



**Queens Cross Workspace Ltd**  
part of the Queens Cross Group

# **Business Plan 2020 – 2025 Consultation Document**

**December 2020**

## Contents

<b>Item</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	<b>Chair's welcome</b>	3
2	<b>Chief Executive's foreword</b>	4
3	<b>About Queens Cross Workspace</b>	5-7
4	<b>Shared vision and values</b>	8
5	<b>Our mission and key objectives</b>	9
6	<b>Achievements 2018-20</b>	10-11
7	<b>How we plan to achieve our aims by 2020</b>	12-14
	- Service development	
	- Asset management	
	- Community impact	
8	<b>Governance &amp; Covid-19</b>	15
9	<b>Measurement &amp; reporting</b>	15
	Appendix 1: Service Plan 2020-25	16-17

## 1. Chair's welcome

Queens Cross Workspace continues to develop our business, and the next five years open up opportunities to both expand our range of business space and to improve the quality of services we offer to support the local economy and the community. Our business planning process has been more consultative than ever before, to ensure that we reflect the views of local stakeholders in the 2020-25 plan, which continues our focus on the mission **“to challenge inequality by stimulating local economic growth”**.

With QC Workspace now in our 35<sup>th</sup> year in operation, we have seen that the only constant in our environment is change. Just as the company reached this milestone in 2020, and celebrated our most sustained period of financial health, we were hit, with the rest of the country, with the challenge of a public health pandemic - Coronavirus. With much of the economic impact of this unprecedented crisis yet to crystallise, the charity directors know that our plans need to be flexible and our response agile if we are to protect both our business and our tenants' businesses in the inevitable economic recession.

Continuing to deliver our business plan will be a challenge, but we recognise the importance of delivering on key priorities to sustain local employment when so many jobs are threatened across the country. For our tenants and our community, our role in helping to support and develop local enterprise is essential, so that they can survive in the short term and thrive in the longer term.

Finally, the current economic crisis shouldn't mean that we take our eyes off the global environmental crisis, as the future prospects for QC Workspace depend on successfully addressing both. In the next five years, we will be working together with tenants to make our businesses more sustainable, more conscious of the environmental impact of our buildings, services and systems, to play our part in reducing climate change.

This plan covers our next five years, but, as a community anchor, our vision must always be long term, and we will work to ensure Queens Cross Workspace is a positive force for regeneration for many years to come.

Ian McLean  
**Chair**

## 2. Chief Executive's foreword

The Queens Cross Group has one aim over the next five years, to demonstrably improve the lives of the people who live in our neighbourhoods.

Queens Cross Workspace has helped to shape the Group's Vision for 2020-25, and our business plan sets out our contribution to achieving this. Our plan has been devised following an extensive process of consultation, ensuring our stakeholders and community partners were invited to comment on our future direction.

As part of the Queens Cross Group, we pride ourselves in being the anchor that holds our community together. The organisations within the Group provide essential services, support to individuals, and work to represent and enable our diverse communities in northwest Glasgow.

Each part of the Group has its own role to play, working with sections of the local population, and for Queens Cross Workspace that role is to support the local economy, providing employment opportunities and skills development, underpinned by our affordable business premises. We work with Queens Cross Housing Association (QCHA) to support local employment and promote community enterprise, and, along the way, create thriving, dynamic neighbourhoods – good places to live and to work.

In the next five years, the Group aims to contribute to building a wellbeing economy, underpinning our business aspirations and decisions with the ultimate goal of creating a fairer, more sustainable, society. For Queens Cross Workspace, this means that our business plan for 2020-25 has a particular focus on creating a resilient business infrastructure capable of nurturing small businesses and community-focussed enterprise, enabling better economic opportunities in our neighbourhoods.

We have made a fantastic start in transforming our neighbourhoods and providing high quality workspaces and accessible employment. In the next five years, Queens Cross Workspace will ensure that our Workspace customers are supported and will play a part in sustaining the transformation.

Shona Stephen  
**Chief Executive**  
**Queens Cross Group**

### 3. About Queens Cross Workspace

Queens Cross Workspace Ltd is a local economic development company operating in the North West sector of Glasgow. We provide good quality, affordable premises to let to community groups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), social enterprise and commercial operators to support and generate employment and training opportunities for local people.

