Glasgow City Council

Local Licensing Forum

Item 4

13th February 2024

Report by Executive Director
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

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A new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Forum Members with:

1. An overview of the content of new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z that was completed in August 2023, and
2. Information on the project's process, including stakeholder engagement and progress towards delivery of recommended actions.

Recommendations:

The Area Partnership is asked to:

(1) Note the content of the new Vision and Plan;

(2) Note that the new Vision's Delivery Plan will be reflected and progressed through the proposed new City centre Strategy, and

(3) Note that dialogue with stakeholders, to deliver the ambitions of the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z, will continue.

1. Introduction

1.1 The City Council commissioned a consultant team on 1st November 2022, to work closely with Council officers to engage city centre stakeholders in the production of a new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z.

1.2 This report presents the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z document (and separate appendices) for members' consideration. The report also outlines the stakeholder engagement process and highlights priority actions to deliver the ambitions of the new Vision and Plan.

1.3 The new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z was approved by City Administration Committee on 31st August 2023, following review by Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration Policy Committee on 15th August 2023.

2. Background

2.1 Production of the new Vision and Plan was funded by the Scottish Government City Centre Recovery Fund, as part of a package of projects progressed by the City Centre Task Force to stimulate post pandemic recovery. The new Vision and Plan is a strategic planning project that explores the spatial, socio-economic and environmental challenges and opportunities facing the centre's three iconic streets.

2.2 These streets; Sauchiehall Street, Buchanan Street and Argyle Street have long formed the navigable retailing core of the City Centre and, as such, have been most affected by the changes in retail shopping which have taken place across the UK. In response, the new Vision and Plan aims to define a renewed development direction to re-energise the Centre's retail core and ensure its greater resilience in future.

2.3 The project also responds to the need for all city centres to refocus in a post pandemic and climate and nature emergency context. New patterns of living, working and shopping, combined with digital/technological advances and changing investor and occupier demands has led to a contraction in retail floorspace that must be replaced with a more diverse range of uses and offer. In addition, city centres must address the critical need to overhaul their urban environments to achieve net zero goals, enhance biodiversity and become more 'liveable' and attractive places.

2.4 The new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z aims to provide a responsive future development trajectory that will provide clarity and confidence to residents, businesses, investors and developers. It considers key issues affecting the centre in a coordinated and integrated manner; such as the contraction of retail space, the blight of vacant land/buildings, the need to grow city centre living and the potential opportunities presented by significant regeneration proposals for St Enoch and Buchanan Galleries. The new Vision and Plan identifies priorities for intervention and investment, by public and private sectors, that will support recovery and resilience.

3. Project Team & Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 A Glasgow based consultant team were appointed in November 2022 comprising Stantec (UK), Threesixty Architecture and Kevin Murray Associates.

3.2 Working with the Council, the team engaged a range of stakeholders in reimagining the future of the Golden Z. Landowners, residents, businesses, institutions, agencies, visitors, developers and investors collectively explored opportunities for change and how they could be delivered. Events included:

- Two Initial stakeholder workshops – 5th December – to capture issues and ideas
- Youth workshop –18th January – to explore youth specific perspective on Z offer
- Public ideas day – 24th January - a wider drop in day to capture more views
- Areas of Focus workshop – 2nd February – to explore development options for buildings and spaces across the Golden Z
- A number of one-to-one meetings with owners, developers, agencies to capture further detail on interests, aspirations and issues.
- A video and questionnaire were made available on the Council website at www.glasgow.gov.uk/goldenZ
- A Golden Z focused Glasgow Urban Design Panel – 23rd February
- A delivery-focused round table – 9th March – to illicit further ideas on unlocking development potential

3.3 Reports of stakeholder events and the key issues and ideas contributed can be found on the Council website at www.glasgow.gov.uk/goldenZ

3.4 A concluding event took take place on 14th August 2023, in Merchants' House, to present the proposed Vision and Plan to stakeholders for consideration. Around 200 people attended, from a range of sectors; residents, property owners, businesses, agents, developers, investors, public sectors agencies and the city's educational institutions. The event explored the role all stakeholders can play in delivering the ambitions of the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z and aimed to nurture an ongoing collaborative dialogue.

4. The new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z – Key Messages

4.1 The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z asserts the importance of the Golden Z as a place. In addition to being a key driver of a successful city and regional economy, it is a core part of the communal identity, and so wellbeing, of Glasgow's citizens. The Vision and Plan also highlights the importance of this opportunity to define the next phase in the evolution of the heart of the city; to transition to become more sustainable, resilient and inclusive of all in future.

