



DRAFT LOCAL PLACE PLAN



MERCHANT CITY AND TRONGATE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION



This is a Local Place Plan from the Merchant City and Trongate Community Council. The Plan was prepared following extensive consultation with the Merchant City and Trongate Community.

By listening to the voices of local residents and relevant stakeholders the Plan reflects what our Community values most and the changes we would like to see for the future.

In presenting this Local Place Plan we are seeking to have the views of our community represented within the new **Glasgow City Development Plan**.

In doing so, we seek to influence future development so that it is better aligned with the aspirations of the Community in line with the policies set out in National Planning Framework 4. By doing so we believe that this will improve the Wellbeing of the Community and achieve a more balanced demographic.

Further, we believe the Plan will make the Merchant City and Trongate a more attractive place to live, thereby helping to achieve the aims of Glasgow City Council's City Centre Strategy and enhancing the vibrancy and inclusivity for which it is already known.

MCTCC's Local Place Plan fully supports Glasgow City Council's historic environment guidance and placemaking principles, which aim to preserve the character, safeguard the heritage, and protect the amenity of Merchant City and Trongate, while also ensuring public safety, inclusion and accessibility.





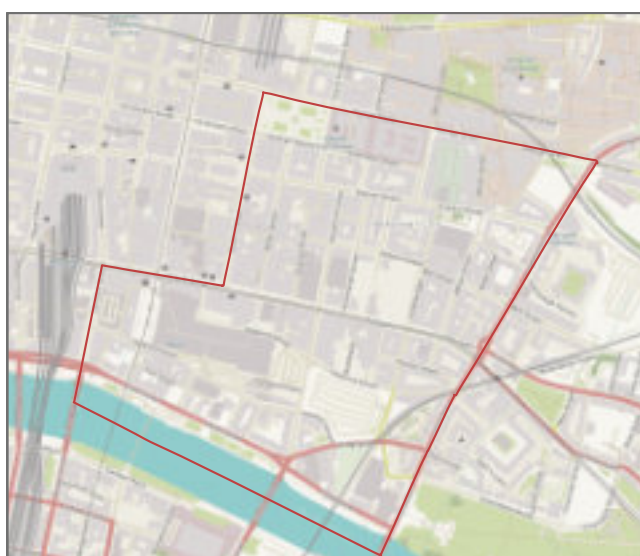
Merchant City and Trongate Community Council (MCTCC) is a constituted Community Council in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. MCTCC sits in Ward 10 – Anderston/ City/Yorkhill of Glasgow City Council.

The Population of the Merchant City and Trongate Community at the 2022 census was 4423, and is now over 5,000.

The Geographical boundaries of MCTCC are:

- North – George St
- West – Queen Street and Jamaica Street
- South – the River Clyde (midway between North and South banks)
- East – High St and Saltmarket

The boundaries are shown below



CONTEXT



The City Centre Development Plan 2017, supplemented by the City Centre Strategic Development Framework May 2021, outlines a bold vision for a vibrant, green, walkable and climate-resilient city centre. It emphasises liveability, economic competitiveness, heritage enhancement and strong connectivity.



Priority Issues are:

- Increase the residential population in and around the centre to grow activity, **sustain the local economy** and bring life to the whole centre.
- Create a City Centre of diverse **sustainable neighbourhoods** that promote **community cohesion, health and wellbeing**.

This is quantified as:

The target is to double the 2020 population of around 20,000 (roughly 3.5% of Glasgow's total) by 2050.

Whilst MCTCC agrees with the vision and priorities of the SDF we believe that its implementation is flawed. The current housing market incentivises developers to focus on the provision of student accommodation, Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), at the expense of other demographics including families and those in need of Social Housing. This creates an unbalanced demographic and we believe is one of the characteristics the City Centre Community and in particular the Merchant City and Trongate Community.

An unbalanced demographic does not create the vibrant and resilient Community imagined by the SDF and is clearly contrary to the ambitions outlined in National Planning Framework 4.

Below we outline why a Community with a disproportionate number of students, lack of Family or Social housing leads to a lack of Community Facilities and thereby does not create a **Sustainable Local Economy** or a **Sustainable Neighbourhood** that promotes **Cohesion** and **Health and Wellbeing** as outlined in the priorities.

Student Population Growth

Figures for the increase in students specifically within the Merchant City and Trongate area are not available but what can be said of the City Centre is true for the Merchant City and Trongate Community

For a list of City Centre Student Developments and Projects in the Planning Pipeline see Appendix 1. Two statements from Appendix 1 to highlight the issue are listed below

City Centre Population Surge

From 2001 to 2021, the population of the City Centre and Merchant City neighbourhood grew by around 7,800 residents, a 64% increase – the highest proportional rise among Glasgow’s neighbourhoods (*Understanding Glasgow*).

While this includes all residents (not just students), the growth aligns with the boom in purpose-built student accommodation being delivered in the same period.



Unbalanced Demographic

It is clear from the above that past PBSA developments coupled with those in the pipeline (see Appendix 1) are creating a demographic imbalance and this is true for the Merchant City and Trongate area. Note the figures in Appendix do not include Private HMO lets or buy to rent lets of which there are many in the MCTCC Community.

An unbalanced demographic is clearly not what Planning Policy should be creating and this is emphasised below.

