

Glasgow City Centre Recovery and Revitalisation – Motion as adjusted approved, after division.

13 Councillor Millar, seconded by Councillor Aitken, moved that

"Council welcomes recent progress in the revitalisation of the city centre and considers that a corner is being turned in the city centre's recovery. Council welcomes significant private investment being delivered across sectors, as well as major public investment in the ongoing transformation of city centre streets through the Council's delivery of the £123million Avenues programme. Council recognises that this progress is being delivered against a continuing challenging backdrop, and reaffirms its commitment to the delivery of the City Centre Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders to redouble collective efforts in supporting city centre regeneration.

Council notes continuing growth in the city centre retail sector, which is performing more strongly than previously predicted despite significant structural change which has been accelerated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council notes that while there has been a period of consolidation of in-person retail floor space across city centres, Glasgow remains the UK's largest retail centre outside London. Council welcomes data showing a 9.4% year-on-year city centre retail sales growth to August, with growth outstripping comparator cities such as Edinburgh, Leeds and Manchester, as well as the UK overall which recorded a 4.8% decrease. Council further highlights the performance of the fashion and food & drink sectors over this period, with increases of 10.5% and 18.2% respectively, against UK trends for these sectors of decreases of 4.6% and 2.2% respectively.

Council further welcomes retailers' significant investment in Glasgow, with the recent opening of new stores such as Uniqlo and the major planned investment in reconfiguring Buchanan Galleries, and notes that the city's key shopping precinct at Buchanan Street has a vacancy level of almost zero. Council notes that considerable further progress is required at Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets which have been particularly impacted by retailers' consolidation of branches and floor space, and notes that the Council's Development Team is actively engaging building and land-owners to find solutions to rejuvenate these streets.

Council welcomes the ongoing transformation of city centre streets through the delivery of the Avenues programme and considers that this investment is an essential element in creating a modern, more attractive city centre for residents, businesses, visitors and investors.

Council notes the development of Sauchiehall Street: Culture and Heritage District a bold 10-year plan to renew Sauchiehall Street, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund UK-wide Heritage Places programme. Council also Sauchiehall Street has a rich cultural heritage, and these transformative plans are a major milestone in our city's efforts to deliver positive economic and social change in this historic area to ensure that culture and heritage organisations, businesses, residents and visitors alike will benefit for years to come.

Council notes the recent completion of Avenues at Holland Street/Pitt Street, Sauchiehall Street and Cambridge Street, and notes that delivery is ongoing in seven projects. Council highlights that construction work is due to begin in 2026 across various Avenues including Argyle Street East and Stockwell Street, and looks forward to the planned reopening of a transformed George Square next year.

Council notes that Glasgow welcomed 4.72 million overnight visitors in 2024, an over 20% increase on the previous year, according to the latest Scottish Tourism Economic Impact Model (STEAM) figures. Locally, the tourism sector supported more than 37,000 full[1]time equivalent jobs in 2024, with total direct visitor expenditure, including day visitors, reached £2.39 billion, up 1.9% from 2023 and more than 50% higher than 2022.

Council notes the recent launch of the Get You In Town campaign, aimed at encouraging more people into the city centre for leisure, and further welcomes the establishment of a new Destination Marketing and Management Organisation, which will pull together expertise from across inward investment, marketing, tourism and conference sector teams to help continue to attract people to Glasgow and our city centre.

Council welcomes the ongoing work of its cleansing teams to respond to challenges in the city centre and create a cleaner, more attractive experience for residents, businesses and visitors. Council recalls its £7million investment in cleansing and neighbourhood services the 2025/26 Budget, with new operatives in areas such as cleansing night shift and commercial waste enforcement already deployed and making a difference in the city centre. Council notes that the additional investment included within the adopted Council Budget far exceeds that proposed within the alternative Opposition Budget presented.

Council notes that Glasgow is currently on track to meet its city centre residential population target of 40,000 by 2035, with the city centre population growing by a third between 2011 (with a population of 21,185) and 2022 (with a population of 28,341). Council reaffirms the importance of the property repurposing agenda, and welcomes the ongoing delivery of various conversion projects for residential accommodation within the city centre. Council however notes the ongoing challenges associated with property repurposing, and reiterates its calls for the UK Government to remove VAT on building conversion projects which disincentivise conversion as opposed to VAT-free new-build development.

