



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

Item 5

26th September 2023

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

Contact: Carol Connolly

**UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S ASPIRATIONS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF
THE M8 ON GLASGOW CITY CENTRE**

Purpose of Report:

- Provide background and an update on the Council's aspirations to reduce the impact of the M8 corridor on Glasgow City Centre

Recommendations:

It is recommended the Committee notes the contents of this report.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide: ✓

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

1 Background and issues

- 1.1 The M8 motorway is the busiest motorway in Scotland. It connects Glasgow to the west and north-west of Scotland and to Edinburgh and the east of Scotland. The motorway is owned, operated and maintained by Transport Scotland so any changes need to be undertaken and approved by Transport Scotland.
- 1.2 Part of the M8 motorway runs through the centre of Glasgow, separating the City Centre from the north and west of the city. This barrier creates a negative impact on the City Centre as a place, in terms of community severance, pollution, noise and blight of adjacent land. The M8 reduces the number of available crossing points for active travel and these are often very car-centric.
- 1.3 The Council clearly recognises these issues and the recently opened Sighthill Bridge provides an example of how the impact can be directly reduced. Other schemes are ongoing which aim to reduce the impact of the M8 at a local level, such as Connecting Woodside.
- 1.4 It should also be recognised that the M8 serves the city strategically, both in the movement of people and goods, and in some stretches may act to remove trips from the local road network. The Council has expressed a desire however to explore ways to reduce the impact of the M8 on the city centre in the short, medium and long term.

2 Policy

- 2.1 The issues around the M8 have been well documented and captured in our core policy documents.
- 2.2 Glasgow City Council's [Strategic Plan 2022 to 2027](#) puts the challenges and aspirations of Glasgow's people and communities at the heart of Council decisions. The Strategic Plan sets out a Grand Challenge to "Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow". Mission 1 of this Grand Challenge is to "deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned with the city region".
- 2.3 An action identified as part of this mission is to "commission research on and explore options to reduce the impact of the M8 on the city centre, and review opportunities to re-engineer other road infrastructure to become more people friendly including options for long-term replacement". This commitment was reinforced by a Motion at Full Council Committee meeting on Thursday 30th March 2023.
- 2.4 The [Glasgow City Centre Strategic Development Framework](#), approved in May 2021, sets out a vision for a "vibrant, inclusive, sustainable and liveable" city centre by 2050. One of the priority issues identified to help realise this vision is to "address the negative impacts of the M8 corridor".
- 2.5 To guide forthcoming physical, social and economic regeneration and development in the City Centre nine District Regeneration Frameworks (DRFs)

have been produced. The impact of the M8 is referenced in a number of these and sets out the cities aspiration to transform the motorway corridor to reduce severance and pollution, restore connections between neighbourhoods and enable development adjacent to, under and over the M8. The DRF's also highlight opportunities to make better use of vacant space around the M8 to integrate into the city fabric, which presents a great opportunity to improve this part of the city.

- 2.6 The [Glasgow City Centre Transport Plan \(CCTP\)](#), developed to align closely with wider strategies, contains transport interventions that look to address the role, traffic volumes and relationship of the M8 motorway to the City Centre.
- 2.7 In October 2021 a [petition](#) was also lodged to the Scottish Parliament to “investigate options for removing and reducing the impact of the central Glasgow section of the M8”. The petition called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to commission an independent feasibility study to investigate scenarios for reducing the impact of the M8 between the M74 and Glasgow Cathedral including, specifically, complete removal and repurposing of the land. The petition is currently under consideration and the petitions commission would welcome further discussion on the topic once possible options have been developed.

3 Progress

- 3.1 In March 2023, a formal request was made in writing on behalf of Glasgow City Council by the City Convener for Climate, Glasgow Green Deal, Transport and City Centre Recovery to the Transport Minister, to begin engagement with the Scottish Government at both political and officer level on the scoping of actions to rethink the role of the M8 motorway, including its relationship with Glasgow City Centre.
- 3.2 This correspondence sought engagement with the Scottish Government on the future of the city centre stretch of the M8 over the short, medium and long term. In the shorter term, Glasgow City Council are seeking dialogue and consideration of the following:
 - Exploration of mitigations which could be introduced to address carbon emissions and air pollution arising from the M8, including the provision of green infrastructure such as green walls and barriers in the M8's immediate vicinity;
 - Support for intensification of air quality monitoring for the city centre M8 corridor;
 - Scottish Government participation in, and funding support for, research to explore M8 with alternative and more people-friendly roads infrastructure in its place, with such research possibly involving academic input and/or civic society expertise;
 - Early engagement with Glasgow City Council officers on our various regeneration frameworks and plans for the areas surrounding the city centre stretch of the M8, including active identification and progression of opportunities to improve cross-connectivity by walking, wheeling and cycling;

