



**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Nalin Seneviratne – Director – City Centre Development

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**Report of:** Michael Crofts – Executive Director, Place  
**Report to:** Co-operative Executive  
**Date of Decision:** 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
**Subject:** City Centre Strategic Vision - Progress Report

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Executive Member Portfolio does this relate to? Executive Member for City Futures: Development, Culture and Regeneration		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i>		

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide a short report on progress on delivering the City Centre Strategic Vision as set out in the One Year Plan. Also, to provide an overview of the topics to be considered and to approve the delivery timetable.

**Recommendations:**

That the Co-operative Executive:

1. Note progress on the delivery of the City Centre Strategic Vision.
2. Note the proposed content of the report and the link to the Transport Strategy, Connecting Sheffield programme including how we use Pinstone Street and Clean Air Zone requirements.
3. Approve the delivery timetable, enabling adequate Member & Public Engagement.

**Background Papers:**

*Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report July 2020 –*

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/planning-and-development/draft-sheffield-plan/Sheffield%20Central%20Area%20Strategy%20-%20Capacity%20Report%20-%20July%202020.pdf>

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Eugene Walker
	Legal: David Hollis
	Equalities: Not applicable at this stage. An assessment will be carried out for the actual City Centre Strategic Vision.
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>EMT member who approved submission:</b> Michael Crofts
3	<b>Executive Member consulted:</b> Cllrs. Terry Fox and Julie Grocutt
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Nalin Seneviratne
	<b>Job Title:</b> Director City Centre Development

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, developing a City Centre Strategic Vision is more important now than ever to guide future development which is sympathetic to the challenges facing Sheffield in a post pandemic world, in which the heightened recognition of the importance of quality spaces in which to live, work and play is clear.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the Vision along with a Strategic Plan will guide development underpinned by wider Sheffield Council policy in the quality of what is built, and the sustainability of development, including the need to develop in a way that achieves our net zero carbon objectives. It is also important that the strategic vision is fully integrated with transport policy and the need to develop an environment that is clean and supports health and well-being.
- 1.3 In planning to deal with a growing population and manage development in a sustainable way, Deloitte were commissioned in 2019 to prepare a strategy for accelerating the growth of residential development in the city centre. The first step in that work was to assess the capacity of the city centre to provide new homes. This culminated in the **Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report** being produced in **July 2020**<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 With the capacity to provide approximately 21,000 new homes, it is important that the environment in which those homes are delivered includes an air quality that protects the health of the population. Therefore, it is critical that new development proposals that aim to deliver homes for a growing population are carried out in line with other policy objectives such as the proposed Clean Air Zone. Such a policy will play a key part in overall health improvements, not only to resident populations in the city centre but to communities across the whole city, particularly as some of the most significant polluters (buses, taxis, goods vehicles) drive around and through neighbourhoods in every part of Sheffield.
- 1.5 The City Centre Strategic Vision will provide a way forward for the continued regeneration of the city centre, building on the outstanding developments to date. Currently, the draft document is in production with the first draft expected by the end of October 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report  
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/planning-and-development/draft-sheffield-plan/Sheffield%20Central%20Area%20Strategy%20-%20Capacity%20Report%20-%20July%202020.pdf>

- 1.6 It is proposed that the draft City Centre Strategic Vision is shaped by Members ahead of public engagement and therefore the draft timetable is set out below:-

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Dates</b>
1	Draft document to the Council from Deloitte	w/c 25.10.2021
2	Review and revisions to draft by Council Officers	w/c 01.11.2021
3	Working draft returned to Sheffield City Council	05.11.2021
4	Draft available of Member input	08.11.2021 to 17.12.21
5	Update to final draft	17.12.21 to 07.01.22
6	Planned Public Engagement to achieve One Year Plan deadline	17.01.2022 to 18.02.2022
7	Update to document following engagement	21.02.2022 to 04.03.2022
8	Final Document available for Endorsement by Co-operative Executive	16.03.2022

## **2. Background - This is Our City Centre**

- 2.1 As Sheffields, we're proud of our city. Proud of its history, of its hills, its green spaces, of our industrial heritage and its strong sense of character. We feel part of both one big Sheffield community and simultaneously our own individual neighbourhoods.
- 2.2 Like all major cities, Sheffield has had to learn to adapt over time. Our city centre is changing right now. It needs to adapt to a new world, where the growth of internet shopping, home entertainment and Covid-19 have led to unprecedented challenges for all of us including businesses and visitors.
- 2.3 Food and drink, leisure and retail operators have faced some significant issues, with some well-known big brands disappearing entirely. Each one of

us knows how hard it has been for so many people, businesses, and organisations.

