

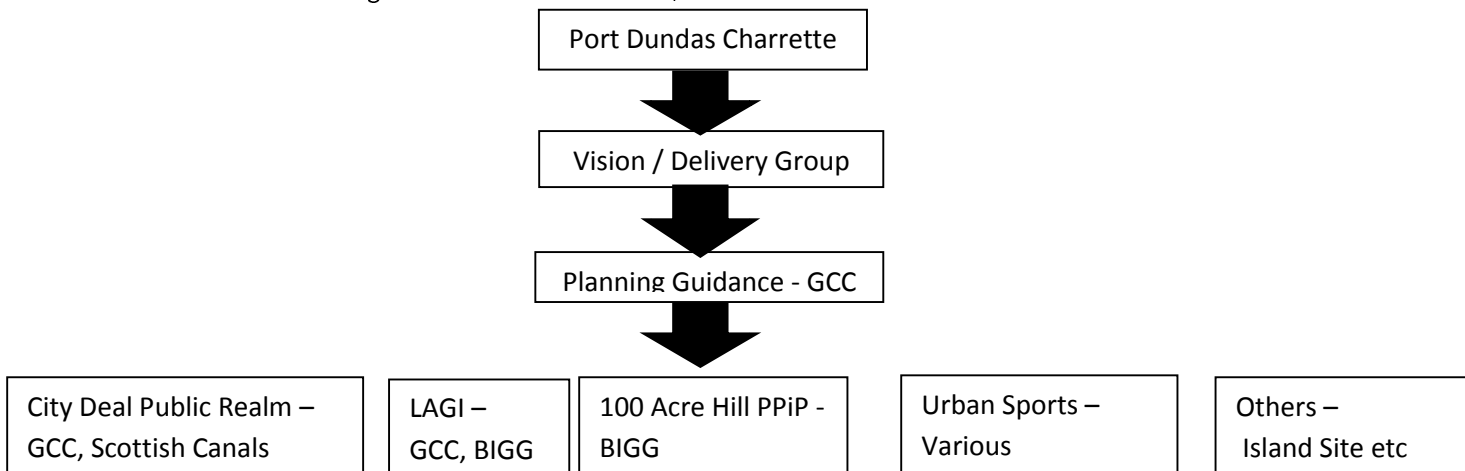
# Port Dundas Regeneration Strategy

January 2015

## A Place for the Urban Pioneer

### 1. Introduction

- The Port Dundas Planning Charrette - held in March and April 2014 - concluded that Port Dundas represents; a strategically significant opportunity for change; one that can build on the momentum already underway; and benefit from the strengths of the area whilst tackling the challenges; to create a place with a distinctive character; accommodating a mix of uses; but leaving no part behind.
- This paper sets out a basic Strategy for delivery of the project, with the framework being suggested as follows – this effectively envisages that there will be an over-riding Vision and Planning Guidance in place for the area as a whole, allowing for the component parts to come forward as and when possible, in something of a cohesive manner;



- However, in proposing any such Framework, it is important to remember that *“culture eats strategy for breakfast”*, (Peter Drucker). It will therefore be equally as important that the mind-set, beliefs and behaviours of all partners involved are aligned and that these are deeply embedded at every stage of delivery.
- These beliefs and behaviours must strike the perfect balance between supporting the ‘good stuff’, whilst protecting against ‘more of the same’. The mindset must be open and dynamic and must not put shackles on the urban pioneer. It must be supporting to those who take risks; encouraging these people to bring forward projects that are imaginative and exciting - but it must be strong enough to say ‘no’ when the quality does not match aspirations.

## 2. Vision

### - **Past**

- Port Dundas was once an important part of the City. It was once a place with a purpose. As Wikipedia reveals;
  - o The Port Dundas terminus was established at One Hundred Acre Hill between 1786 and 1790 and was named after [Sir Lawrence Dundas](#), one of the major backers of the Forth and Clyde Canal Company. Port Dundas formed the terminus of a branch of the [Forth and Clyde Canal](#) in the centre of Glasgow, linking to the adjacent [Monkland Canal](#).
  - o It was an industrial centre in the 19th century, with textile mills, chemical works, granaries, distilleries, glassworks, iron foundries, power stations and engineering works all operating in the area.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1859, a brick chimney was built at Port Dundas for F. Townsend. At 454 feet (138 m) it was the [tallest chimney](#) in the world at the time.
- This chimney was something special. Signifying in a strong, but simple way, that Port Dundas was a beating heart that provided the City with some of its pulse - the coal fired Pinkston Power Station generated the electricity for the City's network of trams, which had been electrified for the opening of the International Festival in 1901.
- And, the area was also home to one of the largest distilleries in the world, with a tall chimney that came to dominate the skyline of north Glasgow. When Alfred Barnard visited in 1885, (under a commission from Harper's Weekly Digest to visit every distillery in the UK), he wrote:
  - o *Port Dundas was a "scene of great commercial activity". The port was "...strange to say, at the top of a hill over-looking the city. The appearance of ships' masts in such a position, over-topping the houses, presented to us a peculiar surprise". The buildings were of great height on the side of a steep hill "one of them forming the highest point in Glasgow."*
- However, in a familiar tale, this industrial function declined during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Monkland Canal was closed. And filled in to become the M8. A motorway that severed the connection from Port Dundas to the city centre. The power stations and distilleries closed. The chimneys were demolished. Land became vacant. Overgrown. Not a single bus in sight. Crumbling canals. Filled with the flotsam of urban decay. And with each act, the area lost more and more of its identity. It became isolated. Excluded. It was wasting away. And worst of all. It had become forgotten. "Port where?".

