



Glasgow City Council
City Administration Committee

Item 2

23rd January 2020

Report by Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of the Council and City Convener for Inclusive Economic Growth.

Contact: Ian Robertson Ext: 76000

**CITY CENTRE STRATEGY: DRAFT BLYTHSWOOD DISTRICT
REGENERATION FRAMEWORK**

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress in developing the Blythswood District Regeneration Framework, and to seek approval to commence the public consultation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the committee:

- (i) considers the contents of the report;
- (ii) approves the proposal to commence public consultation on the draft Blythswood District Regeneration Framework;
- (iii) agrees that the public consultation will commence on Friday 31st January 2020 for 8 weeks;
- (iv) agrees that the Blythswood District Regeneration Framework Final Report will be brought back to the City Administration Committee for approval on the completion of the public consultation; and
- (v) notes that the District Regeneration Frameworks will become Supplementary Guidance to the City Development Plan after the City Centre Strategic Development Framework has been approved.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ✓

consulted: Yes ✓

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the City Centre Strategy 2014–19 (CCS 2014–19) went live in April 2014 with 55 ambitious actions including the development of a District Strategy for each of the nine city centre districts. A map of the Districts is provided at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The CCS 2014-19 was the first five year plan in a ten year strategy to recalibrate the regeneration focus of Glasgow city centre towards a more inclusive sustainable, mixed use city centre that will support a growing population. An evaluation of the first five years is currently being undertaken, and the development of the CCS 2020-25 plan is also underway. The outcome of this work will be brought to the City Administration Committee for approval late in 2019.
- 1.3 The District Strategy has two elements:

- (i) The development of a District Regeneration Framework (DRF) for each of the nine districts. A DRF is a 10-year long regeneration plan with a series of short, medium and long term actions that combine strategic planning and place making with shorter term operational and environmental improvements. The DRFs are developed over an 18 month period and predicated on a sound evidence base¹, tested throughout the process by community and stakeholder engagement.

The Sauchiehall and Garnethill District was selected to be the first to have its regeneration plan developed. The Sauchiehall and Garnethill DRF (SGDRF) was approved in May 2016 with eight Key Projects (large scale physical interventions and four Local Strategies (small scale community focused projects). Five of the Key Projects are now underway and the Local Strategies are to be revised with the local community.

On 13th June 2019, the City Administration Committee gave final approval for the second of the nine DRFs, Broomielaw DRF, as well as approving the St Enoch DRF, the third DRF, for public consultation. In November 2019 Central DRF, the fourth DRF, would also subsequently receive approval for public consultation.

- (ii) The delivery of the “Avenues” programme of public realm investment. The CCS 2014-19 proposed the concept of this network of green infrastructure with the objectives of:
- linking key gateways, neighbourhoods and focus points;
 - displaying good street design with a focus on a people-centred approach;

¹ The DRF methodology comprises a wide range of surveys and analysis, and reviews the history, current land use, urban form, character, vacant and derelict land, committed development, listed buildings, network of streets, public transport, green networks, all economic and social considerations including public space behaviour observations, health and wellbeing indicators, people movement patterns, orientation, disconnection, daytime and night-time economies and resulting character, and previous Conservation Area appraisals.

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- promoting sustainable modes of transport and active travel opportunities;
- improving perceptions of areas, drawing people to active and engaging parts of the city;
- providing opportunities for integrated infrastructure.

The Avenues activity is being taken forward through the City Deal programme. Seventeen Avenues in total will benefit from this significant investment in public realm infrastructure over the period to 2025. These Avenues have been consolidated into three blocks, each comprising a number of streets. Sauchiehall Avenue phase 1 (Charing Cross to Rose Street) was selected to be the pilot Avenue in order to demonstrate the concept and allow for a lessons-learned process to inform the wider programme.

Sauchiehall Avenue phase 1 was recently completed, and the next block of Avenues is now progressing through the design stage. It is noted that the first report of the Connectivity Commission (December 2018) has strongly supported the Avenues programme, and recommended their expansion and acceleration where possible. Work is also ongoing between GCC and Sustrans towards potential funding for a further four avenues.

