

Restoring confidence in Glasgow city centre – Motion dealt with, after division

14 Councillor Rashid Hussain, seconded by Councillor Jill Pidgeon, moved that

“Council recognises Glasgow City Centre's vital role as the economic, cultural and civic heart of Scotland's largest city, supporting employment, investment, tourism and leisure, and making a significant contribution to the city's prosperity and reputation.

Council notes that recent public debate, including that generated by the BBC Disclosure documentary "Welcome to Glasgow", has brought renewed attention to concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, violence, environmental quality and perceptions of safety within parts of Glasgow City Centre. While Council recognises that such coverage does not represent the entirety of city centre life, nor the experience of the overwhelming majority of those who live, work and visit there, it would be wrong to dismiss the concerns that have been highlighted or the impact they are having on public confidence.

Council further notes that many of the issues highlighted in recent weeks are not new. Concerns regarding public safety, antisocial behaviour, environmental quality and the condition of key city centre locations have been raised repeatedly by residents, businesses, community organisations and elected members over a number of years. While a range of strategies, action plans and initiatives have been introduced, many of these concerns remain evident and it is reasonable to question whether sufficient progress has been made.

Council recognises the efforts of frontline staff, Police Scotland, community organisations and businesses working to improve conditions within the city centre. However, residents, businesses and visitors are entitled to expect visible and sustained improvement. The persistence of these issues raises legitimate concerns regarding the effectiveness of the response from both the City Administration and the Scottish Government. Following almost two decades of SNP Government in Scotland and more than a decade of SNP leadership at Glasgow City Council, many of the concerns repeatedly raised by residents and businesses remain unresolved. Despite successive commitments and interventions, visible improvements have too often failed to match public expectations. Council therefore believes that greater urgency, leadership and accountability are required to restore public confidence and deliver meaningful improvement.

Council believes that Glasgow's reputation is best protected not through denial of these challenges, nor through exaggerated characterisations of the city, but through an honest assessment of current conditions and a determination to deliver meaningful improvement. Recognising and addressing legitimate concerns is not talking Glasgow down; it is demonstrating a commitment to making Glasgow better.

Council therefore:

- Calls on Police Scotland and the Scottish Government to work with Glasgow City Council on establishing a dedicated Glasgow City Centre Policing Unit, providing a sustained and highly visible policing presence focused on

antisocial behaviour, violence, acquisitive crime, drug dealing and other city centre disorder; and requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chief Constable and Cabinet Secretary for Justice seeking formal discussions on its establishment.

- Instructs the Chief Executive to seek a commitment from the Scottish Government for additional resources for Glasgow City Centre, recognising the particular pressures experienced by Scotland's largest city and its role as a national economic, cultural, retail and visitor destination.
- Instructs officers, working with Police Scotland, to develop a 12-month City Centre Safety Action Plan, identifying priority locations for enhanced visible policing, community enforcement and coordinated intervention, using crime, antisocial behaviour and other available evidence to target resources.
- Instructs NRS to bring forward proposals to establish an enhanced city centre cleansing and environmental enforcement programme, targeting persistent hotspots for litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, overflowing bins and other environmental problems, with clear service standards and named priority locations.
- Instructs officers to develop options for a dedicated rapid-response city centre environmental team, capable of responding quickly to graffiti, damaged street furniture, overflowing bins, fly-tipping and other defects which visibly undermine the city centre environment.
- Instructs officers to undertake an urgent audit of city centre CCTV, including camera coverage, operational availability, monitoring arrangements and identified blind spots, and to bring forward proposals for additional or upgraded CCTV where evidence demonstrates a need.
- Instructs officers to work with Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Police Scotland and third-sector organisations on a coordinated city centre outreach plan for people experiencing homelessness, addiction or acute vulnerability, including clearer routes into treatment, accommodation and support.
- Instructs officers to establish a City Centre Business and Community Safety Forum, bringing together businesses, residents, Police Scotland, transport operators, the city centre BID, hospitality representatives and relevant third-sector organisations, meeting regularly to identify emerging problems and scrutinise delivery of agreed actions.
- Instructs officers to develop proposals for a programme of targeted improvements at key city centre gateways and identified problem locations, including approaches to Central Station, Union Street, Argyle Street, Sauchiehall Street and St Enoch, addressing cleanliness, lighting, damaged infrastructure, public realm and perceptions of safety.
- Instructs officers to publish a quarterly City Centre Performance Dashboard, including available data on violent crime, antisocial behaviour, environmental complaints, cleanliness, enforcement activity, footfall, commercial vacancies and progress against the City Centre Safety Action Plan.

