



Glasgow City Council

**Economy, Housing, Transport and
Regeneration City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,
Regeneration and Sustainability**

Contact: Jane Laiolo Ext: 77207

Item 2

19th November 2024

GLASGOW CITY CENTRE STRATEGY 2024 to 2030 UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress of the City Centre Strategy 2024 – 2030 (CCS24-30).

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of the report
- (ii) Consider the progress made by the CCS24-30 from March to November 2024
- (iii) Note that biannual updates on progress will be submitted to Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee for the duration of the CCS24-30

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members may recall that the *City Centre Strategy 2024 - 2030 (CCS 24-30)* was approved by the [City Administration Committee on 21 March 2024](#).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the first biannual progress update of the new Strategy. It will cover the key areas of activity within the *CCS 24-30* including the delivery priorities for 2024-25, progress of the newly established Development Team, and the work of the City Centre Task Force.

2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 2.1 The *CCS24-30* superseded the *City Centre Recovery Plan (CCRP)* and has become the “plan of plans” for all city centre regeneration priorities up to 2030. It is supported by the *City Centre Strategic Development Framework (SDF)* which provides the strategic planning priorities for future actions within Glasgow city centre.
- 2.2 The vision for the *CCS24-30* has been developed around three guiding “Pillars”, which can be summarised as follows:
 - (i) Magnetic Experience: the development of more compelling reasons to visit, shop and enjoy the city centre which should have the power to surprise and inspire visitors
 - (ii) Front Door to Innovation: creating opportunities to welcome digital, life sciences, climate science and creative industries into a mix which converges with arts, engineering, and business
 - (iii) A Place to Live: place-based approach to regeneration which responds to climate issues and respects planetary boundaries. It is inclusive, balanced and connected with amenities to support a growing population
- 2.3 The *CCS24-30* has established 19 Priority Actions to be progressed over the planned period which will directly support the Pillars approach and will ensure that resources are targeted accordingly.

3 CCS 24-30 PROGRESS REPORT TO NOVEMBER 2024

3.1 Governance

- 3.1.1 The City Centre Task Force (CCTF) is the strategic body with oversight over City Centre Strategy, co-chaired by Councillor Angus Millar, City Convener for Climate, Glasgow Green Deal, Transport and City Centre Recovery, and Stuart Patrick, CEO of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, with membership comprising of Sub-Group leads, private sector representatives, senior GCC officers, Ward 10 Councillors, and Scottish/UK Government representatives. The CCTF meets every 6 weeks.

- 3.1.2 The CCTF is supported by four thematic sub-groups. These are detailed in **Table 1**. The sub-groups include Council officers, public sector partners, and private sector representatives nominated through the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. The sub-groups currently meet every four to six weeks and are responsible for developing the thematic action plans in collaboration with key partners, to ensure that scarce resources can be effectively prioritised.

Table 1: City Centre Task Force sub-groups

Sub-Group	Chair	Organisation
SG1 City Services, Operations and Events	Jenny O'Hagan	GCC NRS
SG2 City Centre Transport	Martin Heath	GCC NRS
SG3 City Centre Infrastructure, Development and Repurposing	Stephen Lewis/ Mandy MacDonald	Glasgow Development Forum/GCC RS
SG4 Evening/Night-Time Economy and Hospitality Sectors	Mike Grieve	NTIA (Night Time Industries Association)

3.2 Magnetic Experience

- 3.2.1 Avenues Programme and George Square redevelopment: these major public realm projects are covered by a separate report to EHTR on 19 November 2024.

3.2.2 District Regeneration Frameworks (DRFs) Programme

- (i) Design and feasibility work for the Townhead Green Areas and Parliamentary Path is in development with the local community
- (ii) Cathedral Gardens redesign is now also being progressed alongside the High Street Avenue design
- (iii) Hielaman's Umbrella: RIBA Stage 4 design contract now almost complete. The delivery strategy is currently being devised with Network Rail and this will include the works to enhance shopfronts; installation of new lighting and neon art signage; and placement of new planters and benches. Works are expected to commence by mid-2025
- (iv) Other DRF updates have been included below where they fit better under other Priority Actions

