



Glasgow City Council

**Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community
and City Engagement City Policy Committee**

**Report by Councillor Allan Casey, Chair of the Glasgow
Begging Strategy Working Group**

Contact: John Foster

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Item 2

4th March 2021

GLASGOW BEGGING STRATEGY

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress made with the draft Glasgow Begging Strategy (GBS) public consultation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Considers the contents of this report.
- (ii) Considers the outcome of the public consultation.
- (iii) Agrees that this report is submitted to the City Administration Committee for formal approval of the Glasgow Begging Strategy.
- (iv) Agrees that progress of the Glasgow Begging Strategy will be reported annually through the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee.

Ward No(s): 10 / ALL

Citywide:

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

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall that the draft Glasgow Begging Strategy (GBS) was previously presented to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and City Engagement City Policy Committee for consideration in March 2020.
- 1.2 At that time, it was anticipated that a further update would be provided in April 2020, when approval would be sought from City Administration Committee (CAC) to proceed to public consultation. However, this process was delayed by the emerging global pandemic until 3rd September 2020¹. Accordingly, CAC approved the draft GBS and its progression to public consultation on 11th September.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the results of the public consultation exercise, prior to seeking final CAC approval (25th March 2021).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As noted in previous reports, many cities in Scotland and across the UK have experienced an increase in begging, with a number of councils exploring options to deter or prevent this activity, including the possibility of enforcement action (to date, the legislation in Scotland has prevented any proactive enforcement activity).
- 2.2 It had been identified that whilst the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board already has a Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care in the City of Glasgow, this strategic framework makes no specific reference to street begging. Furthermore, the visibility of begging in Glasgow city centre has become more prevalent in recent years. Accordingly, the Glasgow City Centre Strategy Board, chaired by the Leader of Glasgow City Council, instructed the development of a city begging strategy in June 2017 through a Short Life Working Group with two key objectives:
 - (i) Establish a begging strategy for Glasgow that recognises the complex issues and involves a multi-disciplinary group of statutory and third sector agencies.
 - (ii) Establish a public awareness campaign to encourage a greater understanding of services available for vulnerable and homeless people and encourage public support for alternative giving.
- 2.3 The Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was established as a multi-partner forum, chaired by Councillor Allan Casey and comprising a wide range of public sector agencies, third sector groups, and private businesses and business networks. A full list of current members is provided in **Appendix A**.
- 2.4 It is noted that the issues associated with street begging may be further affected as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly if economic uncertainty

¹ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNDXDN0GNT2U>

continues with a corresponding impact on employment opportunities. In addition, there may be potentially increased health risks if mitigation measures like social distancing and the use of masks are not sustained in associated environments. While it is too early to properly assess those issues, the Council will be progressing GBS and all linked activities through a process of continuous review to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

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 emergency². The Glasgow Begging Strategy will support these findings, with specific reference to the council priorities which have been highlighted in the report and which relate to aspects of the GBS (e.g. Priorities 38, and 95). It also supports working through a collaborative network, as proposed by the Climate Emergency Working Group, to establish relevant collective solutions and strategies.
- 3.3 This approach recognises the critical nature of climate change and the related new considerations that must be embedded into public policy. Consequently, all activities being undertaken by the Council should reflect the importance given to sustainable initiatives and interventions. This ethos will be followed in respect of the Glasgow Begging Strategy wherever applicable.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Public consultation was undertaken between 11th September and 23 October 2020. The consultation was open to the general public and all stakeholders through the Council's website, and the survey was extensively promoted through the council's social media channels.
- 4.2 The consultation survey was structured according to the themes in the GBS. In total, 182 respondents took part, including a number of written submissions in addition to the online survey. It was noted that this level of response represents an increase on feedback levels received for other consultation exercises conducted in 2020.
- 4.3 The headlines of the consultation outcomes are summarised as follows:
 - (a) 93% of the respondents confirmed that they had read the document, the majority of which agreed that it was:
 - easy to read (73%)

