



Glasgow City Council
City Administration Committee

Item 5

28th November 2019

Report by Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of the Council and
City Convener for Inclusive Economic Growth

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GLASGOW CITY CENTRE LIVING STRATEGY: VISION TO 2035 (DRAFT)

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress made with the draft City Centre Living Strategy, and to note the proposed timetable for the public consultation process.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) considers the contents of the report;
- (ii) approves the proposal to commence public consultation on the draft *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035*, for ten weeks from Friday, 6 December;
- (iii) agrees that the outcome of the public consultation and the final report should be brought back to City Administration Committee for consideration in early 2020; and
- (iv) notes that the CCLS; Vision 2035 shall be used to inform the development of planning guidance and policy including the City Centre Strategic Development Framework and any subsequent iterations.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the *Glasgow City Centre Strategy 2014-19* (CCS 2014-19) was approved in 2013 with an ambitious 55 actions aimed at attracting investment, development and footfall. These actions ranged from large-scale sector/area strategies and frameworks that each comprised a number of sub-projects, plans and policies, to smaller-scale initiatives that targeted specific thematic issues.
- 1.2 One key issue identified at an early stage of the CCS 2014-19 was the need to increase Glasgow city centre's residential population. Population density is deemed increasingly important in a sustainable city centre. It creates efficiencies with public services and generates demand for local goods and services. Glasgow appears to lag behind other cities in respect of population density (beyond the student population), with comparator city centres pushing ahead in terms of relative growth. More recent trends in planning activity do however suggest that this tide has been reversed, with significant uplift in investor interest and planning approvals in the private rented sector.
- 1.3 In addition, as the retail sector in general has undergone massive structural dislocation since the late 2000s, town and city centres have had to adapt to the shifts in investor and consumer demand and the corresponding impact of this on high streets. New uses have to be found for redundant floorspace formerly in high demand for retail, and residential development offers a useful opportunity to repurpose property. Local authorities also increasingly see the benefit of combining retail and leisure economies in terms of driving and sustaining consumer demand. In short, a successful 21st century city centre must have a mixed economy that does not rely on any one sector.
- 1.4 In response to this, the CCS 2014-19 had a specific objective focused on "*the centre to stay and live*". This proposed measures:
 - (i) To grow the residential population, ensuring an adequate level of supporting infrastructure
 - (ii) To encourage new developments and the conversion of vacant properties into residential spaces, to attract a variety of residents including professionals, families, down-sizers and students
 - (iii) To provide appropriate services such as schools and open spaces
 - (iv) Greening the city through the provision of quality landscaping and environments is a fundamental objective of the CCS, and is being made a reality through the provision of City Deal funding for the Glasgow City Centre Avenues Programme
- 1.5 Market analysis and engagement has since been undertaken to fully understand the issues, opportunities and implications for the city centre if a proactive population growth strategy is introduced in Glasgow. The outcome of this work is the draft *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035*, which has identified six strategic objectives to deliver the overarching growth vision over the next fifteen years.

- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to outline the process to date, the headlines of the draft *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035*, and to confirm the process for public consultation and next steps.
- 1.7 It is noted that a version of this report was approved by Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy Committee on 19 November 2019.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Glasgow city centre has not traditionally been a centre for residential growth. The 2011 Census identified approximately 20,000 people living in the related datazones – a low figure in the context of the wider city population and comparator city analysis. The Centre for Cities has reported that the number of 22-29 year olds living in large city centres nearly tripled over 2000-2011, as young, single, highly educated “millennials” opted to settle in urban areas. In UK terms, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham are leading the way in terms of city centre growth.
- 2.2 However the general trend of the CCS 2014-19 has moved increasingly towards the support of interventions that contribute towards a more mixed-use city centre. Glasgow’s City Development Plan emphasises the importance of enhancing the city’s compact form to increase the built environment and population densities, and by extension, to generate the economic, environmental and social sustainability benefits that can be gained from the concentration of urban functions.
- 2.3 The general atmosphere, vibrancy, physical environment, connectivity, and accessibility to leisure facilities are all important factors in attracting a wide demographic to live in an urban centre. Glasgow city centre offers many advantages in these areas, but equally there are a number of challenges impacting on residential development demand and supply – not least that around one-quarter of properties in Glasgow city centre were built before 1945, and there is a high proportion of listed buildings which can be difficult and expensive to convert.

3. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

- 3.1 Following the First Minister’s declaration of a global climate emergency in April 2019, the Scottish Government committed to ambitious targets in respect of carbon reduction. Scotland remains the only country to have set statutory annual targets to reduce emissions and was the first to include a fair share of the emissions from international aviation and shipping in its targets.
- 3.2 Glasgow City Council subsequently issued a report with a range of recommendations on climate emergency. In relation to the *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035*, the action plan recognises the critical nature of climate change and the related new considerations that must be embedded into public policy, through a specific action focused on *Climate Emergency Response*.

