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17 November 2020

Dear Jim Corbett,

**Glasgow City Council,  
North Glasgow Strategic Development Framework 2050**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on to the North Glasgow Strategic Development Framework. GoBike is a voluntary organisation campaigning in the Strathclyde area for better infrastructure, policy and political support for cycling. Cycling is a healthy, efficient, sustainable form of travel and should be safe and attractive, the natural choice for short trips, for people of all abilities and ages and using every variety of cycle. The comments which follow are made in the context of GoBike's campaign aims, and of the need to create conditions which make cycling the natural way of getting around for the large numbers of people who currently see it as much too risky and inconvenient.

GoBike notes that the North Glasgow SDF sets out principles which will help in the determination of major planning applications for the next 30 years, rather than providing details for implementation of the topics covered.

The following comments respond to the questions set out in the online consultation form. The final question is answered first because of its importance.

*13. Would you like to make any other comment?*

The timetable for finalising this SDF needs to be revised. Glasgow City Council is currently engaged in a Public Conversation about the future of transport in Glasgow. This SDF, with its 30 year horizon, will determine planning guidance for development of the large areas of derelict land in North Glasgow, with implications for travel and transport for correspondingly large numbers of people. It makes no sense for the guidance to be finalised while the future of transport in Glasgow is debated.

*4. Do you agree with the Vision and Outcomes set out on page 3?*

GoBike supports (with the caveat that follows) the intentions of the Vision and Outcomes. In view of the council's position on climate action, the Connectivity Commission's report and the aim of the City Centre SDF for the streets to be dominated by walkers and cyclists over the car (p27, consultation version) the Connected North outcome needs to be that walking and cycling are the natural choice for short journeys in the area, well before 2050.

*5. Do you agree with the common issues identified on page 7?*

Yes, broadly, but the paragraph on Pedestrian/Cyclist Environment understates the problem. The conditions along the whole length of the arterial routes are a hostile deterrent to people cycling (and unpleasant for walking).

6. *In relation to Spatial Design Strategy Working North section do you agree with principles PR1—PR7 and PR8—PR15 set out on pages 14 and 16? Please explain, making references to the specific Principle(s) as relevant.*

No comment

7. *In relation to Spatial Design Strategy Liveable North section do you agree with principles PR16—PR21 and PR22—PR27 set out on pages 20 and 22? Please explain, making references to the specific Principle(s) as relevant*

PR17 refers to new housing being coupled with 'active travel links'. Two issues arise:

- Separate provision must be made for walking and for cycling. The council's fingerboards assume a speed for people cycling four times faster than for those walking. The two do not mix comfortably.
- The phrase 'active travel links' (or 'walking and cycling links') is insufficiently precise. It could mean a usefully fine-grained network, enabling people to walk or cycle from wherever they are to wherever they want to be. But it could equally be interpreted as a collection of 'links' which is too sparse to be useful. More effective wording for PR17 is "... new housing is coupled with ... excellent public transport, and active travel provision that makes walking and cycling the natural choice for short trips"

8. *In relation to Spatial Design Strategy Connected North section do you agree with principles PR28—PR33 and PR34—PR39 set out on pages 27 and 29? Please explain, making references to the specific Principle(s) as relevant.*

The Active Travel principles (PR34—PR39) are disappointingly unambitious and lacking in commitment.

- PR34 needs to be replaced with the formulation used to describe the Liveable Neighbourhoods Plan for Glasgow which "aims to reduce the city's dependence on cars and make walking, cycling and public transport the first choice." This must be by designing streets, crossings and junctions so that cycling and walking are the normal choice for short trips.
- In PR35 (as well as the points made under PR17 above) 'must' needs to be used instead of 'should'.
- GoBike strongly supports PR36. Overcoming movement barriers presented by roads, railways and canals is vital and must be addressed with urgency.
- Protected cycle infrastructure needs to be delivered much more quickly than currently envisaged by the Avenues North Project (PR37). And a 'supporting network' of 'key streets' will not be enough to entice transformative numbers of people to make cycling their normal choice for short trips.

9. *In relation to Spatial Design Strategy Green North section do you agree with principles PR40—PR47 and PR48—PR51 set out on pages 34 and 36? Please explain, making references to the specific Principle(s) as relevant.*

PR48 aims to "improve the River Kelvin's active travel links to neighbourhoods and centres". This must be read in the context of the statement (p25) that "the River Kelvin Walkway and Canal towpath serve as strategically important active travel corridors". It's unclear what "strategically important" is intended to mean here. The Kelvin Walkway is part of the National Cycle Network (NCN7) from Sunderland to Inverness and is an important route, well used in its North Glasgow sections by people walking and cycling, both for leisure and for journeys with a purpose. But there are sections where its width and condition fall far below those required by up-to-date cycle infrastructure standards. The physical constraints

of some sections mean it cannot be much improved. Even before the current need for social distancing there were often days and times when sections were uncomfortably busy for walkers and for people cycling. It is (and arguably should remain) unlit, so is unsuited for commuter-type travel for much of the year. It cannot be treated as a backbone route onto which additional foot and cycle traffic can be funnelled. The case can be made that such a route, seen as strategically important, needs a 'relief' route to separate leisure and utility users.

