

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities

Cultural Committee: 23 August 2021

Subject: Redesign of Dalmuir Gallery

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report proposes a series of improvement works to the existing gallery space within Dalmuir Library. This work will complement planned building upgrade activity and library capital investment that is already committed. The unified project will create an outstanding community venue.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:
- note the contents of this report
 - approve that funding of £541k from the Cultural Capital Fund be allocated for this purpose.

3. Background

- 3.1** In March 2018 the Council agreed to create a £4m Cultural Capital Fund to invest in West Dunbartonshire's cultural and heritage infrastructure in order to unlock regeneration, increase tourism and raise the reputation of the area. The 2018/19 Budget Document committed to undertaking bold and exciting projects that revitalise Council assets and change the way people look at our area.
- 3.2** In February 2019 the Cultural Committee considered a report on the Future operation of the Backdoor Gallery in Dalmuir, with consideration given to the future potential of this venue in the context of wider investment in culture and support for ambitious cultural programming. This report provided an overview of the current function of the gallery space, and noted particular and fundamental challenges associated with security and environmental monitoring which limited opportunities to raise the ambition of exhibition programming within the gallery space. In addition, the footprint of the gallery was cited as a limiting factor in terms of flexibility of use (eg. to host events/accommodate arts development activity), and visibility of the gallery within the library footprint was highlighted as an obstacle to increased visitor numbers.
- 3.3** Following a period of market research and consultation with existing users, in November 2019 the Cultural Committee considered a report on Creating a Destination Gallery Space in Dalmuir. This report highlighted how possible

interventions within Dalmuir Library could contribute to an enhanced visitor/user experience. These interventions included:

- Improved visibility of the main entrance to the library/gallery from the car park/public realm
- Improved visitor journey from the main entrance of the library building to the gallery space
- Increased footprint for the gallery space
- exploring the potential for modular display elements to enliven and elevate exhibitions within the gallery space
- exploring the potential for creating a flexible community events space

3.4 This report was welcomed by the Cultural Committee, with Elected Members strongly supportive of seeing these proposals progressed. To this end, budget was allocated from the Cultural Capital Fund to develop a redesign proposal that would consider the points noted above, and provide visualisations of how a transformed exhibition gallery might look and feel.

3.5 Following discussions with the Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU), Brown + Wallace – a multi-discipline construction consultancy – were appointed in early 2020 to lead a feasibility study on a new gallery space. Due to the Covid 19 crisis work on the project did not commence until August 2020.

3.6 In October 2020 a first draft Feasibility Report was submitted by Brown + Wallace, making a series of proposals and recommendations regarding the spatial redesign of the exhibition gallery within the Dalmuir Library building. This report considered all relevant technical and associated issues, including

- lighting design
- environmental monitoring and control (humidity and temperature)
- structural elements
- accessibility
- the building's multi-use nature

The report also considered the overall 'street presence' of the library building and its relationship to the immediately adjacent public realm, identifying opportunities to define and enhance the overall visitor journey.

3.7 In November 2020 an update on the gallery redesign proposal was taken to the Cultural Committee, advising that a future report would follow to describe developed proposals for the gallery space, with a view to delivering an overall improved visitor experience. Again, Elected Members expressed their support for this proposal and their desire to see all opportunities inherent in this project maximised for the ultimate

benefit of the Dalmuir community and in support of increased visitors to the gallery.

- 3.8** Concurrent with activity to develop the gallery redesign proposal, the Libraries Service has been progressing delivery of a capital investment programme to transform the libraries infrastructure across West Dunbartonshire. The focus of this investment is on improving the overall libraries estate and service delivery, including the replacement of existing customer service desks with modern information pods; the revitalisation of junior libraries and family learning areas; and the purchase of moveable shelving, allowing greater flexibility of use in terms of events and activities. An allocation of capital funds has been set aside for Dalmuir Library, with the intention to invest in the venue in 2021/22.
- 3.9** In tandem with the Libraries capital investment programme, planned investment in building upgrades at Dalmuir Library has been committed for 2021/22 through the Council's Asset Management team to address the condition of the building as part of the reoccurring Building Upgrades budget line.
- 3.10** These three investment elements present an opportunity to maximise the investment to offer the community of Dalmuir a modernised, fit for purpose multi-use library facility. Towards this outcome discussions have taken place involving Arts and Heritage, Libraries and Asset Management to consider how best to realise the ambitions of each service area, while delivering overall best value. Review of the gallery redesign Feasibility Report was undertaken as part of these discussions, with further input sought from colleagues in Planning and Building Standards.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Taking cognisance of the outcome of cross-service discussions, and following interrogation by officers of the Feasibility Report already received, the following improvement works are now proposed to realise the ambition of a destination gallery within Dalmuir Library:
- A redesigned and relocated main entrance to the building as a central element of an entrance sequence that will improve visibility from the street.
 - Realignment of the gallery entrance within the library building to ensure line of sight from the main entrance;
 - A revised layout incorporating an increased footprint for the main gallery space; an associated community gallery space, open-plan to the library lending floor; and a dedicated workshop space with

wet facilities to support arts development and community engagement activity.

- Provision of integrated storage to support arts development and community engagement activity.
- Integration of environmental monitoring equipment to enable a higher standard of loaned artworks into the gallery and improve overall collections care;
- Inclusion of a modular wall solution within the main gallery space to enliven future exhibitions and increase display opportunities;
- Relocation of a rear fire door to increase wall hanging space within the gallery and improve overall security;
- Integrated wayfinding solutions via floor and ceiling finishes to orientate visitors and direct them to the gallery.

