

Item 1

18th April 2023



Glasgow City Council

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

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

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CITY CENTRE RECOVERY PLAN 2022-24 UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

To update Elected Members on the progress of the City Centre Recovery Plan 2022-24.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of this report
- (ii) Consider the progress made by the City Centre Recovery Plan in 2022
- (iii) Notes that the next area of focus will be the development of the new City Centre Strategy in later 2023

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members may recall that the City Centre Recovery Plan 2022-24 (CCRP) was considered by the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy committee on 16 November 2021¹ and approved by the City Administration Committee on 2 December 2021².
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the second progress update to Members. The report will cover the key areas of activity within the CCRP including the work of the City Centre Task Force, progress on Scottish Government-funded projects, and the proposed next steps for the new City Centre Strategy.
- 1.3 A copy of the previous progress report is available at the link below³.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 2.1 As previously noted, the City Centre Recovery Plan (CCRP) superseded the City Centre Strategy 2014-19⁴ and will inform city centre regeneration priorities until the new City Centre Strategy 2024-30 is in place. These documents are all supported by the City Centre Strategic Development Framework⁵ (SDF) which provides the strategic outline for future actions within Glasgow city centre against a range of identified ambitions.
- 2.2 In summary, the CCRP has to date been focused on responding to pandemic-related impacts on key business sectors, enabling and delivering economic, environmental and social benefits, and a city centre that is vibrant, sustainable, liveable and well-connected. Over the course of 2023 it will increasingly turn attention to the longer term strategic objectives and the development of the new City Centre Strategy (CCS).
- 2.3 Priority actions within the CCRP and new CCS will also support Glasgow's Climate Plan⁶ which sets out the Council's ambitions to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030.

3. CCRP PROGRESS REPORT TO MARCH 2023

3.1 City Centre Task Force (CCTF)

¹ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNZL2U2UZ30G>

² <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNZL2UNTUT2U>

³ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=1059818>

⁴ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17548&p=0>

⁵ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=53335&p=0>

⁶ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=50623&p=0>

- 3.1.1 The CCTF has continued to operate as the interim governance structure for city centre strategy while recovery from the pandemic continues and new trends such as hybrid working begin to stabilise.
- 3.1.2 A review of CCTF commenced in late 2022 with the aim of agreeing the process and timetable for a new City Centre Strategy. This is being undertaken by NRS officers and the co-chairs of the CCTF, and will include consideration of the necessary governance structure as part of the transition away from recovery focus to that of the longer-term strategic agenda. The Recovery Plan and current CCTF structure will continue as planned until end 2023.
- 3.1.3 The new City Centre Strategy will seek to simplify the range of strategies with a focus on the city centre, such as transport, economic development, city living and sustainability, and will predominantly focus on delivery and the implementation of existing plans and policies. One new requirement will be the Property Repurposing Action Plan which was considered by City Administration Committee on 23 March 2023. The scale of the redundant property issue in the city centre is such that it demands focused attention as part of the broader CCS.

3.2 Performance report: Data Insights (December 2022 - February 2023)

- 3.2.1 Another output from the work of the CCRP has been the establishment of a new real-time open data dashboard for the city centre, which can be accessed [here](#). The data covers general activity relating to the city centres and more sector-specific issues, all of which is helpful in informing the priority actions of various city centre organisations.
- 3.2.2 The key headlines of city centre business sector performance against pre-Covid levels are as follows:
- Footfall in December remained 18% below pre-Covid levels which equated to 814,000 less visitors in the city centre.
 - Train strikes in mid-December resulted in 112,000 fewer city centre visitors compared to the previous week.
 - Weekday footfall remains an issue with the slow return rate of office workers to Glasgow city centre (half of the national average) although weekend and night-time footfall is strong (101% and 130% of pre-Covid levels)
 - Visitor numbers to the city (up to December 2022) are:
 - International – 76% of pre-Covid levels
 - Domestic – 89% of pre-Covid levels
 - Public transport use against pre-Covid rates are as follows (up to December 2022):
 - Train – 68%
 - Subway – 91%
 - Bus – 76%
 - Hotel occupancy is currently 69% compared to 71% of pre-Covid levels with ongoing concerns about the escalating costs of doing business

- In terms of sales in December: sales in Glasgow city centre were +15% ahead of the same month in 2019, slightly ahead of Manchester (13%) and substantially ahead of Edinburgh (6%) and Leeds (6%).
- Sales were up +30% compared to December 2021.
- Sales performance continues to follow previous trends where recovery is being led by food and drink (+54%) rather than traditional retail activity (i.e. general retail was 25% down).
- Although sales have increased, businesses are facing rising cost pressures so does not necessarily translate to increased profitability.
- Feedback from retailers acknowledged that consumers were discount driven.

