltenham to be. Since October a small officer team supported by stakeholder sector leads have spoken to a wide range of industry leaders, groups, businesses and individuals.</p> <p>This report draws together the conversations and presents a draft Cheltenham Placemaking Vision for endorsement by Council. The next steps proposed will be to work with key partners, elected members, stakeholders and the wider community of Cheltenham on agreeing the ambition for the town and how to turn it into reality. In order to facilitate this, officers will prepare an engagement plan to be agreed by the Leader of the Council. Following completion of the engagement process and with input from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the final Place Strategy and supporting Action Plan will be approved by Cabinet.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Council endorses the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision for engagement with stakeholders and the wider communities of Cheltenham.</b>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising in respect of this report. However financial resources will be required for the delivery of the place strategy programme, once specific projects are identified. The financial implications of all proposed schemes will need to be considered as part of a business case, and the impact on the medium term financial strategy considered at this time.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Accountant, <a href="mailto:sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk">sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01242 264125</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>No legal implications arising at this stage,</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Solicitor, <a href="mailto:nick.jonathan@tewkesbury.gov.uk">nick.jonathan@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a> , 01684 272690</b></p>

<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>No direct HR implications arising from the content of this report, however as the action plan develops in co-ordination with stakeholders this is expected to lead to further demands on officer resources to support delivery. This is being kept under review through the Place and Economic Development transformation programme.</p> <p>The council is in the process of developing an Organisational Development programme which will capture activity which will influence and shape the organisation's values and behaviours and determine how we develop and skill our staff to implement this key strategy.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: HR Manager, <a href="mailto:julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk">julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk</a> , 01242 264355</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p>Risks are detailed at appendix 1 of this report.</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>The Place Strategy is an output of the Corporate Strategy 2016-17</p> <p><b>ECON 1</b> – We will work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop a longer term strategy for place making and growth.</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>None arising directly from this report. The action plan supporting the Place Strategy, considers the positive outcomes placemaking can bring to environmental and climate change.</p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>No property implications arising at this stage, but may do in the future upon implementation of the Place Strategy action plan.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Head Of Property Services <a href="mailto:david.roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk">david.roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01242 264151</b></p>

# 1. Background

1.1 On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 Cabinet agreed the scope of the Place Strategy with a recommendation to bring a draft to Council by March 2017. Cabinet actioned the officer team to work with stakeholders to inform preparation of the strategy. A working vision was developed to start the conversations with stakeholders around what type of place we want Cheltenham to be, this being;

**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.**

1.2 This vision was a helpful starting point to understanding the many and varied influences of what defines 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.

1.3 Four broad outcomes were identified in October which were used to frame the engagement programme, these were;

1. A place where businesses choose to invest, where skills, innovation and talent are sought and fostered
2. A place where tourists choose to visit and return – recognising the vibrancy of the town, its offer and relevance to different age groups
3. 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
4. A place where people live in thriving communities

## 1.4 Why do we need a Place Strategy for Cheltenham?

- We have a relatively affluent economy that supports around 72,000 jobs in a range of industries including defence, aerospace, electronics and the visitor economy. But we know we need to do more as our rate of economic growth and jobs growth is below the average and in general productivity rates this area are below average, these concerns are captured in the analysis of risks (see appendix 1).
- We have a well-defined visitor economy and a national and international reputation with regard to our key festivals and events coupled with a strong hospitality offer. But we know that we need to do more as the number of visitors staying in Cheltenham has dropped.
- We have many high achieving schools, further education and higher education establishments, both in the state sector and in the independent sectors that are promoting lifelong learning and celebrating excellent levels of educational attainment. But we know that we need to do more to retain our young people as the number of children and young people living in Cheltenham falls whilst the number of older people is increasing
- We have many diverse communities in Cheltenham that have a range of structures to represent them including neighbourhood coordination groups, friends of groups, resident associations, neighbourhood partnerships and parish councils. But we know that we need to do more as we have the most extremes in deprivation in the county. Whilst the district contains areas that are amongst the most affluent in the country, there are three areas in the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

1.5 Addressing these long-term challenges will require us to create an ambitious vision that sets out how we can work together to make to make sure Cheltenham remains an amazing place.