4.2 In addition to the gallery-focused improvements outlined above, work will continue to deliver the Libraries capital investment programme and planned building upgrades concurrently. This will ensure a cohesive works package, to the ultimate benefit of all users of the building. For reference, the proposed new library floorplan and visualisations for an improved building façade are included at appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

4.3 By considering the gallery improvement works as proposed in the context of the overall function of Dalmeir Library, and by working directly with colleagues in other service areas to consider how these proposals could complement and/or enhance activity already being delivered in the building, the opportunity has been seized upon to create a modern, flexible community space in the heart of Dalmeir. Inclusion of this project as part of the Council's wider commitment to investment in culture, at the same time library capital spend has been made available, represents a truly transformational and joined-up project that has the potential to deliver a multi-use facility that is genuinely fit for the future.

4.4 Outline costs for the proposals described at 4.1 are estimated to be in the region of £541k. This is a conservative figure that builds in appropriate contingency in the event that unexpected issues emerge as works progress. In support of this project, it is recommended that funding for these works come from the £4m Cultural Capital Fund.

4.5 While this project will ensure there is a truly transformational facility for the residents of Dalmeir, there is a further opportunity to consider the environment surrounding the building. The public realm outside the Library and Gallery, including the adjacent Dalmeir Square, paving stones, and street furniture, could all be improved for the benefit of residents to complement the investment being recommended in this

report. Committee may wish to consider this point and potentially ask officers to explore what could be achieved, and any cost implications for the Cultural Capital Fund

5. People Implications

- 5.1 This proposal requires officer time. Capacity exists within the Arts & Heritage, Libraries and Corporate Asset Management services at this time to deliver the project.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 In March 2018 the Council created a £4m Cultural Capital Fund and it is the recommendation of officers that this Fund should support the costs of this project in full as detailed at 4.4 above. Approval on this basis would represent no additional cost to the Council beyond what is already agreed within the Council's Capital Plan.

- 6.2 The following other projects are also in the pipeline for the Cultural Capital Fund.

| Project | Cost |
|---|--------------------------|
| Alexandria Library museum, lift and new public-use room | £0.330m (Agreed) |
| Town Hall external roof and stonework | £0.252m (Agreed) |
| Town Hall Investment Project | £0.060m (Agreed) |
| Town Hall renovations | £0.950m (Agreed) |
| Clydebank Library basement museum | £0.575m (Agreed) |
| Bruce Street Baths upgrade | £0.100m (Agreed) |
| Town Hall/Dalmuir gallery redesign feasibility | £0.016m (Agreed) |
| Fine Art Acquisition Fund | £0.100m (Agreed) |
| Asset Management Development costs to support the Cultural Capital Projects | £0.075,350m (Agreed) |
| Uplift in budget for Town Hall renovations | £0.204,636m (Indicative) |
| Sub total | £2.662,986m |
| Dalmuir Gallery renovations | £0.541m (Indicative) |
| Total | £3.203,986m |
| Funding left for other projects | £0.796,014m |

- 6.3 Works to improve the function of the gallery space and the overall visitor experience will be undertaken concurrent with planned building upgrades (£815k committed) and the roll out of the libraries capital investment project (£90k committed), giving an overarching project budget of £1.446m.

- 6.4 It is envisaged that these works (once necessary consents are in place) will be

carried out either by Building Services and their medium term contractors and sub contractors, or by an appropriate external contractor. As required, discussions will take place with Corporate Procurement and Consultancy Services to determine an overall contract strategy and specification to be agreed and taken to market. Any procurement and subsequent contract awards will be done in line with Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, scheme of delegation and relevant procurement legislation.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a risk that should this project not progress concurrent with the library capital investment programme and planned building upgrades the coherence of the overall project would be compromised and its potential impact lessened. There is a further risk that best value for the project overall would not be realised.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equality Impact Screening did not indicate any further action required in relation to any recommendations.

9. Environmental Sustainability

- 9.1** The Brown + Wallace Feasibility Report considered environmental sustainability as part of any overall project strategy, describing a 'fabric first' approach whereby any elements of the building fabric being altered are upgraded as far as possible within the limits of budget and construction constraints.
- 9.2** Colleagues in Corporate Asset Management have further considered these proposals as part of the developed design for the overall Dalmuir Library project, consulting with colleagues in the Energy Team to consider the possibility of achieving Passive House Standard.
- 9.3** New services infrastructure required will consider the use of renewables first, where appropriate. Detailed solutions in the context of environmental sustainability will be considered within the MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) proposals made. Consideration will be made in future proofing the building to ensure that the building can accommodate the District Heating network in the future.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** The redesign proposals for the Dalmuir Library building have been assessed and developed in discussion with officers from Arts & Heritage, Library Services, Corporate Asset Management, Energy & Compliance, Corporate Procurement, Communications, and Planning & Building Standards.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 The proposals within this report support the following strategic priorities:

- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

Malcolm Bennie
Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities
Date: 26 July 2021

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| Person to Contact: | Malcolm Bennie Chief Officer Citizen, Culture & Facilities Malcolm.bennie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk |
| Appendices: | Appendix 1: Proposed new library floorplan Appendix 2: Visualisations for an improved building façade |
| Background Papers: | Future Operation of the Backdoor Gallery in Dalmuir Report by Strategic Lead, Communications, Culture and Communities to Cultural Committee on 25 February 2019 <u>Creating a Destination Gallery Space in Dalmuir:</u> Report by Strategic Lead, Communications, Culture and Communities to Cultural Committee on 25 November 2019. <u>Redesign of Dalmuir Gallery, Dalmuir Library</u> Report by Strategic Lead, Communications, Culture and Communities to Cultural Committee on 23 November 2020. |
| Wards Affected: | Clydebank Central Clydebank Waterfront Kilpatrick. |