



Glasgow City Council

Economy, Housing, Transport and
Regeneration City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,
Regeneration and Sustainability

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Item 5

30th May 2023

A VISION AND PLAN FOR THE GOLDEN Z

Purpose of Report:

To inform Elected Members of the proposed new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z and update on the process to produce it.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the key messages and recommendations of the proposed new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z
2. Note the intention to seek approval from the City Administration Committee for the proposed Vision and Plan for the Golden Z.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On [27th September 2022](#) Members of the Neighborhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy Committee received a report on the City Centre Recovery Plan 2022-24 and the City Centre Strategic Development Framework (SDF). The report highlighted a number of projects being progressed with Scottish Government Recovery Funding, overseen by the City Centre Task Force. A further update on the City Centre Recovery Plan was considered by this Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration Policy Committee on [18th April 2023](#).
- 1.2 On [7th March 2023](#), Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration Policy Committee considered a report on the Property Repurposing Action Plan for the City Centre. This followed consideration, on [15th November 2022](#) by Neighborhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy Committee, on two research reports on the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on key property sectors and the city centre economy. This research was commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the City Centre Taskforce and formed the evidence base for the Repurposing Action Plan.
- 1.3 Critical to the delivery of the SDF and the Property Repurposing Action Plan, Glasgow City Council committed to the development of a new 'Vision and Plan for the Golden Z'.
- 1.4 In response, the new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z seeks to explore the specific post pandemic challenges and opportunities of the centre's key iconic streets. It seeks to define a renewed development direction that addresses areas affected and maximises its considerable potential to ensure it continues to thrive into the future.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The covid pandemic rapidly accelerated pre-existing trends that were already altering the physical fabric of city centres across the UK. Changing investor and occupier demands, and digital/technological advances have resulted in a significant vacancy issue for Glasgow city centre. This, combined with the impacts of the pandemic and the need to overhaul urban environments to respond to the climate and ecological emergency, means that it is critical for city centres to refocus.
- 2.2 Lingering post-pandemic behaviour changes in the way we work, shop and travel and ongoing economic pressures highlight the need for 'planned intervention' and collaboration to successfully manage structural changes. The SDF emphasizes that if the city centre is to be vibrant in future, it must restructure and diversify its offer to ensure greater activity. It must grow its resident population, increase its cultural and leisure attractions, satisfy changing property needs and 'green the grey' to create world class public space. The 'Vision and Plan for the Golden Z' progresses the SDF action to explore how the retail core can "*diversify its experiential offer.*"

- 2.3 The Vision and Plan also takes forward a key recommendation of the [‘Glasgow City Centre Property Market Recovery and Support Interventions’](#), report by Ryden, that underpins the evidence base for the Council’s City Centre Property Repurposing Plan, mentioned above and approved by Committee on [23rd March 2023](#). Ryden’s report, for the City Centre Task Force, proposes, *“a new masterplan for the former Golden Z”* stating that *“this is a generational ‘golden’ opportunity to reassert the City Centre’s apex commercial role, while supporting the transition to a more diverse mix and loveable City Centre sought by all strategies”*
- 2.4 The new Vision and Plan aims to establish a renewed regeneration direction for the Golden Z, that will provide clarity and confidence to investors, developers, residents and businesses going forward. It will allow for the coordinated consideration of key issues, such as retail space contraction, repurposing of vacant land/buildings and growing City Centre living, alongside the potential contribution of significant regeneration proposals, such as those for St Enoch and Buchanan Galleries. It seeks to identify priorities for intervention and investment, by both the public and private sectors, that will support recovery and longer term resilience.

3. THE VISION AND PLAN PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- 3.1. A project brief was prepared by NRS Planning Services for the production of the new Vision and Plan, which requires three key outputs:
- (i) **An overarching Vision and Plan** that provides a clear picture of what a vibrant, sustainable and successful Golden Z of the future will look, feel and be like. This should include Buchanan, Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets and key adjoining streets and lanes, such as Gordon Street, Royal Exchange Square, Ingram Street, Mitchell Lane and Princes Square environs. While not directly on the Z, Union Street and Queen Street (defined as Primary Retail Streets in the City Development Plan) are of key importance and their contribution should be explored;
 - (ii) **Development Options for 3 ‘Areas of Focus’** on Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets that are experiencing a concentration of vacancies and offer redevelopment potential. Options should explore ways to overcome barriers to redevelopment, seek to repurpose vacant land/buildings and consider meanwhile uses; and
 - (iii) **A Delivery Plan** that outlines how all stakeholders can play a part in delivering the vision.
- 3.2. Importantly, the brief requires stakeholders (landowners, businesses, institutions, agencies, residents, visitors), to be engaged in a collaborative process to reimagine the future of the ‘Golden Z’ and co-design the ambitious new Vision and Plan, in order to unlock new opportunities and enable their coordinated delivery.
- 3.3 Overall, the new Vision and Plan is required to provide:

- A shared vision and statement of intent on future development direction
- A coordinated and proactive response to key issues affecting the core
- A clear spatial representation of the trajectory of change and opportunities to harness
- Priorities for intervention and investment, for recovery and future resilience
- an assessment of planning policy and a recommended future policy direction
- Creative approaches to delivery to realise the potential of the Golden Z

4. PROJECT TEAM & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Following a procurement process, NRS Planning Services appointed a consultant team in November 2022 comprising Stantec (UK), Threesixty Architecture and Kevin Murray Associates. The consultants are all Glasgow based with offices in or on the edge of the Golden Z.

4.2 Kevin Murray Associates led the stakeholder engagement which sought to capture a range of perspectives and intelligence around change and ideas for the future. Particular events included:

- Two Initial stakeholder workshops – on 5th December – to capture initial issues and ideas from a mix of participants.
- Youth workshop – 18th January - exploring youth specific perspective on Z and its offer
- Public ideas day – 24th January - a wider drop in day to capture those unable to make workshops
- Areas of Focus workshop – 2nd February – to explore further development options for buildings and spaces across the Golden Z
- A number of one-to-one meetings with owners, developers, agencies to capture further detail on interests, aspirations and issues.
- A video and questionnaire were made available on the Council website at www.glasgow.gov.uk/goldenZ
- A Golden Z focused Glasgow Urban Design Panel – 23rd February
- A delivery-focused round table – 9th March – to illicit further ideas on unlocking development potential

4.3 Details of stakeholder events and the key issues and ideas contributed can be found in reports on the website at www.glasgow.gov.uk/goldenZ However, key elements include:

- Need for a diversity of uses, beyond retail, to bring people in at different parts of the day and week
- Need for resident population and ‘liveable’ city fabric – walkable streets, more green spaces, community facilities and services
- Linked is the potential of greater cultural activity and events – potential Sauchiehall ‘cultural quarter’ of creative institutions
- Reinforce strong sense of character and identity – celebrate great heritage and place assets
- For young people –desire for affordable leisure activities, greater beautification and tackling of vacant areas prone to antisocial activity

- Need for improved accessibility – bus, rail, stronger cycle network, taxis at night
- Improvement and greening of public realm critical to attract people and allow dwell time
- Needs stronger ‘customer focussed’ place management, to align place improvements, cleansing and operational management with customer needs
- Should explore a public-private-third sector partnership approach to place stewardship and management in order to share and maximise the available resource,
- Given the scale of change, touching on all sectors, stakeholders felt a greater need for collaboration and contribution by all, with the Council providing a crucial enabling role.

5. THE VISION AND PLAN KEY MESSAGES

5.1 The key propositions of the Vision and Plan for the Golden Z are outlined in a [Summary Document](#). The Vision begins with a reflection on the evolution of the Golden Z as a place and highlights its importance as a part of the communal identity, and so wellbeing, of Glasgow’s citizens. It notes how the future Golden Z will aim to be more inclusive, to better serve all its users, and that the *“future success of the Golden Z will be measured against how welcoming, comfortable and accessible it is for everyone.”*

5.2 The main body of the Vision and Plan is structured around six themes:

- (i) **Balanced** - considers the range and balance of uses now and in future across the various streets. It supports the concentration of retail uses on the prime spine of Buchanan Street and a concentrated Z, complemented by a greater diversity of uses, particularly on adjoining streets.
- (ii) **Legible** - analyses how we move around the core of the city and how the future Golden Z, as the recognised spine of how we navigate the centre can contribute to more sustainable travel, increased permeability and ‘celebration’ and enhancement of connected urban spaces.
- (iii) **Living** - explores the important role the Golden Z can play in delivering the Council’s City Centre Living Strategy ambitions to significantly repopulate the city centre. It considers opportunities to create new homes of various tenures and formats, including affordable, family, student and later living homes. It demonstrates the opportunity for new and repurposed buildings and upper floors, and the need to provide centrally located community facilities and services to enable their development
- (iv) **Working** - responds to changing demands for new, including agile, office space and highlights the opportunities around the Z to create

new workspace, building on recent successes (such as McLellan Works). Nurturing links with educational institutions is also explored.

(v) **Vibrant** - reinforces the strong cultural offer in and around the Golden Z and explores how cultural attractions and institutions can be better integrated along this spine for the leisure economy. It recognises the importance of a vibrant and safe city centre providing culture, music, bars and restaurants that underpin the city's economy particularly at weekends and strengthens this role as an attractive day and evening destination.