Overarching Spatial Principles

Among the six guiding principles of NPF4 is “Rebalanced Development”, which seeks to manage areas of population decline and urban pressure more effectively. It emphasises that local development plans need to be informed by population change and settlement characteristics over time, ensuring areas don’t become over-concentrated with one demographic—and indeed that development supports community longevity and sustainability. (*Scottish Government*)

CONTEXT



Student Population Growth

The above statement is further further emphasised by the Ministerial statement introducing National Planning Framework 4:

Ministerial Statements — In parliamentary remarks introducing NPF4, the Minister specifically noted the ambition to create “**more balanced, diverse communities and neighbourhoods**”, reaffirming that planning must go beyond simply adding housing and instead foster inclusive, well-mixed neighbourhoods. (*Scottish Government*)

At **Local Level** specific issues created by an **unbalanced demographic** in relation to the stated priorities are:-

Local Economy – Students

Whilst students do inject money into the Local Economy this is of a “boom and bust” nature and a disproportionate number of students does not create a resilient, vibrant economy as envisaged by NPF4.

The transient nature of students does not encourage long-term investment. This leads to a lack of services that would make an area attractive to other demographic groups thus creating a downward spiral and further exacerbating the demographic imbalance.

Students often work part-time or in low-paying jobs and contribute less to tax revenues (they do not pay Council Tax), while still driving high demand for affordable housing, public services, and amenities. This can inflate rental markets, push out long-term residents, and discourage investment in industries that require a stable, full-time workforce.



Sustainable Neighbourhoods – Students

Community Cohesion

At the local level Social Cohesion can be characterised by gestures of goodwill, community-building activities and voluntary support between residents and local businesses. Neighbourhoods with a disproportionate number of students struggle to achieve social cohesion because the population is largely transient, with limited long-term commitment to the area.

Students typically move in and out on short leases, which reduces opportunities for lasting neighbourly relationships and weakens community networks. This imbalance can discourage families and long-term residents from settling, leaving fewer people to sustain local schools, community facilities, and civic life.

The result is a fragmented neighbourhood identity, with weaker social bonds and reduced resilience compared to more balanced, mixed communities

Health and Wellbeing – Students

The health and wellbeing of a community is key to the ambitions of NPF4 and can be negatively affected when a neighbourhood has a disproportionate number of students.

A largely transient student population can limit investment in local health services, playparks and community facilities, since long-term demand for these amenities is reduced. Families and older residents may be deterred from settling, eroding the social mix that underpins supportive, intergenerational communities.

This imbalance risks creating an environment where short-term rental patterns, noise and late-night activity dominate, undermining both physical and mental wellbeing for permanent residents and failing to provide the stable, inclusive conditions that support healthier lifestyles.

This is a characteristic of the Merchant City and Trongate environment.



CONTEXT



Families / Social Housing

Development in the Housing market is investment driven and the greatest returns are to be made in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). This clearly disincentivises investment in Family/Social Housing, further exacerbating the demographic imbalance with the attendant problems highlighted above.

The impact of having a more balanced demographic to include Families and those in Social Housing is given below.

Local Economy

Families and those in social housing contribute positively to the local economy by creating steady, year-round demand for everyday services such as schools, healthcare, shops, childcare, and leisure facilities.

Unlike more transient groups, they are long-term residents who support a stable customer base for small businesses and community services, helping to sustain local jobs and investment.

Social housing also ensures that lower-income households can live centrally, supporting a broader range of retail and service activity, while families often drive demand for diverse amenities, from grocery stores to cultural activities.

Together, these groups help build resilient local economies that are not reliant on seasonal or short-term spending



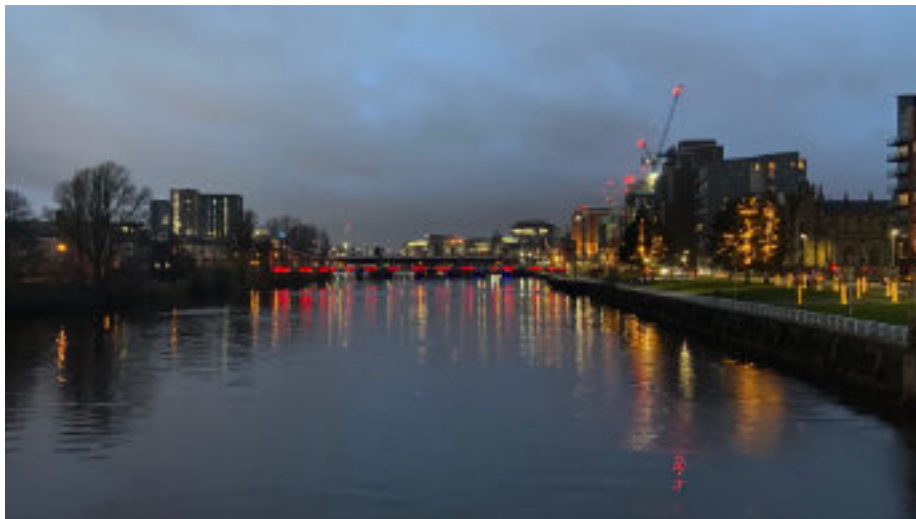
Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Social Cohesion

A lack of families and social housing undermines social cohesion by reducing the diversity of residents who give a neighbourhood long-term stability and intergenerational depth.

Families bring sustained demand for schools, parks and health services, while social housing ensures inclusivity and affordability, allowing people from a range of backgrounds to live and remain in the area.

Without these groups, neighbourhoods risk becoming dominated by transient or more affluent populations, weakening community networks, narrowing the range of local services, and eroding the shared sense of belonging that underpins resilient, cohesive communities.