- Instructs officers to review whether existing Council enforcement resources and operating hours provide sufficient visible coverage during evenings and weekends, and to report on options for strengthening the Council's presence at the times and locations experiencing the greatest problems.
- Calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that Police Scotland, addiction services, homelessness services and other relevant public services in Glasgow have sufficient resources to respond to the particular pressures experienced within the city centre.
- Instructs the Executive Director of NRS, in consultation with relevant services and partners, to report to the appropriate committee within three months on implementation of these actions and proposals, including costs, funding options, responsible agencies and clear delivery timescales, with progress thereafter reported quarterly."

Councillor Millar, seconded by Councillor Aitken, moved as an amendment to delete all and replace with the following:-

"Council recognises Glasgow City Centre's vital role as the economic, cultural and civic heart of Scotland's largest city, supporting employment, investment, tourism and leisure, and making a significant contribution to the city's prosperity and reputation.

Council notes that recent public debate has brought renewed attention to concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, violence, environmental quality and perceptions of safety within parts of Glasgow City Centre. While Council recognises that recent coverage does not represent the entirety of city centre life, nor the experience of the overwhelming majority of those who live, work and visit there, it would be wrong to dismiss the concerns that have been highlighted or the impact they are having on public confidence.

Council further notes that many of the issues highlighted in recent weeks are not new. Council notes that it has sought to assist Police Scotland in addressing the localised issues of crime and antisocial behaviour around the Four Corners and St Enoch Square, for example, through supporting the establishment of the city centre dispersal zone. Council further notes that senior officers and Police Scotland are closely engaged in tackling these issues on an ongoing basis through the operational City Centre Strategic Group established to share information and develop co-ordinated responses to anti-social behaviour and crime in city centre.

Council recognises the efforts of frontline staff, Police Scotland, community organisations and businesses working to improve conditions within the city centre. Council recalls its additional investment in city centre environmental operations through recent Budget decisions, and notes the ongoing implementation of a City Centre Operations Action Plan via the City Centre Task Force, which is seeing further targeted work to address challenges such as cleansing and commercial waste enforcement. Council further welcomes the recent establishment of the Let's Go Glasgow Business Improvement District and its operations activity focused on graffiti removal and CCTV monitoring within the city centre.

Council believes that effectively addressing these challenges will require a continued deepening of the partnership working and strategic initiatives already in place, and will require additional resources and a concerted effort to address both the symptoms and root causes of antisocial behaviour in the city centre.

Council therefore:

- Instructs the Chief Executive to seek a commitment from the Scottish Government for additional resources for Glasgow City Centre, recognising the particular pressures experienced by Scotland's largest city and its role as a national economic, cultural, retail and visitor destination.
- Calls on Police Scotland and the Scottish Government to increase city centre policing resources, providing a sustained and highly visible policing presence focused on antisocial behaviour, violence, acquisitive crime, drug dealing and other city centre disorder; and requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chief Constable and Cabinet Secretary for Justice seeking formal discussions on the deepening, resourcing and formalisation of partnership structures to support the strategic coordination of policing in the city centre.
- Instructs officers to bring to committee an updated City Centre Operations Action Plan, reflecting activity to be delivered by the Let's Go Glasgow BID as well as by NRS, setting out plans for enhanced cleansing, enforcement and graffiti removal activity, and including a targeted programme of interventions focused on environmental management and public safety at key city centre gateways and identified hotspots.
- Further instructs officers to explore opportunities to attract further resources to support and extend this Action Plan, including from Scottish and UK Government and potential revenue streams including the forthcoming Transient Visitor Levy scheme.
- Requests that the Convener for Homelessness and Addictions and the Convener for Housing update Council on the progress of ongoing engagement with the Scottish and UK governments on assistance to address the unique combination of pressures driving homelessness in Glasgow.
- Notes the regular publication by the City Centre Task Force of the City Centre Performance Dashboard, which includes a range of datasets including footfall and commercial performance, and instructs officers to identify opportunities to include further datasets including on crime and antisocial behaviour and environmental indicators.
- Instructs the Chief Executive to ensure that a report is brought to the relevant committee within two cycles presenting progress against these actions, with regular reporting to be brought thereafter."

Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Bailie Wardrop, moved as an amendment:-

After sentence ending "...parts of Glasgow City Centre." in paragraph two, delete the rest of the motion and replace with:

"Council believes that such coverage, and the social media statements encouraging vigilante action and so-called "street patrols" are right-wing provocations and bear little resemblance to Glasgow city life in actuality.