3.3 Scottish Government funded projects

An update on the projects being delivered this year with Scottish Government recovery funding is provided below.

3.3.1 Priority Area Action Plans

- (i) Six area action plans are in progress, focusing on areas of high footfall and transport hubs: Sauchiehall Street, Argyle Street, Anderston Cross, Buchanan Bus Station, Heilanman's Umbrella, and High Street.
- (ii) A programme to deal with the various vacant units and strategic sites on Sauchiehall and Argyle Street has been delivered including vinyls, hoarding and other improvements works.
- (iii) Meanwhile use projects are being developed, including support to the private sector, and funding to City Property for the High Street initiative (Phase 2).
- (iv) A design competition to reinvigorate the shopfronts at Heilanman's Umbrella with the support of the Royal Institute of British Architects has now been concluded and a successful bidder has been appointed with service provision underway.
- (vi) Further improvements to the environs of Anderston Station are now programmed with full implementation of the project elements, including the accessible lift, planting and lighting by summer 2023.
- (vii) Similarly, public realm remedial works around Buchanan Bus Station are anticipated for completion within the same timescales, whilst other associated improvements have either been completed or continue to be progressed, including a landscaping project adjacent to Cowcaddens Road.
- (vii) Activity remains ongoing towards completion of the High Street Area Strategy, including a final project review. Any outstanding actions are expected to be delivered through the new emerging District Regeneration Frameworks (DRFs) with appropriate reporting mechanisms as agreed with HSAS Reference Group.

3.3.2 Operational Services

- (i) A range of additional services have been provided as a result of the grant funding including additional graffiti removal operating hours – allowing city centre focus to removing graffiti proactively
- (ii) Enhanced cleansing service with a focus on innovative ideas and cleansing work outwith BAU service delivery
- (iii) Additional Community Enforcement officer patrols – providing enhanced assurance across the city centre
- (iv) Additional Police resource at key times and dates across the city centre
- (v) Support to business recovery providing financial support to businesses for outdoor area applications

3.3.3 Public Transport

- (i) This project aimed to drive footfall back to Glasgow city centre and encourage visitors to use public transport where possible, by promoting public transport options in collateral and messaging
- (ii) The campaign supported the Glasgow Loves Christmas campaign and targeted the regional catchment which comprises the ‘everyday’ shopper and a key target for city centre businesses.
- (iii) The campaign was delivered across media channels including radio, social, digital and billboard advertising.
- (iv) The campaign will continue to be delivered into 2023 focused on ‘Love Glasgow’

3.3.4 Media

- (i) A multi-format media campaign promoting Glasgow city centre and focused on over 40s was delivered in June 2022. This was assessed to have delivered significant reach with over 40% of adults in Glasgow having viewed the TV advert at least once, and approximately eight times on average.
- (ii) TV, radio and social media campaign ran from 2 June to 3 July. The main aim was to increase weekday footfall in the city centre, in order to regenerate the economy as a result of the pandemic.
- (iii) Emerging stats indicate a high rate of views and reach across TV, radio and social media spots.

3.3.5 Marketing

- (i) Glasgow Life implemented a domestic tourism campaign to promote the range of winter event and experiences taking place over the winter (October – February). The aim was to drive overnight stays on the lead up to Christmas and in the early part of 2023.
- (ii) **Love Glasgow This Christmas** was the proposition taken to market via a highly targeted, integrated media and channels plan which included social media advertising, content partnership with Reach PLC titles, travel partnership with ScotRail, corporate and consumer PR activity, paid influencers and development of content across

- peoplemakeglasgow.com and glasgowloveschristmas.com and organic social comms via associated channels.
- (iii) The aim of this activity was to raise awareness of the city's winter and festive programming and experiences to drive overnight stays. Target audience segments across Scotland focused on highly populated cities and regions including Aberdeen, Dundee, Ayrshire, Stirling and Edinburgh.
 - (iv) From the results provided this campaign has been extremely successful in terms of the results achieved and the audiences which have been reached throughout the campaign period.
 - (v) The project was all delivered to plan with the exception of Scotrail activity which was delayed due to the strike action of their workforce

3.3.6 Strategic Planning

(i) ***Project: Retail Capacity Study***

- Main objectives: to survey and produce evidence on the changing requirement for retail floorspace within the City Centre principal retail areas, to inform basis for changes to planning policy and basis for targeted repurposing strategies.
- Key Objective is to retain Glasgow City Centre's status as a metropolitan/international retail destination, while adapting to changes in retail demands.
- Outcomes will form basis for potential changes to planning policy and also evidence for assessment of planning applications. This should support changes of use while still retaining the retail emphasis and required floorspace (quantum, type and location) within the City Centre.
- Progress: this study is due to report by May 2023.