- 2.4 Despite this, work is already well advanced to drive the positive change that is needed for our city centre to make us proud once more. We are building a new heart of our city centre between Barkers Pool and Moorhead to create a thriving city centre for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Moor has been transformed. There are new plans and funding in place to reinvent Fargate. You only have to walk around Pinstone Street, Moorhead, and Cambridge Street, and see the large number of cranes and construction sites, to see that the future is underway right now.
- 2.5 Our plan to adapt and strengthen our city centre focuses on five key aims, all of which focus on increasing the number of people in the city centre:
- 2.6 Homes:  
Our plans will see thousands more residents living in the city, bringing life and activity night and day, including the amenities necessary to have a decent quality of life.
- 2.7 Workplaces:  
We are delivering new office developments that will see thousands more people working in the city centre every day. The pandemic has changed how we work but city centre offices will return with more people and firms coming together to meet and collaborate.
- 2.8 Improved Environment:  
We are making our city centre cleaner, greener and safer with new quality public spaces, pedestrianised areas and squares, and a new city centre park. We are creating spaces for people to meet, socialise and relax.
- 2.9 More to do:  
We are adding more places to eat and drink, and more things to do, from cinemas to bowling, exhibitions to events, alongside new places to shop and places where you can come to the city centre and just be.
- 2.10 Accessibility:  
We are making it easier to walk, cycle and travel by public transport to and around the city centre, as well as maintaining access by car.

### **3. Proposed Content of the City Centre Strategic Vision**

- 3.1 As stated above, like a lot of cities and towns in the UK and beyond, Sheffield is experiencing its own share of structural and economic challenges. However, despite those challenges from changing retail to the current reduction in the number of office workers, Sheffield still has a rich set of opportunities to capitalise on and to reach its potential.

3.2 Our “Outdoor City” brand is known and respected outside the city as well as within and this is a brand on which to build for the city centre, which, will be even more compelling in a post Covid climate where footloose talent would be more likely to appreciate the amenities of a large city with easy access to nature.

We have a good framework to make the city centre a great destination:

- high quality and well-maintained public realm
- open spaces and green spaces
- a characterful and distinct built environment
- Strong Cultural Anchors
- a rich ecosystem of cultural creative and digital businesses
- two world class universities
- a year-long calendar of events
- a tram system running through the centre
- new developments with good opportunities in the pipeline

However, we need to address the following:

- A better balance of residential office retail and civic uses, including how we manage potential conflict between uses in the city centre.
- A more diverse residential offer is important, having housing options for all, in high quality homes built to appropriate quality standards and linked to wider planning & environmental policy.
- New workplaces: offices and space for innovation and collaboration that are adaptive to flexible working.
- Acceptance of a reduction in the importance of retail space with a better mix between national brands, homegrown brands, leisure, and culture, that makes the city centre the place for socialising and exchange of ideas rather than just shopping.
- We need to think more about young people from children to young adults and what offers are meaningful for them in a digital age. We also need to address how we cater for an elderly population.
- Providing enhanced public realm that can support a more flexible use of active outside space particularly streets, for markets, events, seating, play, and other activities.
- Higher quality infrastructure to encourage active travel, with dedicated space for cycling and ‘healthier’ streets for people, along with a bus and tram network that is more reliable, faster, cleaner, and supports better interchange and connections in the city centre, to reduce the number of private car trips, this includes how we will use Pinstone Street at the heart of the city centre,
- and of course, how we develop in a low and net zero carbon way.

3.3 Pinstone Street was closed to traffic in June 2020 as part of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic to implement the Government's Social Distancing Guidance. This meant the removal of some southbound bus movements through the city, relocating them to Rockingham Street and Arundel Gate.

- 3.4 We have been working for some time on a Connecting Sheffield scheme with external funding streams that included the closure of Pinstone Street to motor traffic and reallocation of this space to walking and cycling, and broader amenity use. The benefits of this wider scheme are intended to be improved bus journey times, enhanced public realm and the delivery of the formative stages of a seamless active travel network for the City. However, we have reviewed several temporary schemes before, such as Shalesmoor, and there is an opportunity to now review Pinstone St in the wider context of this City Centre Vision.
- 3.5 The Vision context includes the Future High Street Fund and Heart of the City schemes, which we need to ensure achieve accessibility for the core of the city centre alongside biodiversity enhancement and climate change resilience and in the process provide a unique selling point for the city, realising the Outdoor City brand and philosophy.
- 3.6 Whilst removal of traffic through the Pinstone Street area has received some support, it has also highlighted concerns raised by some businesses across the City Centre, bus users, and user groups representing the interests of the elderly and the disabled. These were debated through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in September 2021 who requested that;
- the report be referred back to the Co-operative Executive, together with the issues now raised and highlighted by this Committee, specifically with regard to accessibility, inclusivity and travel routes through the city centre, and
  - the Executive Members for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and for Finance and Resources give consideration, as part of the budget process, to funding a free, electric bus, to run on a route to be agreed, through the city centre
- 3.7 This report will be brought back to the Co-operative Executive and will look at alternative options for Pinstone Street, including re-opening it to traffic.

