Welcome to the third edition of the High Street Area Strategy Newsletter. This newsletter is produced bi-annually for residents, businesses and retailers in the area to remain up to date with the work and progress of the five year action plan for the High Street Area Strategy. For each edition of the newsletter we will provide updates of upcoming activities and how you can get involved.

The High Street Area Strategy aims to enhance the liveability, competitiveness, and sustainability of the High Street. Work has not stopped during the Covid-19 emergency. However some projects had to be delayed as the construction industry paused during the Emergency. Where possible, projects have continued to be developed in the background.

Once lockdown restrictions are lifted, the High Street Area Strategy will continue as planned. In the meantime Glasgow City Council is introducing temporary measures to provide additional space for physical distancing in public places for people to walk, wheel orcycle while Covid-19 restrictions remain in place, including along the High Street. Please follow updates on GCC’s website and social media channels for further details.

We thank you for your patience during this time.

PROJECTS UPDATE

- City Property (Glasgow) LLP has launched a Tenant Support Package and issued regular communications to tenants advising of GCC and government support available for businesses during the Covid-19 emergency.

- City Property Rent Reviews have now been completed.

- The Independent Retail Fund has been suspended during the Covid-19 emergency, but work on site will resume as soon as possible, in accordance with Scottish Government directives.

- Several projects which required high levels of community involvement, such as Past, Present, Possible and the High Street Interpretation Strategy, had to be suspended during lockdown. As social distancing measures might remain with us for a long time, innovative ways to interact with the community are being investigated.
TALES OF THE HIGH STREET

Blind Alick lived in Fiddlers close just off the High Street in the 1700s. Fiddlers close may have been named after Alick, employed by both merchants and the poor to play a good 'reef', well into the wee small hours. At first Alick made a good living from playing the fiddle, ‘eighteen pence for the first two hours’ and ‘a penny for every reel afterwards’. Blind from a young age, Alick was described by Mr Sherriff Strathearn as ‘a man of middle size, his coat was green with stains, soiling and age’. From his coat he hung ‘a staff’, which he swung at street urchins, who followed him along the street. ‘He wore brown corduroy breeches, grey worsted stockings and ill-fitting shoes tied together with string’. But as Alick grew older, he became even more down on his luck. He attended the Tron Church, where the minister, Dr Chalmers, gave his sermons and Blind Alick would stand at the door with his hat in his hand. By all accounts many took pity on the old blind fiddler and would donate a penny or two.

His love of his fiddle and the music he gave to the city were clearly appreciated and Blind Alick, never let his blindness stop him from composing or orating poems, and this is one of his first.

I left Inverness, And travelled up to Glasgow town, And arrived in great distress, I’ve travelled the world over, And many a place besides, But I never saw a more beautiful city. 

Than this on the navigable Clyde’!

Alick lived in Glasgow at a time when the cities growth was due to commerce with the Americas and the trade in Rum, sugar, cotton, tobacco and slaves.

It is remarkable therefore that at this time of wealth that this description of an ordinary citizen like Alick, who lived on the High Street 230 years ago, has been handed down.

The City Centre Strategy identified nine City Centre Districts and set a goal of creating a District Regeneration Framework (DRF) for each of them by 2025. Glasgow City Council has appointed a multidisciplinary team of local and international consultants to develop the four remaining DRFs: Cowcaddens, Townhead, the “Learning Quarter” and the Merchant City. The High Street cuts across three out of these four districts and is a very important focus for this part of the city.

The team of consultants is led by Austin-Smith-Lord, in partnership with Rotterdam based Studio for New Realities, Wave Particle, Urban Movement and Civic Engineers. The new DRFs will benefit from the experience developed in producing the previous DRFs for Broomielaw, St Enoch, Central, and Blythswood.

The purpose of a DRF is to seek ways to support each community to thrive. The documents will develop a multi sector strategy to respond to challenges and opportunities these communities face to enhance quality of life, health and wellbeing, sustainability, resiliency, economy, and the physical environment.

The action plan associated with each DRF will promote local and large-scale projects, with short, medium, and long term delivery timescales.

The DRFs will be developed during the course of the next three years in collaboration with local communities across all four districts. Consultants will be working in partnership with residents, businesses, community and civic organisations, as well as, Strathclyde University, Glasgow Caledonian University and the City of Glasgow College.

The Covid-19 emergency and the social distancing measures associated with it will require a change in the way the consultants will work with communities.

The team are working with community councils, housing associations and local stakeholders, to ensure that everyone in the community will have a voice in developing the regeneration plan.

Please follow updates on the DRFs journey on the City Centre Strategy blog: https://www.glasgowcitycentrestrategy.com/

If you have any comments, thoughts or ideas please contact us on citycentrestrategy@glasgow.gov.uk.