Council further notes that while many of the issues highlighted are not new, they do not arise from what is being portrayed as an influx of immigrants or from people whom anti-immigrant agitators are describing as "non-natives". Rather the issues arise from decades of underfunding to services resulting from austerity measures enacted by successive Labour, Conservative and new Labour governments. Any lack of progress in strategies, plans and initiatives to address these concerns have been due to a lack of funding, and such measures as nominating Glasgow a dispersal city, with subsequent changes to housing legislation without sufficient national funding support, further exacerbating Glasgow's housing crisis and putting people into intolerable situations, including children and families, as well as victims of war, persecution and climate change.

Council notes the importance of the City Centre Strategy 2024-2030 which sets out a plan to support a more sustainable, greener city centre with more jobs, better transport connections and increased opportunities for housing. Council also recognises that to keep up with demand for housing, 7500 new social homes must be built before 2030, a target which will require significant additional resources to achieve. Council also recognises that, without the introduction of rent controls, tenants living in the private-rented sector will continue to face precarity of tenancy and risk homelessness.

Council notes with concern the persistently high vacancy rates and tenant retention on Glasgow's High Street. Council requests the Convenor for Neighbourhood Services & Assets to write to City Property, requesting a review of their approach to asset management within the High St, and whether new, more sustainable and attractive proposals can be made to ensure units can bring tenants to the High Street once again on a more secure basis.

Council recognises the efforts of frontline staff, Police Scotland, charities, community organisations and businesses working to improve conditions within the city centre, however, acknowledges that services and opportunities for young people are limited and incapable of meeting the scale of demand which exists. As a result of a lack of opportunities, many young people are attracted into the city centre where they can be exploited by drug dealers or attacked by far-right thugs. Council believes that addressing the root cause of these problems must be tackled, such as by increasing funding to youth services in the city centre, enhancing employment and further education opportunities for young people, and tackling poverty and the housing emergency.

Council believes that Glasgow's reputation is best protected by an honest assessment of the paucity of economic and cultural opportunities and facilities available to Glasgow's citizens, in particular young people and homeless people.

Council therefore:

- Instructs the Chief Executive to seek a commitment from the Scottish Government for additional resources for Glasgow City Centre, recognising the particular pressures experienced by Scotland's largest city and its role as a national economic, cultural, retail and visitor destination.
- Instructs officers, working with Police Scotland, and members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to develop a 12-month City Centre Liveable City Action Plan, identifying priority locations for leisure and cultural facilities accessible to young people and low-income people and using available evidence to target resources.
- Instructs officers to work with Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Police Scotland and third-sector organisations to consider an enhanced city centre outreach plan for people experiencing homelessness, addiction or acute vulnerability, including clearer routes into treatment, accommodation and support.
- Instructs officers to consider expanding the membership of the City Centre Taskforce, reporting on the work of this committee more regularly or to consider the creation of a new forum that includes residents, transport operators, the city centre BID, hospitality representatives and relevant third-sector organisations, meeting regularly to identify shortfalls in services and scrutinise delivery of agreed actions.
- Calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that Police Scotland, addiction services, homelessness services and other relevant public services in Glasgow have sufficient resources to respond to the particular pressures experienced within the city centre.
- Calls for Safe Glasgow to scrutinise the impact of proposals from Police Scotland on the city centre including a 12% reduction in the workforce by 2030 and facial recognition technology.
- Instructs the Executive Director of NRS, in consultation with relevant services and partners, to report to the appropriate committee within three months on implementation of these actions and proposals, including costs, funding options, responsible agencies and clear delivery timescales, with progress thereafter reported quarterly
- Calls on the Scottish Government to advocate for the devolution of drugs law to Scotland, the decriminalisation of drugs and expanding establishing safe consumption facilities and anti-addiction services, to prevent exploitation and ensure this is addressed as a health issue first and foremost."

During the debate Councillor Millar and Councillor Gallagher, with the approval of their seconders, agreed to combine their amendments resulting in the following adjusted amendment:-

“Council recognises Glasgow City Centre's vital role as the economic, cultural and civic heart of Scotland's largest city, supporting employment, investment, tourism and leisure, and making a significant contribution to the city's prosperity and reputation.

Council notes that recent public debate has brought renewed attention to concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, violence, environmental quality and perceptions of safety within parts of Glasgow City Centre. While Council recognises that recent coverage does not represent the entirety of city centre life, nor the experience of the overwhelming majority of those who live, work and visit there, it would be wrong to dismiss the concerns that have been highlighted or the impact they are having on public confidence.

