

REPORT TO: FAIR WORK, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE – 8 JANUARY 2024

REPORT ON: CITY CENTRE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN – UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 7-2024

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of progress made on the City Centre Strategic Investment Plan 2050 following approval of the draft Plan on 31 October 2022. The report also identifies that the Eastern Quarter of the city centre should be the next priority focus area and seeks approval of an initial phase of capital expenditure.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a notes the progress made in implementing of the City Centre Strategic Investment Plan as set out in Appendix 1;
- b agrees that the Eastern Quarter of the city centre, as identified in Appendix 2, should be a focus of activity over the next five years, recognising both the challenges and opportunities in this area;
- c delegates the Executive Director of City Development to procure and consult on masterplan for the Eastern Quarter and pursue external funding to support a long-term programme of investment in this area;
- d approves the next phase of the Commercial Street/Murraygate project to enhance the public realm of the Murraygate area to support future opportunities and address vacancies in the area; and
- e delegates the Head of Design and Property to finalise the Commercial Street/Murraygate project design and to procure the scheme as set out in the report.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost of implementing the Commercial Street/Murraygate project is estimated at around £1,000,000 and will be met from the Capital Plan 2023-2028 City Investment Fund (Build Resilient and Empowered Communities). These streetscape works will be procured through Tayside Contracts in the normal manner. The revenue costs of around £30,000 associated with developing the masterplan will be met from the Scottish Government City Centre Recovery Fund.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Reference is made to Item VI of the meeting of the City Development Committee on 31 October 2022 (Report 290-2022) which approved the draft City Centre Strategic Investment Plan (CCSIP). Its preparation been informed by extensive stakeholder engagement. Following approval of the draft Plan, there was a further opportunity for comment during November and December 2022. Overall, the feedback on the draft Plan was very positive, and following minor amendment in response to comments received, the final Plan was published in June 2023.

4.2 The CCSIP sets out a long-term vision for the future of the city centre. It identifies a variety of proposals for improvement across five key themes. In addition, it sets out radical ideas and

conceptual plans for seven strategic development opportunity sites that have the potential that individually and collectively, will support the positive regeneration of the city centre.

- 4.3 Since the approval of the draft Plan, several reports have been considered by Committee that drive forward the improvements across the five key themes:
- Item VII of the City Development Committee, 31 October 2022 – City Centre Commercial Waste Pilot (Report 289-2022);
 - Item V of the City Development Committee, 5 December 2022 – City Centre Shopfront Improvement Pilot Scheme (Report 322-2022);
 - Item VI of the City Development Committee, 23 January 2023 – CCSIP Commercial Street Enhancement (Report 24-2023);
 - Item IV of the City Development Committee, 6 March 2023 – CCSIP City Lights and City Nights (Report 76-2023);
 - Item VIII of the City Development Committee, 26 June 2023 – Green Transport Hub and Spokes Project (Report 173-2023);
 - Item III of the Neighbourhood Regeneration, Housing and Estate Management Committee, 23 October 2023 – Dundee Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029 (Report 290-2023); and
 - Item II of the Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee, 20 November 2023 – Events Strategy (Report 326-2023).
- 4.4 Appendix 1 to this report summarises the progress that is being made on an extensive range of projects.
- 4.5 Since the Plan was published, efforts have been made to raise awareness of the Council's ambition for the city centre with a wide range of investors and developers, leading to multiple in-person presentations, discussions and site visits. This contributes to the delivery of the Plan's vision, ambitions, strategic outcomes and actions. It is notable that progress is already being made on some of the seven strategic sites identified in the Plan, including Bell Steet Car Park where £14.4m of Levelling Up Funding has been secured to transform the car park into a low-carbon, multi-modal, transport hub; facilitate active travel routes to the north of the city centre; and introduce new public realm landscaping to the adjacent section of Constitution Road; and
- 4.6 As intended, and to build on the current momentum generated, an implementation plan is being prepared to shape the delivery of the Plan's strategic outcomes and actions.
- 4.7 Since the draft Plan was approved, the statutory Development Plan, against which planning decisions are made, has changed following the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 by the Scottish Parliament. This document reaffirms the Town Centre First approach to help centres adapt positively to long-term economic, environmental and societal changes, and encourage town centre living. It seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations that are accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes and provide communities with easy access to the goods, services and recreational opportunities that they need.
- 4.8 Members will be aware that work is currently underway to review the Local Development Plan, which presents an opportunity to bring forward local planning policies and actions that support NPF4 and help to deliver the vision set out in the CCSIP.

