



Glasgow City Council

Economy, Housing, Transport and  
Regeneration City Policy Committee

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

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Item 2

26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**GLASGOW CITY CENTRE STRATEGY 2024 to 2030: DRAFT FOR PUBLIC  
CONSULTATION**

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on the new City Centre Strategy 2024-30 and the planned consultation activity.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of the report;
- (ii) Note the request for additional capital funding of up to £5m
- (iii) Note that this report will be submitted to City Administration Committee on 12 October 2023 for approval to proceed to public consultation;
- (iv) Note the intention to commence public consultation following City Administration Committee approval for six weeks from 20 October 2023 to 3 December 2023;
- (v) Agree that the outcome of the public consultation be reported back to this committee prior to seeking formal approval of the new City Centre Strategy at City Administration Committee in early 2024.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes ✓

consulted:

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the City Centre Strategy (CCS) 2014-19 which was intended to be the first five-year plan in a ten-year strategy to recalibrate the regeneration focus of the city centre towards a more inclusive, sustainable, mixed-use place, with less reliance on single sectors, and one capable of supporting a growing population.
- 1.2 The focus of the first five years was very much one of development activity along with the establishment of the flagship project, the District Strategy. By way of reminder, the District Strategy comprised two elements, the District Regeneration Framework (DRF) strategy, and the Avenues programme. DRFs are 10-year regeneration plans underpinned by extensive analysis and community/stakeholder engagement, building on each district's unique characteristics. All DRFs are now completed and in delivery.
- 1.3 The advent of City Deal funding also enabled progression of the ambitious Avenues programme which ultimately seeks to transform a vehicle-dominated urban centre into one with high quality, greened and connected pedestrian routes and active travel spaces.
- 1.4 Previous reports to Committee have reported on the wide range of activity and deliverables of the CCS 2014-19 and this report will not repeat that information other than to note the City Centre Living Strategy which was delivered in 2019 with an ambition to double the current population to 40,000 by 2035. This has become particularly important in the post-pandemic period.

### 2 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PERIOD

- 2.1 The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 halted many of the CCS 2014-19 delivery plans and required a different response to the immediate situation. The City Centre Recovery Plan 2022–2024 was subsequently developed and approved by Committee in 2021. This plan focused on business recovery, given the extent and duration of restrictions placed on Glasgow city centre during the pandemic. It has been supported by the establishment of a City Centre Task Force which brought together public and private sector stakeholders with an interest in Glasgow city centre.
- 2.2 While the impacts of Covid-19 have had a profound effect on the city centre, this draft Strategy is effectively the second five-year phase of the City Centre Strategy, with an updated approach due to the various external events of recent years. The emphasis will move to outcome-focused delivery and implementation of the Priority Actions.
- 2.3 The new CCS 2024-30 can be accessed at this link:  
[City Centre Strategy 2024-2030](#)

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### 3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 A number of factors have driven the approach to the new CCS 2024-30:

- (i) The 2008 economic crash, which disproportionately affected town and city centres. Borrowing was made significantly harder, and this precipitated a development freeze, numerous business insolvencies and job losses
- (ii) The massive structural changes impacting on the retail and commercial office sectors, with rapidly changing investor requirements requiring smaller and more flexible footprints, and higher quality amenity space able to attract new industries
- (iii) Retail and consumer trends – especially the growth in online shopping which has shifted demand away from large floorplate retail. The importance of retail to Glasgow city centre should not however be understated. As this City Centre Strategy develops there will be a continuing requirement to respond in policy terms, to enable a more flexible response to structural shifts in this sector and to retain Glasgow's retail advantage

3.2 While there has been some degree of recovery in certain sectors and at certain times, namely weekends and weekday evenings, weekday footfall is still creating challenging circumstances for many businesses, not least when coupled with rising costs across all business activity.

3.3 The draft CCS 2024-30 has been prepared with the expectation of becoming the “plan of plans” for Glasgow city centre and it aims to simplify the strategic landscape by consolidating the highest priority actions from all corporate plans that have a bearing on the regeneration approach to the city centre. The exercise has involved reviewing objectives and recommendations from the work undertaken across the Council family both pre- and post-pandemic.

3.4 This includes major programmes from the CCS 2014-19 including the District Regeneration Frameworks, Avenues, and City Centre Living Strategy, as well as more recent research exercises undertaken by Ryden and Stantec on the post-pandemic city centre property market and economy which resulted in the Property Repurposing Action Plan, and the Business of Cities review of Glasgow city centre. In addition, the work done with the other Scottish cities on developing recommendations for Scottish and UK Governments around legislative/policy/regulation/investment measures to increasing residential density has also helped to inform the CCS 2024-30.

3.5 The outcome of this exercise was combined with an engagement process with other Council departments to identify key actions that will be delivered in the city centre from 2024 to 2030. These will come from a wide range of strategies ranging from the City Centre Transport Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the Economic Strategy, the Glasgow Housing Strategy, and the work recently completed on the Golden Z. The development of each of these strategies has involved extensive stakeholder and public engagement. Consideration was also given to key corporate and national strategies.