Health and Wellbeing

A lack of families and social housing undermines the health and wellbeing of a community by eroding the diversity and stability needed for inclusive, supportive neighbourhoods.

Without families, there is little demand for schools, playparks and child-friendly spaces, reducing opportunities for active lifestyles and intergenerational connection.

The absence of social housing limits affordability and excludes lower-income households, leading to social segregation and weakening community support networks.

Together, these gaps create environments that are more transient, less inclusive, and less equipped to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of residents across all life stages.

CONTEXT



Community Facilities

It is clear from the above statements that an unbalanced demographic with a disproportionate number of students leads to a lack of investment in Family friendly infrastructure. This is clearly evident in the Merchant City and Trongate Community where there is currently no:

- Community Park;
- Community Centre;
- Childrens' Playpark;
- Doctor's Surgery/Health Centre.

The lack of a Community Centre and Community parks runs contrary to the ambitions of **NPF4**, which places strong emphasis on wellbeing, inclusion, and the creation of **20-minute neighbourhoods** where people can easily access facilities that support daily life.

Community halls provide space for social interaction, events, and local services, while parks deliver opportunities for play, recreation and improved mental and physical health.

Without these essential facilities, the neighbourhood fails to meet NPF4's vision of resilient, liveable, and sustainable communities that foster belonging and social cohesion. The impact of a lack of Community Facilities on a Neighbourhood is given below.

Local Economy

The absence of a Community Hall, playpark, or Community Park impacts negatively on the local economy by making the area less attractive to families and long-term residents, reducing the stable population base that sustains local shops, services, and jobs.

Without spaces for social interaction, recreation, and community events, neighbourhood life becomes less vibrant, discouraging investment and weakening footfall for nearby businesses.

These amenities are vital anchors of local living; without them, spending power is more likely to flow elsewhere, undermining the resilience and competitiveness of the local economy.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Social Cohesion

The absence of a Community Hall and Community Park undermines social cohesion by removing the very spaces where people come together, interact, and build shared identity.

Community Centres act as hubs for events, local groups, and support networks, while parks provide inclusive, informal settings where residents of all ages and backgrounds can meet and connect.

Without these amenities, opportunities for social interaction are limited, leaving the neighbourhood fragmented and isolating, with weaker bonds between residents and a diminished sense of belonging

Health and Wellbeing

The lack of a Community Hall and Community Parks negatively impacts health and wellbeing by removing vital opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and access to green space.

Parks encourage exercise, play, and contact with nature, all of which are proven to reduce stress and improve mental health, while community halls provide inclusive spaces for support groups, cultural activities, and social connection that combat isolation.

Without these facilities, residents have fewer chances to lead active, healthy lives and to build the social networks that are essential to overall wellbeing.

In relation to the above MCTCC also notes the following.

Doctor's Surgery/Health Centre

MCTCC's view is that inner-city residents and vulnerable groups must have equitable access to health services. We support the introduction of mobile health units, enhanced outreach provision and clearer signposting to NHS and third-sector services within the area.

In addition, just as the number of dental surgeries has grown locally, we believe there is now a pressing need for GP practices within Merchant City and Trongate. The significant increase in student and mixed residential accommodation planned for the area will only intensify this demand, making additional GP provision essential.



The High Street

For as long as Merchant City and Trongate Community Council has been the existence the High Street has been under-developed with vacant properties and underutilised spaces which hinder its regeneration and contribute to a sense of neglect.

There have been initiatives along the way to overcome this but sadly the above characterisation remains true.

Your Merchant City Regeneration Framework addresses this issue but in our view the statement on GCC's website:

“There is huge potential in a thriving student population, and this has to be realised.”

as a means of regenerating the High Street is a continuation of the flawed Policy outlined previously.

The High Street is surrounded on all sides by Student residences and in the view of MCTCC is one of the key reasons the High Street has never achieved its true potential.

MCTCC recognise that projects such as the “Avenues” will have a positive effect on the High Street but we also believe that **an area over populated with students does not make for a resilient, vibrant economy.**

Until this is recognised by the City Planners there will always be economic inactivity on the High Street





**THIS IS YOUR COMMUNITY
HAVE YOUR SAY**

**LOCAL
PLACE
PLAN**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



This is a placeholder for the outcomes from the community engagement exercises

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**LOCAL
PLACE
PLAN**

- An over reliance on students to repopulate the City Centre,
- a lack of Family/Social Housing
- and a lack of Community Facilities

The Plan

- Projects associated with land, either used or disused (PL1, PL2 etc).
- Projects associated with places. Buildings that are empty (PP1, PP2, etc.)
- Policy Statements, associated with Planning Policy (PS1, PS2 etc.)

Why – the rationale for the Project and alignment with planning policies



- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Your Merchant City Regeneration Handbook (YMCRH)

All of the Policy Statements relate to future development within the MCTCC boundary.

PROJECTS – LAND



PL1 Community Playpark

What

MCTCC seeks to have the land outlined in fig 2 allocated as a Community PlayPark with a view to possibly, in the future, exercising their right to purchase the Land through one of the five available Community Right to Buy (CrtB) options.