### - **Present**

- That was then. This is now. Port Dundas is changing. For the better, again. Something has definitely started. The makings of a vision can be seen through the blight. The first seeds to be sown are;
  - o Opening of Pinkston Watersports
  - o Launch of Glasgow's Wake Park
  - o Re-energising of 100 Borron Street
  - o Funding being secured for a new Skatepark
  - o Hosting of the first events as part of the Sonica Arts Festival
  - o Emergence of Speirs Locks as a creative neighbourhood
- Ok, it may not yet be pretty, but the message is clear – Port Dundas, (together with its sister neighbourhood at Speirs Locks), is becoming a place of pilgrimage for the urban pioneer. Creative businesses. Urban sports. The arts. Cultural education. Student housing. All with a canal gently flowing at its heart.

- Every one of these pioneering tribes has one thing in common – they can spot the true potential of the place. They may not know about indices of multiple deprivation, (important as these are). They may not care about iconic buildings, (nice as these maybe). But they know when a place is going to change. When it promises to be a little bit different. A little bit daring. It's intuition. It's what Wayne Hemingway calls "the eye".
- This emerging mix has the genuine potential to grow to the extent that the neighbourhood will become a truly creative and healthy place, demonstrating the central role that creativity & culture; and sport & healthy living can play in urban regeneration.
- This is particularly pertinent for Glasgow, which "is Scotland's creative powerhouse, producing artistic and cultural work that is both crucial to the nation's economy and Glasgow's unique distinction as a vibrant destination, enjoyed by citizens and tourists alike", (Glasgow Life). And of course, Glasgow 2014 has provided the inspiration for a lasting legacy in terms of participation in sport and engendering a sense of community spirit.
- This process of creative city development is now well established in Glasgow – the Myerscough Report in 2011 charted the growth since it was the European City of Culture in 1990.
  - o *"The cultural sector has a workforce of some 5,362 people. Additionally, Glasgow has the greatest concentration of the creative industries in Scotland, and one of the largest in the UK outside London, which employ a further 24,632. The workforce of the cultural sector and the creative industries together equate to 7% of Glasgow's employment total", (Glasgow Life).*
- At Port Dundas, 'arts, entertainment and recreation' already account for 15% of the workforce, and the potential to build upon this is huge, which will contribute further to the success of the city;
  - o "Places provide the ecosystems that harness human creativity and turn it into economic value", (Richard Florida, The Rise of the Creative Class).
- And beyond these pioneers, there are committed plans by the City Council too – these focus on bringing forward the £250m transformation of nearby Sighthill. The proposals include for housing, a school and student accommodation.
- Central to these plans is a new pedestrian bridge and cycleway over the M8, which will ensure that Port Dundas is well connected to the city once again.
- **Future**
- Of course, there's a long way to go. These first seeds are only that. Seeds. But the vision is that the place will build upon these creative and sporting foundations to become an enduring and successful location, renowned for the 'right reasons', and embedded once again deep within the city psyche.
- What will that place be? What will it be renowned for?
- Well, it's as important to think about what it won't be first. And in that respect, there are no better words of guidance than those from Jane Jacobs;
  - o *"It appears that the rebuilt portions of cities and endless new developments are reducing cities to a monotonous, un nourishing gruel".*
- These concerns were echoed during the Charrette process, which concluded that the Vision and Framework for Port Dundas must be different – it must be an alternative solution to the challenge of urban renewal. It must envisage Port Dundas becoming a world class creative mixed use area, with a quite unique

blend of urban sports and active recreation, new homes and independent workspace, and open space and art.

- Together, these will blend such that Port Dundas becomes renowned for healthy living and creativity, satisfying the criteria for a creative place;
  - o “There are 4 main categories of creative place: *stimulation*, where the mind is inspired: *reflection*, for uninterrupted focus: *collaboration*, where ideas are shared and built: and *play*, where experimentation occurs”, (Kursty Groves, I Wish I Worked There).