3.2.3 River Corridor

- (i) Custom House Quay and Carlton Place project: RIBA stage 3 (Developed Design) commenced in August 2024. This design stage will prepare a design masterplan and phasing strategy, along with a major planning application. A detailed consultation process will be undertaken between October 2024 and January 2025. This design stage is expected to conclude in Q4 2024/25

3.2.4 Tourism and Events

- (i) The *Glasgow Tourism Strategy 2030* two-year action plan has been published, outlining objectives through to December 2026
- (ii) The estimated economic benefit from delegate spending between 1 April 2023 and March 2024 is £145 million
- (iii) **World Athletics Indoor Championships 2024** – Hosted in March, the WIC24 is the first ever event to be awarded Platinum Status by World Athletics for *Athletics for a Better World* in recognition of its sustainability achievements across environmental and social impacts. The event attracted 22,000 spectator attendances, 586 athletes from 128 countries and was broadcast into 53 countries and territories (via tv broadcast) with a live stream catering for those not served by tv broadcast reaching millions of viewers. Activation included two exhibitions (Museum of World Athletics and Team Scotland Exhibition, celebrating 10 years on since the incredible success the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, plus a fan zone area in St Enochs visited by 160,000 over four weeks
- (iv) **Glasgow Events Strategy 2035** launch – following consultation with key stakeholders across tourism and economy, music and culture, sport, equalities, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and sport, along with a public consultation, a draft Glasgow Events Strategy 2035 and Action Plan has been developed. The strategy and action plan has been presented to WECCE and will be presented for approval to the City Administration Committee on 24 October, with an expected industry launch in November
- (v) **Winter Events Strategy** – work continues to build towards the vision for winter in Glasgow, with additional investment for a lighting investment from GCC in 2024. Work is underway on plans for 2025 and beyond, with an update expected to industry partners in the first quarter of 2025
- (vi) **Merchant City Festival** – continued delivery of the new strategic plan. 2024 saw a change of dates to align with the Glasgow Fair holiday, which also coincided with Pride, bringing a new audience and opportunities for the event. Creative Scotland did not provide funding for the 2024 meaning a scaling back of some activities. GL continues to progress longer-term funding commitments and explore how the business and delivery model continues to evolve to maximise the positive economic and social impacts
- (vii) **World Irish Dancing Championships 2024** - Held from 24th – 31st March, at the SEC in Glasgow, the event welcomed dancers and spectators from across the world including Ireland, America, Australia, Taiwan, Japan and South Africa
- (viii) **Commonwealth Games 2026** – GL and GCC have been working with Commonwealth Games Scotland since late 2023 to provide input to their new event concept for 2026 that the Scottish Government recently announced its support to host in Glasgow. Commonwealth Games Scotland are in the process of setting up the Games Organising Company to deliver the event and GL continues to work with GCC, CGS and the Scottish Government on their plans

- (ix) Glasgow has been confirmed as a **Euro 2028** host city, alongside eight other host cities, as part of a UK & Ireland EURO 2028 tournament. EURO 2028 will be the largest event taking place in the UK since London 2012 and Hampden Park, Glasgow will be the only venue in Scotland, hosting six matches across June and July 2028. Glasgow's commitments include delivery of a fanzone; football village; a trophy tour and coordination of the host city experience in collaboration with the organising company, UEFA, Scottish Football Association, Scottish Government and UK Government

3.2.5 Cultural and Heritage

- (i) Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £350K through the Heritage Places initiative to the Heritage and Culture District project in Sauchiehall Street. A dedicated team has been set up by Glasgow Life to develop the 2025-2035 funding bid and action plan
- (ii) Action plan to June 25 comprises three pillars: Uncovering Sauchiehall Street; Animating Sauchiehall Street; and Renewing Sauchiehall Street

3.2.6 Retail Capacity Study

- (i) Recommendations from Retail capacity study have been integrated into the Golden Z report and inform various activities being taken forward by the new Development Team. In addition, findings are being integrated in new City Development Plan 2 retail policy

3.2.7 Evening & Night-Time Economy

- (i) The associated CCTF Subgroup has been set up, chaired by Mike Grieve, Chair of the Scottish Night-Time Industries Association and Glasgow night-club owner
- (ii) A draft action plan has been developed

3.2.8 People Friendly City Centre

- (i) Engagement exercise with key stakeholders on the design has been completed. Design options are being developed to RIBA Stage 2 and will also explore any feasible quick wins. Work is ongoing to assess funding opportunities for traffic management and public realm options
- (ii) Development work for a segregated cycle route on West Nile is being developed to RIBA Stage 2

