



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Michael Johnson, Head of Planning & Tammy Whitaker, Head of Property and Regeneration.

Tel: 07769607537

Report of: Executive Director of Place

Report to: Cooperative Executive

Date of Decision: 16 March 2022

Subject: City Centre Strategic Vision

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? City Futures, Development, Culture and Regeneration		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? EIA1159		
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:-		

Purpose of Report:

- a) To provide a summary of consultation responses from the 5-week public engagement (called 'Our City Centre') and set out how the City Centre Strategic Vision has been adjusted to take account of the public's views; and
- b) To seek approval for the final version of City Centre Strategic Vision for Sheffield (Appendix 1)

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Co-operative Executive:

1. Notes the City Centre consultation responses and proposed adjustments to the City Centre Strategic Vision.
2. Approves the City Centre Strategic Vision for publication.

Background Papers:

Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report, July 2020

Lead Officer to complete:-							
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4	<p>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.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">Lead Officer Name:</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">Job Title:</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Michael Johnson Tammy Whitaker.</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Head of Planning Head of Property and Regeneration</td> </tr> </table> <p>Date: 04 March 2022</p>	Lead Officer Name:	Job Title:	Michael Johnson Tammy Whitaker.	Head of Planning Head of Property and Regeneration		
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1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report seeks approval for a new City Centre Strategic Vision that will provide a way forward for the continued regeneration of the city centre in a post pandemic world, building on the outstanding developments to date. The Vision reflects the changing role of the city centre and takes account of developments that are already helping to transform it. This report also summarises and responds to comments made on the draft Vision through the public consultation that took place earlier this year.
- 1.1.2 Sheffield is an inclusive, resilient, competitive yet distinctive place with a green agenda and its people at its heart. The Vision will promote a future direction that sets out how the city centre can change and adapt to new trends for cities, such as the decline of retail, the changing nature of workplace, and the growth of city centre living through the creation of distinctive new neighbourhoods and permanent communities, enabling a vibrant and sustainable city centre in which to live, work and play.
- 1.1.3 In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, developing a City Centre Strategic Vision is more important now than ever in order to guide future development in a way that is sympathetic to the challenges facing Sheffield. There is now a heightened recognition of the importance of placemaking and quality spaces for all.
- 1.1.4 The City Centre Strategic Vision is underpinned by wider Sheffield Council policy on 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.
- 1.1.5 In planning to deal with a growing population and manage development in a sustainable way, regeneration experts Deloitte were commissioned in autumn 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 2020¹.
- 1.1.6 The Capacity Report provided the foundation for further work on the Strategic Vision. However, the Vision goes far beyond the objective of accelerating and increasing housing development, recognising the need to address wider

¹ Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/sheffield-plan-background-studies-reports>

economic, environmental, and social issues while delivering distinctive neighbourhoods across the whole city centre that will expand the population beyond students. The Vision aims to provide a mix of homes, public spaces, retail, entertainment, places to work and key services to connect and link into existing/emerging inner-city communities such as Kelham Island. We will ensure the city centre is activated, populated, well connected, welcoming and safe by day and night to encourage businesses to locate here and help sustain existing and new shops, restaurants, bars and a leisure offer, which can then be accessed by the wider city.

1.2 The Need for a New Strategic Vision

Changing Role of the City Centre

- 1.2.1 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. These changes will underpin the future vision for the city.
- 1.2.2 The nature of the workplace is undergoing change with a 'new normal' yet to emerge. As such, the city centre can expect changes to office space supply and demand in the longer term, particularly in terms of type and offer. However, whilst commentators share a mixture of views on the matter, nobody predicts a future that does not include many jobs still being carried out in city centre locations and current evidence shows there is strong demand for Grade A office space.
- 1.2.3 The city centre is key to unlocking new solutions to the Climate Change Emergency. Strategically located, the city centre should act as a hub for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority public transport network whilst simultaneously supporting new modes of active travel and sustainable housing growth.
- 1.2.4 It is well known that the city centre retail market has contracted, marked most recently by the closure of two department stores - John Lewis and Debenhams. The loss of these anchor tenants from Sheffield's high street will bring about a significant change to the wider retail landscape but presents new opportunities for other high street chains, smaller independent retailers and organisations which are active within Sheffield. For example, this provides a significant opportunity to repurpose and rethink the 'groundscape' of the city centre working with academic institutions, the leisure, arts and culture sector in particular, to bring innovative ideas to the streets, public spaces and vacant units.
- 1.2.5 During the pandemic, the benefits of outdoor living and working from home as a choice began to become evident. Despite this, emerging trends point towards ongoing demand for city centre living to benefit

from the lifestyle it offers, which the city centre should capitalise on.