## 4 GLASGOW CITY CENTRE STRATEGY 2024-30

### 4.1 CCS 2024-30 Vision and Structure

4.1.1 The vision for the next period of city centre strategy has been developed around under 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.

4.1.2 Within each Pillar are a series of “Big Moves” which are the thematic priorities. These include:

(i) **Magnetic Experience:**

- **The River:** focus on activation, access, greening and connectivity
- **Business Economy:** inclusive investment and development strategy building on Glasgow’s unique metropolitan role and destination status
- **Connected and Green Places:** developing greener districts that are well connected with active travel routes and attractive streets that rebalance the space allocation
- **Creative and Cultural:** developing quarters that build on culture, creativity, innovation and diversity, with district-specific outcomes

(ii) **Front Door to Innovation:**

- **Innovation and Digital:** delivering the Digital Strategy and Innovation District plans; connecting small, new and micro businesses with creative and innovative opportunities
- **Property:** proactive targeting of long-term vacant properties and sites, and stalled developments, including working with Scottish Government on the potential devolution of key powers to local authority level; repurposing including focus on residential outcomes
- **Wellbeing Economy:** ensuring benefits of city centre growth are inclusive to ensure that no citizen is left behind in terms of access to jobs, training, housing and healthcare; supporting the circular economy and inclusive growth agendas

(iii) **A Place to Live:**

- **City Centre Living:** delivering the target to double the population to 40,000 by 2035 and ensure appropriate social infrastructure provision to support the growing residential community

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- **Net Zero:** supporting the transition to a low carbon city centre guided by a place-based approach

### 4.2 Priority Actions

4.2.1 The CCS 2024-30 outlines a number of Priority Actions to be progressed over the planned period. These actions will directly support the Big Moves and Pillars approach and will ensure that resources are targeted accordingly.

4.2.2 Most of these Priority Actions contain a number of sub-projects and actions. All relevant activity will be reported upon annually under each Priority Action heading.

- (i) **Avenues Programme:** following the interruption to activity during the two main years of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent impact of the inflationary economic environment, the Avenues programme has the potential to make the most transformative change to the city centre in physical terms. Works are now underway on the Holland Street and Pitt Street Avenues, with Sauchiehall Precinct and Cambridge Street Avenues starting on site in September 2023, and thereafter new Avenues should be commencing on site approximately every six months
- (ii) **George Square redevelopment:** as the civic heart of Glasgow this redesign is now in its advanced stages, and site works are expected to commence in Spring 2025, with anticipated completion in Spring 2027
- (iii) **DRF Programme:** all nine districts now have a DRF which is a prioritised regeneration plan building on each district's unique assets, characteristics, opportunities and constraints. Sauchiehall DRF actions have almost been completed. Focus will now return to progressing DRF actions across the remaining districts, with community involvement central to the process
- (iv) **Greening the Districts:** in addition to the Avenues programme a Landscape Action Plan will be developed to deliver smaller-scale greening outcomes including pocket parks and micro interventions
- (v) **River Corridor:** completing the development work on Custom House Quay and progressing delivery of the River Park concept of the Broomielaw DRF
- (vi) **Property Repurposing Action Plan:** approved earlier in 2023, the recommendations will be progressed with a focus on converting former office space into residential and other commercial outcomes, as well as seeking additional powers to enable more direct action at local level, and delivering a number of the recommendations from the Golden Z research
- (vii) **Visitor Marketing, Tourism and Events:** a continued focus on visitor marketing and promotion, leisure tourism, events and conventions that promote Glasgow city centre across the country and on the international stage

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- (viii) **City Centre Living:** delivering the increased population with the desired range of tenures and demographics; ensuring pipeline of social infrastructure and amenity space, play areas and other facilities to support city centre residents, current and future
- (ix) **People Friendly City Centre:** delivering the recommendations and actions of the City Centre Transport Plan and ultimately increasing opportunity for pedestrians, wheelers, active travel and public transport. The future of the M8 will continue to be explored: its impact, and that of the River, together serve to create a physical barrier around the city centre, particularly north, south and west, which results in a tightly-defined perception of boundary. Over time this has created physical constraints to regeneration impact in the core city centre. The development of Sighthill Village with the associated new pedestrian bridge over the M8 has demonstrated the ability to transform and activate adjacent communities through improved connectivity, and similar opportunities will be considered around the edges of the city centre, as part of long-term transport planning with national partners
- (x) **Innovation and Digital:** support and promotion of the innovation and digital strategies
- (xi) **Creative and Cultural Area Strategy:** building on the array of cultural and creative assets in some city centre districts, this action will develop key quarters through a co-creation model with local stakeholders. The first project will cover the Sauchiehall district as it increasingly requires supporting sectors to drive retail demand
- (xii) **Evening and Night-Time Economy Review:** a post-pandemic review of this sector which is one of the hardest hit by recent events, likely to cover consumer perceptions, economic impact, comparative city analysis, issues including night transport, and with resulting recommendations for action to be progressed through a collaborative approach with the sector
- (xiii) **Infrastructure Plans:** new plans to understand the hard infrastructure constraints, impact on development, and the development of the Social Infrastructure Strategy as a route map to the increased population target and associated amenity requirements
- (xiv) **Development Support Team:** a dedicated team from across the Council Family, to directly target owners of vacant/problem sites, enable meanwhile uses and solutions to stalled development, and connecting with potential occupiers/end users
- (xv) **Local Community Projects:** this action covers a range of smaller projects including the Begging Strategy, High Street Strategy, mural programme, winter lighting programme, footfall counters and other initiatives being continued from the first CCS 2014-18
- (xvi) **Retail Capacity Study:** currently in development, the new CCS 2024-30 will consider the recommendations of this study for the future retail footprint in Glasgow city centre and any additional measures required to deliver them