Council further notes that many of the issues highlighted in recent weeks are not new. Council notes that they do not arise from what is being portrayed as an influx of immigrants or from people whom anti-immigrant agitators are describing as “non-natives”. Rather the issues arise from decades of underfunding to services resulting from austerity measures enacted by successive Labour, Conservative and new Labour governments. Any lack of progress in strategies, plans and initiatives to address these concerns have been due to a lack of funding, and such measures as nominating Glasgow a dispersal city, with subsequent changes to housing legislation without sufficient national funding support, further exacerbating Glasgow's housing crisis and putting people into intolerable situations, including children and families, as well as victims of war, persecution and climate change.

Council notes the importance of the City Centre Strategy 2024-2030 which sets out a plan to support a more sustainable, greener city centre with more jobs, better transport connections and increased opportunities for housing. Council also recognises that to keep up with demand for housing, 7500 new social homes must be built before 2030, a target which will require significant additional resources to achieve. Council also recognises that, without the introduction of rent controls, tenants living in the private-rented sector will continue to face precarity of tenancy and risk homelessness.

Council acknowledges that services and opportunities for young people are limited and incapable of meeting the scale of demand which exists. As a result of a lack of opportunities, many young people are attracted into the city centre where they can be exploited by drug dealers or attacked by far-right thugs. Council believes that addressing the root cause of these problems must be tackled, such as by increasing funding to youth services in the city centre, enhancing employment and further education opportunities for young people, and tackling poverty and the housing emergency.

Council notes that it has sought to assist Police Scotland in addressing the localised issues of crime and antisocial behaviour around the Four Corners and St Enoch Square, for example, through supporting the establishment of the city centre dispersal zone. Council further notes that senior officers and Police Scotland are closely

engaged in tackling these issues on an ongoing basis through the operational City Centre Strategic Group established to share information and develop co-ordinated responses to anti-social behaviour and crime in city centre.

Council recognises the efforts of frontline staff, Police Scotland, community organisations and businesses working to improve conditions within the city centre. Council recalls its additional investment in city centre environmental operations through recent Budget decisions, and notes the ongoing implementation of a City Centre Operations Action Plan via the City Centre Task Force, which is seeing further targeted work to address challenges such as cleansing and commercial waste enforcement. Council further welcomes the recent establishment of the Let's Go Glasgow Business Improvement District and its operations activity focused on graffiti removal and CCTV monitoring within the city centre.

Council believes that effectively addressing these challenges will require a continued deepening of the partnership working and strategic initiatives already in place, and will require additional resources and a concerted effort to address both the symptoms and root causes of antisocial behaviour in the city centre.

Council therefore:

- Instructs the Chief Executive to seek a commitment from the Scottish Government for additional resources for Glasgow City Centre, recognising the particular pressures experienced by Scotland's largest city and its role as a national economic, cultural, retail and visitor destination.
- Requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chief Constable and Cabinet Secretary for Justice seeking formal discussions on the deepening, resourcing and formalisation of partnership structures to support the strategic coordination of policing in the city centre.
- Instructs officers to bring to committee an updated City Centre Operations Action Plan, reflecting activity to be delivered by the Let's Go Glasgow BID as well as by NRS, setting out plans for enhanced cleansing, enforcement and graffiti removal activity, and including a targeted programme of interventions focused on environmental management and public safety at key city centre gateways and identified hotspots.
- Further instructs officers to explore opportunities to attract further resources to support and extend this Action Plan, including from Scottish and UK Government and potential revenue streams including the forthcoming Transient Visitor Levy scheme.
- Requests that the Convener for Homelessness and Addictions and the Convener for Housing update Council on the progress of ongoing engagement with the Scottish and UK governments on assistance to address the unique combination of pressures driving homelessness in Glasgow.
- Calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that Police Scotland, addiction services, homelessness services and other relevant public services in Glasgow have sufficient resources to respond to the particular pressures experienced within the city centre.
- Calls for Safe Glasgow to scrutinise the impact of proposals from Police Scotland on the city centre including a 12% reduction in the workforce by 2030 and facial recognition technology.

- Notes the regular publication by the City Centre Task Force of the City Centre Performance Dashboard, which includes a range of datasets including footfall and commercial performance, and instructs officers to identify opportunities to include further datasets including on crime and antisocial behaviour and environmental indicators.
- Calls on the Scottish Government to advocate for the devolution of drugs law to Scotland, the decriminalisation of drugs and expanding establishing safe consumption facilities and anti-addiction services, to prevent exploitation and ensure this is addressed as a health issue first and foremost
- Instructs the Chief Executive to ensure that a report is brought to the relevant committee within two cycles presenting progress against these actions, with regular reporting to be brought thereafter.”

On a vote being taken electronically and by calling the roll, 42 voted for the amendment and 29 for the motion.

The amendment as adjusted was accordingly declared to be carried.