



# BE SWIFT, BOLD & BRAVE

Business Plan 2020 – 2022

**CHEL TENHAM**

ECONOMIC  
RECOVERY  
TASK FORCE





Working together, in tandem and in unison has never been more important than it is now during and post this pandemic. Our communities and how we come together within those is a critical part of our post Covid recovery.

Covid has changed many things in particular our High streets in what feels to be an overnight transition. In reality this change was already happening but at a much slower pace. The new reality is that we need and have to change our Places very swiftly in order to ensure there vibrancy and future and to do that we need to be bold and brave in our thinking and our actions. The Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force has been put in place to do just that.

*Diane Savory*

Diane Savory  
Independent Chair, Cheltenham Recovery Task Force

## ABOUT US

The purpose of the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force is to respond to the challenges facing the borough, with a particular focus on the town centre and the need for reinvention. The Task Force has been established as a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic to reinvigorate growth whilst maintaining the longer term vision of our economic, social and environmental growth plans; essentially supporting the economy now in such a way that does not preclude current thinking on future ambitions.

Hosted by Cheltenham Borough Council, the Task Force is an advisory board and vehicle with which conversations and actions focussed on economic recovery will be driven forward in partnership with the Borough Council and other key stakeholders. It responds directly to **Cheltenham Recovery Strategy**. In bringing forward this strategy Cllr Steve Jordan, leader of Cheltenham Borough Council said;

*"I'm delighted that the council has committed to this bold and robust strategy to lead Cheltenham's economic and community recovery. It will provide a clear road-map to deliver our key five priorities including a renewed commitment to becoming a net zero carbon council and borough by 2030 and continuing our progress to make Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK as part of the overarching Golden Valley development, which will bring sustainable infrastructure, housing and employment opportunities".*





The Task Force membership includes members that represents political leadership at both Cheltenham and Gloucestershire County Council, public, private, voluntary and charity sector representation focussed on the industry knowledge and experience around property, retail, commercial, sustainability and environment, culture, place making.

It is important that the Recovery Task Force does not duplicate activities being led elsewhere, such as Golden Valley Development, GFirst LEP or duplicate where other partnerships exist, for example Cheltenham BID, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce, Visit Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Civic Society. Where agendas overlap the emphasis will be on where the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force can add value.

[Our terms of reference can be viewed here.](#)



## OUR VALUES UNDERPIN A COMMITMENT TO:



- Engaging with partners to maximise integrated working
- Re-imagining to re-invent our town centre as a place for people and social experiences. The implications of Covid-19, have not created the challenges on the High Street, but have amplified them. Pre Covid clear academic research evidences the need for reinvention. High streets have always been spaces for the local community to come together, do business and interact. With a bit of imagination, we can find a 21st-century way of making that happen again.  
*[High streets can be saved. Here's how to reinvent them for the 21st century](#)*
- Being bold, ambitious and innovative in response to the economy adapting to the digitisation of work, KPMG note that "recovery for the sector will likely to be slow, uneven and erratic. However, there is still significant capital sitting on the sidelines waiting to be deployed"  
*[KPMG 'The Digitization of Work'](#)*
- Supporting local business resilience, skills development and jobs and helping communities to help themselves
- Getting on with delivery & promoting inward investment
- Driving forward our sustainability goals
- The need to re-establish consumer trust in the 'safety' in our culture offer, including the many festivals and events that have been the hallmark of Cheltenham and categorise 'The Festival town'
- Our economic recovery plans will support all of Cheltenham's high streets and retail parks, with an initial focus on the town centre

At its inception meeting on 9th September 2020 the Task Force discussed its expectations and priorities for delivery. This forward plan draws together that thinking to develop a programme of activities for the Task Force going forward. This is a living document and will be amended in light of changes in priorities as a response to Covid-19 recovery and continued engagement with the Task Force. This business plan summaries the key actions and priorities that will guide the Task Force over the next 18 months, where appropriate task and finish sub groups will be established to drive forward actions and priorities, utilising the skill sets and experience of the Task Force members and wider partners and stakeholders.