QC Workspace is a not-for-profit community based company, registered in Scotland (No. SC006821). Having commenced trading in 1985, we are now in our thirty-fifth year of operation. Our property portfolio is diverse, containing 80 units from small single retail units to large office blocks - approximately 100,000 square feet of lettable space in total. Our assets are valued at over £12m and we have an annual turnover of £800k.

Part of the Queens Cross Group of companies, we are governed through a voluntary Board of up to nine Directors, elected by the shareholders annually. As a subsidiary of QCHA, the Housing Association's Board nominates two members to serve also on the Workspace Board, and one of these acts as the parent representative on our Board, ensuring the two organisations' strategies are closely aligned.

Workspace has a mission **“to challenge inequality by stimulating local economic growth.”** This statement was agreed by the Board at a planning event in March 2018, but the sentiment aligns with the charitable objectives set out when the organisation was established in 1985:

- i) The relief of poverty and distress by the alleviation of unemployment and the improvement of housing and community facilities.
- ii) To provide and assist in the provision of training opportunities with a view to teaching particular skills which will assist people to find work.

Our area of operation has seen significant investment in the last thirty years but still contains some of the poorest communities in Scotland, as assessed in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Firhill data zone SIMD2020). The area has a diverse, multi-cultural demographic but there is evidence of significant social economic issues. It scores particularly poorly in income (392nd worst data zone), employment (419th), health (77th), education and skills (153rd), and crime (952nd) which illustrates that the area faces multiple deprivation issues.

Working closely with QCHA for over thirty years, Workspace has been able to focus on the social and economic regeneration of the local area whilst the

Housing Association has focused on the improvement of housing and neighbourhoods. Large-scale physical regeneration projects such as at Westercommon and Woodside have provided scope for co-ordinated investment by both organisations to maximize the benefits to the community.

Working hand in hand with the housing association, in 2004, QC Workspace was instrumental in establishing Queens Cross Community Foundation (formerly Garscube Community Foundation), a local charity focused on fundraising support to community projects, voluntary organisations and individuals. For the last 16 years, the Foundation has made the relief of poverty in the Queens Cross area, their goal. QC Workspace makes regular donations to the Foundation and supports in particular their Community Chest – a skills and opportunities fund for young people.

### **Our Challenges and Opportunities**

Our operating environment is continuously evolving and, as well as producing opportunities to develop our activities and increase our impact, this also presents us with challenges. As part of our business planning process, we reviewed the environment to identify the most significant themes that are emerging to ensure that actions to address these were incorporated in our future strategy.

**Covid-19** - Whilst developing our new business plan in 2020, QC Workspace was confronted by an enormous challenge as a result of the Coronavirus public health crisis, and the Government restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the virus. QC Workspace has been successful in maintaining its core services, supporting our tenants and protecting their businesses despite the crisis.

During lockdown, our offices temporarily closed to the public, but our team adapted quickly to work from home, and established new ways of communicating with our customers. We offered tailored support measures to tenants who were most effected by the restrictions, and new health and safety measures were adopted across our premises, so customers who were able to keep operating their businesses, could do so safely. However, it was far from business as usual and some key learning has taken place around the opportunities and limitations of digital technology for service delivery which need to be addressed.

The economic impact of the virus is already devastating, with significant job losses across a number of sectors which may take some time to recover. This recession is predicted to impact particularly on young people, who do not yet have the valuable skills and experience to secure employment in a highly competitive market. Government assistance is already being offered to

employers to incentivise training and employment of younger workers and QC Workspace can have a key role in stimulating employability programmes in our area.

**Brexit** – The uncertainty caused by the British exit from the EU is being felt in all sectors of the economy, but the impact is more significant for start-ups and SMEs, which are our target market. We anticipate that these new and growing businesses will find the post-Brexit environment challenging with capital investment and grant assistance in short supply, and less predictability in the marketplace.

We will need to do more to provide a support system through signposting funding sources, and encouraging better networking between new and established Workspace tenants to exchange market insight and advice. We will also be doing our best to reduce premises costs, and to make our buildings more affordable, to improve our offer to customers.