²

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDN0GZLZ3DNDX>

- easy to follow (76%)
 - comprehensive (60%)
- (b) Respondents largely agreed with the three strategic objectives contained within the draft GBS:
- 83% either agreed or strongly agreed with the objective to “support people on the street who are begging”.
 - 92% either agreed or strongly agreed with the objective to “reduce the need for people to have to beg”.
 - 64% either agreed, or strongly agreed with the objective to “provide cash-alternatives for people who wish to support beggars”.
- (c) 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the four Key Projects outlined in the draft GBS will enable the achievement of the project goals.
- (d) **Alternative Giving**
- 60% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Alternative Giving Key Project.
 - 75% thought that the Alternative Giving Key Project was either important or very important.
- (e) **Financial & Digital Inclusion**
- 62% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Financial and Digital Inclusion Key Project.
 - 66% thought that the Financial & Digital Inclusion Key Project was either important or very important.
- (f) **Environmental Strategy**
- 58% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Environmental Strategy Key Project.
 - 71% thought that the Environmental Strategy Key Project was either important or very important.
- (g) **Public Perceptions**
- 65% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Public Perceptions Key Project.
 - 83% thought that the Public Perceptions Key Project was either important or very important.
- (h) In addition to the responses provided to the Likert scale questions, the open-ended questions prompted 245 separate written responses. Given the wide range of opinions presented, these responses have been collated by theme and a summary of the ten most common points raised are presented in the table below:

Public Consultation Feedback		
Rank	Theme	Qty
1	Information campaign to promote	36
2	Associated factors (e.g. organised begging/criminal activity/ASB/non-indigenous groups)	34
3	Approach is too soft	19
4	Concerns of misuse of funds	18
5	More clarity required	14
5	Approach is too harsh	14
7	Flexible approach required	13
7	Access to housing / services	13
7	Implementation concerns	13
10	Resourcing concerns	11

4.4 The Working Group has given consideration to the findings of the consultation exercise and approved changes to the GBS accordingly. Further information about these changes is presented in item 5.3 below.

4.5 A copy of the full Public Consultation Report can be accessed via the link provided in the Enclosures.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The public consultation process has demonstrated support for the proposed GBS and has been helpful in enabling the Working Group to further refine the information contained within the strategy document.

5.2 The written submissions, mainly from organisational stakeholders, were very useful in understanding respective opinions and priorities. GCC has since had further direct discussions with these organisations, and it is hoped that this increased level of engagement will continue as the project develops. Given that there are some areas of shared activity, GCC views this engagement as an opportunity to maximise operational effectiveness and to share best practice.

5.3 In light of the responses received, an FAQ list was felt to be the most effective way to meaningfully respond to the opinions expressed by the general public, and to the specific points raised through the written submissions. This additional section has been inserted into the GBS document in the interests of clarity and transparency.

6. ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 Members will note that a summary five-year Action Plan has been included in the draft GBS. It should be noted that although the draft GBS contains numerous suggestions and options, the Action Plan has been structured around the four Key Projects.
- 6.2 It should also be noted that these actions represent a starting point based on currently available data and resources and it is anticipated that they will continue to develop and evolve over the project's lifetime in line with changing circumstances. It is also hoped that the future success of the Glasgow Begging Strategy will encourage other stakeholders and organisations to become involved, thereby broadening the range of activity for future consideration.
- 6.3 In relation to project delivery, the GBS highlights that it is not solely the Council's responsibility to implement the various actions. The GBS has been developed in collaboration from the beginning of the process, and its implementation will require ongoing participation from relevant stakeholders across the city, including those service providers who have been key members of the Working Group.
- 6.4 Funding is currently in place for all actions either for pilot activity, full delivery, or the development of related projects. However, some funding aspects will require further clarification going forward and these have been identified within the Action Plan. Furthermore, this process will also include exploration of alternative funding sources and delivery mechanisms within the local community and in collaboration with partner organisations. This will be assessed on a project-by-project basis as part of the ongoing development process.
- 6.6 Progress of the Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed in line with accepted best practice and will follow the methodology used for the High Street Area Strategy. This model utilises a quarterly Project Tracker and embedded KPIs to assess the delivery of actions. It is proposed that the GBS will report annually to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE) and this has been captured within the Organisational Structure, as referenced in **Appendix B**.

7. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

Financial: Costs are in place for the delivery of this strategy including the pilot projects of Street Change Glasgow and the Digital and Financial Inclusion Officer. Extending these pilot projects will require additional funding, however, this will only be progressed following an evaluation of those actions.

Legal: There are no immediate legal issues, however, this will be assessed as individual actions / projects are developed.

Personnel: There are no direct personnel issues.

Procurement: The extension of Street Change Glasgow will require more infrastructure being procured to enable participation by a broader business base. The evaluation process will determine procurement options at that stage.

Council Strategic Plan:

Specify which theme(s) and outcome(s) the proposal supports

The project supports the following themes:

- A Healthier City, with specific outcomes:
 - Support service redesign that will result in Glasgow becoming a healthier, empowered city, with early intervention and prevention approaches at the heart of what we do;
 - Deliver the homelessness strategy in partnership with providers, building on the recommendations of the homelessness summit and strengthening the Rough Sleepers' Initiative approach.

Priorities: 38, 46,

- Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhoods:
 - Extend the number of volunteers in Glasgow and record what skills they can offer the city

Priorities: 86

- A Well Governed City that Listens and Responds:
 - Work in partnership with others to deliver the city's ambitions and improve its services and outcomes through third sector organisations and community groups.

Priorities: 95

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22 People begging on the street do not necessarily fall within the protected characteristics groupings. However, the Begging Strategy will support the general principle of Tackling Poverty and Financial Exclusion. Additionally, the Begging Strategy may also provide an opportunity to interface with other relevant equalities-based support networks (e.g. ROMA-NeT and URBACT) and this will be investigated going forward (e.g. in support of Outcome 11).

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? None

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. Yes. People engaged in street begging are usually the most socially and economically disadvantaged amongst us and may come from the most deprived areas of Glasgow. The Glasgow Begging Strategy will look to reduce barriers to accessing services across areas such as Health & Wellbeing, Housing, Education, and Learning Skills & Employment whilst encouraging vulnerable users to access appropriate support services.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: None

Social, including opportunities under Article 20 of the European Public Procurement Directive: None

Economic: None

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: A DPIA is required by law where the processing of personal data is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

The project will not collect personal data except through the provision of contact details of the purposes of community engagement. Permission for any other use, or any ongoing use, will be sought at the point at which contact details are provided.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Considers the contents of this report.
- (ii) Considers the outcome of the public consultation.
- (iii) Agrees that this report is submitted to the City Administration Committee for formal approval of the Glasgow Begging Strategy.
- (iii) Agrees that progress of the Glasgow Begging Strategy will be reported annually through the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee.

JF 23/02/21
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Enclosures:

Appendix A: Glasgow Begging Strategy – SLWG Membership

Appendix B: Glasgow Begging Strategy – Organisational Structure

Link to: [Public Consultation Report](#) – Full Document
[Glasgow Begging Strategy](#) – Full Document

Appendix A: Glasgow Begging Strategy – Working Group Membership

Big Issue

British Transport Police (BTP)

City Centre Retail Association (CCRA)

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP)

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

Glasgow City Council (Chair: Councillor Allan Casey)

Glasgow City Missions

Homeless Network Scotland (formerly Glasgow Homelessness Network)

Marie Trust

National Health Service Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Police Scotland

Simon Community Scotland

Turning Point Scotland

Appendix B: Glasgow Begging Strategy – Organisational Structure