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to outline progress with the development of the Blythswood DRF, the fifth of nine regeneration plans for Glasgow city centre to be brought forward over the full lifetime of the CCS.

2. BLYTHSWOOD DISTRICT REGENERATION FRAMEWORK (BLDRF)

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The BLDRF was commissioned as part of a group of four DRFs in 2017, incorporating the Central, St Enoch, and Broomielaw districts in addition to Blythswood. As with the SGDRF, the process built on Town Centres First principles, and has integrated spatial planning and placemaking objectives with operational and environmental enhancements.
- 2.1.2 It has been developed collaboratively by a multi-disciplinary team led by Austin-Smith: Lord and MVRDV, who worked with the local community, stakeholders and organisations within both the public and private sectors. The consultation period will offer further opportunity for local parties to input to this process. The final BLDRF and Action Plan will be produced after the consultation period has concluded on 20 March 2020.
- 2.1.3 As the final DRF from this group, Blythswood is intended to be brought to committee for approval to proceed to public consultation in early 2020. The final four city centre DRFs (Townhead, Cowcaddens, Merchant City and the Learning Quarter) are planned to be commissioned in 2020.

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2.2 Development Period

- 2.2.1 The BLDRF has been prepared in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders and consultees. Engagement and consultation has been conducted on-street, online, in public exhibitions, design workshops and via social media. Participants have included residents, businesses, land and building owners/occupiers, developers and investors, local and national agencies, Council departments, elected members, charities, voluntary organisations and tourists. These ideas have shaped the recommendations and projects emerging through the BLDRF process.
- 2.2.2 The findings of this development period have been analysed and presented in the draft BLDRF which is appended to this report. This is an ambitious and aspirational regeneration plan with a significant number of recommendations and proposals. It should be highlighted that resource constraints will limit the full range of actions going forward, and it will be important to understand stakeholder priorities through the public consultation, before a delivery plan is finalised.
- 2.2.3 In the meantime the recommendations and proposals have undergone detailed review with a focus on deliverability (in funding, resource, and outcome terms). On that basis, a rationalised, draft action plan has been produced for consideration as part of the public consultation (**Appendix 2**). The outcome of the public consultation will be reported back to committee and may alter the composition and/or timing of the action plan.
- 2.2.4 A Summary BLDRF Document has been produced and a link to this can be accessed at the end of this report.

2.3 BLDRF Overall Findings

- 2.3.1 The intensive process of BLDRF development has confirmed that the Blythswood District contains a wide range of opportunities.
- 2.3.2 Blythswood District encompasses a diverse section of central Glasgow, covering an area more varied than the name suggests. Evidence of the original Georgian grid structure as planned in the 18th century remains despite some erosion over time, especially around Blythswood Square. Whilst its basic boundaries can be thought of as the M8, West Campbell Street, Argyle Street, and Sauchiehall Street, the BLDRF area contains a number of landmarks and buildings of architectural importance, such as St Vincent Street Church, the Willow Team Rooms, the Mitchell Library, the former Glasgow High School and a variety of Victorian and Edwardian structures.
- 2.3.3 As demonstrated by previous DRFs, there are many opportunities for improvement in a District which suffers from challenges to its connections, in particular those caused by having the M8 as a barrier on its western edge. In fact, examples of significant change have already become evident through the introduction of recent commercial developments such as new hotels and

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student accommodation, as well the Scottish Power headquarters and St Vincent Plaza which have transformed the local skyline.

- 2.3.4 As has already been noted in previous DRFs, the regeneration of Glasgow city centre should be considered a national priority project and the BLDRF is intended to play a key part in these endeavours. It will explore the significant issues and opportunities that will continue to define the city centre's environmental, spatial, economic and social performance. It confirms the overarching objectives that must be met if Glasgow is to compete as a leading European city, and reinforces the importance of the city centre as the driver of regional growth and health.