1.2.6 There is a fast return of the city centre leisure economy. Leisure, arts and culture are increasingly the reasons why people are choosing to visit the city centre. The importance of these sectors is emerging as a counterpoint to the more traditional urban pursuits such as shopping.

1.2.7 The city centre also has an important function to deliver health and well-being benefits to its residents through green spaces, well-designed public spaces, walking and cycling routes, delivering on net zero carbon objectives and making the most of natural assets in creating new communities.

Our City Centre Today

1.2.8 Work is already well advanced to drive the positive change that is needed for our city centre to continue to make us proud. We are building a new heart of our city centre between Barkers Pool and Moorhead to create a thriving centre for the 21st century. The Moor has been transformed. There are new plans and funding in place to reinvent Fargate & High Street, and Castlegate. 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.

1.3 The City Centre Strategic Vision

City Centre Strategic Ambitions

1.3.1 We have ambitious plans for our city centre, which will transform the contribution it makes regionally and nationally. Our vision is for a well-connected, high profile city centre with a quality city environment that supports business, employment, residential and cultural opportunities. The city centre will be a hub for learning, employment, and highly skilled jobs but also a place where people can live.

Our City Centre Vision sets out our plans to create a thriving, liveable and sustainable city centre. New homes and neighbourhoods will deliver housing-led growth, with supporting investment vital to creating places where people want to live. Catalytic commercial developments like Heart of the City, West Bar and Castlegate will create space for high value jobs and transform the city centre offer to create vibrancy through new places to shop, eat and drink, socialise, explore and relax. The cultural offer will be transformed, bringing a quality of experience unique in the city region. Enhanced transport connectivity will ensure the opportunities created are accessible to people across South Yorkshire.

We have five strategic ambitions which are to be the building blocks to creating a successful city centre, addressing head on how the city will move forward. These five ambitions are:

- Ambition One: Building a resilient city centre that supports a strong economy and offers a diverse range of employment opportunities for all.
- Ambition Two: Creating a clear sense of place for the city by shaping distinctive and inclusive neighbourhoods in which people can live, work and play.
- Ambition Three: Delivering enhanced connectivity and accessibility for the city centre through integrated and sustainable transport.
- Ambition Four: Establishing a sustainable and environmentally friendly city centre.
- Ambition Five: Bringing the outdoors to the city centre, creating attractive high-quality spaces and places that facilitate wellbeing for all.

1.3.2 An essential component of the vision is repopulation of the city centre in terms of homes and associated amenities and workplaces. These residents and neighbourhoods will act as ‘the glue’ to help tackle future changes city centres will inevitably face. To deliver approximately 20,000 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 and provide the infrastructure and facilities, such as schools and GP’s and outdoor spaces to enable a diverse range of people to live in them.

1.3.3 Creating these permanent communities will mean the city centre is more vibrant, more viable and more sustainable. Encouraging more people to live here will ensure it is activated, populated and safe by day and night. This new population will help to sustain shops, restaurants, bars and a leisure offer, which can then be accessed by, and create jobs for, the wider city. As well as new homes, there will be areas of the city centre and neighbourhoods which have a different primary role, such as commercial, learning or retail. This is about creating opportunities for all of Sheffield’s residents, no matter their background.

City Centre Key Themes

1.3.4 The delivery of the Vision will be guided by key themes, delivered through a number of principles or activities, designed to realise the vision for a strong, vibrant and thriving city centre in the 21st century.

These themes are:

An Outdoor City - Now is the time to bring the outdoors right into the heart of the city centre.

Distinctive - The city centre should offer distinct neighbourhoods, each with its own character and which celebrate Sheffield's unique character and history.

Liveable - Encouraging a more diverse range of homes in quality environments is vital. The city centre should offer housing options that are well-designed, supported by facilities and amenities to create neighbourhoods and housing choices suitable for a diverse range of people, including families, people looking to downsize and older residents.

Innovative and Resilient - Sheffield needs to respond to the climate crisis with ambitious, clear and deliverable actions. We also need to sustain the high street by creating a better balance of offer.