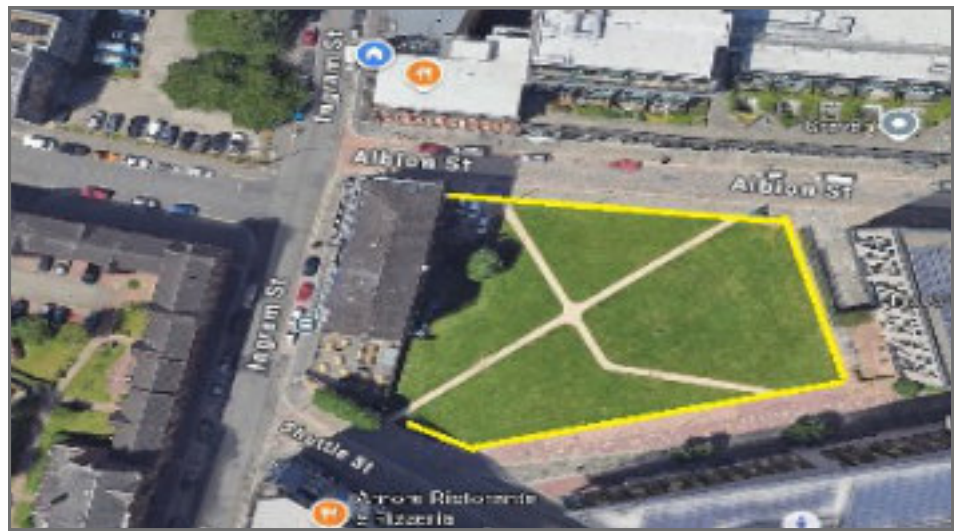


Fig2: Playpark location

Where

Land bounded by Shuttle St, Albion St. and Strathclyde University's Technology and Innovation Centre (TIC). A map of the identified land bounded by yellow lines is shown in fig 2.

As can be seen from the map the Land identified is currently a grassed open space.

The Land is currently owned by Scottish Enterprise.

Why

There are no Children's Playparks within the MCTCC boundary.

Alignment with Planning Policies

This Project aligns with NPF4 Policies 15 and 21

Community playparks are vital community assets that contribute significantly to the health, wellbeing, and cohesion of Scotland's people. They support the ambitions of NPF4 by promoting local living, enhancing community resilience, and delivering positive health and social outcomes.

Policy 15 Intent

To encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options.

Policy 21 Intent

To encourage, promote and facilitate spaces and opportunities for play, recreation and sport.



Policy Outcomes

Health and Wellbeing

- Playparks provide safe, accessible spaces for **active play**, encouraging physical activity that improves children's fitness, coordination, and long-term health.
- Outdoor play supports **mental wellbeing**, reducing stress and anxiety while promoting resilience, creativity, and self-confidence

Social and Community Cohesion

- Playparks act as **gathering spaces**, strengthening social ties among families, carers, and neighbours.
- They help reduce social isolation by offering inclusive environments for intergenerational interaction.
- Well-designed playparks ensure **inclusive access** for children of all abilities, supporting equality and fairness.

PROJECTS – LAND



Educational Value

- Play encourages **problem-solving, imagination, and risk awareness** in a controlled environment.
- Naturalised playparks can provide direct contact with nature, building **environmental awareness and stewardship** from an early age.

Local Living and Place-Making

- Playparks contribute to **20-minute neighbourhoods**, ensuring children and families can access safe play opportunities close to home.
- They enhance the attractiveness of local areas, supporting community pride and encouraging families to settle in neighbourhoods.

Economic and Regeneration Benefits

- Investment in playparks contributes to **place-based regeneration**, improving local quality of life and attracting inward investment.
- High-quality play facilities can increase property values, support local businesses, and reduce long-term public health costs through preventative health benefits.

Alignment with National Priorities

Playparks directly support **Scottish Government priorities** around child wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, and delivering a **just transition to net zero** by encouraging outdoor, sustainable lifestyles.

They contribute to the aims of **NPF4's spatial principles** of local living, just transition, and conserving community assets.

The above is further echoed throughout **Your Merchant City Regeneration Handbook**.



PL2 Community Park

What

MCTCC seeks to have the land outlined in fig 3 allocated as a Community Park with a view to possibly, in the future, exercising their right to purchase the Land through one of the five available Community Right to Buy (CrtB) options.



Fig3: Community Park location

Where

Land bounded by Albion St, Ingram St, Candleriggs and the City Halls / Fruitmarket complex.

The site is currently owned by Glasgow City Property and is leased to NCP for use as a Car Park.

The site currently has Planning Consent for a seven storey building containing 109 flats with commercial units.

See fig 3 for a map showing the identified Land bounded by Yellow Lines.

Why

There are no Community Parks within the MCTCC boundary.

PROJECTS – LAND



Alignment with Planning Policies

This Project aligns with NPF4 Policies 9, 15, 20 and 21

Community parks are vital multi-functional spaces that support **health, wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and community life**. They form part of the essential infrastructure of successful places and directly contribute to the aims of Scotland's NPF4, particularly around local living, climate resilience, and inclusive growth.

Policy 9 Intent

To encourage, promote and facilitate the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings, and to help reduce the need for greenfield development.

Policy 15 Intent

To encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options.

Policy 20 Intent

To protect or enhance blue and green infrastructure and their networks.

Policy 21 Intent

To encourage, promote and facilitate spaces and opportunities for play, recreation and sport.



Policy Outcomes

Health and Wellbeing

- Provide safe, attractive, and accessible spaces for **physical activity**, reducing obesity, cardiovascular disease, and sedentary lifestyles.
- Improve **mental health** by offering green, restorative environments that reduce stress and promote relaxation.
- Encourage **outdoor socialisation and active lifestyles** across all age groups.