2.4 BLDRF Strategic Themes

- 2.4.1 Six strategic themes have been developed for the BLDRF and associated draft action plan. These are fully detailed in the appended report, and summarised below:

- (i) ***(Y)our Updated Mobility***: This incorporates proposals to enhance the city centre's public transport and active travel networks to create a sustainable, walkable city, and will include consideration as part of the City Centre Transport Strategy in the context of the BLDRF objectives and the recommendations of the Connectivity Commission.
- (ii) ***(Y)our Urbanised M8***: This investigates issues arising from the form and function of the M8 with a view to identifying ways to maintain the benefits of an urban motorway whilst reducing or mitigating against the negative impacts associated with it. It also explores these issues on national, city, city centre, and local levels.
- (iii) ***(Y)our Great Streets and Spaces***: This theme seeks to optimise Glasgow's street grid and address issues arising from the shortage of quality greenspace and other public spaces within the BLDRF. In particular it looks to identify broken connections and gaps in the urban form which need to be addressed throughout the district as well as opportunities for essential investment in public spaces and the physical environment. It also focuses on connection and re-connection to further develop the diverse and distinctive character in the BLDRF.
- (iv) ***(Y)our Great Buildings***: This theme seeks to ensure that Glasgow's historic fine built heritage is protected and that it continues to be recognised as some of the greatest urban architecture in the UK. Consequently, it is imperative that new developments respect this legacy whilst striving to achieve the highest quality in contemporary design.
- (v) ***(Y)our Vibrant Blythswood***: this theme explores ways to address the lack of local neighbourhood amenities which might prevent people from choosing to live within the Blythswood District area. It is therefore important that increased community infrastructure should accompany increased city centre residential development and achieve higher

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densities of working populations. Not only should the locations of attractions and destinations inform the alignment of key routes across the city centre but the city centre should become more lively, with more night-time economy, more viable amenities, better connections to the existing cultural and creative infrastructure and a more sustainable, walkable and activated district.

- (vi) Transforming (Y)our Blythswood: This focuses on the creation of agile policies and shared objectives to attract investment, secure funding and foster collaborative working in the district. Transforming this district cannot, however, be delivered by the Council alone; this must be a truly collaborative partnership between all stakeholders. Despite the lack of public ownership, GCC will look to identify and work with partners to develop masterplan strategies as appropriate.

2.4.2 Each of the strategic themes contains a number of project proposals. As indicated above, these have been rationalised into the draft BLDRF Action Plan which is provided at **Appendix 2**. Funding availability has been assessed and funds are in place to deliver the majority of the projects identified as key priorities in the DRF, including an *Improved West George Street* which will help to provide principal connection and environmental enhancements within the District as well as supporting similar projects being undertaken elsewhere as part of the City Deal Avenues Programme.

2.4.3 Other key priority projects, such as the *Improved Blythswood Square*, rely on the cooperation of external partners. Furthermore, in some instances transformative change is likely to require substantial additional capital funding which is not yet in place. In such cases funds have been secured to progress the feasibility stage for these projects. This will involve intensive engagement with key partners before proposals are developed and brought back to Council for consideration. These will include costed plans and review of funding options.

2.4.4 Costs for smaller-scale projects including minor public space projects, event activity and the development of masterplans and branding/promotional strategies will be contained within existing CCS budgets.

2.4.5 The objective of the public consultation is to assess where there is clear support for specific projects, and to establish which actions should be prioritised. Indicative timelines, in some cases based on funding availability, have been detailed at **Appendix 2**. Following the consultation, the revised BLDRF and Action Plan will be reviewed and finalised. This will be brought back to City Administration Committee for consideration in April 2020 (item 2.1.2 as above).

3. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

3.1 Following the First Minister's declaration of a global climate emergency in April 2019, the Scottish Government committed to ambitious targets in respect of carbon reduction. Scotland remains the only country to have set statutory

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annual targets to reduce emissions and was the first to include a fair share of the emissions from international aviation and shipping in its targets.