In support of continued progress in the regeneration of the city centre, Council therefore resolves to:

- Continue to engage with partners across the public and private sectors to coordinate action and delivery across the City Centre Strategy.
- Support the further roll-out of the Get You In Town campaign to continue to attract more people to the city centre.
- Implement appropriate engagement and communications plans around the delivery of the Avenues to ensure that both the purpose of the works and any construction-related alternative arrangements are well communicated to the public.

- Explore opportunities to better promote and facilitate residential repurposing in the city centre within the forthcoming development of a new City Development Plan.
- Continue to bring regular reports to the relevant committee to update on delivery and progress within the city centre."

Councillor Carson, seconded by Councillor Greer, moved as an amendment :-

- (1) to delete the first 2 paragraphs;
- (2) to delete "further" in the first paragraph, and the sentence should read as:

"Council welcomes retailers";

- (3) to delete the paragraph beginning "Council welcomes the ongoing transformation of city centre streets";
- (4) that after the fourth paragraph, insert the following:

"However, Council notes that several businesses have reported a significant drop in revenue associated with the ongoing works of the Avenues programme. Footfall on Sauchiehall Street has also declined during this period, and the current perceived condition of the street, as experienced by residents and visitors, has been negatively impacted by the disruption. Council therefore calls for enhanced engagement with affected businesses and requests that officers explore and bring forward measures to support footfall recovery and minimise disruption during the remainder of the programme.";

- (5) that in the fifth paragraph commencing "Council notes the development of Sauchiehall Street: Culture and Heritage" delete all after "has a rich cultural heritage" and insert full stop after heritage;
- (6) that in paragraph 9
 - (i) after "commercial waste enforcement already deployed and making a difference in the city centre" insert the following:

"The Council recognises that the City Administration has presided over successive years of public dissatisfaction with the city's cleansing services, as reflected in the Glasgow Household Survey.

Additionally, Council highlights the GMB's "Reclaim Our Lanes" campaign, which powerfully illustrates the deteriorating state of cleanliness in parts of the city centre and residential areas. The campaign has drawn attention to the accumulation of waste in back lanes and communal spaces, which not only undermines the city's appearance but also raises concerns about public health and safety. Council acknowledges that these issues are not isolated incidents but reflect systemic challenges in service delivery and resource allocation.

The visibility and grassroots nature of the campaign underscore the urgency of addressing cleansing service deficiencies through long-term, sustainable investment rather than short-term fixes. Council believes that this context is essential in assessing both the impact of recent investments and the scale of the challenge that remains.”;

- (ii) remove “Council notes that the additional investment included within the adopted Council Budget far exceeds that proposed within the alternative Opposition Budget presented.”;
- (7) in the tenth paragraph after “(with a population of 28,341)” insert “despite cuts to the housing budget” and delete “remove” and insert “review” and sentence should read as “UK Government to review VAT on building conversion”; and
- (8) in the eleventh paragraph at “Council resolves to”, add a new bullet point, which should read as:
 - “Support GMBs Reclaim the Lane Campaign.”

Bailie Mearns, seconded by Bailie Wardrop, moved as an amendment that after the tenth paragraph, ending “...new-build development.”, add the following additional section:

“Council also notes the central importance of music to Glasgow’s culture and economic success, with UNESCO City of Music status being granted in 2008 to recognise the high calibre of music venues and a musical ecosystem which has put Glasgow on the map globally as a city famed for producing and nurturing musical talent across many genres.

Council recognises that Glasgow’s nighttime economy, and our reputation for musical brilliance, is dependent on the continuing success of this industry; however Council notes that many important music venues and artists continue to be severely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, high inflation, National Insurance and other factors.

Council thanks partners involved in the work on Glasgow’s forthcoming Nighttime Economy Strategy, including the Nighttime Industries Association Scotland, Music Venue Trust, the City Centre Taskforce, and officers across the Council family and requests that the Night-time Vision and action-plan is robust and presented to the relevant committee before the end of the calendar year.