PROJECTS – LAND



Social and Community Benefit

- Parks act as **inclusive gathering spaces**, promoting intergenerational use and strengthening community bonds.
- Encourage **volunteering and civic pride** through community gardening, events, and stewardship programmes.
- Contribute to **social equity** by offering free and accessible recreational opportunities for all.

Environmental and Climate Benefits

- Provide important **green infrastructure**, improving air quality, biodiversity, and urban cooling.
- Contribute to **climate resilience** by managing floodwater, reducing urban heat, and increasing tree cover.
- Support **nature recovery** by offering habitats for wildlife and opportunities for environmental education.

Educational and Cultural Value

- Enable **environmental learning and outdoor education** for children and schools.
- Provide space for **arts, culture, and community events**, enriching the social and cultural fabric of neighbourhoods.



Economic and Regeneration Benefits

- High-quality parks enhance the **attractiveness of towns and cities**, supporting tourism, inward investment, and local business activity.
- Contribute to **placemaking and regeneration**, improving perceptions of safety and quality of life.
- Parks support long-term **preventative health benefits**, reducing pressure on public health services.



The above is further echoed throughout Your Merchant City Regeneration Handbook.

PROJECTS – PLACES



PPI Community Hub

What

MCTCC aspires to create a Community Hub in a suitable retail unit, such as any of the ones photographed, with a view to in future exercising its right to purchase the unit through one of the five available Community Right to Buy (CrtB) options.

Where

Several empty retail units in the area have been identified, most commonly owned by Glasgow City Property.

Why

There are no Community Hubs or other facilities within the MCTCC boundary.



POLICY STATEMENTS



PS01 Architectural Aspirations

MCTCC's general view is that development Planning Applications for 'inner city' areas, like Merchant City and Trongate, should be restricted to fit well with adjacent existing, and/ or accepted, established architectural scale, materiality, quality, and tradition.

MCTCC is open to 'modern' architecture that works within these values.

PS02 Existing Architectural Scales, Materiality, Quality, Traditions and Historical Context

Our expectations are that any development design team will undertake studies to explore the architectural heritage of any site under consideration with a view to incorporating legacy lessons learnt into their proposals.

MCTCC recognises that new Development schemes are most likely to be 'modern' in aesthetics, but prefers proposals that have deferred to heritage legacy, learnt from that, and have considered combining a modern approach with 'traditional' existing architectural scale, materiality, quality, detail and tradition.

Our expectations are that new developments are designed to be sympathetic to Glasgow heritage. MCTCC requires that development design teams propose solutions that demonstrate architectural merit with creative character and visual interest, thereby offering solutions that are conducive to the health and wellbeing of the city and its inhabitants.

MCTCC's expectation in particular is that any development design team will take all positive actions to ensure that existing traditional stone facades will be retained within their proposed schematics, with restoration where needed.

MCTCC requires that, in the case where a new development proposes the demolition of existing traditional stone facades, the case for removal is clearly demonstrable and proven by professional testimony AND corroborated by further, independent, professional, '2nd opinion' contribution.

PS03 Architectural Scale, and Tradition/ Tall Buildings

MCTCC accepts financial model cases that require Developments to be tall buildings.

However, this should be in appropriate situations within consented Planning guidelines and/ or accepted parameters. That being the case, MCTCC believe that 'tall' development schemes should still reflect the architectural traditions and history of any site location.

PS04 Financial Viability – Hotel Accommodation

MCTCC is concerned about the amount of hotel accommodation being proposed in central Glasgow. It welcomes usage diversity by development teams, as far as possible encompassing hotel, apart-hotel, residential, and retail opportunities, etc.

MCTCC requires that development teams incorporate designs to facilitate readily- achievable change to that planned in order to accommodate future market change, either during design stages or post construction.

POLICY STATEMENTS



PS05 Financial Viability – Student Accommodation

MCTCC is concerned about the amount of student accommodation being proposed in Glasgow generally, and while we welcome the increased population and the increased ‘ambiance’ that will bring, we are concerned that the proposals for so many students may not be economically ‘sound’ and that, with an emphasis on student accommodation, full traditional residential potential may be compromised.

MCTCC is not against student accommodation, per se, in the right situation. For example, we are supportive of proposals for student accommodation where that restores ‘life’ to derelict, or under-utilised buildings, particularly those of historic and architectural interest.

MCTCC’s view is that the overall amount of planned Glasgow student accommodation may be questionable, possibly not ‘safe’, and is further concerned that if market demand alters then the Developer may be left with vacant floor space to contend with, should no ‘forward planning’ be incorporated.

MCTCC requires that provision is incorporated into any development design to facilitate readily-achievable change to any scheme, at design stage development, or, indeed, to post construction, to accommodate future market change.

PS06 Financial Viability – Housing Accommodation

MCTCC supports development proposals that accommodate usage much needed in the City, primarily full residential accommodation (either housing or apartment).

MCTCC supports development proposals that aim to convert to full residential accommodation upper levels of commercial, or retail-orientated buildings within the City that are not occupied, (either apartments, or assisted/ social housing apartments).

MCTCC supports National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) guidelines in general and in particular on the NPF4 recommended percentage of total housing given over to Assisted/ Social Housing, in any housing Development.

We require that provision is incorporated into any development design to facilitate readily-achievable change to scheme, at design stage development, or indeed to post construction, to accommodate future market change.

PS07 Ground Level Retail, Restaurant and Similar Usage

MCTCC is concerned that, whether hotel, student accommodation, or housing proposals, at Ground level at least there is where appropriate a continuous and consistent retail frontage to discipline the presentation to street, and therefore to promote, maintain and encourage ‘footfall’ and good site ‘animation’.