## PRIORITY

## ACTIONS

1	<b>TOWN CENTRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options for vacant units</li> <li>Input into future planning strategy - move to a more dynamic blend of retail, commercial and residential</li> <li>New town centre vision</li> <li>Investigating opportunities for digital innovation</li> <li>Opportunities for a new town centre hub/focal point</li> <li>Investigating opportunities that help build community cohesion</li> <li>Temporary relaxation of planning restrictions</li> <li>Supporting the night-time economy</li> <li>Supporting local business resilience and jobs, including town centre uses outside retailing</li> <li>Integration of cyber</li> <li>Support delivery of Reopening the High Street Safely</li> </ul>	 
2	<b>CYBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging with the cyber community to develop opportunities and maximise benefit to Cheltenham and wider Gloucestershire</li> <li>Support for Golden Valley Development considering how benefits can be maximised</li> <li>Overview of Minster Innovation Project and set up of Cheltenham Growth Hub</li> <li>Support skills development for the next generation workforce</li> </ul>	
3	<b>INWARD INVESTMENT (INCLUDING CATALYST SITES)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting development of We're Moving to Cheltenham platform</li> <li>Supporting reinvestment/inward investment – encouraging bold and innovative development proposals</li> <li>Providing review of development ideas and emerging schemes</li> <li>Input into review of CBC asset review</li> </ul>	
4	<b>LOCAL BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND JOBS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with GFirst LEP and Cheltenham Borough Council to ensure that government messaging is disseminated and clear for businesses to deliver in a safe Covid environment</li> <li>Support delivery of Reopening the High Street Safely</li> <li>Working with GFirst LEP and Growth Hubs to ensure local signposting in place for job search and retraining opportunities</li> <li>Developing the town centre Growth Hub</li> </ul>	

## PRIORITY

## ACTIONS

5	<b>VISITOR ECONOMY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining Cheltenham as a world class destination</li> <li>Using culture as a lever for growth and investment</li> <li>Defining our Eco Tourism strategy with local partners including Marketing Cheltenham, Visit Gloucestershire, GFirst LEP.</li> </ul>	
6	<b>GREEN GROWTH/ SUSTAINABILITY/ ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for infrastructure investment</li> <li>Considering how broader climate change agenda can feed in across CERTF priorities</li> <li>Working with partners and GCC to accelerate town centre modal-shift</li> <li>Looking at opportunities for best practice</li> <li>Accelerating green growth initiatives</li> <li>Opportunities to work with partners on response to 2030 Carbon Neutral target</li> <li>Feeding into Visit Gloucestershire eco tourism strategy</li> </ul>	
7	<b>SKILLS AND EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalise on opportunities between recognised growth sectors (Gfirst LEP Industrial Strategy), and education and employment</li> <li>Work collaboratively to better link local and regional industry and academia</li> <li>Encourage the young and disadvantaged</li> <li>Supporting local start-up and scale-up businesses to obtain and retain local talent</li> </ul>	
8	<b>LOBBYING OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of planning reforms</li> <li>Review of changes in government policy/legislation</li> <li>Lobbying on key issues impacting on economic recovery</li> </ul>	
9	<b>FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping up to date across funding opportunities and alignment with Task Force outcomes</li> <li>Utilise CERTF member technical support in preparation of funding bids</li> <li>Exploring new access to finance options for sustainable investments and developments</li> </ul>	



In addition to the priorities and actions above, the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force will be cognisant of wider concerns and fleet footed/opportunistic in its approach in order to adapt to changing circumstances. The key will be rapidly seeking safe but effective new or temporary uses for any distressed assets within the town and helping to create a flexible environment within which change can happen. Emerging future agenda items for the Task Force include, responding to funding opportunities across the economic recovery agenda, lobbying to partners, stakeholders, government to drive flexibilities to deliver economic recovery interventions.

Outcomes and activities of the Task Force are published [here](#).

Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force meetings take place on a 6 week cycle. The Task Force is an advisory board and is not a decision making body. Summarised notes are prepared and published via the link above.

## HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Understanding the impact of the Task Force will be an important element of the evaluation of its activities. A range of indicators, including:

- Town centre footfall data
- Town centre vacant unit data
- Number of development projects and programmes supported
- Number of lobbying activities to Government
- Number of funding bids supported
- Unemployment data
- Apprenticeship data
- Number of businesses presenting themselves on social media platforms
- Engagements with wider partners





# WHO WE ARE

Full membership of the Task Force can be viewed [here](#). Current membership is as follows:



**Diane Savory**  
*Independent Chair*



**Rowena Hay**  
*Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council*



**Gareth Edmundson**  
*Chief Executive Cheltenham Borough Council*



**Victoria Atherstone**  
*Cheltenham Borough Council  
Cabinet Member for economy and development*



**Nigel Jobson**  
*Representing retail /digital*



**Darren Stevens**  
*Representing business / marketing*



**Madeline Howard**  
*Representing skills / young people*



**Tim Atkins**  
*Managing Director of Place and Growth Cheltenham Borough Council*



**Nicola Inchbald**  
*Representing property / landlords*



**Ian George**  
*Representing Culture Board / Charity*



**Antonia Shield**  
*Representing legal*



**Dorian Wragg**  
*Representing property*



**Joe Roberts**  
*Representing place making*



**Dave Entwistle**  
*Representing voluntary sector*



**Nigel Moor**  
*Gloucestershire County Council  
Cabinet Member for environment and planning*



**Patrick Molyneux**  
*Gloucestershire County Council  
Cabinet Member for economy, education and skills*



**Tracey Crews**  
*Director of Planning  
(portfolio includes economic development & inward investment/ marketing/infrastructure)*



**Andrew McKenzie**  
*Representing sustainability and environment*



**Eoin McQuone**  
*Representing sustainability and environment*







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