- Trialling a lower mandatory speed limit on the city centre stretch of the M8 to address amenity impacts including noise and air pollution
- 3.3 Over the medium term, Glasgow City Council is seeking to explore:
- Potential rationalisation of junctions and sliproads, some of which may be over-engineered, in order to reduce the impact of the motorway on surrounding communities;
 - Commencement of detailed transport modelling on options for the future of the M8, including exploration of opportunities to re-engineer and downgrade the city centre stretch of the motorway to a lower-speed boulevard-style road with active uses alongside;
 - Transport Scotland support for development of Glasgow City Council's proposed M8 garden cap project at Charing Cross, including consideration of funding opportunities and models, as part of a wider set of medium-term interventions to mitigate the impact of the M8 on the city centre;
 - Transport Scotland support for transport modelling, business case development and identification of funding opportunities for the transformation of existing heavy roads infrastructure in Glasgow such as at Shieldhall and the Clydeside Expressway;
- 3.4 Over the longer term, Glasgow City Council is seeking:
- Subject to the outcome of early research and more detailed business case and transport modelling outputs, re-engineering and/or replacement of city centre stretch of the M8 with an alternative, lower-speed non-motorway road in its place which can better contribute to Glasgow's placemaking, regeneration and sustainable transport objectives
- 3.5 It is recognised that a radical re-engineering of city centre motorway infrastructure is a longer-term prospect that would likely lie beyond the timeframe of the existing Glasgow Transport Strategy. However, the Council's position is to help facilitate a discussion on this vision now, to encourage the major feasibility, modelling and business case development work that would likely be required for such a transformation to take place in the interim, and to identify early actions to reduce the impact of the M8 on the city centre.
- 3.6 In May 2023, Glasgow City Council received a formal response to this request from the then Minister for Transport, Kevin Stewart, which recognised the Council's aspirations for the future of the city centre and the stretch of the M8 motorway adjacent. The Minister acknowledged the stated aims of the proposal for the M8 and the scale of the challenge as well as the potential benefits in carrying out interventions. The Minister for Transport expressed his support for Scottish Government officials to have initial discussions with the Council on the potential shared benefits and impacts of the specific points raised.
- 3.7 A meeting between Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland officers to discuss aspirations for the M8 was held on Wednesday 23rd August 2023. This was a positive discussion, with alignment of aspirations to reduce car vehicle kilometres. Within this there was recognition of the desire to re-mode, reduce, re-route or re-time traffic that use the M8 over the long-term. It was also agreed that research and evidence gathering was required however, to fully understand

the problem and the nature of journeys being made currently on the M8, including by businesses.

- 3.8 Transport Scotland indicated that some of the issues raised by Glasgow City Council on the M8 could be explored via the Business Case work for the Strategic Transport Strategic Review (STPR2) project recommendation 14 on Managed Motorways. This Review provides an overview of transport investment, mainly infrastructure and other behaviour change recommendations, that are required to deliver the National Transport Strategy priorities and objectives. It is a 20 year plan and does not specifically include any recommendations on the M8 as per the Glasgow City Council aspiration, though there was agreement this work could be explored via STPR2 intervention 14 Managed Motorways.
- 3.9 The issues around requests for greening, a reduced speed limit and opportunities for joint working were all noted and Transport Scotland agreed to come back on these requests in due course.
- 3.10 It has been noted that there is academic interest around re-purposing of the M8 and discussions took place at the meeting on how this could be properly captured and utilised in any evidence gathering. A meeting is planned with academics who have approached Glasgow City Council on this topic, involving both Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland.
- 3.11 It was agreed to hold an annual progress meeting between senior Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland Officers to discuss updates around the M8, over and above any interim discussions on actions above.
- 3.12 Following discussion within Glasgow City Council officers, it is proposed that an Action Plan for short, medium and long term aspirations should be prepared to cover all the Council's projects that interact with the M8 between junctions 15 and 22, clearly identifying the role of Transport Scotland in these interventions to help facilitate collaboration and progress.

4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	There is currently no budget or funding allocated for this project.
<i>Legal:</i>	No new legal issues / implications, though it should be noted Transport Scotland have legal responsibility for the M8.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Early engagement and workstreams progressing however consideration will need to be given to staffing requirements to support any longer term workplan.
<i>Procurement:</i>	

Any external resources will be procured through the Scotland Excel Framework.

Council Strategic Plan: The following Strategic Plan outcomes are supported:

- Commission research on and explore options to reduce the impact of the M8 on the city centre, and review opportunities to re-engineer other road infrastructure to become more people-friendly including options for long-term replacement. **Grand Challenge 3, Mission 1**
- Via the implementation of the Glasgow Transport Strategy Policy Framework, work to reduce car vehicle kilometres travelled in the city by at least 30 per cent by 2030. **Grand Challenge 3, Mission 1**

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

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

Generally supportive of the stated outcomes.

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

At this stage no EqIA screening has been undertaken to determine the potential equality impacts.

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

Improving opportunities for access to sustainable and/or active travel and enhancing local environments through improving conditions for cycling/walking can help address barriers to social mobility, improve access to services and employment opportunities, and can help to address problems of physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Climate Impacts:

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

Glasgow City Council has committed to a goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions in the city by 2030 in its collaborative Climate Plan. This Plan recognizes transport emissions are the biggest challenge for the city.

What are the potential climate impacts as a

Improvements along the M8 corridor can provide a positive impact on the climate by

result of this proposal?

enabling and encouraging alternative modes of travelling to and from Glasgow City Centre as well as reduce emissions.

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

Improvements along the M8 corridor will contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target. To promote low carbon movement of people and goods in a resilient transport system that can adapt sustainably in future.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

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

No

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report.