For any Development scheme MCTCC requires a uniform datum and uniform detailing at ground level that forms a substantially continuous presentation for retail, restaurant and similar usage sub-letting.

POLICY STATEMENTS



PS08 Conflicting or Parallel Development Coordination

MCTCC is concerned that potentially conflicting Development design proposals are advanced with less than acceptable liaison between respective design teams.

We expect full and proper liaison is carried out between respective and conflicts resolved prior presentation for public consultation.

PS09 Contribution to Local Environment Improvement

MCTCC recognises that many areas of Glasgow are less than ideal environmentally.

It supports development proposals that include contributions to local environment street-scape improvements, including 'greening'. Its expectation is that these improvements will include, but not limited to, improved lighting, walkways, street signage, street furniture, and street planting, etc.

Construction sites should not be left derelict for long periods of time. They can become eyesores, detrimental to the wellbeing of local residents and visitors, and to the city's image. We require Glasgow City Council to take appropriate urgent action to have them cleaned up and the requisite planning permission(s) to be expedited and actioned.

PS10 Improvements to Public Facilities

MCTCC's expectation is that any Development proposals should factor in the provision of new, additional 'neighbourhood' facilities, such as public toilets, food provision, medical practices, etc to support anticipated new and increased street 'animation'.

It expects new or enhanced facilities to be supported by robust management strategies to maintain safe 'footfall', encouraging good pedestrian use and good site 'animation'.

Recycling facilities (including paper, plastic, glass, food and textile) should be regularly re-assessed to fit in with public needs and contribute to fulfilment of the Net Zero policies of Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government.

PS11 Integration of and Improvement of Adjacent Thoroughfares

MCTCC's expectation is that proposed development schemes should improve the adjacent street network and surrounding areas.

PS12 Integration of Public Transport

MCTCC requires that any Development enhances the provision of public transport.

PS13 Hard and Soft Landscaping

MCTCC recognises that the Avenues program is the agreed 'backbone' for Glasgow cityscape improvements, both in the MCTCC area and beyond. That supplemented by various Developer-led proposals currently underway. This 'backbone', however, 'Avenues' leaves a whole raft of streets untreated, barren, not contributing to environmental and general wellbeing improvements.

POLICY STATEMENTS



MCTCC supports supplementary 'lighter touch' cityscape tree planting programmes, wherever possible, complementary to 'Avenues', and spreading Avenues influence wider into the MCTCC community.

We require that all hard and soft landscaping schemes are supported by robust management strategies, incorporated to promote and maintain sustainability and encourage pedestrian 'footfall' and good site 'animation'.

Generally, MCTCC supports the expansion of the concept of 'people friendly environments' that enhance the pedestrian wellbeing experience while encouraging attractive business robustness.

We require protection of all existing mature trees within our area, together with proper regular maintenance and watering provision. MCTCC requires that mature trees within our area that have expired are replaced with new mature trees within one calendar season of expiry of the old.

PS14 Environmental Protection

MCTCC anticipates that construction of any development proposals will be disruptive to local residents and passers-by's 'quiet enjoyment'.

It supports development proposals where there is a commitment to Considerate Contractor's schemes and to frequent liaison with neighbours to minimise disruption.

MCTCC would prefer to be participants in in forming any Development's strategy to minimise environmental disruption, including noise.

PS15 Murals

All proposed murals, as defined by the term, shall be required to be submitted for full scrutiny under current and future Planning Applications procedures and regulations.

No installation shall be excluded from such scrutiny whether intended to be of a permanent or temporary nature, and shall be required to obtain full Planning Permission, with or without Conditions.

PS16 River Clyde Bankside

MCTCC supports the redevelopment of the river bankside, and its immediate hinterland and street 'tributaries', within the whole MCTCC curtilage, to the benefit of residents and visitors. That is between (Jamaica) Glasgow Bridge and Albert Bridge.

MCTCC encourages the upgrading of all bridges landing bankside within this catchment area, notably including improvements/ enhancements to lighting and landscaping, but, also, general maintenance. That is; (Jamaica) Glasgow Bridge, the (pedestrian) South Portland Suspension Bridge, Victoria Bridge, City Union (rail) Bridge and Albert Bridge.

It encourages the enabling of potential use of the river for transport and leisure purposes.

POLICY STATEMENTS



PS17 Community Fund

MCTCC's expectation is that if a development within MCTCC requires a developer to contribute to a Community Fund for tree planting or otherwise as compensation for loss of the same on site that money should be spent within MCTCC boundaries and not elsewhere as is the current practice.

PS18 Historic Environment and Public Realm Protection

Within conservation areas and adjoining sites in the Merchant City and Trongate area, any premises with large outdoor displays, poor-quality furniture, and inappropriate advertising that diminish amenity or character and dominate the streetscape, will not be supported.

With respect to Glasgow City Council's placemaking principles, MCTCC supports public spaces within the Merchant City and Trongate area remaining safe, accessible and uncluttered. Outdoor seating, structures or displays that disregard licensing conditions, obstruct pedestrian routes, or compromise inclusion, accessibility and safety will not be supported.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Graffiti

MCTCC's view is that sanctioned street art, of which there are excellent examples in the Merchant City, can attract tourists, boost foot traffic and support local businesses, turning neighbourhoods into cultural destinations. Unauthorised graffiti has the opposite effect.

Unauthorised graffiti within a neighbourhood creates a public perception of crime and neglect.