**Growth** - The quality, range and affordability of the QCW assets provides the foundation for attracting new and diverse business to our area, enabling us to develop the local economy. We still have ambitions to continue to grow our market, and we have identified unmet demand for additional retail space locally and catering premises that are in short supply. We have also yet to create the business incubator space identified as a target in our last Business Plan.

We are keeping our eyes open for potential acquisition opportunities and have new retail space under development within Woodside. We also want to build our reputation for stimulating social enterprise and are working on a new community café initiative to showcase this.

**Green business** – The key to our successful track record over 35 years has been awareness of community concerns and our adaptability. As the protection of the environment has become an increasing priority for the general public, community businesses like ours must respond by reviewing our operations and premises to maximize sustainability.

Such a review offers both environmental and business benefits as not only will we make a positive contribution to reducing climate change, but can promote our environmental credentials to attract and retain tenant businesses who share our concerns.

## 4. Shared vision and values

Queens Cross Workspace is part of the Queens Cross Group alongside Queens Cross Housing Association, Queens Cross Factoring and Queens Cross Community Foundation.

The Group Plans are the result of consultations and conversations with our customers, staff and Board members. With this evidenced knowledge as our starting point we have been able to lay out a plan that addresses the challenges and opportunities of the next five years.

Queens Cross Workspace's activity is delivered within the context of the wider Group's vision and values and all activity is designed to deliver against the key strategic aims outlined in the Group Vision 2025.

### Vision

Excellent housing in vibrant communities

### Values

Our values guide everything we do. Whenever we make decisions, we refer to these values to make sure we are doing the right thing.

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Respect</b>    | We see the positive in everyone, we treat everyone fairly                    |
| <b>Integrity</b>  | We provide solutions based on sound information that improves people's lives |
| <b>Aspiration</b> | We seek new opportunities and welcome change                                 |

### Strategic aims

The Group's strategic aims are:

- Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods
- Creating and supporting greater life opportunities for all
- Developing greener spaces and community wellbeing
- Being a dynamic and listening community partner
- Treating people equally and with respect



## 5. Our mission & key objectives

Queens Cross Workspace's mission for 2020-25 is:

**To challenge inequality by stimulating local economic growth.**

We want to be a force for good in our community, and to have a real impact on people's lives and economic opportunities. Our mission helps us focus on what's important, to deliver a sustainable business infrastructure, creating employment, skills development and training options for individuals, and to maximize the benefits to the wider Queens Cross community.

We have agreed three key objectives that will help us to achieve our mission:

1. To undertake a process of **Service Development** that will underpin the sustainability of our services and build our reputation
2. To invest for the future, implementing a clear **Asset Management** strategy that secures the Workspace legacy
3. To engage with our customers and business networks to maximize **Community Impact**, focusing support where it's needed in our community.

In addition to these top-line objectives, we have also agreed that our business plan should include specific governance and Covid-19 objectives.

## 6. Achievements 2018-2020

We have achieved much over the past two years. Our previous business plan was ambitious, setting out twelve key objectives to work on over a short timeframe. However the work that went into developing the plan paid off and, with a clear direction and focus, eight objectives have been achieved in full, and substantial progress has been made on the remaining four.

### Governance

- We've changed our structure, entered into the Queens Cross Group, and are establishing the intra-group relationships.
- The move into QC Group was unanimously supported by our shareholders and promoted by the charity Directors.
- We've strengthened our Board, and undertaken a skills audit to ensure we have effective leadership. There's more work to do on succession planning and providing training and development opportunities to our Directors.
- We've undertaken a comprehensive Business Planning process within the Group to develop a co-ordinated Group strategy.

### Business Focus

- We've developed our market analysis and have greater insight on which business sectors are growing in our area. We still have work to do to plan service developments with our customers.
- We have completed a Stock Condition Survey and are now developing our long term investment plan.
- We're now active in local and national social enterprise networks and have built our profile as a good place for SMEs to start up and grow.
- A community café project is under development but there's more work to do to create training opportunities in our local community.
- Joint work with QCHA and the Queens Cross Community Foundation (formerly Garscube Community Foundation) has been successful and we are maximizing our social regeneration impact through the Community Chest initiative.