3.3 This action will involve an initial assessment of opportunities to respond to the Climate Emergency through this strategy, working through a collaborative network, as proposed by the Climate Emergency Working Group, to establish relevant collective solutions and strategies. Thereafter an action plan will be established for the *City Centre Living Strategy* with targeted interventions, which are likely to coalesce around actions that, for example:

- Enable the reuse of buildings;
- Establish measures that promote and incentivise district heating systems, where feasible, in major new housing developments and in renewal or refurbishment projects;
- Support the Avenues public realm programme and other sister City Centre Strategy projects that incorporate green infrastructure and active travel infrastructure, electric vehicle infrastructure, and smart infrastructure;
- Deliver resilient city centre neighbourhoods by working in partnership with local communities and organisations;
- Develop policies which support the vision for a low carbon city and guide proposals and planning decisions that help our city respond to the climate challenge.

4. DEVELOPING THE CITY CENTRE LIVING STRATEGY: VISION 2035

4.1 In order to understand the potential opportunity for Glasgow city centre, a comprehensive development process was undertaken to understand the market, local strengths and constraints, supply and demand issues, good practice, policy issues, and targeted local matters such as analysis of the student accommodation sector, and the individual opportunities presented by the nine city centre districts.

4.2 This portfolio was subject of a collaboration with Savills who undertook extensive property market research in five key areas, in addition to managing various stakeholder events in 2017/18, with a further stakeholder review in 2019. This process established a number of key findings:

- (i) **Residential provision:** in Glasgow city centre the research findings highlighted the current lack of residential availability and choice, and the unmet demand
- (ii) **Social housing:** plays an important role in certain districts (Cowcaddens, Garnethill, Trongate and particularly Townhead) and provides attainably priced and secure, if limited, accommodation
- (iii) **Perceptions:** stakeholder events demonstrated that housing in the city centre was perceived to be quite expensive, and they would like to see more variety available in respect of cost and type of property
- (iv) **Planning activity:** the pipeline review indicates that the Merchant City district has the highest demand for all types of residential development (including student), and interest is also high for flatted residential development in the Broomielaw and Sauchiehall districts
- (v) **Demographics:** The areas around the Merchant City and the universities and colleges are demographically quite young with high shares of 18-30

year residents and over-occupation, while the wider city centre sees a broader range of ages and less over-occupation

- (vi) **Infrastructure:** community, social, smart and green infrastructure – is all essential to creating the kind of city centre that will attract a wide demographic
- (vii) **Policy:** this needs to promote the area as a “liveable” city centre and not one just for retail and leisure
- (viii) **Public services:** cleansing and antisocial behaviour issues can have a significant impact on the perception of liveability
- (ix) **Design:** quality in design is critical, and the market suggests that policy makers need to become more comfortable with higher density development
- (x) **Districts:** the nine city centre districts each offer different opportunities and constraints and bespoke plans are required to enable and grow residential investment
- (xi) **Developers:** need and want clarity on local authority priorities and topical issues, such as the fact DRFs will be material considerations, or the city’s position on vertical separation of uses

4.3 The development period has therefore established some critical factors for growing the population in Glasgow city centre. These findings have now been analysed and presented in the draft CCLS which is appended to this report. This is an aspirational strategy with a 15-year timeline to reflect the scale of the challenge.

4.4 This consensus over priorities has enabled the creation of a simple vision statement to guide the overarching framework:

“The City Centre Living Strategy will enable a sustainable, inclusive, diverse and growing population, supported by a physical and policy environment that enables its liveability objectives”.

- 4.5 The vision statement enabled the identification of six key objectives:
- (i) **Population:** to increase the city centre population from its baseline of 20,233 in 2018 to c40,000 by 2035
 - (ii) **Vacant commercial space:** to find productive outcomes for vacant space, with particular focus on upper floors
 - (iii) **Environment:** to provide a quality city centre environment that is cleaner, greener, safer, more sustainable, and better connected, and responsive to climate change
 - (iv) **Quality in design:** to deliver quality in design across all development
 - (v) **Investment:** to offer a responsive, innovative approach to investment opportunities that support this strategy
 - (vi) **Resilient neighbourhoods:** to enable resilient, empowered and socially cohesive neighbourhoods

4.6 A draft action plan has been produced (**Appendix 1**) with actions structured under each of the six strategic objectives. This plan comprises a mix of district-specific interventions, strategies focused on social infrastructure, environmental

improvements and policy actions. The district-specific analysis and an outline of each individual action have been incorporated into the strategy document.