PR49 aims "to improve ... active travel links along the canal." Again, this must be read in the context of the statement (p25) that "the River Kelvin Walkway and Canal towpath serve as strategically important active travel corridors". As with the Kelvin Walkway, the canal towpath is well used by people walking and cycling, both for leisure and for journeys with a purpose. Physical constraints mean that the capacity of the path cannot be much increased. The aim of using the canal for more leisure activities conflicts with its use as a travel corridor. The towpath cannot be treated as a backbone route capable of absorbing much additional traffic.

10. *In respect of the SDF's Vision, Outcomes, Common Issues and Spatial Design Strategy is there anything which requires greater emphasis or is missing from the document? Please explain, making reference to the section concerned.*

To achieve the aim of a healthy, high quality North Glasgow as a place to live and work there must be recognition that every decision affecting travel in and through the area (not just in new developments) must prioritise permeability for walking and cycling, (with safe infrastructure, crossings and junctions) over motor traffic.

11. *The SDF includes an initial action programme (pages 42—45), do you agree with the actions set out? Are there other actions which should be added? Please explain.*

- GoBike strongly welcomes action PR36 to deliver new active travel crossings.
- The remaining actions to improve conditions for active travel are welcome, but lack ambition in scope and timescale. To achieve the modal shift envisaged by other council policies the thinking and language needs to change away from 'active travel projects', 'active travel network', 'key streets', and the like. There is already a network for walking and cycling; it's just that it's dominated by motor traffic. Action is needed to create safe, attractive conditions for cycling in the neighbourhoods where people already live, for example:
  - Applying the principles set out in *Designing Streets* in every neighbourhood. As one instance, all new turnings from existing streets must be built with tight radii so that all drivers have to slow down before turning.
- If/when the large areas of derelict land within this SDF area are developed for housing the transport choices of all the people who live there will have an impact not just within the new developments, but also in neighbouring areas and the city centre. Those transport choices will be strongly influenced by the road layouts and connections for active travel and public transport, all of which need to be the subject of strong planning policy. Actions need to be defined to make the following possible:
  - Making the *Designing Streets* (or updated version) principles mandatory in new developments
  - Finding ways to prevent industrial revolution land-holding boundaries from defining and constraining the form of new developments and limiting their permeability for active travel. (The Ruchill Hospital historic boundary and wall are doing this in the current planning application for that site.)
  - Constructing a framework within which major new developments can require a significant upfront payment and annual fee from any resident wishing to park on the site, and/or require that while drivers may load and unload at their homes cars must be parked at the edge of the site,

Requiring that major planning applications include a plan of safe, direct walking and cycling routes to all local trip generators (shops, schools, leisure centres, parks, libraries, segregated cycle routes on main roads, public transport hubs). Where the flying-crow route would include a hill challenging for people with buggies, cycles, wheelchairs or laden shopping trolleys the planned route must make the shortest diversion compatible with an acceptable slope. This mandatory active travel plan must take priority over the bin lorry SPA.

- There needs to be an action to find ways to use the pop-up soft-segregated cycle lanes created under 'Space for Distancing' as stepping stones to better, permanent infrastructure with more protection at junctions.

12. *Do you have a comment on any other part of the document? (Please specify the section, page number or diagram title) What is your comment? (Please provide as much detail as possible, including what you would like to see changed and why.*

- The Active Travel Principles Diagram (p31) shows the Kelvin Walkway and canal towpath as 'existing assets'. It needs to be acknowledged that while these are important for leisure and some purposeful active travel, they have limited potential for adding significantly to the number of active travel journeys.
- Appendix D Avenues North Project (p65)
  - The first column admirably summarises the case for making main arterial roads safe for cycling. However, the timescale for the work that can make cycling the normal choice for local journeys is desperately unambitious for a council which has declared a climate emergency.
  - The statement labelled 'Medium term' near the bottom of the central column must be removed. The idea of turning existing pavements into shared pedestrian and cycle surfaces has no place in a strategic document. People walking and cycling move at very different speeds, have different needs, and all dislike this compromise. Shared footways is an outmoded concept and must not be used.
  - The statement about "... *redesign[ing] the overall street in favour of pedestrians and cyclists* (foot traffic and cycle traffic) – *taking away a lane or lanes from road* (meaning motor) *traffic...*" must be an immediate action rather than pushed back to 'long term'. The road space already redesignated to create 'Space for Distancing' must be preserved and used as the basis for permanent change.

We trust that you will give our submission due consideration and we will be pleased to discuss any concepts that we have included with you.

Yours sincerely



Tricia Fort  
for Consultations, GoBike