- 4.9 Alongside the review of the LDP, it is important to consider what actions can be taken in the short to medium term that will help create a vibrant city centre. There are particular challenges and opportunities in the Eastern Quarter, as illustrated in Appendix 2 that merit focused attention. These include:
- the Murraygate currently has several vacant units in prominent buildings. The relocation of Marks and Spencer during 2024 will have a further impact. It is important that this key street between the Wellgate Centre and the High Street remains vibrant. The upgrading of the public realm in Murraygate, through enhancement of lighting, street furniture as well as improvements to the surface materials will help stimulate interest in vacant units. There is also an opportunity to explore the introduction of planting along Murraygate. Improvement of the physical environment will enhance the prospects of securing economic regeneration of this key street and the wider area;
 - the CCSIP identifies the Wellgate Centre as a potential strategic development opportunity over the 30-year timeframe of the Plan. In addition to considering how the Wellgate Centre may be redeveloped in the longer term, there remains a need to consider measures that support the Centre today, particularly those in the streets surrounding the Wellgate Centre that will be important routes now and in the future. Although there are vacancies within the Centre, it remains an important retail location and is home to the Central Library and the Dundee Jobcentre;
 - the Low Emission Zone and measures to promote active travel present a longer-term opportunity to consider traffic movements within the Eastern Quarter, including the Seagate. Proposed measures will follow a wider review of transportation in the city centre and will consider how to enhance the Seagate as a place for pedestrians and active travel through a reduction in traffic movements; and
 - there are several prominent buildings that are in a poor and deteriorating physical condition, some of which are Listed and are important parts of Dundee's built heritage, including the Kings Theatre. Encouraging the maintenance and reuse of these buildings would make a significant contribution to the delivery of the aims of the CCSIP.
 - the need to enhance the active travel connections into the city centre from areas to the east and north-east. Existing and potential attractions in these areas present an opportunity to increase footfall to help enliven the main shopping, entertainment and recreation spaces in the centre.
- 4.10 In the short term, it is proposed that initial capital works take place in Murraygate to enhance the public realm as an early intervention to address immediate concerns in this area. Concurrently, a longer-term masterplan setting out a range of interventions that respond to the challenges and opportunities in the Eastern Quarter will be developed. These initiatives will acknowledge that, as a UNESCO City of Design, it is vital to use the transformative power of design to improve and redefine the city centre: to create liveable neighbourhoods; enhance education, business and employment opportunities; grow visitor and tourism numbers; improve active travel and transport networks; enhance the built environment; and establish a more sustainable, attractive, and people-oriented place. Appendix 2 includes conceptual images that illustrate the quality of public realm enhancement that will be explored as part of the more detailed master-planning process.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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APPENDIX 1: CITY CENTRE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN PROGRESS OVERVIEW

The following paragraphs provide an update on the key progress made on each of the plan's five themes.

Living Theme

- DCC's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023-2028 acknowledges the importance of the CCSIP, which will inform development opportunities in future years. City centre sites are actively being promoted to Registered Social Landlords.
- Significant housing developments continue to progress towards completion on sites in and around the city centre, including projects at Thorter Loan, Gellatly Street, Murraygate, and Seagate/Trades Lane.
- Purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) projects are progressing on edge of centre sites at Brown Street and Douglas Street. The mixed-use development underway at West Marketgait incorporates student accommodation, and there is a pipeline of approved PBSA applications and pre-application discussions.
- Survey work has concluded on the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023. The city centre sites will form the basis for action and continue to be monitored on an annual basis.
- An exercise to map vacant and underused sites and properties is being progressed to help understand the scale, context and potential for development opportunities.
- DCC has approved its Open Market Housing Acquisition Strategy, which will include city centre properties.

Working Theme

- Significant new-build office accommodation projects are underway within the city centre, including the new mixed-use development at West Marketgait, which is at an advanced stage of development, and the commencement of Grade-A office accommodation on site 6 in the Central Waterfront area. These developments will help meet the demand for high-quality office space and provide further job opportunities in the city centre.
- The vacant to vibrant project with Creative Dundee (HAPWORKS) is progressing, with the aim of creating a pilot project to occupy and animate a vacant city centre property for three months early in 2024.
- Ongoing collaborative working with Abertay University to develop their campus masterplan and to establish the city centre as a nationally recognised hub for digital technology, e.g. cyber security (through the Abertay cyberQuarter), virtual production (through the CoSTAR regional lab), e-sports (through the e-sports test and play facility currently under development on campus), computer games (through the academic centre for excellence and the city's games cluster), and a major centre for 5G testing.

Visiting Theme

- An evening economy pilot project ("Think Thursday") took place over 12-weeks in spring/summer 2023.
- Development of Visitor Pass linked to the Dundee loves local gift card is underway.
- City centre stakeholder group meetings and events continue to take place, providing opportunities for information to be shared, issues to be raised, and feedback to be given on future plans.