3.3 Front Door to Innovation

3.3.1 Innovation and Digital

- (i) £900k SPF funding has been awarded to the Glasgow City Innovation District (GCID) to design, develop, establish and deliver Glasgow's first Venture Studio dedicated to developing and supporting innovation-driven enterprises based within Glasgow City

3.3.2 Wellbeing Economy

- (i) Work is ongoing between GCC Economic Development and the University of Glasgow's GALLANT Programme, with initial focus on mapping and aligning the Council's strategic plan ambitions, Sustainable Development Goals and the Wellbeing Economy indicators. The associated CCS 2024-30 review will be in the next stage of activity once the initial process has been scoped and tested
- (ii) A research project is underway to explore the skills needs of employers across the city. Consideration will be given to the city centre and research will seek to understand challenges and potential opportunities across public, private and third sector employers. The first phase of this will be to test an engagement model with city centre employers with the potential to align their skills needs with those coming through various employability programmes. Engagement will seek to understand the challenges businesses face in employing people with protected characteristics or barriers to work. Consideration will be given to parents, criminal justice experienced, people with addictions, ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities or health conditions, and young people including care leavers.

3.3.3 Development Team

- (i) A cross-service Development Team (DT) has been set up with senior officers from across the Council including Planning, City Centre Regeneration, Sustainability, Legal, Housing, Comms, City Property, Economic Development and NRS Project Consultancy Services. The DT action plan focuses on several key areas to guide development and governance improvements in Glasgow
- (ii) Strategic Sites Assessment: several vacant and blighted sites in private ownership across the city centre have been highlighted through the Golden Z report as requiring targeted intervention. Each of these key sites are being assessed in terms of ownership, policy context, strategies, project opportunities, planning applications, pre-planning applications, site constraints and opportunities. A GIS data repository has been created to manage site-specific information. All site owners and agents are now subject of regular communication to understand forward plans, or where necessary, the scope for meanwhile projects or other public sector intervention
- (iii) Supporting Development: work is ongoing to create a one stop shop website, entitled Develop Glasgow, encompassing toolkits to assist external parties with conversions, meanwhile uses, and achievement of net zero objectives, while also addressing funding and development constraints. Analysis is being undertaken of comparative cities to understand measures to support development that have worked and not worked well elsewhere. Funding options have been developed including the new Rapid Response proposal and the City Centre Improvement Grant Fund which was approved at CAC on 5 September 2024

3.3.4 Property Repurposing Action Plan

- (i) The Property Repurposing Action Plan has now been absorbed into the Development Team remit

- (ii) **Utilisation of Public Assets:** NRS is participating in a broader public sector exercise to find more innovative ways to utilise the public estate
- (iii) **Affordable Housing:** Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)/ Scottish City Centre Recovery Task Force (SCCRTF) cities collaboration recommendations were submitted to City Leaders and Scottish Government in 2023. Work to develop an Affordable Housing Policy in Glasgow will be taken forward in line with the timescales to prepare the new City Development Plan. NRS Housing provided funding to West of Scotland Housing Association to acquire a five-storey property in St Enoch Square in early 2024. West of Scotland Housing Association is progressing a pilot project that will involve redeveloping the building into affordable housing, and aims to deliver the proposal by 2026. Upper floor conversion opportunities are also being investigated at Trongate/Saltmarket by GCC
- (iv) **Additional Powers and Taxation:** Glasgow City Council has changed the Empty Property Relief (EPR) policy, significantly impacting listed building owners, with 100% relief available for only three months from 1 April 2024, followed by a reduction to 10% for the next 12 months, after which no relief will be provided. The Council along with colleagues in the Scottish Cities Alliance continues to advocate for the Scottish Government to progress the recommendations made by cities over 2021/22 to enable residential development. GCC Housing Services are also involved in a Scottish Government group reviewing compulsory purchase order (CPO) legislation
- (v) **Office And Employment Uses:** work is ongoing to update the vacancy mapping of office space with a view to establishing the requirements for new Prime and Grade A space and strategies for delivering this using repurposed space