Productive - We want to consolidate and better connect the key commercial areas that attract the highest numbers of people, making all areas accessible. We will also support the growth of Sheffield's maker industries and creative businesses.

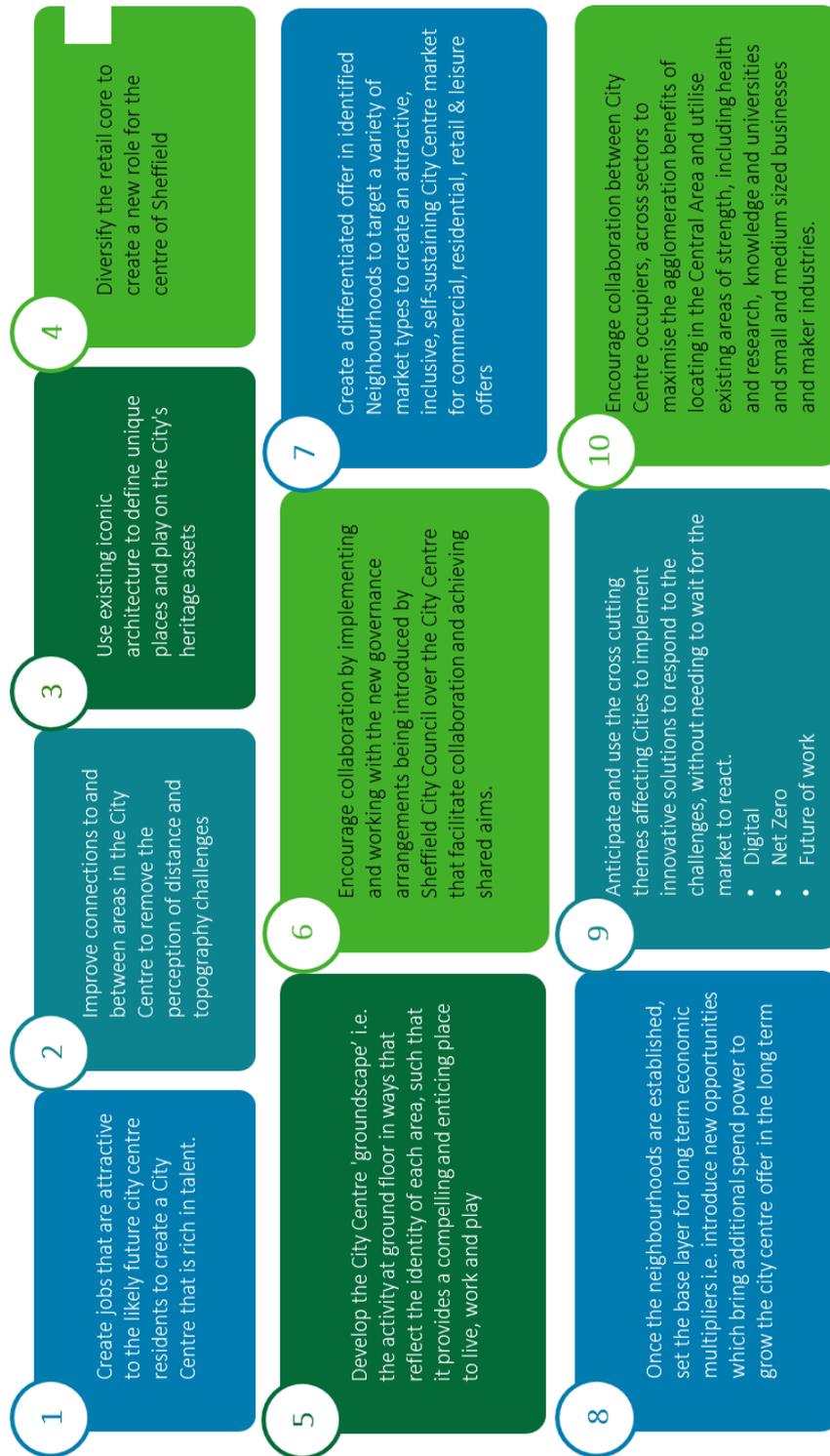
Collaborative - A collaborative approach to development will be employed, with the public and private sectors working in partnership for long term, sustainable results.

Connected and Accessible - Comprehensive transport improvements across the city centre need to be made, including pedestrian infrastructure. The city centre should be easy to access by high quality and reliable public transport.