**1.6** Cabinet were clear in their discussion in October, that in considering these outcomes we should not be looking through just a lens of Cheltenham Borough Council, but through the lens of our different stakeholders. To facilitate this, a key stakeholder group was established and facilitators agreed to lead discussion with key groups. The stakeholder group and facilitators are listed below. Details of the stakeholder conversations and wider engagement are set out in section 2 of this report.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
Gloucestershire University	Maxine Melling	
Cheltenham Development Taskforce	Jeremy Williamson	
Gloucestershire County Council	Nigel Riglar	
Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership	David Owen	
Cheltenham Trust	Julie Finch	<b>Cultural sector lead</b>
Cheltenham Festivals	Louise Emmerson	
Cheltenham Racecourse	Ian Renton	
Voluntary and Community sector	Angela Gilbert	<b>Voluntary sector lead</b>
Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID)	Kevan Blackadder	<b>Business sector lead</b>
Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce	Michael Ratcliffe	
Tourism consultant	Kelly Ballard	
Head Teacher Pittville School	Richard Gilpin	
Leader of Council	Councillor Steve Jordan	
Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles	Councillor Flo Clucas	
Cabinet Member Development and Safety	Councillor Andrew McKinlay	

## **2. Stakeholder Sector engagement and feedback**

- 2.1** As outlined above, over the past 4 months engagement has taken place, what was clear from this engagement is that wider consultation is needed; this report therefore provides a Cheltenham Placemaking Vision that will feed into the preparation of the Place Strategy.
- 2.2** The starting point for the stakeholder engagement was for the sector leads to organise events/workshops which would draw together industry experts and leaders to consider the vision, mission, enablers and outcomes as outlined in the October cabinet report. The sector leads were actioned to organise this in a way which fitted with their audience and a summary of their activities is provided below.
- 2.3** **Businesses make Cheltenham:** The starting point for this conversation was a joint workshop hosted by the Cheltenham BID/Chamber of Commerce. Bringing together a range of business representatives to debate barriers and opportunities around key area, including; business opportunities, traffic and parking, public transport, moving around, housing and community, streets and spaces, influence and sense of control, facilities and amenities, identity and belonging, feeling safe and care and maintenance. The discussion tested where Cheltenham

was positioned now, both perceptions and reality and what we needed to do to contribute to business growth and investment in the context of 'destination Cheltenham'. Outside the workshop further engagement took place with smaller groups within the business sector to help add depth to the conclusions being drawn.

#### 2.4 Key messages from the business community include:

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

**2.5 Visitors make Cheltenham:** This engagement was led by Cheltenham Trust, bringing together industry leaders around the creative, culture and visitor economy. To assist the debate a workshop was organised which was facilitated by Charles Landry (best known for having written the book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*). The objective of this workshop was to draw out from industry leaders how the creative economy can play an active and lead role in creating place, considering opportunities of how the creative economy can define Cheltenham; marrying innovation with heritage and the essence of what makes Cheltenham special. The outcome of this engagement was the drafting of a manifesto – the power and potential of culture and creativity. This manifesto draws conclusions that Cheltenham is not optimising opportunities for the creative economy and cultural activities and provided a set of statements to help inform the preparation of the Place Strategy and priorities for conversations and actions going forward.

#### 2.6 Key messages from the cultural community included:

- Cheltenham needs to unlock, spark and harness its potential
- The sharp contrasts in Cheltenham should by thinking imaginatively be turned from problems into opportunities.
- Leverage is the watchword and so much more could be achieved if the town connected up better.
- Create the cross sector linkages that can generate value adding processes and projects
- Feel the cyberness of the place - Cheltenham should see itself as a living lab, and indeed join the Living Lab movement.
- Cheltenham should surprise – visitors should experience things beyond the obvious.
- Cheltenham should accentuate, amplify and promote its diversities by shining a light on its diverse heritage, its localities, its communities
- Cheltenham's origins as a spa town fit the current health, wellbeing and education agendas very well.
- Value the benefits, potential and catalytic impact of cultural thinking, arts, creative industries and related forms
- It is the energy and wealth creation possibilities of the younger cohorts that will make Cheltenham economically resilient.
- Cheltenham should be more ambitious and globally aware.
- The existing cultural institutions in Cheltenham should also challenge themselves to be more alert, creative and imaginative to ensure they help the town operate at its best.
- By feeling more at ease with itself the town can explore Gloucester/Cheltenham synergies with a level of urgency without fearing it is losing out.

**2.7 Our communities make Cheltenham:** A broad range of stakeholders came together to engage in this sector discussion led by the Voluntary and Community (VCS) support via Gloucestershire Rural and Community Council. This included a range of players from community leaders to service providers. There was a clear understanding of the challenges facing the different sectors

of the community and the difficulties around addressing the root causes of deprivation to readdress the balance of Cheltenham both in terms of access to opportunities whether that is jobs, education, cultural offer etc. The importance of partnership working was a key area of debate and the need for partners to take the time to have a deeper understanding of the issues at a grass roots level and how investment could be targeted to make a real difference to people's lives.