### Managing Finance

- We've worked hard on financial planning and management, meeting our target surplus level each year.
- Capital repayments have been maintained, bringing down borrowing costs and freeing significant resources for future investment.
- We have contained our staffing cost through effective review of the Service Level Agreement with QCHA.

Reflecting on just how much progress we have been able to make since 2018, has made us determined to set ambitious targets for the next five years, and has renewed our enthusiasm to see what more we can deliver for our customers and the wider community.

## 7. How we plan to achieve our aims by 2025

**Key objective 1:** To undertake a process of **Service Development** that will underpin the sustainability of our services and build our reputation

Continuing to develop our services is what will ensure the ongoing viability of our business for the future, so we can deliver our charitable objectives and be a force for good in our community. Technology can be a key tool in making our services as efficient and effective as possible.

We need to keep focus on our customers and the community we serve, reflecting their values and responding to their needs so that we continue to increase the impact and value of our business in their terms.

We want to build upon the reputation we have worked hard to establish and raise our profile in Glasgow and beyond, to attract investment and business opportunities. Working within the Group and with our networks, we will be able to deliver more for our customers and other community stakeholders.

The Covid-19 health crisis has resulted in an economic downturn and our customers' businesses will be impacted. Value for money must stay at the top of our agenda and we will reduce costs where we can and keep our business space affordable.

### **What we will do to achieve this:**

- Make improved use of technology to update our services and business premises, using modern software and systems and investing in better connectivity for our business centres
- Regularly review the costs of our service and seek to improve value or create savings that we can pass on to customers
- Demonstrate our environmental and social conscience clearly by working with our tenants to make services more sustainable and protect the local environment
- Promote the QC Workspace brand as part of Queens Cross Group, updating key marketing tools such as our website and maintaining our public profile locally and nationally
- Provide support to local businesses that are hardest hit by the recession and work with them to sustain the local economy.

**Key objective 2:** To invest for the future, implementing a clear **Asset Management** strategy that secures the Workspace legacy

As a social enterprise, we consider the assets of our business to be community assets and our role is to preserve them for the long term benefit of our community. Only by regular investment and maintenance can we ensure that the monetary value of our property is protected, but its *real* value is in providing space for businesses to form and grow, to develop the skills and provide the jobs needed in our community.

We need to ensure that the workspace we have fits local needs, and where there is demand for new business space, we will try to deliver this. Diversity in our property portfolio is key to being able to meet our customers' needs and retaining them in the area as their businesses develop over time.

Some new businesses need very little space initially and can't commit to long term leases whilst they are finding their feet. In particular, new social enterprises may offer significant benefits to our community but may have limited turnover until their market is well established. We want to support business start-ups, both commercial and social, as they create new employment and volunteer opportunities. To do this, we need to offer good options for small retail and office space suitable for start-ups, in the community at affordable terms.

**What we will do to achieve this:**

- Invest strategically in our existing assets and the local environment, ensuring all our properties are let and contributing to the local economy
- Deliver our community café and develop models of community retail and incubator office space for start-up businesses
- Implement a long term Asset plan, ensuring ongoing programmes of maintenance to keep our properties in good condition
- Develop our property holding through purchase of high demand premises and continue to diversify the types and range of workspace we can offer local businesses.

**Key objective 3:** To engage with our customers and business networks to maximize **Community Impact**, focusing support where it's needed in our community

As recession hits, QC Workspace aims to be an anchor for our customers and for our community. We will remain alert to developments across the social enterprise sector, and will work with public and private sector partners to bring new ideas, new investment and new initiatives to Queens Cross.

Within our diverse group of tenant businesses we aim to create a virtuous circle of shared knowledge and support. We believe our small business customers have tremendous expertise to offer, they are flexible and adaptive, and these attributes are essential to see the business community through this challenging time.

It is predicted that young people in communities like ours will be severely impacted by the failing jobs market, and we must do what we can to improve local opportunities for this age group. We will work with our customers and business partners to offer a step-up to young people, getting them on track for a future in employment.

To benefit our community, we want use all of the tools at our disposal. So, we will be continuing to work with our partners in the QC Group to target support in different ways to get meaningful impact.