City Centre Guiding Principles

- 1.3.5 To achieve the Strategic Vision of a successful city centre, the Vision will be delivered by ten guiding principles or activities (see page 8 overleaf).

10 Guiding Principles



2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

The decision on the City Centre Strategic Vision will play an important role in supporting Council priorities in relation to the 1-Year Plan themes of:

- Communities and Neighbourhoods
- Climate Change, Economy and Development

The approval of the City Centre Strategic Vision will mean Sheffield has a coherent plan for the future of the city centre. We have listened to people and businesses about their aspirations and ideas to inform our plans to create a city centre that is vibrant, inclusive, resilient, competitive yet a distinctive place with a green agenda and its people at its heart.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 Summary of Public Consultation

Extensive public and stakeholder consultation on the Strategic Vision took place across five weeks, between Monday 10 January 2022 and Sunday 13 February 2022. Please note the full Consultation Report can be found at (Appendix 2).

Throughout the consultation, a range of communication methods were used to raise awareness. These methods were restricted to a degree by the imposition of Covid 'Plan B' as the Omicron variant had become prevalent. However, the strategy included methods to ensure information was accessible to members of the public and stakeholders across the city, even if they didn't have access to the internet. These methods included:

- The consultation website, including a video webinar.
- The Star newspaper.
- Community Access Points, where posters and postcards were on display.
- Social media.
- Pop-up exhibit in the Winter Gardens and Moor Market.
- Stakeholder meetings.
- Online presentation, with automated commentary.

The consultation asked stakeholders and members of the public to feedback on the City Centre Strategic Vision and plans for the key central sites of Fargate and High Street, Castlegate and the site of the former John Lewis store. In total, 1,452 feedback forms were submitted during the consultation from a variety of postcodes across the city, which is a very healthy response rate and demonstrates the consultation reached beyond the city centre boundary.

The full analysis of the feedback is included at Appendix 2 and the headline statistics from the key closed questions from the online feedback form were

as follows:

- 74% of respondents answered 'Yes' or 'Yes with some reservations' when asked whether the City Centre Strategic Vision was a suitable plan for the city centre.
- 62% of participants said, 'Yes' or 'Yes, with some reservations' to the question "Do you agree with the approach to create a series of distinctive city centre neighbourhoods with different identities and functions?".
- 74.6% of respondents answered 'Yes' or 'Yes with some reservations' when asked whether they agreed with the City Centre Strategic Vision in terms of providing 20,000 new homes in the city centre.

In addition to the closed question responses, the opportunity to provide open responses was also provided. A summary of the broad themes to come out from this are as follows:

Prioritise Green Space and Biodiversity – Responses emphasised the importance of green space and biodiversity for the city centre.
Better City Centre Offer – Respondents wanted to see an improvement to the retail offer, such as more independent and high-end retail.
More New Homes – Clear support for this, particularly a diverse mix of housing, which includes affordable homes.
New Neighbourhoods – Support of the idea but need to avoid creating segregated areas of housing.
Provision of Amenities – Need for amenities to serve the new homes and communities, as referenced in the Strategic Vision.
Preserve Heritage – Need for more to be done to preserve and celebrate Sheffield's historic buildings and heritage.
Improve Connections – Need for a better-connected city centre, including better public transport and connections to other parts of Sheffield.

In relation to stakeholder engagement, an extensive stakeholder mapping process was undertaken to identify different individuals and groups who were likely to have an interest in the proposals. The following different audience groups were engaged, and a summary of key pieces of feedback are included at Appendix 2:

- Political stakeholders.
- Economic and city-wide organisations.
- Educational organisations.
- Cultural & heritage interest groups and organisations.
- Community and local interest groups.
- Local Area Committees.

The overall balance of responses from the public and stakeholders to the consultation shows clear support for the City Centre Strategic Vision. It confirms support for the proposals to deliver distinctive and inclusive neighbourhoods with a balance of offers, alongside delivering significant

levels of new housing.

Additionally, plans for the key central sites of Fargate & High Street and Castlegate were supported and, from the options for the former John Lewis building, removal of the existing building with a smaller replacement building and accompanying new public space was the clear preference.

3.2 Changes to Vision following Public Consultation Feedback

Given the significant number of responses received in respect of the public consultation exercise, these have been bunched into key themes and adjustments made to the Strategic Vision to address gaps and strengthen other areas as required.