4.8 A link to the full CCLS 2020-35 can be found [here](#).

4.9 For ease of reference, a structure chart has been provided at **Appendix 2** to illustrate where this project sits within the overall strategic framework pertinent to Glasgow city centre.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 It is intended that the CCLS; Vision 2035 will be used to inform the development of planning guidance and policy including the City Centre Strategic Development Framework and any subsequent iterations thereof. This will allow it to be referenced and used in the making of all development decisions in the city centre. Future outputs of the CCLS, for example district-specific strategies, will be incorporated into the planning framework.

6. DELIVERY AND GOVERNANCE

6.1 The CCLS will be absorbed into the governance of the City Centre Strategy 2020-25. This is currently in development and will be brought to committee for consideration in early 2020. In addition to the planned public consultations it is important that there remains a way for stakeholders to be involved as the CCLS is delivered, and as with all CCS activity this will involve an element of ongoing engagement as the work programme rolls out.

6.2 Progress will be reported through the CCS 2020-25 annual reporting process. Where necessary this will identify additional actions to be progressed, should that be required through changes in external circumstances or other factors.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

7.1 Public consultation will commence on 6 December for ten weeks. Interested parties will be able to participate through an online survey, by email and by post. This will be publicised through a range of communications.

7.2 The consultation process will conclude on 14 February 2020 and thereafter the CCLS and Action Plan will be finalised and brought back to City Administration Committee for formal approval.

8. POLICY AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

Financial:

Full delivery of the CCLS as outlined in this report will require additional funding of up to c£600,000 capital which can be met from current capital approvals.

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

Personnel: There are no direct personnel issues.

Procurement: Procurement resources will be required to progress individual contracts and related project activity. CPU will be engaged once the CCLS is approved.

Council Strategic Plan: The CCLS supports the following themes:

- A Thriving Economy, with specific outcomes:
 - A resilient, growing and diverse city economy where businesses thrive;
 - The city and its citizens benefit from inclusive economic growth and are involved in economic decision making through participatory budgeting.

Priorities: 6

- A Vibrant City with specific outcomes:
 - Glasgow is a world class destination for tourism, culture, sport, events and heritage;
 - Glaswegians are active and healthier.

Priorities: 17, 21

- A Sustainable and Low Carbon City with specific outcomes:
 - The city is clean and public spaces are well maintained;
 - We have a low carbon footprint as a council and as a city;
 - We have more sustainable, integrated transport networks across the city, and less congestion;
 - Citizens use active travel, including walking and cycling;

Priorities: 53, 54, 55, 61, 68, 71

- Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhoods with specific outcomes:
 - Citizens' satisfaction with services is maintained or improved.

- Glasgow's housing meets the needs of its growing and diverse population.

Priorities: 74, 76, 83

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

- The project will help deliver Outcome 9 by improving opportunities for physical activity through the increase in active travel opportunities.
- The project will help deliver Outcome 10 by directly engaging with vulnerable user groups during design processes.

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

Positive impact: the project will improve accessibility through improved physical measures

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

The CCLS will help address socio-economic disadvantage through the provision of projects that promote environmental enhancements with inclusive growth at their heart. Specific projects in the action plan will be EQIA-assessed as required.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The CCLS will support the following themes:

A Sustainable and Low Carbon City, specifically the following outcomes:

- The city is clean and public spaces are well maintained;
- We have a low carbon footprint as a council and as a city;
- We have more sustainable, integrated transport networks across the city, and less congestion;
- Citizens use active travel, including walking and cycling.

This includes direct intervention in the following priorities:

- 53: Review the options and feasibility for a new transport body for Glasgow, working in partnership across the Glasgow City

Region, to provide a more connected service for all our citizens and visitors;

- 54: Invest in roads and pavement maintenance, improving conditions, residents' satisfaction and contributing to active travel networks. Ensure community involvement in local decision making about this investment.
- 55: Prioritise sustainable transport across the city.
- 68: Meet our commitments to the national target of ensuring heat, transport and electricity needs are met by renewables by 2030.
- 71: Promote and enhance our city's natural resources including nature reserves and public parks.

Social, including opportunities under Article 20 of the European Public Procurement Directive

- The local community throughout the city centre will benefit from several actions such as the Liveable District Strategies, People First Transport Strategy, Public Realm Strategy, Place Design for a Liveable City, Liveable City Management Strategy, and Student Accommodation: Neighbourhood Management Plan.
- Contracts able to provide supported employment opportunities under Article 19 will be explored as part of the individual projects' development processes.