## 2.8 Key messages from community leaders and representatives included:

- Celebrate what we've got.
- Make sure that focus is inclusive, 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.
- Add 2 further outcomes, one for infrastructure and hospitals and one for public services.
- Make sure vision delivers improvements today!

## 2.9 **Young people make Cheltenham:** Following initial stages of engagement it was clear by all parties that we were not picking up the voices of younger people and therefore a fourth sector was added which was 'young people make Cheltenham'. This was led via the Wilson Arts Collective and youth workers.

## 2.10 Key messages from this sector included:

- Celebrate the talent of young people.
- Create the Talent pathway concept.
- Create business incubator / start-up space.
- Lift Cheltenham out of its comfort zone.
- 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 positive.
- Can the place strategy also articulate a vision about Cheltenham valuing young people and being child-friendly.

## 2.11 **Ongoing engagement:** To bring together the different sector engagement conversations a series of stakeholder meetings have taken place enabling the sector leads to bring forward their findings and debate amongst a wider group. The outputs of this have very much informed the evolution of the vision of the Place Strategy which was further debated through a facilitated session with the sector leads on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The outcome of this was tested at a stakeholder meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

# 3. Wider engagement

## 3.1 In addition to the formal stakeholder conversations outlined above wider engagement has taken place including;

- 4 staff sessions with council employees. These sessions have helped inform the vision and outcomes of the Place Strategy, workshops were undertaken to gain reflections on how different parts of the council could deliver key priorities. Key messages drawn from these sessions included;
  - Be a go to / happening place with great entertainment.
  - Be a safe place to live that is well looked after.
  - Be an attractive town for visitors and residents (parks, festivals, races, shopping).
  - Be caring, friendly and welcoming.
  - Celebrate our architecture – our regency heritage.
  - Embrace the town's link to spies - cyber industry hub.
  - Encourage businesses into the area.

- Encourage the edgy not just the posh.
  - Heritage of municipal horticulture, trees, parks and green spaces.
  - Town within a garden.
  - More activities and facilities to retain the young people.
  - More inclusive and affordable events.
  - Must feel good, a good place to be.
  - Sell the unique small items e.g. the possibility of using pop-ups.
  - Spa town and link to Cotswolds.
  - Wildlife links and cycle access.
  - Use and promote our festivals more.
  - Be more ambitious about selling Cheltenham.
- Engagement with hospitality industry led by consultant Kelly Ballard who is supporting the council on delivery of the tourism strategy. This was principally through the tourism forum, but also included a branding workshop with the hospitality trade linking engagement with the tourism strategy with the preparation of the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision.
  - Discussion reports have been presented to 3 meetings of Overview and Scrutiny, again this has helped in testing the visions and outcomes.
  - Presentation and debate with cabinet members on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017. Testing outputs of the stakeholder group and the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision.
  - A member seminar was held for all members on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 to review progress and debate the emerging Cheltenham Placemaking Vision.

**3.2** What couldn't be achieved within the time and resources available is wider public/community engagement. This is clearly a gap which we will need to address as we move to the testing stage and the preparation of the place strategy. Should Council approve the recommendations, activities will be included within an engagement plan to consult more widely as outlined in section 6 of this report.

## **4. Evolution of the vision**

**4.1** The starting point for the vision was established in October 2016 and over the past few months this has evolved, informed by the outcomes as set out above. All parties have been clear that the vision is critical to setting the direction of travel and should be the catalyst for driving the agenda of the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision. Expectations driven by the engagement with stakeholders and incorporated into the vision as now presented includes;

- Celebration of our diversity;
- Understanding that place is not just about the physical, it's about the atmosphere, the sense of being, our psychology and personality; our history;
- Outlining how we harness our ambition to make the most out of our potential;
- A level of urgency – creating a culture of making things happen.

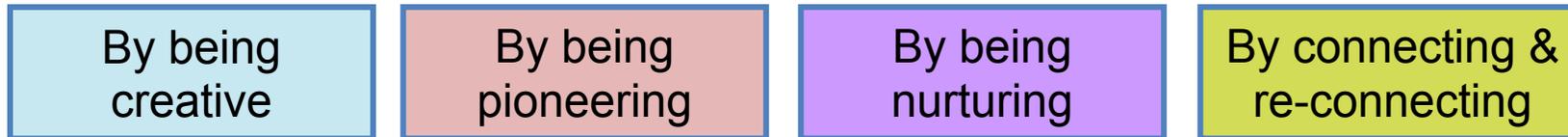
**4.2** There was concern that iterations of the vision, together with connected enablers and outcomes did not capture the essence of the above and felt more like a box ticking exercise to ensure key words/phrases were presented. This was a challenge, therefore through the facilitated session with sector leads and testing with the wider stakeholder group the following simplified vision has been identified.