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- (xvii) **Wellbeing Economy:** all CCS projects will consider how they can support or enable the wellbeing economy, whether through procurement strategy or other means
- (xviii) **Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES):** exploring the scope for district heating and energy reduction measures across city centre infrastructure and assets

### 4.3 Governance

- 4.3.1 The City Centre Task Force is currently the main strategic body with oversight over City Centre Strategy. It has evolved into a large grouping, comprising Council officers, Ward 10 members, and a number of private sector representatives. Work is currently ongoing to revise the structure to a “hub and spoke” model with a smaller group into which a number of thematic sub-groups will report.
- 4.3.2 While the new CCS 2024-30 will not go live until April 2024, it is envisaged that part of the new governance structure is established in late 2023. This is likely to include two key sub-groups: Transport, and Evening/Night-Time Economy. Work is currently ongoing to develop these structures and a full update on the governance for the strategy period will be reported back to committee on completion of the public consultation, alongside the final CCS 2024-30.
- 4.3.3 The approved Priority Actions for the CCS 2024-30 will underpin the Council’s city centre workplan and progress will be reported annually to Environment, Housing, Transport and Regeneration Committee. Where individual projects justify it, separate reports will be also brought to this committee for consideration.

## 5 FUNDING

- 5.1 Over the last five years the city centre has benefited from significant public sector investment of over £200m including via City Deal, Sustrans, Levelling Up, Innovation Accelerator, and other funds. Over the period of this new City Centre Strategy, funds of over £120m are committed to the Avenues Programme, investment in Clyde Waterfront, and George Square’s redevelopment.
- 5.2 The pipeline of development outlined in the CCS 2024-30 also illustrates the private investment flowing into the city centre. While some sectors continue to face significant economic pressures, many are adapting with developers keen to deliver high quality commercial outcomes and bringing substantial investment to the city. The private sector will be critical to the delivery of the city centre vision over the coming years, not least due to their stake in property and site ownership, and the CCS will continue to promote a collaborative and partnership-focused approach to city centre regeneration.
- 5.3 To support the phase 1 City Centre Strategy 2014-19, the Council allocated a capital fund of £6.3m to support direct intervention and to lever in other sources of funding to support improvements within the city centre. It is estimated that a fund of up to £5m will be required to support the updated, seven-year strategy.

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## 6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the public consultation commences following City Administration Committee approval, for a six-week period from 20 October 2023. The objective of the public consultation is to assess the level of support for the strategic approach and Priority Actions. 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 3 December and thereafter the action plan will be finalised and brought back to this committee for consideration, along with the consultation findings. The CCS 2024-30 will then be submitted to City Administration Committee for formal approval, in early 2024.
- 6.3 The CCS 2024-30 will go live on 1 April 2024.

## 7 POLICY AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

### Resource Implications:

Financial: As set out in Section 5. The additional capital funding will be built into future capital planning budgets.

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

Personnel: None.

Procurement: Procurement resources will be required to progress individual contracts and related project activity

**Council Strategic Plan:** The CCS cuts across many areas of service and embeds many of the council's missions and commitments.

**Grand Challenge One** – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.

Mission 3: Improve the health and well being of our local communities.

**Grand Challenge Two** – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.

Mission 1: Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work.

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Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy.

**Grand Challenge Three** – Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow.

Mission 1: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned to the city region.

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 as the strategy develops. The EQIA has also informed and supported the planned public consultation process.

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

Theme 2: Just and Inclusive Place

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support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	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	No
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out.	NA

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the contents of the report;
- (ii) Note the request for additional capital funding of up to £5m
- (iii) Note that this report will be submitted to City Administration Committee on 12 October 2023 for approval to proceed to public consultation;
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**Enclosures:** Link to [City Centre Strategy 2024-2030](#)

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