It is noted and welcomed that almost all the key themes that came through the free text responses to the consultation simply helped to reinforce existing strands of the Vision and adjustments do not need to be made in a number of cases as a result. For example, the importance of good connectivity, excellent green spaces and new homes were already comprehensively covered in the Vision.

In light of this, and considering the positive feedback provided during the public consultation process, the proposed changes to the Vision document when compared to the consultation version are relatively minor and focus on the following areas.

Inclusivity – Adjustments have been made to further strengthen inclusivity as a major thread that runs through the heart of the Strategic Vision.

This includes re-emphasising that new high-quality homes within future neighbourhoods will cater for all segments of the community to create a balanced and diversified residential population and deliver sustainable communities across the Central Area. This offer will see a variety of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of Sheffield's population.

Holistic Approach – The message that this Vision is about much more than delivering new homes has been strengthened, with further emphasis added to the myriad of component parts that all need to be delivered in order to create sustainable neighbourhoods and a successful Central Area (see image added in the Strategic Vision Introduction for example).

Small and Medium Enterprises – Elements have been added to strengthen this theme and the vital role these businesses will continue to play in our future successes.

Heritage – Increased emphasis added to the importance of Conservation Areas and the significant benefit these deliver around themes such as distinctiveness and economy.

Culture – Increased emphasis on Sheffield’s live and classical music scenes, alongside a need to support smaller cultural events and activities within the sector.

Night-time Economy – Additional images added to emphasise and celebrate the importance of the city’s night-time economy.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces – Whilst these subject areas are covered comprehensively in the Vision, we have added additional references to reinforce these themes in the final document.

It is noted that specific comments on the areas of Castlegate, Fargate & High Street and the former John Lewis site will be taken forward in the development of more detailed plans for these areas/sites in the future.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 Overall, there are no significant differential, positive or negative, equality impacts from this proposal. The final version of the Vision has been adjusted to further strengthen inclusivity and the holistic approach taken as major threads throughout.

We will ensure that future projects to implement the Vision, including the Local Plan, take account of the highlighted impacts and potential for mitigation. This includes:

- Ensuring that new residential development in the city centre is supported through the provision of new open space.
- Improved accessibility standards.
- Reviewing the ways of engaging people in any future consultation to ensure that there is representative feedback from the impacted communities.
- A housing offer will see a variety of housing types, affordability and tenures to meet the needs of Sheffield’s population.
- The location of new homes in relation to community facilities/public transport/ active travel routes.
- Access to employment areas by public transport or active travel.
- The proximity of new housing to areas with poor air quality.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct revenue implications as a result of approving the City Centre Strategic Vision. The Council has already secured significant capital funding from the Future High Street Fund, Get Building Fund and Levelling Up Fund to help revitalise Fargate and High Street; the regeneration of Castlegate, delivery of the Heart of the City Scheme and a range of transport

and active travel improvements which will help the strategic vision to be realised.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of approving the City Centre Strategic Vision.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 There are no other significant implications.

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 city 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 approval of the City Centre Strategic Vision, which has received clear support through public and stakeholder consultation and taken on the views of Sheffield's people and businesses, will form the basis for new development and investment geared towards improving opportunities for all. The 10 guiding principles in the Vision summarise the actions that are required to bring the City Centre Strategic Vision to life.

6.2 The intended outcome is to start to realise the full potential of the City Centre Strategic Vision, and the following short term next steps will be progressed to ensure this:

1. Priority Neighbourhoods: Preparation of Masterplans and outline design principles to help shape 5 new distinctive neighbourhoods and to guide future development in these areas.

2. Delivery Plan: To enable key sites to be brought forward for delivery that will catalyse regeneration in their respective priority neighbourhoods.

3. City Centre Investment Prospectus: Building on point 1 and 2, this will clearly articulate the investment opportunities available within Sheffield's Central Area.

6.3 The outputs of the City Centre Strategic Vision and the next steps outlined in paragraph 6.2 will form a significant part of the emerging Sheffield Local Plan, a key piece of evidence to shape planning policy and site allocations. The outputs will act as interim guidance and support for city centre development and help guide decisions on planning applications pending adoption of the Sheffield Local Plan.

- 6.4 In addition, the Council will be working hard to bring forward the improvements at key city centre sites such as Fargate & High Street, Castlegate and the former John Lewis Store using the feedback and views from the public engagement.