**What we will do to achieve this:**

- Work more effectively in partnerships with other economic and social regeneration companies, learning and sharing good practice and working on joint initiatives
- Create an effective business network for our customers to support their development through exchange of skills and market insight
- Focus on the development of enterprise and employment skills in young people, linking local youngsters into local business for training and work placements, and promoting enterprise in schools and colleges
- Continue to support the Queens Cross Community Foundation in promoting education opportunities and skills development through their Community Chest and bursary schemes
- Review our subsidiary company QC Consultants and think of ways to refocus its activities towards initiating community business for community benefit.

## 8. Governance and Covid-19

With the creation of the new Group structure in 2019, we have been working to create new **Governance** arrangements for QC Workspace within the Group. We want to ensure our Board have clarity on their role and responsibilities in the new structure and can direct the company effectively. To successfully achieve our aims, we are reliant on the strength and drive of our Board and must ensure appropriate resources are available to support the recruitment, induction and development of our Directors.

Whilst the social and economic challenges created by the Coronavirus health pandemic set the context for our business plan objectives, we have agreed specific **Covid-19** objectives directed towards crisis management for our business and our customers' businesses.

## 9. Measurement and reporting

Our key objectives and the actions we have identified to achieve these, have been mapped out in the 2020-25 Service Plan which follows. For each identified action, we will consider the resources required and establish timescales and measures, so that we have a structure for reporting on progress each year of this business plan.

An annual update will be provided on our website and at our Annual General Meeting. We will also establish a programme of networking events and communication to ensure our customers are kept up to date with significant achievements across the five years of the plan.

Queens Cross Workspace		2020-25 Service Plan
Strategic Aim	Action	Outcome
Service Development	Prioritise the use of technology to improve systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in software to ensure efficient property and tenancy management</li> <li>Investment in broadband for office properties</li> </ul>
	Make the business more profitable and reduce costs for current and future tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost analysis of current services</li> <li>Costs and tariffs reviewed for energy, water, waste suppliers</li> </ul>
	Make premises and services more environmentally sustainable	Work with tenants to develop green agenda e.g. installation of low energy lighting, paper and other recycling facilities, additional bike racks installed.
	Promote our service and Build on our reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of high quality service information and marketing materials such as welcome packs</li> <li>Annual tenant visits implemented</li> <li>Complaints policy and procedures reviewed</li> <li>Introduction of new logo and rebranding, new website, use of social media and improved signage</li> </ul>
Asset Management	Develop our long term asset plan	Rollout of investment identified as part of the property conditions survey. Improved standard of property, retention of tenants and protection of assets.
	Invest in assets and local neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devise a community investment strategy</li> <li>Let new Cedar retail units, prioritising SMEs/start-ups</li> <li>Develop incubator office space, encourage business start-ups and investigate more flexible accommodation models</li> <li>Research of existing tenants and local business requirements for longer term planning</li> <li>Investigate options for improved parking for tenants in Firhill estate</li> </ul>
	Purchase of premises to diversify/enhance property portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase of community café</li> <li>Proposals for future purchase e.g. retail units developed</li> </ul>
Community Impact	Work in partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closer working relationships with local and sector agencies: Canal Partnership, GSEN, GCVS.</li> <li>Work with partners in QC Group to develop new initiatives</li> </ul>
	Develop young people's employment and enterprise skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placements and links into local businesses encouraged</li> <li>Training opportunities identified and programme developed</li> <li>Creation of enterprise award or sponsorship</li> </ul>
	Promote better networking between businesses (a self-help community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved communication between existing tenants</li> <li>Create online forum/newsletter</li> <li>Informal meetings promote sense of community</li> </ul>



	Find a new focus for QC Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of legal and loan arrangements for Homelink properties</li> <li>• Undertake feasibility work on new community business focus</li> </ul>
Governance	Strengthen governance arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new group governance arrangements</li> <li>• New annual appraisals and succession plan for charity best practice</li> </ul>
Covid-19	Control impact of Covid-19 on QC Workspace and our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement plan for sustaining tenant businesses</li> <li>• Work with tenants to access business support</li> <li>• Prepare contingency plan with analysis of rental income and relevant expenditure</li> </ul>