- **Place Making Ambitions**

- No place is quite the same. No place quite offers the same opportunity as Port Dundas. But to help guide the place-making process, exemplars from elsewhere have been presented below, with reference to some of the likely main drivers for change. These also relate to the process promoted by Jan Gehl, “First life. Then spaces. Then buildings: the other way round never works”.
- Where possible, all of these examples are from areas that experienced substantial change, and where the issues were similar – vacant land, edge of city locations, former industrial areas etc;

- o Urban Sports, Active Recreation & Meanwhile Uses
  - *Vision - Port Dundas will become renowned as being a place full of experiences and activities, from urban sports that generate buzz, to urban design that encourages active lives.*
  - Inspiration - Orestad, Copenhagen, (Urban Sports)
  - Inspiration – De Ceuvel, Amsterdam, (Meanwhile Uses – Shipyard)
- o Public Realm & Social Spaces
  - *Vision – Port Dundas will have oodles of open space, (a green and blue network), and feel a world away from the city centre. But only a 10 minute walk. These canalside and hilltop spaces will combine to become a destination for the people of Glasgow to embrace and enjoy. They will and provide an important stage for city life.*
  - Inspiration – Malmo, BO01 (waterside)
  - Inspiration – Northala Fields, (land art); Park Guell (hilltop)
- o Art
  - *Vision – to help transform the space into a place, and give it an identity of its own, the vision is to embed art in all that is done in the area. This will include an opportunity to signify and celebrate the regeneration through the delivery of a significant artwork at the top of the hill. The opportunistic and incremental must also be encouraged.*
  - Inspiration – Keith Haring, Crack is Wack
  - Inspiration – Nathan Coley, A Place Beyond Belief
  - Inspiration – Playable Cities
  - Inspiration – Jupiter Artland
- o Mix of Uses, (SEE PLAN IN CHARRETTE REPORT, PAGE 30 – SHOWS SPATIAL MIX)

- *Vision – as noted in the Charrette Report, it is envisaged that, over time, the ongoing transition, combined with infrastructure and public realm investment, will encourage development of a distinct City Centre quarter at Port Dundas, with a mix of uses from residential and leisure to education and employment. Specifically;*
      - Port Dundas as a key leisure focus and residential location in North Glasgow (reinforcing Speirs Locks)
      - A destination on the canal as a visitor, leisure & recreation resource
      - Intensification of cultural and creative sector activity particularly between the canal and the City Centre;
      - An increase in business activity in Craighall Business Park and the M8 Food Park; and the introduction of residential to create a mix of uses.
      - Improved physical and functional links to surrounding neighbourhoods, the City Centre and the Glasgow Caledonian University campus
      - Inspiration – Malmo Western Harbour, Amsterdam Eastern Docklands
  - Creative and cultural industries
    - *Vision – to build on the emerging creative cluster at Speirs Locks to become an important breeding ground for creative companies and artistic pursuits. 100 Borrone Street will be central to this.*
    - Inspiration - NDSM Werf, Amsterdam
    - Inspiration – Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam
  - Connectivity & Public Transport
    - *Vision – in theory, Port Dundas sits cheek by jowl with the city centre, and all its attractions and services. In reality, it does not, as connections are so poor. Therefore, the Vision must be to vastly improve the availability and attractiveness of sustainable travel options, including public transport, cycling and walking. It will only be possible to realise the potential of Port Dundas as a place if this is achieved. A major first step towards realising this will be the delivery of the new bridge over the M8 at Sighthill. Port Dundas must make the most of this connection. Radical improvements to Dobbies Loan underpass will also be needed early in the programme, to enhance its attractiveness and safety for pedestrians and cyclists is critical. We envisage that provision of parking will be primarily for car clubs.*
    - Inspiration - Mile End Park Living Bridge, High Line New York
  - Environmental Sustainability
    - *Vision – to encourage more sustainable patterns of living, and embed this into the project attitude at every step of the way, from design to end management. Issues to consider will include; incorporating a green and blue infrastructure plan into the urban design; improving walking and cycling connections and public transport availability; exploring connections to renewable energy and CHP networks.*
    - Inspiration – Hammarby Sjostad
    - Inspiration – Malmo BO01, (Suds)

- Inspiration – Vauban, Freiburg
- Inspiration – Eco-Viikki Village, Helsinki
- Urban Design / Architecture
  - *Vision – Glasgow has a tradition of good urban design. The framework for Port Dundas must follow in this tradition, and put in place a simple set of enduring rules that people believe in. This will allow for the place to be built out over time, by many hands, which will ensure that a rich character develops. There must also be opportunities for buildings, art or spaces that are brave and bold. That stand out from the crowd.*
  - Inspiration – Park Circus, Crown Street, Homes for the Future, Glasgow
  - Inspiration – Java Island & Borneo Sporenburg, Amsterdam
  - Inspiration – Homeruskwartier, Almere, Holland
  - Inspiration – Malmö, BO01
  - Inspiration – Arabia Waterfront, Helsinki

- **Delivery Model**

- Design ambition is only one side of the coin.
- The process also needs to attract the pioneers and enable the vision. Central to this will be Custom Build. Just think: **People Make Glasgow**. And Port Dundas will provide the perfect platform. Enabling these pioneers to realise their visions quickly and effectively will therefore underpin the delivery model.
- These exemplars often also demonstrate an equally strong, high level civic leadership and delivery partnership, one that endures over time, and has a commitment to the long term delivery and promotion of the place, as a whole.
- Therefore, to successfully realise the Vision, there must be an absolute alignment between the place making ambition for the place; the delivery strategy; and productive public sector investment and support.
- If this is achieved, Port Dundas will be something special. Be prepared to set sail for a different world.