Council therefore resolves to ask that the following measures are considered in the final Night-time Vision strategy and associated action plan:

1. Seeking changes to Non-domestic rates relief to ensure that all grassroots music venues can benefit from relief currently not afforded to venues with a rateable value over £51,000;

2. Seeking funding needed to allow SPT to operate the Subway later into the evening to improve the late-night transport offer to get more people into the city centre;
3. Seeking action on improving night bus services in Glasgow;
4. Ensuring that proposed changes to permitted development rights for residential conversions do not have a detrimental impact on music venues and that the Agent of Change principle is upheld;
5. Promoting the Stadium Levy to ensure that this reaches at least 50% of all tickets by the end of the year to ensure that grassroots music venues in Scotland can benefit from the stadium and arena shows which rely on these smaller venues;
6. Considering what exemptions can be considered by parking and roads to ensure that loading can be achieved for venues without the threat of parking contraventions and when road closures affect direct access and routes; and
7. Considering additional resource for the work of the UNESCO City of Music team in Glasgow.”

Councillor Hutchison, seconded by Councillor Massie, moved as an amendment that:-

- (1) after the tenth paragraph add the following:

“Council acknowledges that the success of the city centre is down to those working in hospitality, retail, cleansing, transport, the arts and many other workers across a variety of sectors whose work keeps the city centre operating at all hours of the day.”; and

- (2) at the end of the bullet points add the following:

“ - ensure that workers across the city centre are represented in appropriate forums and will extend an invitation to relevant union representatives to join the City Centre Taskforce (where permissible under its terms of reference) and the Local Licensing Forum. A report will be brought to Business Bureau within 2 cycles with appropriate nominees.”

During the debate, Councillor Millar, Bailie Mearns and Councillor Hutchison, with the approval of their seconders, agreed to combine their motion and amendments resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

"Council welcomes recent progress in the revitalisation of the city centre and considers that a corner is being turned in the city centre's recovery. Council welcomes significant private investment being delivered across sectors, as well as major public investment in the ongoing transformation of city centre streets through the Council's delivery of the £123million Avenues programme. Council recognises that this progress is being delivered against a continuing challenging backdrop, and reaffirms its commitment to the delivery of the City Centre Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders to redouble collective efforts in supporting city centre regeneration.

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more strongly than previously predicted despite significant structural change which has been accelerated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council notes that while there has been a period of consolidation of in-person retail floor space across city centres, Glasgow remains the UK's largest retail centre outside London. Council welcomes data showing a 9.4% year-on-year city centre retail sales growth to August, with growth outstripping comparator cities such as Edinburgh, Leeds and Manchester, as well as the UK overall which recorded a 4.8% decrease. Council further highlights the performance of the fashion and food & drink sectors over this period, with increases of 10.5% and 18.2% respectively, against UK trends for these sectors of decreases of 4.6% and 2.2% respectively.

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Council thanks partners involved in the work on Glasgow's forthcoming Nighttime Economy Strategy, including the Nighttime Industries Association Scotland, Music Venue Trust, the City Centre Taskforce, and officers across the Council family and requests that the Night-time Vision and action-plan is robust and presented to the relevant committee before the end of the calendar year.

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- Implement appropriate engagement and communications plans around the delivery of the Avenues to ensure that both the purpose of the works and any construction-related alternative arrangements are well communicated to the public.
- Explore opportunities to better promote and facilitate residential repurposing in the city centre within the forthcoming development of a new City Development Plan.
- Ask that the following measures are considered in the final Night-time Vision strategy and associated action plan:
 - Seeking changes to non-domestic rates relief to ensure that all grassroots music venues can benefit from relief currently not afforded to venues with a rateable value over £51,000;
 - Seeking funding needed to allow SPT to operate the Subway later into the evening to improve the late-night transport offer to get more people into the city centre;
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 - Ensuring that proposed changes to permitted development rights for residential conversions do not have a detrimental impact on music venues and that the Agent of Change principle is upheld;
 - Promoting the Stadium Levy to ensure that this reaches at least 50% of all tickets by the end of the year to ensure that grassroots music venues in Scotland can benefit from the stadium and arena shows which rely on these smaller venues;
 - Considering what exemptions can be considered by parking and roads to ensure that loading can be achieved for venues without the threat of parking contraventions and when road closures affect direct access and routes; and
 - Considering additional resource for the work of the UNESCO City of Music team in Glasgow.
- Request that the City Centre Task Force consider the extension of invitation to relevant trades union representation to ensure that workers are represented in appropriate forums; and instruct officers to bring a report to Business Bureau within two cycles considering trades union representation to be added to the Local Licensing Forum; and
- Continue to bring regular reports to the relevant committee to update on delivery and progress within the city centre.”

On a vote being taken electronically and by calling the roll, 27 voted for the amendment and 47 for the motion as adjusted, with 1 abstention.

The motion as adjusted was accordingly declared to be carried.