(ii) ***Project: Golden Z regeneration project***

- Main objectives: To focus on the main traditional shopping streets of Argyle St/Buchanan St/Sauchiehall Street and see where long term interventions can be encouraged to re-use vacant buildings and sites, and add to the City Centre's offer as a local, metropolitan and international destination.
- This involves key stakeholder and public engagement on the potential uses and interventions in the physical environment, as well as looking at potential for changes to planning policy.
- Progress: On target to complete phases of engagement and deliver report by May 2023.

3.3.7 CCRP Action Programme summary update

- (i) While the majority of activity this year has focused on the above items, an update on the broader CCRP Action Programme has been included at **Appendix 1**.

4 SCOTTISH CITY CENTRE RECOVERY TASK FORCE (SCCRTF) UPDATE

- 4.1 Glasgow City Council is leading one of seven thematic workstreams set up by the SCCRTF, on behalf of the other cities, and will be inputting to the other workstreams as required. The Glasgow activity is focused on how national policy, legislation, regulation and investment options should be redirected to deliver more residential outcomes in city centres.
- 4.2 Recommendations from this work are now being considered by the eight cities. Officers within GCC are reviewing the reports before briefing sessions will be offered to the political groups to run through the proposed recommendations for Scottish Government. Once this process is complete the conclusions and next steps will be reported to back to this Committee. This will focus on the residential and vacant/derelict land workstreams, and where possible an update will be provided on the remaining SCCRTF workstreams.
- 4.3 The remaining six thematic workstreams being progressed through the SCCRTF are as follows. No updates are yet available from the other cities.

Workstream	City Lead
(i) City centre carbon footprint	Edinburgh
(ii) V&DL reduction	Stirling
(iii) Entrepreneurial/start up activity	Perth
(iv) Revenue-raising opportunities	Aberdeen
(v) Oversupply of Retail	Dundee
(vi) Faster and more agile Planning	Inverness
(vii) Residential outcomes	Glasgow

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Despite the pressures on Glasgow city centre over the period since March 2020, it can be acknowledged that while significant issues do remain, good progress overall has been made in terms of recovery. One key issue is the city's perceived low rate of office return. These low rates are reported by Remit Consulting, who undertake UK-wide analysis of office return across all major towns and cities, and work is currently underway by the NRS city centre team and CCTF members to establish the accuracy of this assessment, whether it can be supported by other data, and - if accurate - whether there are unique causes for Glasgow city centre.
- 5.2 More broadly, this is likely to be the final update on the City Centre Recovery Plan 2022-24, as attention will shortly turn to the development of the new City Centre Strategy. Members will be engaged with later this year as that strategic development process commences. This will include consideration of the governance and organisational structure.

6 POLICY AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

- Financial:* There are no new financial implications arising from this report or the attached City Centre Recovery Plan 2022 – 2024 (CCRP).
- Legal:* No immediate legal issues are raised by this report or the attached CCRP however these will be assessed as individual actions are developed.
- Personnel:* There are no direct personnel implications from this report or the attached, updated CCRP.
- Procurement:* Procurement resources will be required to progress individual contracts and related project activity. CPU will be engaged as these are developed.

Council Strategic Plan:

Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

- **GRAND CHALLENGE ONE – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities**
 - MISSION 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities
 - Commitments: 1, 2, 4
 - MISSION 4: Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant
 - Commitments: 8
- **GRAND CHALLENGE TWO – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens**
 - MISSION 1: Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work
 - Commitments: 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14
 - MISSION 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy
 - Commitments: 6, 8
- **GRAND CHALLENGE THREE – Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow**
 - MISSION 1: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned with the city region
 - Commitments: 4
 - MISSION 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 20230
 - Commitments: 12, 18, 19, 27, 28

- **GRAND CHALLENGE FOUR – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens**
 - MISSION 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods
 - Commitments: 2, 13, 16, 17, 18
 - MISSION 3: Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative council structure that delivers value for money
 - Commitments: 3

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

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

This CCRP has three themes: inclusion, innovation, and sustainability. These apply to public realm, enhanced active travel, community wealth building and the 20 min neighbourhood, etc. EQIAs will be considered for each of the projects as these are brought forward. An EQIA for the CCRP can be found [here](#).