Further, there is a cost to the city in increased policing associated with the attendant anti-social behaviour. This is most evident within the Clyde Walkway/St Enoch's area which is a Graffiti hotspot.

Unauthorised graffiti:

- damages civic pride;
- encourages anti-social behaviour;
- ruins the aesthetic of historical streets and buildings and monuments.



Impacts on the local economy

- deterring visitors;
- increasing cleanup and maintenance costs for businesses;
- lowering property values;
- deterring investment.

We support a rapid-clean approach facilitated by GCC while encouraging designated, well-managed street art spaces that contribute positively to the cultural fabric of Merchant City and Trongate. We also welcome the creation of local volunteer graffiti cleaning groups to complement council cleaning services.

Currently the only response to the wave of graffiti that is blighting the City including the MC&T area is the provision of "Legal Walls". If this is meant to deter graffiti by providing a "legal space" then the Policy is clearly not working. MCTCC believes that this Policy needs to be reviewed and a more robust policy adopted as outlined above.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Toilet Facilities

MCTCC's view is that the lack of accessible public toilets undermines a welcoming City Centre. We support:

- Investment in upgraded, modern facilities
- The introduction of community toilet schemes with local businesses.

We would like to work productively with GCC to move this forward and note that GCC has announced a public consultation exercise to take place in 2026.

Litter



MCTCC's view is that litter damages Merchant City and Trongate's reputation as a leading cultural and hospitality district. Litter:

- discourages visitors
- encourages the presence of seagulls and pigeons looking for food
- and inconveniences residents and businesses in a variety of different ways.

We support:

- expanded bin provision, including recycling points,
- more frequent collections at peak times.

We also endorse the creation of regular local volunteer litter-picking groups to complement council services. In addition, we call for stronger enforcement against irresponsible disposal, supported by public awareness campaigns and collaboration with local businesses to reduce waste. A cleaner, well-maintained environment is essential to ensuring the area remains safe, attractive and welcoming.

Community Balance and Over-provision

MCTCC supports a balanced night-time economy, recognising the contribution of bars and clubs to the area's vitality. However, MCTCC does not support over-saturation of licensed premises in the Merchant City and Trongate area that generate noise, anti-social behaviour and undermine residential balance and community well-being.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Seagulls and Pigeons

MCTCC's view is that the **excessive** number of **gulls and pigeons** in Merchant City and Trongate poses:

- unacceptable health and environmental risks;
- undermines the attractiveness and liveability of the area.

This issue has not been adequately addressed in recent years, resulting in the current severity of the problem experienced by both **residents** and **businesses**.

MCTCC supports immediate improvements to **litter management** and the expansion of cleansing and recycling facilities to prevent access to food waste and rubbish bags.

We also endorse stronger community awareness campaigns, delivered in partnership with community officers, to engage positively with individuals feeding birds.

These community officers would explain the damaging impact of feeding gulls and pigeons and highlight in a non-confrontational way that enforcement measures, including fines, may follow if “no feeding” signage is ignored.

We further support police and community officer action against persistent feeders who continue to contribute to the problem.

MCTCC also proposes active engagement with local businesses to discourage the sale of bird feed and the installation of clear “no feeding” signage, prioritised in areas where bird populations are most concentrated.

In addition, we call on Glasgow City Council to commission a long-term hawking service to tackle nesting problems and deter large bird populations from returning to the same rooftops year after year.

According to specialists, this is a service that is likely to have a significant and positive impact on the area if implemented correctly over a longer period of time.

Given the scale of the problem, MCTCC believes that only a co-ordinated package of measures combining education, improved waste management, deterrence, enforcement, and hawking, will deliver a lasting and effective solution for the community.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Parades

Whilst MCTCC respects the role of parades in civic expression, we believe that current management is inadequate. Within the Merchant City and Trongate area Parades often cause

- significant inconvenience and disruption to residents and businesses;
- unnecessary opportunities for disorder, obstruction and hate crimes.

MCTCC also deems road closures and the cost of policing parades as an unacceptable inconvenience and cost to taxpayers.

MCTCC supports the position that all parades should eventually be banned from passing through Glasgow City Centre. We propose that

- the number of parades be significantly reduced;
- limited to specifically defined areas in the short term;
- In the longer term, replaced with static gatherings in designated locations.

Strong engagement between organisers, residents, businesses and enforcement agencies must form part of this process to ensure Community safety and respect.

Drug Use and Paraphernalia

MCTCC's view is that discarded drug paraphernalia and visible public drug use pose unacceptable risks to public health, safety and community wellbeing. These issues demand a response that is compassionate in supporting recovery, but firm in protecting the wider community.

We support:

- rapid removal services;
- secure disposal points;
- expanded outreach to connect individuals with treatment and recovery pathways.

We also call on Glasgow City Council and partner agencies to require the use of safe consumption facilities where street use is identified, and to implement all necessary measures to protect residents, businesses and visitors from the ongoing impact of public drug use.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Homelessness and Begging

MCTCC's view is that homelessness and begging must be addressed through

- safe and sustainable housing solutions;
- comprehensive and cohesive wraparound support services;
- public awareness.

While we recognise the vulnerability of those affected and the importance of compassion in responding to their needs, we are equally concerned about the obstruction, safety and hygiene risks caused when individuals occupy

- fire exits;
- cash points;
- Shopfronts;
- transport hubs;
- food establishments

as well as the negative impact on residents, visitors, and local businesses when camping, littering, or urinating in public spaces.