# Our vision for Cheltenham

What we want  
Cheltenham to be:



How we will do this:



The outcomes we  
hope to see:



## 5. Draft Cheltenham Placemaking Vision

5.1 With the vision '**a place where everyone thrives**' agreed with key stakeholders; together with defining key values of Creative – Pioneering – Nurturing – Connecting & Reconnecting, a draft Cheltenham Placemaking Vision has been prepared (see appendix 1). This document should be seen at this stage as the start of a conversation with stakeholders and the wider community, defining the ambition to help deliver the four outcomes as agreed by Cabinet in October and now redefined within the context of the revised vision;

Outcome 1 – the local economy thrives;

Outcome 2 – the visitor economy thrives;

Outcome 3 – young people thrive;

Outcome 4 – our communities thrive.

5.2 The Cheltenham Placemaking Vision has been drafted in the context of a discussion document with a number of ideas and suggestions. The task now is to work with a wide range of stakeholders to test the vision and values and to explore whether the ideas and suggestions are ambitious enough and to develop collective solutions to turn the vision into reality.

5.3 The focus moving forward will be on identifying projects and partners that will deliver the Placemaking Vision ambitions.

5.4 During the course of the preparation of the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision there has been much discussion on the end date. The starting point for this was 2050; linking into futures thinking works currently being led by Leadership Gloucestershire. Whilst there was some support for this time horizon the majority of stakeholders felt that it was too far ahead. Consensus was that the Placemaking Vision should initially align with the time period of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy, 2031, but demonstrating a wider awareness beyond this timeframe.

5.5 There has also been discussion on an appropriate governance model to support future delivery of a Place Strategy action plan. This needs to be developed in partnership with key stakeholders and forms part of the next steps.

## 6. Next steps

6.1 Should Council endorse the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision, the next steps will be to work with key partners, elected members, stakeholders and the wider community of Cheltenham on agreeing the ambition for the town and considering how to turn it into reality. This will include;

1. Clearly setting out how the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision provides the spatial expression (the overarching plan) for other supporting plans and strategies, e.g. tourism, cultural and economic strategies, events, public realm and High Street plans etc.
2. Preparing an engagement plan which sets out how the officer team will test the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision and develop the Place Strategy and supporting action plan.
3. Making all relevant documents available via the Cheltenham placemaking webpage and engage with communities through this medium and through activities set out within the Place Strategy engagement plan.

4. Working with key stakeholders, for example cultural chairs, C5 group, LEP Infrastructure and Construction Group, University etc. to test the Cheltenham Placemaking Vision and develop the details of the action plan. To date engagement has very much focussed on facilitated conversations through identified stakeholders. There now needs to be a deeper level of engagement.
5. Continuing to engage with Overview and Scrutiny Group on the Place Strategy and supporting plans and strategies.
6. Agreeing the final Place Strategy, Action Plan and governance through Cabinet.
7. Continuing staff involvement to help embed the ambitions of the Place Strategy across all our activities, but also to use the group to test ideas and thinking.
8. Developing the key values of Creative – Pioneering – Nurturing – Connecting & Re-connecting through the council’s organisational development project.

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<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risks</li> <li>2. Cheltenham Placemaking Vision</li> </ol>
<b>Background information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cabinet report 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 <a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s20456/2016_10_11_CAB_Place_Strategy.pdf">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s20456/2016_10_11_CAB_Place_Strategy.pdf</a></li> </ol>

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If current staff contracts are not addressed within the Planning Division, then there will be insufficient suitable staff resource available to deliver the Place Strategy to quality or to timetable.	TC	Oct 2016	5	3	15	Reduce	Review current staffing arrangements within the Planning Division as part of the review of the Place and Economic development team.	May 2017	TC	Divisional
	If the Council does not structure its strategy-strands within an overarching Place Strategy, then there is a possibility of a divergence in strategic approaches with the potential to impact on economic growth.	TC	Oct 2016	4	2	8	Reduce	Produce Place Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders and wider community which provides a coherent and spatial expression of the ambition for Cheltenham.	Summer 2017	TC	Corporate
	If the Council does not effectively engage with its communities in the preparation of the Place Strategy, then it runs the risk of failing to bring with it organisations and communities vital to the Strategy's delivery and isolating parts of its community.	TC	Oct 2016	5	2	10	Reduce	Undertake engagement as set out in the main report.	Summer 2017	TC	Corporate