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

The CCRP will encourage skills development, employment opportunities and opportunities for all city centre residents to contribute to the implementation of the strategy.

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

The CCRP will encourage skills development and business development more generally including through the development of community wealth building.

Climate Impacts:

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

The CCRP seeks to develop and implement actions that are specific to the city centre as well as including those that will have an impact and that are being delivered by other parts of the Council Family. The CCRP will support the following actions: 9, 10, 29, 36, 37, 39, 40, 51, 56, 59.

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

The potential impacts are on carbon reduction, increases in active travel, connected green and open spaces, support for circularity, public realm that promotes well-being and empowers local communities and community wealth building. The District Regeneration Frameworks, which are a key part of the overarching CCS, have the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as their starting point.

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

The proposals in the CCRP will contribute to Glasgow's net zero target. The delivery of the Avenues will reduce the space for private vehicles, will improve bus journey times in the city centre and will improve SUDS and greening.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

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

Approval of the CCRP does not have any immediate data protection impacts. These will be assessed as individual projects are developed or implemented and DPIA's will be completed as required.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of this report
- (ii) Consider the progress made by the City Centre Recovery Plan in 2022
- (iii) Notes that the next area of focus will be the development of the new City Centre Strategy in later 2023

Appendix A: City Centre Recovery Plan – Action Programme summary update

Theme	Action	Update – 05/04/23	2022	2023	2024
Supporting business operations	· Footfall recovery measures	The 2022/23 Covid Recovery Short Term Action Plans are now complete. They included measures such as enhanced cleaning regimes- including graffiti removals, vinyling of vacant properties, new Winter Lighting, development of a Meanwhile use scheme, rewinding of stalled spaces (concept design for site at corner between Stockwell Street and Cowcaddens Road now complete, with a view to deliver the design during the course of the next year). Dress for the Weather have been appointed to develop an innovative, sustainable and inclusive design for the environmental upgrade of Hielanman's Umbrella; the design contract will be completed by summer 23. Scot Govt funding also supported various operational enhancement resources, marketing, media and event activity, and investment into strategic planning for the core retail areas.			
	· Look and feel audits	Look and feel audits were carried out in spring 2022 to inform the Covid Recovery Short Term action plans, with interventions now being progressed per the 22/23 Short Term Action Plans noted above.			
	· Scottish and UK Government advocacy	Ongoing			
	· Vacant unit plan	Meanwhile Use Scheme has been finalised in consultation with internal and external stakeholders piloting in Sauchiehall and Argyle Street. New planning procedure for temporary – up to 2 years – Change of Use has been developed, with a maximum fee of £1000 for not for profit organisations moving into vacant properties. Funding for Meanwhile Use Phase 2 units in High Street has been awarded to City Property. Units will be delivered in 2023.			
	· Skills development support	Community benefits are being delivered through live contracts e.g. Avenues, etc. Business Survey completed August 22 to understand recruitment/skills issues.			
Transforming the city centre	· City Centre Living Strategy	CCLS is being transferred to the Housing department and will become a part of the new Housing Strategy. Actions around property repurposing and the development of Liveable Districts Strategies have been retained by CCRG.			
	· Developer engagement and support	Ongoing engagement and joint working/alignment of schemes with developers across the city centre.			
	· Avenues programme design and delivery	Construction of Holland Street and Pitt Street Avenue has commenced with completion expected in July 2024. The tender process to secure a construction contractor for Sauchiehall Precinct and Cambridge Street, is nearing completion with a site start expected in September 2023 and completion in May 2024. Design work on Argyle St West and North Hanover St Avenues is nearing completion and the tendering process for construction of each is expected to be completed by the end of 2023. Argyle St East design work will continue through 2023 with procurement and construction to take place in 2024. George Square and Block C Avenues are now at RIBA stage 3; pre-planning discussions and statutory planning consultations are ongoing.			