(vi) **Responsible** – looks at how the Golden Z can progress the city's response to the climate emergency; in achieving carbon neutrality, increasing density, property repurposing, greening the grey and in ensuring the city core is accessible, safe and welcoming for all.

- 5.3 The Vision goes on to outline future development options for the three 'areas of focus'. It applies the principles and findings from the preceding sections and presents multiple options that demonstrate the positive impact the development of each area could have locally, and combined, on the whole Golden Z.
- 5.4 The final section is the Delivery Plan, which contains a summary of the actions to deliver the recommendations of the Vision many of which are recurring themes.
- 5.5 The delivery narrative highlights the urgency in tackling issues of blight, including vacant land and buildings and those in a poor state of repair. As such, it recommends the Council explore the use of its statutory enforcement powers to lead the way in resolving such issues.
- 5.6 Further emphasis is placed on the need for ongoing collaboration across the sectors and with all stakeholders, to collectively realise the potential for the Golden Z. The Council cannot tackle all of the issues alone, but has a key role in enabling and coordinating action and leveraging efforts for joined up regeneration.
- 5.7 Crucially, many of the actions cross refer and reinforce those contained in other Council strategies and actions plans, such as the City Centre Living Strategy, City Centre Transport Plan, City Centre SDF, District Regeneration Frameworks and more recently, and notably, the Property Repurposing Action Plan. The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z enacts the recommendations of the City Centre Task Force to provide a concerted focus on addressing the issues of the retail core and consider how these various actions meet place, namely what they mean for ensuring the successful future of the Golden Z.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 It is envisaged that a 'launch' event of the Vision and Plan will be held in order to feed back to participants the key messages of the Vision and continue the valuable collaborative dialogue with stakeholders around its delivery.
- 6.2 NRS Planning Services will in 2023/24 commence the preparation of Supplementary Guidance to the City Development Plan (CDP), to enshrine elements of the Vision in planning policy in advance of the CDP's full review.
- 6.3 It is proposed to report the Vision and Plan to the City Administration Committee on 15th June 2023 for approval. The full Vision and Plan detailed document plus appendices will then be available on the Council's website.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no immediate financial implications from this Vision and Plan for the Golden Z. However, the action programme will give rise to future projects that will be costed and will seek external funding where they contribute to strategic objectives. The Vision and Plan highlights that public sector finance should leverage additional private sector investment.

Legal: There are no immediate requirements associated with the production of the Vision and Plan document. Legal resources will be required to progress individual projects in the action plan and requirements will be assessed as these projects are developed.

Personnel: None

Procurement: Procurement requirements will be assessed as individual projects are developed.

Council Strategic Plan: The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z sets out priorities and actions in support of the following Grand Challenges and Missions:

Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities:

Mission 3 – Improve the health and wellbeing

of our local communities.

Mission 4 - Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant

Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens:

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

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

Grand Challenge 3 – 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

Mission 2 - Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

Grand Challenge 4 – Deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities:

Mission 1 – Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods.

Mission 2 - Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

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

Yes. The new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z promotes an ethos of inclusive placemaking that seeks to improve the lives of all citizens in line with the aims of the City Development Plan. An EQIA Screening Report was prepared for the City Development Plan in 2017 for which no significant negative impacts were identified.

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

It is envisaged that the Vision and Plan for the Golden Z will have a positive impact on equality, in seeing to make the city centre a more inclusive place. This can be addressed in more detail as the Action Plan is taken forward.

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

The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z seeks to deliver inclusive economic growth, improving access to opportunities for all citizens.

Climate Impacts:

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

The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z promotes the concept of sustainable urban development, promoting opportunities for building reuse and repurposing, active travel, increased biodiversity and urban greening, and is being developed to take cognisance of furthering the city's response to the climate and ecological emergency. The following actions are supported: 9, 10, 29, 36, 37, 39, 40, 51, 56 & 59.

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

The potential positive impacts of projects emerging from the Vision and Plan are on carbon reduction, increases in active travel, biodiversity, and green spaces and support for circular economy.

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

The Vision and Plan for the Golden Z has the potential to contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target by a supporting a sustainable urban form that includes 20-minute neighbourhoods, promoting active travel, building repurposing and sustainable densification.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

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

There are no immediate data protection impacts as a result of this report. Consultation processes were carried out in accordance with data protection policies and legislation. Further DPIAs will be completed as required for individual projects.

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

(i) Consider the key messages and recommendations of the proposed new Vision and Plan for the Golden Z; and

(ii) Note the intention to seek approval from the City Administration Committee for the proposed Vision and Plan for the Golden Z.