Economic:

Various actions within the CCLS will benefit local businesses and other organisations especially the improved public realm, connections and waste management strategy; the growth in mixed use and population will in turn support the local economy.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts

None

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) considers the contents of the report;
- (ii) approves the proposal to commence public consultation on the draft *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035*, for ten weeks from Friday, 6 December;

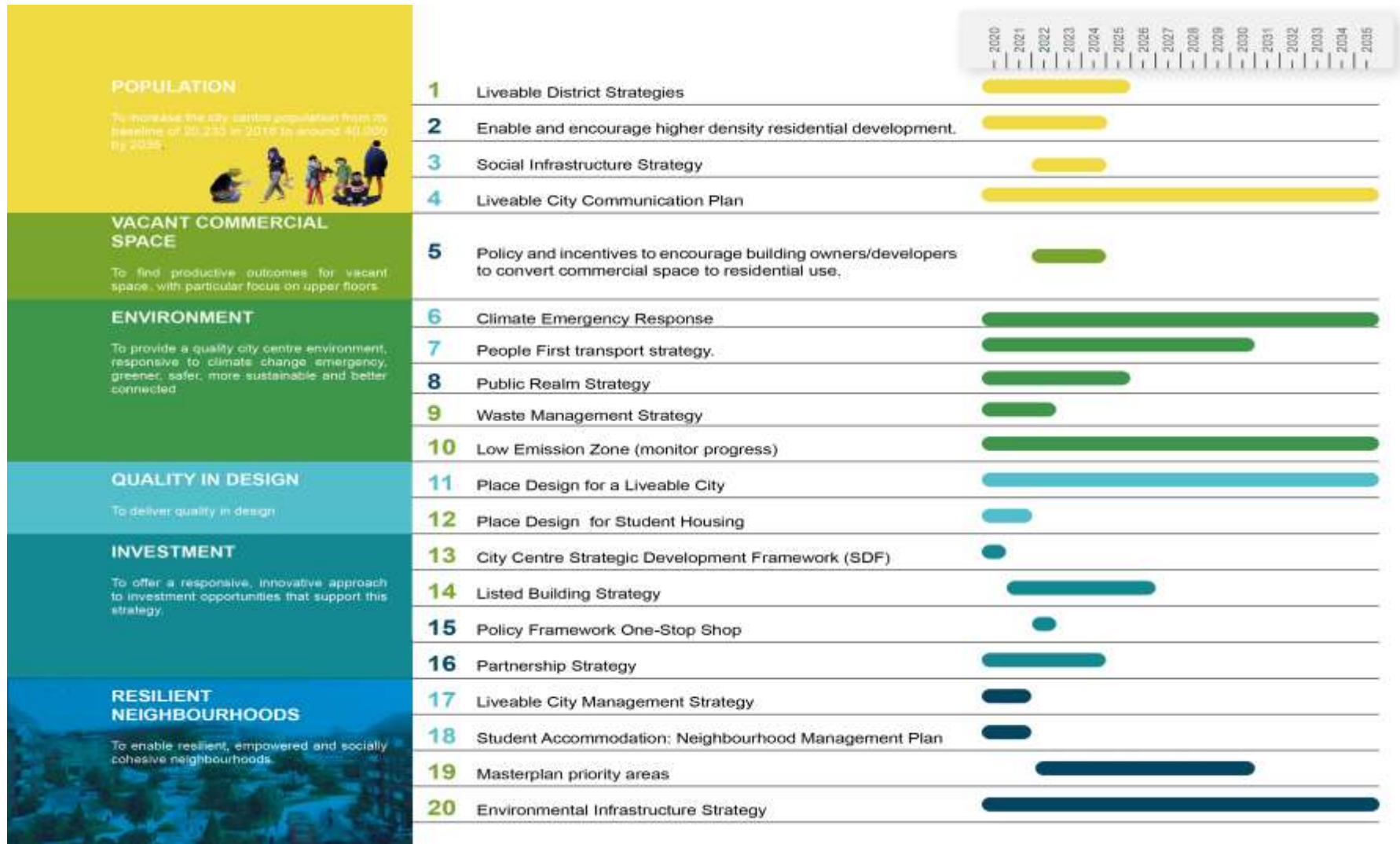
- (iii) agrees that the outcome of the public consultation and the final report should be brought back to City Administration Committee for consideration in early 2020; and
- (iv) notes that the *City Centre Living Strategy: Vision 2035* will become Supplementary Guidance to the City Development Plan after the City Centre Strategic Development Framework has been approved.

JF 01/11/19
DRS 000168-19

Appendix 1: Draft Action Plan

Appendix 2: City Centre Strategic Framework flowchart

Appendix 1: Action Plan



Appendix 2: City Centre Strategic Framework