So, the document we're working on will seek to deal with how we improve and move forward the idea of the City Centre being the place that is for all the people of Sheffield and the region, to meet, socialise, play, collaborate and work together. Therefore, accessibility and connectivity to the city centre is important. There is already a Transport Strategy for Sheffield<sup>2</sup> and more recently we have the Connecting Sheffield programme<sup>3</sup> using Transforming Cities Funding. The plan will reference both of those so that the link between the City Centre Plan and transport connectivity and overall accessibility is clear. As mentioned above, the strategy will also reference the Clean Air Zone proposals as a pre-requisite for further city centre development.

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<sup>2</sup> Sheffield City Council (2018) Transport Strategy  
<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s31437/Transport%20Strategy%20202.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://connectingsheffield.commonplace.is/>

- 3.8 We will look at how the good work happening inside buildings is made more visible, encouraging activation of the great public realm. We will aim to move to a point where there is always something going on in the centre. This should all lead to better positioning nationally and internationally for Sheffield as a major UK City.
- 3.9 The strategic vision will seek to address short, medium, and long-term issues:
- Many of the current short-term issues have been longstanding ones that the recent pandemic has brought into sharp focus. They mainly lie along a north-east / south-west axis through the city centre from Castlegate to Moorfoot. This is a figurative spine that runs from Castlegate and Fitzalan Square and High Street onto Fargate, carrying on along Pinstone Street and down through The Moor. The strategy will address, issues along this “spine” of the city centre: Castlegate, High St, Fargate, the John Lewis building, the Town Hall, Central Library and Graves Art Gallery, The Moor and Moorfoot.
- 3.10 This backbone of the city centre, like all high streets across the UK, has faced countless challenges over the years and has had to adapt. The main retail focus, and indeed the indoor market, has now shifted to The Moor, which has been revitalised in recent years.
- 3.11 Yet there is no doubting the difficulties much of our historic high street backbone has faced in recent years. The good news, however, is that this challenge is being met head on. Both public and private sectors are investing heavily to strengthen these areas, driving them to adapt to a changing future to create a City Centre we can be proud of.
- 3.12 Public sector investment beyond that with a financial return will be reliant on external grant funding and where appropriate or possible, private sector contributions.
- 3.13 As highlighted in section 2 of this report, it should not be forgotten that in the middle of the short-term issues is the delivery of £370m investment in the Heart of the City which, over the next 18 months to 2 years will largely be complete, finally addressing a lack of critical mass in the centre that has been a problem for decades.
- 3.14 Importantly, the vision is about the medium to long term repopulation of the City Centre in terms of homes and associated amenities and workplaces. To deliver approximately 21,000 new homes, we can't just zone the centre and hope things will happen. We need to create new city centre neighbourhoods, attractive, safe places that will create the demand for new homes in the city centre.
- 3.15 So, linked to the local plan the City Centre Strategic Vision will look at how areas of the centre can be defined by several neighbourhoods that will include Castlegate and Moorfoot. We will also define some new housing sites that will act as catalysts for that medium to long term housing led

regeneration. The sustainability of all activity along the key streets from Castlegate to Moorfoot will then be supported by a resident and working population.

3.16 As well as producing the City Centre Strategic Vision, we will also prepare a housing delivery plan with investment prospectus alongside a technical plan to assist with the delivery of new neighbourhoods and sites that will provide catalytic opportunity for housing delivery.

3.17 The diagram below illustrates the component parts of how the Vision will be formulated.



3.18 The Strategic Plan will look to realise the Vision opportunities through this 10 point plan.



#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

- 4.1 All matters regarding implications for equality of opportunity, financial, commercial, and legal matters will be provided as part of the report to Co-operative Executive when the City Centre Strategic Vision is presented for approval in line with the timetable above.

#### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The alternative option would be not to produce a City Centre Strategic Vision. However, given the need for the centre's continued regeneration in the light of retail re-structuring and other economic challenges along with the need to address the delivery of more homes in Sheffield, the need to deliver a strategy outweighs the option not to deliver one.

#### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The reasons for the recommendations are to:
- provide clarity regarding the overall content of the City Centre Strategic Vision
  - be clear on the importance of other policy decisions such as the Clean Air Zone as an enabler for sustainable city centre development, and
  - agree the timetable for delivery to enable adequate engagement from Members of the Council and the public.

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