- 3.2 Glasgow City Council subsequently issued a report with a range of recommendations on climate emergency. The District Strategy supports these findings, inasmuch as its central purpose is to set out frameworks for adapting Glasgow to the changing demands of contemporary city life. It also supports working through a collaborative network, as proposed by the Climate Emergency Working Group, to establish relevant collective solutions and strategies.
- 3.3 This approach recognises the critical nature of climate change and the related new considerations that must be embedded into public policy. It has also been reflected in the importance given to those sustainable initiatives and interventions which have subsequently been identified in the action plans generated for each District Regeneration Framework. For example, these actions seek to:
- Introduce green infrastructure and optimise greening principles;
 - Mitigate against the possible impacts of climate change through the use of surface water management principles;
 - Enhance and reorient connections to promote and prioritise active travel and public transport;
 - Tackle poor air quality;
 - Introduce SMART infrastructure and pilot new ways to integrate sustainable urban solutions;
 - Enable the reuse of buildings;
 - Deliver resilient city centre neighbourhoods by working in partnership with local communities and organisations.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The BLDRF will become Supplementary Planning Guidance once it is approved by Council. This allows it to have the status of a material consideration, and it will be referenced and used in the making of all development decisions in the District. This is the position of all the city centre DRFs, after the City Centre Strategic Development Framework has been approved.
- 4.2 The BLDRF Planning Policy section provides the context for the Blythswood District, and provides criteria against which development proposals will be assessed.

5. DELIVERY AND GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 The BLDRF will be absorbed into the overarching City Centre Strategy work plan and progress will be reported through an annual reporting structure with specific documents seeking approval from Committee as required. This will be the position with large-scale projects or where the outcome of feasibility work is being reported.

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- 5.2 The City Centre Strategy governance model is currently under review whilst the new CCS 2020-25 is being developed. The new structure will maintain an oversight role over the full workplan. The GCC City Centre Regeneration Team will ensure that there is a way for residents and other stakeholders to continue to be involved and input to the process as projects are developed and delivered. Engagement is ongoing with Blythswood and Broomielaw Community Council. In addition, this approach will identify additional/alternative actions to be progressed, should that be required through changes in external circumstances or other factors.
- 5.3 For ease of reference, a structure chart has been provided at **Appendix 3** to illustrate where this project sits within the overall strategic framework pertinent to Glasgow city centre.

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the public consultation commences following the Committee approval, for an eight week period from Friday 31st January 2020. Interested parties will be able to participate through an online survey, by email and by post. This will be promoted through a range of media and communications.
- 6.2 The consultation process will conclude on 20 March 2020, and thereafter the BLDRF and its action plan will be finalised and brought back to City Administration Committee for formal approval.

7. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

Financial: Full delivery of the BLDRF as outlined in this report will require additional funding of £0.9m capital which can be met from current capital approvals. The revenue financial implications are estimated at £100,000 and will be contained within existing approval.

Legal: There are no immediate legal issues however these will be assessed as individual projects are developed.

Personnel: There are no direct personnel issues.

Procurement: Procurement resources will be required to progress individual contracts and related project activity. CPU will be engaged once the BLDRF is approved.

**Council Strategic
Plan:**

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Specify which theme(s) and outcome(s) the proposal supports

The BLDRF supports the following themes:

- A Vibrant City, with specific outcomes:
 - Glasgow is a world-class destination for tourism, culture, sports events and heritage;
 - Glasgow acknowledges and promotes its history, heritage and culture

Priorities: 13, 15, 17, 19

- A Sustainable and Low Carbon City, with specific outcomes:
 - The city is clean and public spaces are well maintained;
 - Citizens use active travel including walking and cycling

Priorities: 54, 61, 65, 66

- Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhoods, with specific outcomes:
 - Citizens and neighbourhoods can influence how services are developed and budgets spent

Priorities: 77, 83

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

- The project will help deliver Outcome 9 by improving opportunities for physical activity through the increase in active travel opportunities
- The project will help deliver Outcome 10 by directly engaging with vulnerable user groups during public realm design processes.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

- Positive impact: the project will improve accessibility through improved physical measures

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.