- Reform Street/Exchange Street stakeholder meetings have taken place to bring street communities together and identify opportunities to work together and potential positive actions.
- A new walking tour of Dundee has been created in conjunction with University of Dundee and other partners to support sustainable tourism.
- Cruise ship 'Welcome Volunteers' have improved the welcome given to the increasing number of visitors.
- The Events Strategy 2025-2030 has been approved.
- City marketing campaign 'Put Dundee on your Map - Do it all in Dundee' is underway with digital activity targeted in the central belt and Aberdeen to encourage overnight stays in the city.
- The Exchange Street lighting project will be implemented early in 2024, highlighting this historic cobbled street and the businesses located there.
- A pipeline of events, business conferences and festivals for 2024 and beyond is being progressed.
- New ownership of the Overgate shopping centre has resulted in recent building warrant applications for store refurbishments, which will result in new businesses locating in the centre.
- Planning applications have been submitted for the proposed Eden Project development to the east of the city centre.

Connectivity Theme

- Bell Street Sustainable Transport Hub: during January 2023, the UK Government confirmed that Dundee City Council's proposed 'Green Transport Hub and Spokes' project had been provisionally awarded £14.4M of capital funding from the UK Levelling Up Fund.
- The Council, working with consultant Stantec, continues to progress and consult on active travel routes within the North-West quarter of the city centre.
- Active travel freeway network development: route appraisal of the city's six key strategic corridors is now complete with concept designs prepared. The routes include Arbroath Road, Pitkerro Road, Hawkhill, Macalpine Road, Lochee Road and Harefield/Strathmore Avenue/Dens Road corridors.
- Union Street full pedestrianisation: public engagement on designed landscape commenced in September 2023. This engagement takes the form of 'street trials' that ask questions of what people would like the street to be within the confines of the architect's layout. Once this exercise has concluded, the technical design elements will then progress and will be completed by spring 2024.
- Secure cycle parking and storage: Committee approval secured during June 2023 to convert parts of the Greenmarket and Olympia multi-storey car parks to accommodate cycle access and storage. Works are due to be complete by spring 2024.
- The first phase of Commercial Street/Murraygate junction improvements to prioritise pedestrian movement and reduce illegal vehicle movements have been completed.
- Draft Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan approved at Committee for consultation with key stakeholders.

Public Realm Theme

- A city centre investment programme will manage and prioritise capital and revenue funding spend on environmental improvements and public realm projects. Projects that have been delivered include:
 - a new trade waste management pilot, successfully rolled out across the city centre and delivering positive change to the appearance of streets such as, Seagate, Gellatly Street, Coutties Wynd and Whitehall Crescent;
 - enhancements to New Inn Entry (Keiller Centre), including new planters, a public art mural and security camera to help tackle anti-social behaviour; and
 - various city dressing installations have also been delivered, including the Union Street summer decorations, the application of window vinyls to various vacant shopfronts, and tartan banners in support of the V&A Tartan exhibition.
- Various projects are in production, including:
 - A lighting masterplan is being developed for the city centre that will create a cohesive public realm lighting strategy that will identify key routes and focal points that warrant special attention. The lighting strategy will look at various design options and consider opportunities to reduce energy and carbon consumption. The lighting masterplan will be developed early next year and will consider buildings including the McManus, the rear elevation of Caird Hall, the Steeple and St Paul's Cathedral.
 - Union Street shopfront façade enhancement scheme is being progressed with discussions taking place in relation to several properties; and
 - city centre tree improvements: survey work and proposals are currently being procured for tree maintenance and planting recommendations.
- The Community Wellbeing Centre, Hope Point, opened on South Ward Road during Aug 2023. The facility is open 24 hours to provide people experiencing emotional distress with immediate access to support.
- A range of work has been progressed during the last 12 months to expand access to drug treatment through city centre based drop-in sessions held by both statutory and third sector services in the city centre area. A Suicide Prevention stakeholder engagement event is planned for January 2024 at the Steeple Church, involving a wide range of stakeholders and partners to begin to develop Dundee's suicide prevention action plan for 2024-2027. The Dundee Women's Hub has opened at 2 Dudhope Street, providing multi-agency support for women impacted by substance use and other multiple disadvantage such as gender-based violence, homelessness, poor mental health, isolation, and trauma.
- Enhanced partnership working with Police Scotland and city centre management has implemented a new multi-agency approach and community policing team model, engaging with retail premises and fast-food outlets to proactively address issues.
- Communications have been carried out with businesses on the use of DUNCAN and webinars with the police on reducing crime and improving safety.
- The buskers code of conduct has been reviewed and an additional pitch has been included at the penguins sculpture, close to the City Churches.

APPENDIX 2: CCSIP – EASTERN QUARTER FOCUS AREA



Eastern Quarter: Conceptual Images