3.4 A Place to Live

3.4.1 Greening the City Centre:

- (i) **Greening activities in the city centre** have been mapped and prioritised. As an early action, 21 new trees will be delivered with the support of funding from sums collected through LEZ Penalty Charge notices. A procurement process will begin shortly, with the successful contractor expected to deliver the planters early next year
- (ii) The contract to design the link between Argyle Street West Avenue and Liveable Neighbourhoods active travel network, through the Anderston station footprint, is now underway. The contract will also develop an early design for the reconfiguration of the existing planters at Central station, which will then be replanted with suitable species able to survive in such a harsh environment
- (iii) The green area to the north-east of Buchanan Bus Station has been redesigned to enhance biodiversity potential and introduce areas for seating. Phase one is now complete and all soft landscaping has planted including new shrubbery & hedging; a bug hotel; a wildflower meadow; and five new trees. This enhancement has led to the site being considered as a 'Green Connector' site and consequently it will benefit from an enhanced maintenance schedule. The second phase of works will deliver areas of hard surface and new seating and will be delivered by the Avenues programme in 2025, as part of Cowcaddens Avenue

- (iv) An infrastructure audit has been undertaken by Planning Services as part of the Evidence Report for the upcoming City Development Plan 2. This includes both hard and social infrastructure across the city, including Ward 10

3.4.2 Local Community Projects

- (i) The Garnethill Community Projects proposed by the local *Garnethill and Sauchiehall District Regeneration Framework*, have been completed, delivering various initiatives aimed at improving the area's appearance and environment. This includes greening efforts; enhancing entrance points; adding colour to the overpass surface; creating a mural at the Woodside underpass. improving security along the route to Molly's Point; and enhancement of the public realm
- (ii) An open City Centre Performance dashboard has been launched
- (iii) The *High Street Area Strategy* completed in April 2023. Since then, NRS officers perform minor back-office support functions and provide updates on related project activity to the new High Street Reference Group
- (iv) The *Begging Strategy Action Plan* concludes March 2025, and a final report will be provided to Committee in early 2025 on outputs achieved to date and proposed next steps
- (v) Busking pilot: Interim project activity concluded September 2024 and an update report on findings and proposed next steps will be reported to Committee in early 2025
- (vi) A new commercial model is in development for *Dressing the City*, the city's street bannering programme with a targeted start date of April 2025
- (vii) *Good Food Glasgow*: A new street food vendor project to be managed by a market operator is being developed with a targeted start date of April 2025

3.4.3 City Centre Living

- (i) Work is continuing with partners for affordable Housing pilots and options for target locations/projects within the city centre
- (ii) Talks are still ongoing with GCC/City Property and Wheatley Group over the acquisition and conversion of two former commercial units at Trongate and Duke Street to convert into affordable Housing
- (iii) The first stage of the work commissioned to Ryden to assess the level of vacant commercial premises within the city centre is complete and will help to determine target locations for repurposing within the city centre
- (iv) The second stage of the Ryden work will shortly commence and is in relation to the action within the PRAP which is the development of archetypes across the city centre which will then go on to help inform an Options Assessment and development of a new Glasgow Handbook

3.4.4 Sustainability

- (i) **Net Zero Routemap**: An update is being prepared for the Net Zero Committee November 2024
- (ii) **Glasgow's Climate Plan**: the Annual update will be presented to Net Zero Committee November 2024 and new version considering outputs from the Net Zero Routemap will be published by April 2025

- (iii) **Heat Decarbonisation/Renewable energy generation:** Glasgow City Council published its Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) in November 2023. The LHEES has a strategic focus on the deployment of district heating as a mechanism of addressing heating-based emissions and fuel poverty across Glasgow. The extent of the opportunity within the sites identified in the LHEES is now being investigated with a view to developing a commercial model capable of delivering district heating in Glasgow, including the city centre
- (iv) The **regional concession for public EV charging** infrastructure is being progressed by Glasgow City Region, in partnership with local authorities. Work on preparing a concession tender will be ongoing over 2024-25
- (v) **GCC Carbon Management Plan:** The *Carbon Management Plan 3* was approved by the City Administration Committee in [March 2024](#). A working group is managing the 27 actions and progress is currently on track