- Yes through the provision of projects that promote environmental enhancements with inclusive growth at their heart.
- Specific projects in the action plan will be EQIA-assessed as required.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The BLDRF will support the following themes:

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A Sustainable and Low Carbon Economy, specifically the following outcomes:

- The city is clean and public spaces are well maintained;
- We have more sustainable, integrated transport networks across the city, and less congestion;
- Citizens use active travel, including walking and cycling.

This includes direct intervention in the following priorities:

- 55: invest in roads and pavement maintenance
- 65: build high quality, inclusive active travel infrastructure.

Social, including Article 19 opportunities:

Various actions within the Action Plan will benefit local residents

- The focus on supporting local SMEs will encourage footfall which in turn will impact on job creation and skills development
- The local community throughout the District and the wider city will benefit from the improvements to be delivered through the Action Plan;
- Contracts able to provide supported employment opportunities under Article 19 will be explored as part of the individual projects' development processes.

Economic:

- Various actions within the BLDRF will benefit local businesses and other organisations especially the improved connections.
- The growth in mixed use and population will in turn support the local economy.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

A DPIA is required by law where the processing of personal data is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

The project will not collect personal data except through the provision of contact details of the purposes of community engagement. Permission for any other use, or any ongoing

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use, will be sought at the point at which contact details are provided.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) considers the contents of this report;
- (ii) approves the proposals to commence public consultation on the draft Blythswood District Regeneration Framework;
- (iii) agrees that the public consultation will commence on Friday 31st January 2020 for 8 weeks;
- (iv) agrees that the Blythswood District Regeneration Framework Final Report will be brought back to City Administration Committee for approval on completion of the public consultation; and
- (iv) notes that the District Regeneration Frameworks will become Supplementary Planning Guidance to the City Development Plan after the City Centre Strategic Development Framework has been approved.

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Enclosures:

Appendix 1: Glasgow City Centre Districts Map

Appendix 2: Draft BLDRF Action Plan

Appendix 3: City Centre Strategic Framework

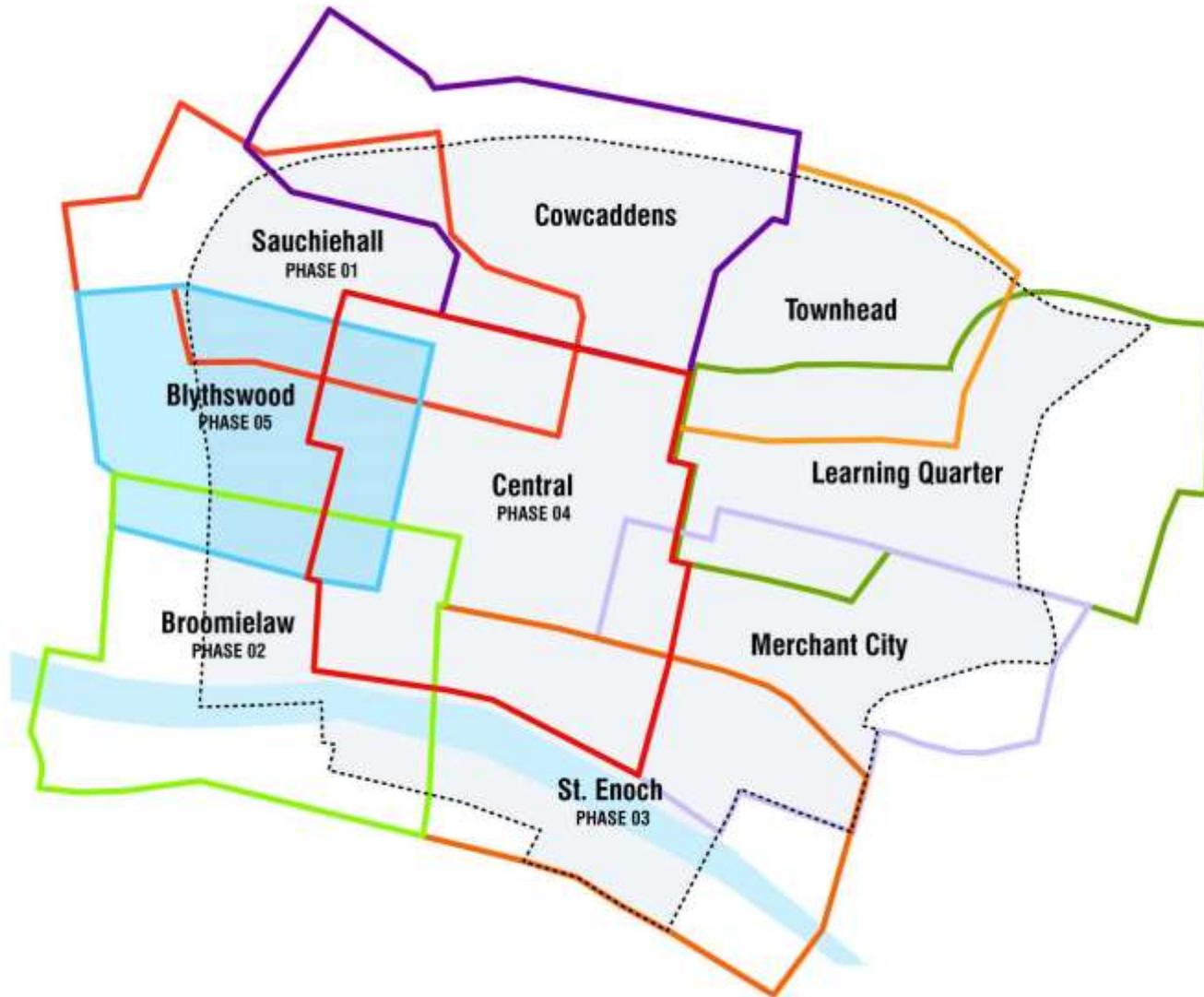
Link to: [Draft Blythswood District Regeneration Framework](#) - Full Report

Link to: [Draft Blythswood District Regeneration Framework](#) - Summary Report

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Appendix 1: Glasgow City Centre Districts Map



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Appendix 2: Draft BLDRF Action Plan

Item	Theme/Project	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
1.0	(Y)our Urbanised M8											
1.1	City Centre Motorway Strategy											
1.2	Above the M8											
2.0	(Y)our Great Streets & Spaces											
2.1	Public Space Plan											
2.2	Updated St Vincent Street											
2.3	Improved West George Street											
2.4	Improved Blythswood Square											
2.5	Blythswood Street steep park											
2.6	Public art											
3.0	(Y)our Updated Mobility											
3.1	City Centre Transport Strategy (CCTS)											
3.2	Low Emission Zone											
3.3	Smarter Blythswood											
3.4	Street safety and accessibility											
3.5	Updated railway stations											
4.0	(Y)our Great Buildings											
4.1	Design Guidelines											
4.2	DRF Planning Policy: <i>Higher density, increase building heights, flexible Blythswood</i>											
4.3	Historic Blythswood											
4.4	Refashioned Blythswood Court											
5.0	(Y)our Vibrant Broomielaw											
5.1	Strong and diverse neighbourhoods											
5.2	Community amenity and infrastructure plan											

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5.3	DRF Planning Policy: <i>Mixed and Re-populated Blythswood</i>											
5.4	Re-purpose vacant spaces / buildings											
6.0	Transforming (Y)our Blythswood											
6.1	Blythswood Masterplan											
6.2	M8 Masterplan											
6.3	Blythswood brand											
6.4	Blythswood Conservation and Heritage Property Fund											
6.5	Events programme											
6.6	New Blythswood Community Council											

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Appendix 3: City Centre Strategic Framework