Theme	Action	Update – 05/04/23	2022	2023	2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRF programme delivery 	Last 4 DRFs (Townhead, Cowcaddens, Merchant City, Learning Quarter) have gone through public consultation and will be presented at CAC for final approval on 4 th May 2023. A new combined DRF action plan will be developed as a part of the new City Centre Strategy 2024-30.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDP programme delivery 	Ongoing			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning policy review: changing uses 	CCS team recently responded to the Scottish Government's phase 2 consultations on permitted development rights review, suggesting greater flexibility with change of use and that use of the forthcoming Masterplan Consent Areas tool could be a way of targeting place-based policy approach in the city centre; subject to SG guidelines when available. GCC Planning led the overall response to the SG.			
Responding to climate and ecological emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Strategy (Transformation Plan) 	Glasgow City Council is consulting on draft City Centre Transport Plan (CCTP) for 2022-32, a plan that allows the delivery of an integrated, healthy, inclusive and sustainable transport network for the city centre, with increased connectivity and capacity. Consultation will close on Monday 12 September 2022			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net zero carbon residential development 	Based on the ambitions of the CCLS and the concurrent work with the SCA/SCCRTF we are working on reviewing the regulatory framework and ensuring that the response to the climate and ecological emergency is incorporated into the emerging Housing Strategy.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat and energy generation projects 	Continued collaboration with Sustainability team to promote heat and energy generation projects across the city centre. Currently investigating the possibility of integrating district heating enabling infrastructure in the design of High Street as a part of the Avenues programme.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage resilience plan 	No update			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Biodiversity, Pollinator & Open Space plans 	CCS team currently working with GCC biodiversity colleagues on several greening projects that will aim to help fulfill the aims of Glasgow's Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Open space factors for the city centre are expected to be picked up following adoption of the final 4 DRFs			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce rain gardens and green infrastructure 	Rain Gardens and green infrastructure are being delivered as part of the avenues programme, as well as in pop up public spaces, such as the public realm in front of Anderston station. http://www.glasgowwaterworks.com/ Pilot project at Washington Street still ongoing.			
Key destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renfrew Street digital Arts/Culture quarter 	Avenues of the Arts under review. A digital cultural cluster will be developed once last four DRFS are approved			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Street Area Strategy 	The HSAS is reaching the end of its timeframe, and action on the High Street will be continued through the DRF programme plan. Several actions from the HSAS are now complete, such as the Visitor Interpretation Strategy, Visual Identity Strategy, heritage trails, wayfinding banners, a strategy for the Medieval Area, including the refurbishment of Provand's Lordship, High Street Gardens, the relocation of Greyfriars Gardens, the new Royal Infirmary Museum.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFSD phase 2 	Banners for wayfinding/ supporting conversation between development interests in this area to make the site available for development – consideration now being given to a masterplan approach.			

Theme	Action	Update – 05/04/23	2022	2023	2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Events Campus 	Banners/River Strategy/Better connections at Anderston/ wayfinding digital units one at science centre at SEC			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River development plan 	Completed - River SDF			
Liveable city centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place Design policy development 	The team continues to engage with and respond to the early findings of the Place Design Commission			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy one-stop-shop 	Coordination with Planning ongoing			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversion to residential supports 	As part of the response to Covid the CCTF commissioned a property repurposing report which contains recommendations on the restraint and opportunities for residential conversions. Additionally we are working with SCA to develop specific asks of Scottish Government for conversion to residential.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public space and social infrastructure planning 	Community potential analysis to be updated as part of Scottish City Centre Recovery Task Force workstream 1 - Glasgow lead - growing residential outcomes in city centres			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive and accessible transport opportunities 	The Avenues programme is developing inclusive and accessible transport opportunities through the delivery of active travel infrastructure and continuous engagement with minority groups through the recently created Inclusive and Accessible Design Forum. Work is going to strengthen the offer of night buses to service the nighttime economy.			
Creativity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of GCID 	As part of the development of Glasgow City Innovation District, the University of Strathclyde is leading an ambitious project to a 100% renewable climate neutral and climate resilient area within the district. The project aims to integrate heat, power, transport, climate adaptation and wellbeing solutions that will benefit everyone in the area of the Innovation District. Currently working with UOS to integrate district heating enabling infrastructure in the design for High Street.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artists in Residence 	In 2019 Glasgow Life appointed Artists in Residence for each of Glasgow's wards including the city centre, now working with local communities in the city centre.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community wealth building options 	Will be explored for Property Repurposing Action Plan			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor tech data tools 	Several Storymaps have been developed for the City Centre, including the City Centre Mural Trail, Thriving City (High Street) and Contemporary Art Trail			