4 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 4.1 While individual projects are in development, the approach of the CCS24-30 is to engage as widely as possible with the public and business stakeholders prior to firming up delivery plans. The current workplan is now focused on implementing the strategy's Priority Actions. While most of the stakeholder and community engagement has been completed during the project development periods, the City Centre Regeneration Group regularly present updates to the six Community Councils located in the city centre. New projects continue to include extensive public and stakeholder engagement as part of the development process.
- 4.2 As projects are developed it is also essential that they are informed by a detailed equalities impact assessment which allows a deeper understanding of the needs of individuals and groups with protected characteristics. This in turn allows projects to be adapted to support these groups/individuals at an early stage. This is a key part of all Priority Actions within the CCS24-30. In addition, where a project evaluation is required, this will include engagement with key stakeholders, with particular reference to equalities issues, to establish whether perceptions have changed since the project was introduced.
- 4.3 Work is ongoing to improve the strategy's comms plan, to ensure that progress is widely communicated, as well as endeavouring to encourage groups and individuals with protected characteristics to participate in project activity wherever possible.
- 4.4 City centre performance monitoring is assessed at macro level through the open dashboard which can be accessed [here](#). This dashboard tracks a range of quantifiable indicators that provide an ongoing record on three main themes: people movement, tourism, and employment. This is a free resource for anyone to use.

- 4.5 In addition to the dashboard, each Priority Action within the CCS 2024-30 will be delivering outputs and outcomes. This extensive list is being developed into a shortlist that can be reported upon in future CCS updates to Committee, as part of an overall monitoring and evaluation framework for the overarching strategy. This focused monitoring plan will be reported back to this committee as part of the biannual updates.
- 4.6 There is a wide range of work being progressed under the banner of the City Centre Strategy in an economic context that continues to be particularly challenging for many city centre businesses and residents. However, the active collaboration between public and private sectors will deliver more targeted and effective outcomes that would otherwise be the case.
- 4.7 Due to the scale of activity, it is proposed that six-monthly reports will be submitted to this committee to report on progress for the duration of the CCS24-30. Significant projects will be subject of individual reports to committee.

5 POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	There are no immediate financial implications. The additional capital funding will be built into future capital planning budgets.
<i>Legal:</i>	There are no immediate legal issues, and these will be assessed as individual projects are developed.
<i>Personnel:</i>	None.
<i>Procurement:</i>	Procurement resources will be required to progress individual contracts and related project activity.

Council Strategic Plan:	<p>The CCS cuts across many areas of service and embeds many of the council's missions and commitments.</p> <p>Grand Challenge One – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.</p> <p>Mission 3: Improve the health and well being of our local communities.</p> <p>Grand Challenge Two – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.</p> <p>Mission 1: Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work.</p> <p>Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy.</p> <p>Grand Challenge Three – Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow.</p> <p>Mission 1: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned to the city region.</p>
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Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

Grand Challenge four – Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities.

Mission 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

The CCS cuts across many areas in terms of accessibility and just transition and thereby embeds many of the commitments of the Council's Equality Outcomes. It is expected that successful delivery of Key Priorities will contribute to achieving Outcome 1 by providing more employment opportunities for a diverse workforce, Outcome 2 which will make our city centre more accessible to all and Outcome 6 by helping to create a more vibrant and attractive city centre with more opportunities for social interaction.

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

Positive impact: The CCS will improve accessibility through improved physical measures. The initial desktop screening has been completed and will continue to be updated as the strategy develops. The public consultation outputs have been added to the EQIA.

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

Yes, the actions in the CCS are designed to improve access to work and support the provision of new sustainable housing. It will encourage Community Wealth Building and promote environmental enhancements with inclusive growth at their heart. Specific projects in the action plan will be EQIA assessed as required.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Theme 2: Just and Inclusive Place
Theme 3: Well Connected and Thriving City
Theme 4: Health and Wellbeing
Theme 5: Green Recovery

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

These will be determined as the Strategy is delivered. The continuing work to develop a climate impact assessment tool will also assist in this.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Yes. The CCS contain projects that support public transport (including opportunities to explore synergies with Clyde Metro), modal shift, greening, retrofit and repurposing of building stock.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out N/A

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of the report
- (ii) Consider the progress made by the CCS 24-30 from March to November 2024
- (iii) Note that biannual updates on progress will be submitted to Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee for the duration of the CCS 24-30

Enclosures: Link to [City Centre Strategy 2024-2030](#)