4.2 The Vision and Plan provides recommendations for how the Golden Z and environs could and should look, feel and be like in future. It explores a series of repurposing and redevelopment options for three 'areas of focus' on

Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets that suffer from a concentration of vacant property and poor environmental quality. Drawing on discussions with stakeholders, the Vision and Plan explores how to unlock repurposing opportunities and overcome barriers to delivery.

4.3 The main body of the Vision and Plan for the Golden Z document is structured around six themes:

(i) **Balanced** - considers how and where to diversify the range uses across the Z. The importance of good quality retail premises and their concentration on the prime spine of Buchanan Street is highlighted, complemented by a greater mix of restaurant, café, bar and leisure uses to activate key routes and adjoining streets. The need for more homes, workspaces and cultural attractions to enliven the Z through different times of the day and evening is outlined.

(ii) **Legible** – explores how the Golden Z, as the recognised spine of how we navigate the city centre, can contribute to more sustainable travel, be made more accessible, permeable and benefit from better connected movement networks and urban spaces.

(iii) **Living** - explores opportunities to create new homes of various tenures and formats, (including affordable, family, student and later living homes) within new and repurposed buildings and upper floors. The need to provide centrally located community facilities and services to enable their development is highlighted.

(iv) **Working** - highlights the opportunities around the Z to create new agile workspace, building on recent successes such as McLellan Works. Nurturing links with educational institutions is also explored.

(v) **Vibrant** - reinforces the strong cultural offer in and around the Golden Z and explores how cultural attractions and institutions can be better integrated to enhance cultural participation and boost the leisure economy, particularly the Sauchiehall Street cluster. The importance of ensuring a vibrant and safe city centre providing culture, music, bars and restaurants which enhance the city's economy and destination appeal is highlighted, as is the contribution of meanwhile uses.

(vi) **Responsible** –outlines how the Golden Z can progress the city's response to the climate emergency; in progressing carbon neutrality, increasing density, property repurposing, greening the grey and in ensuring the city core is accessible, safe and welcoming for all.

4.4 The Vision and Plan goes on to outline future redevelopment options to address the needs of the three 'areas of focus', namely; the former ABC/Jumpin Jacks site adjoining the GSA, the area on Sauchiehall Street around the former BHS, Watt Bros, and former Victoria's nightclub gap site, and the locale of the vacant TJ Hughes site near Trongate. The various options seek to repurpose vacant land and buildings and demonstrate the

positive impact the redevelopment of each area could have locally, and combined, on the whole Golden Z.

4.5 The Areas of Focus and the preceding six thematic sections contain a wealth of analysis, ideas and recommendations. They include a number of rich and relevant case studies that illuminate best practice from cities around the world to help raise our ambition and understanding as we seek to implement similar ideas.

4.6 The concluding 'Delivering the Vision' section identifies 5 priority objectives for the centre to focus on, for a successful transition:

- Diversification of uses;
- Densification & Retrofit of land and buildings;
- Creation of world class public spaces;
- Improving connectivity and accessibility, and
- Ensuring Inclusivity and appeal to more diverse range of users

4.7 'Delivering the Vision' includes a Delivery Plan, which summarises key actions required to deliver the Vision. Five priority interventions are outlined, thus:

- Progress the redevelopment options for the 'areas of focus';
- Proactively tackle blight and promote good stewardship;
- Create world class public spaces;
- Explore creation of a Sauchiehall Cultural District, and
- Ensure cross sectoral collaboration and exploration of governance

4.8 The new Vision and Plan's delivery narrative highlights the urgency in tackling poor stewardship and blight; including vacant land and buildings and those in a poor state of repair. As such, it recommends the Council explore the use of its statutory enforcement powers to lead the way in resolving such issues.

4.9 In addition, the Delivery Plan emphasises the need for ongoing collaboration across the sectors and with all stakeholders, to collectively realise the potential for the Golden Z. The Council cannot tackle all of the issues alone, but has a key role in enabling and coordinating action and leveraging efforts for joined up regeneration. Consideration of City Centre governance, to enable the private sector to play a greater role in management, is recommended.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The ambitions and actions of the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z are reflected in the Council's new City Centre Strategy. As such, it is envisaged that delivery of the Golden Z's priority actions will be progressed through the City Centre Strategy's Governance structures.

5.2 It is envisaged that ongoing dialogue with stakeholders around collaborative delivery of the recommendations will continue under the City Centre governance structures established to progress the new City Centre Strategy.

5.2 The new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z will also inform the review of the City Development Plan (CDP). Planning Services will consider how best to enshrine the aims the Vision and Plan in supporting planning policy in advance of the CDP's full review.

6. Recommendations

1. Members are asked to

(i) Note the content of the new Vision and Plan;

(ii) Note that the new Vision's Delivery Plan will be reflected and progressed through the proposed new City Centre Strategy, and

(iii) Note that dialogue with stakeholders, to deliver the ambitions of the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z, will continue.