These behaviours create an environment that is anti-social, unhygienic, uncomfortable and unpleasant for residents, shoppers, diners and tourists and is harmful to the reputation of Merchant City and Trongate as a welcoming and compassionate cultural and hospitality district.

Given that services already exist to provide accommodation, health care, and addiction support, which MCTCC would also like to see significantly improved through better coordination between Glasgow City Council and charities, MCTCC also calls on police and community officers to engage proactively with homeless people and beggars, directing them immediately towards appropriate services and interventions and not allowing them to remain where they are on the street.

MCTCC believes that public spaces must be kept clear of obstructions to ensure safety, accessibility and a positive experience for residents, vulnerable citizens, businesses and visitors alike.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Virginia Court

MCTCC calls for close collaboration with police, businesses, landlords, factors and residents to ensure Virginia Court is maintained as a clean, safe and attractive space for visitors and residents alike.

Given the ongoing issues with graffiti, litter, birds, security and drug use in the courtyard, we believe this area should be subject to closer monitoring to prevent it from becoming unsafe and undesirable for those wishing to pass through and/or spend time there.

Virginia Street, Virginia Place and Virginia Lane

MCTCC expects the design and delivery of all plans and projects to prioritise accessibility, safety, and environmental quality, ensuring tangible benefits and attractiveness for residents, businesses and visitors.

All projects should also respect the character of the area and contribute positively to Merchant City's identity as a leading cultural and historical district.

Parnie Street, Stockwell Street, Osborne Street, Trongate & Immediate Neighbourhood

MCTCC's view is that these streets are in urgent need of regeneration. Any investment must respect the historic character of the area while elevating standards to those expected of a high-quality city-centre district. The MCTCC expects full consultation on all development and investment proposals.

APPENDIX 1



Student growth

Over the past decade, Glasgow's student population has risen by approximately **22,155 students**, with **12,220 additional students** joining in the last three years alone Insider. This reflects a strong upward trend in demand, particularly in city-centre zones like Merchant City.

Increase in student accommodation

Since 2015, around 20 new student blocks have been constructed, largely concentrated in the city centre. Developers continue to respond to rising demand by approving large-scale student housing projects—such as a 36-storey tower near Charing Cross that would provide nearly 800 student beds (glasgowstandard.com, The Times.)

City Centre population surge

From 2001 to 2021, the population of the City Centre and Merchant City neighbourhood grew by around **7,800 residents**, representing a **64% increase**—the highest proportional rise among Glasgow's neighbourhoods Understanding Glasgow. **While this includes all residents (not just students), the growth aligns with the boom in purpose-built student accommodation being delivered in the same period.**

Note the list of student residences that currently exist in the City Centre including the Merchant City and Trongate Area are shown over and total **7299 Student Places**..Whilst not all of these are in the Merchant City many border to the extent the impact mentioned in section 1 is felt. Noticeably those on the High Street to the North and South and those in the George Street vicinity.

When the Planned Developments that are in the Pipeline are considered this puts approximately a further **763+** students in the heart of the Merchant City around the Trongate /Osborne Street area and takes the Total number of students living in or around the Merchant City and Trongate Community to **8000+** compared to the resident population in the 2022 census of **4423** which will no doubt consist of residents and students present at the time.

APPENDIX 1



Current City Centre Student Residences

	Address	Capacity
Andrew Ure Hall	1–4 Parsonage Row, High St, G1 1PU	300
Merchant City House	59 Miller St, G1 1EB	181
Merchant Studios	6 Havannah St, G4 0AJ	262
St Andrews Court	St Andrews St, G1 5PW	122
Havannah House	16 Havannah St, G4 0AS	458
Collegelands Phase 1	10 Havanna St, G4 0UD	588
George St Apartments	151 George St, G1 1AB	89
Nido St James	110 St James Road, G4 0PS	416
James Goold Hall	64 Rottenrow East, G4 0NG	66
Murray Hall	Collins St, G4 0NL	70
Clyde House	14 Clyde St, G1 5JH	60
Homes for Students	260 Clyde St, G1 4JH	77
Central House	50 Jamaica St, G1 4QC	66
Unite Students - Blackfriars	4 Blackfriars Road, G1 1QL	520
Clyde Court	Jocelyn Square, G1 5JY	169
Buchanan View	33 Calgary St, G4 0XG	656
Dobbie's Point	200 North Hanover St, G4 0PY	400
Caledonian Court	240 Dobbies Loan, G4 0JF	660
Gallery Apartments	2 Port Dundas Place, G2 3LD	140
Abodus Student Living	110 St James Road, G4 0PS	
Base Glasgow	20 McPhater St, G4 0HN	301
Kyle Park House	171 Kyle St, G4 0DS	465
Foundry Courtyard	214 Kennedy St, G4 0DB	536
Bridle Works	350 Cathedral St, G1 2BQ	422
Martha St Apartments	77 John St, G1 2BS	275

Rows in bold are in the MCTCC area

APPENDIX 1



Student Residence Projects in the Pipeline

All of these proposed Developments are within the MCTCC area

Address	Notes	Capacity
Osborne St/ Old Wynd	Approved 22 Apr 2025	173
137 - 151 Trongate	Reworking existing consents	101
159 Trongate	Conversion of existing offices	16
Granite House (Trongate/ Stockwell St)	Refurbishment of historic block	289
Osborne St /Old Wynd (	Behind old TJ Hughes building	211
Trongate / Hutcheson St	Revision of previous hotel plan	173
George St/High St	Brownfield Site	TBC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Coordination on behalf of MCTCC

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All photographs and images used with
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