



Sustainable Glasgow  
Neighbourhoods and Sustainability  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Response to Climate Emergency Implementation Plan 2020**

The Strathbungo Society is a community organisation that represents people living in Strathbungo, part of which is a conservation area.

We welcome the fact that the Climate Emergency Plan contains proposals to address the nature emergency as well as the climate emergency. While the plan contains many worthy aspirations, it is short on meaningful actions that will deliver them. More specifically, there is no attempt to cost the overall investment required, only that this will be "substantial", nor to describe where this will come from. While reference is made to various Scottish Government revenue streams, e.g. the new £1.6bn for energy efficiency, what proportion of this will come to the city and its impact is not explained.

Part of our interest in these matters is that (like much of Glasgow) Strathbungo comprises older housing stock – tenements, 19th century townhouses and 20th century terraces – all of which pose considerable challenges in terms of energy consumption. We cannot see how the issues will be addressed without support from public authorities but see little sign of this in the plan. For example, the proposal "Upgrade insulation and heating of all building stock in the city, city council leading by example" suggests that responsibility for private stock is simply going to be passed on to homeowners. We believe that many homeowners will be unable to be able to afford this without some support, particularly in the conservation area where meeting standards can be particularly costly. We would like to see the cost and design implications of applying the tenement passivhaus pilot to all houses and flats in our area and in respect of Grade A and Grade B listed buildings. The challenge is immense. Given the Council is short of resources, two ways it could help would first be to sponsor further the development of further model specifications for retrofitting different types of older buildings and second to advocate for the abolition of VAT on insulation materials. In a tenement in a conservation area, it can cost over £3000 just to double-glaze the living room windows.

The other major housing challenge is to "Increase the amount of renewable energy such as solar thermal, PV or heat pumps in the city to represent 20 % of total energy demand.". Setting targets, however "ambitious", as proposed in the plan, won't in itself change anything. For buildings that may never become energy neutral, new forms of heating like heat pumps become even more important. The plan says little about the opportunities to use heat pumps or communal heating systems in areas of intensive housing like ours. We see considerable potential but, for this to happen, land needs to be made available to sink holes deep into the ground and a means need to be created that enables projects to go ahead if the majority of a community support it. It might well be possible to put in underfloor heating powered by a heat pump along our terraces

but, unless there is a mechanism to make this happen, projects are unlikely to get off the ground. Our understanding of the legal position is if one house owner disagrees, that could scupper a whole project. We have experience of this with our project about 20 years ago to improve our back lanes. It collapsed when a handful of homeowners refused to co-operate.

The Council though, as the largest landowner in the city, has also a crucial role to play in making its land available to support community projects. For example, the Council at present is trying to sell off land formerly occupied by Crossmyloof Care Home, a small portion of which could potentially be used to power some of the houses in the gardens. There must be hundreds of examples in Glasgow but the plan is silent about this.

Related to this, while there are statements in the plan about changing the way the Council manages its land, there is no commitment in the plan to make Council land available to local communities for other greening projects. In our own case for example, there is considerable interest at present in using a strip of land running along the railway (part of the land formerly occupied by Crossmyloof Care Home) to create a new footpath to significantly improve walking and cycling connections in the area. The challenge at present is that the Council appears to rely on disposal of assets to make up for shortfalls in revenue. We believe there needs to be a rethink about how the Council uses its landed estate to assist local communities in greening projects.

We welcome the plans to encourage the use of electric vehicles, particularly through car clubs to reduce pollution and the number of cars in the city. Strathbungo is comprised of narrow roads and pavements overburdened by private cars. A pilot project to win residents' consent to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and non-vehicular transport in Strathbungo coupled with e vehicle and car club charging bays should be considered.

Lastly, while there are many worthy aspirations in terms of parks and trees, the aspirations bear no resemblance at present to reality. The Council has a poor record of protecting trees, treating them as a bother rather than an asset, and provided us as a local community with very little support in our own battles with Network Rail to preserve a green corridor along the railway. On the other side of the road, the run-down of Queen's Park, which has been thronged during the Covid crisis, is extremely sad to see. This reinforces the point that without resources and significant investment, many of the aspirations in the plan will never be realised.

Yours Sincerely,  
Jane Carolan  
(Chair)