

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by Strategic Lead for Communications, Culture, Communities and Facilities

#### Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development:

21 August 2019

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**Subject: Regeneration of Glencairn House, Dumbarton, and the creation of a Publicly Accessible Collections Store and Archive**

#### 1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update on the public consultation on the regeneration of Glencairn House and the creation of a Publicly Accessible Collections Store and Archive in the existing Dumbarton Library; and
- to propose that this project is approved so that officers can begin the process of transforming the two sites.

#### 2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- notes the positive feedback gathered during the public consultation on the future uses of Glencairn House and the existing Dumbarton Library;
- notes the updated financial information in the report which details the cost of this project and the funding plans;
- agrees that officers should progress with the transformation of Glencairn House and Dumbarton Library as outlined in this report;
- agrees that the project is included in an updated Capital Plan when the 2020/21 budget is approved in March 2020;
- agrees that following confirmation of funding from external partners that officers can proceed to go to tender for the project. The results of this will be reported to a future Tendering Committee.

#### 3. Background

3.1 In May 2019 a report was presented to the Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee (IRED) detailing proposals for a new use for Glencairn House and the existing Dumbarton Library. This report gave background information on the history of Glencairn House. It also outlined extensive information on the options appraisals and other activity that had been followed by Council Officers to generate the proposal for a library and museum in Glencairn House, and a publicly accessible collection store and archive, and modern office space at the existing Dumbarton Library.

- 3.2** In summary this project would see the currently vacant Glencairn House, one of West Dunbartonshire's oldest buildings, transformed into a state-of-the-art library and museum. To allow for the required floor space for such a use, a large extension would be built to the rear of the building over four floors. This would create 13 rooms amounting to around 411m<sup>2</sup> of useable space, plus service areas and circulation space. The end result would create a venue that faced out onto the riverside as well as providing panoramic views of the River Leven, River Clyde and Dumbarton Rock. It would continue the Council's strategy of investing in Dumbarton Town Centre by establishing a landmark building for Dumbarton to complement the recently opened Church Street Offices, support the new riverside walkway, and further assist the regeneration of the town centre.
- 3.3** The new library would include dedicated separate spaces for children and families, computer use and quiet study, alongside a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction items in a variety of high-demand formats. A relaxing recreational space would also be included featuring a coffee station to increase dwell times and improve the overall customer experience. Museum facilities would include an entire local history floor featuring an exhibition space. This would be further augmented by the integral display of artefacts throughout all floors of the building. Among the most important objects available for display are a Roman Medallion from 193AD; the 'Skellat Bell' from the early Christian church in Scotland; Tron Weights which date from the early 1700s; The company seal for the Dumbarton Glassworks; The Dubonnet Trophy, presented to Sir Jackie Stewart at the 1969 Mexican Grand Prix; and the Overtoun Collection and associated civic fine art.
- 3.4** An appraisal by EKOS (Economic and Social Research Consultancy) in November 2017 projected that:
- There would be one-off construction impacts equivalent to 25 net additional construction posts. If all of these came from the local area then it would be worth £0.540m to West Dunbartonshire, and a net additional one-off Gross Value Added (GVA) of £1.33 million;
  - The new library would help to maintain visitor numbers by opening it to shoppers who do not visit the current location, and there would be a £0.090m additional annual net spend in the town centre by bringing the libraries 60,000+ visitors per year to the High Street. This would equate to a net additional GVA of £0.050m generated at the West Dunbartonshire level; and
  - There would be long-term impacts estimated at £1.9 million over 15 years at the West Dunbartonshire level.
- 3.5** In addition to the economic benefits the following wider impacts were also identified as being likely:
- Relocation of the library would make the town centre more animated due to the additional footfall it would bring;

- Provide new modern facilities for welfare claimants and job seekers to search for employment opportunities and complete applications online;
- The permanent occupation of the historically and architecturally important Glencairn House would enhance the image of the area;
- The project contributes to the town centre first government objective to sustain and safeguard accessible facilities and services;
- The new library will be an improved space for residents and prove more attractive to the community. This will increase engagement with the service which is crucial since providing access to books and encouraging reading improves child literacy and is linked to improved general educational attainment. In addition, core book lending services have a beneficial effect on adult learning, alongside library ICT services which allow users to improve their computer literacy and access wider online learning tools;
- Provides a social hub to connect communities, particularly those on low incomes, the elderly and families. This function will be enhanced by the relocation of the library to a more central, accessible town centre location;
- Creates an attractive meeting facility that, in addition to its use by local residents and visitors, could also be used by adjacent businesses;
- Provides a venue for a variety of social activities as well as services delivered by the public or third sector organisations;
- Improved community pride through keeping Glencairn House in use and having these important services maintained; and
- Provides a high-quality venue to showcase elements of West Dunbartonshire Council's heritage collections, as well as providing space to host changing exhibitions, and other creative events e.g. art classes, book signings, writing classes, etc

**3.6** Following the proposed relocation of the existing library to Glencairn House, the non-listed Strathleven Place building would be converted into a publicly accessible collections store and archive, with associated office space. This would allow for regular publicly accessible collections-based activities, and facilitate improved access to the heritage collections and archival materials generally throughout the year. Items of particular note held in the heritage collection and archive include a letter under the Privy Seal of James III; a charter signed by Mary Queen of Scots; an obligation signed at Dumbarton by James, Earl of Moray, Regent; and a Commission by King James VI to the Baillies of Dumbarton to apprehend and try persons suspected of witchcraft, signed by the King himself.

In addition, the current public PC area of the library would be transformed into a flexible office space for Council employees. This space would accommodate more than 30 individuals in a mix of fixed and flexible desks. It would work well for all employees currently based at the Poplar Road offices, along with potentially employees based at Elm Road, and any overspill from the Municipal and Church Street offices.

**3.7** The IRED Committee in May 2019 noted that the first public library in Dumbarton had actually been based on the High Street and so this proposal would restate that historic service. It was also noted by Councillors that if the proposal was agreed then the opening could coincide with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original Glencairn House being built in 2023.

**3.8** Committee was positive about the Glencairn House and the Publicly Accessible Collections Store and Archive proposal and agreed that a public consultation should go forward on this option. Details of this consultation are outlined in the Main Issues section. In addition an elected member seminar was to be held to inform Councillors further, as well as a visit arranged to the 'Secret Collection' publicly accessible museum store in Paisley. Both these actions were completed between June and August 2019.

#### **4. Main Issues**

**4.1** Following agreement by Committee on 15 May 2019, a programme of community engagement was undertaken on proposals for the future use of Glencairn House. An online consultation launched on 27 May which detailed the history of the building and invited respondents to give their views on the proposal to bring the building back into use as a community resource housing a library, museum and events space. This consultation was supported by three drop-in sessions across a range of Dumbarton venues at different times of day to ensure accessibility. At these sessions visitors were able to discuss the proposals with officers involved in their development including the Strategic Lead for Communications, Culture, Communities and Facilities, Team Leader for Arts and Heritage, Asset Co-Ordinator, Librarians, Collections Officer, Architect, and Economic Development Officer.

**4.2** Information on the programme of engagement was published on the Council website and social media platforms as well as through a direct mailing to community organisations, community councils and other groups with an interest in arts & heritage. As this proposal relates directly to Dumbarton Library, a fixed display was added to the library space during the consultation period to allow library users to engage directly. The display comprised of pop-up boards detailing the 'past, present, future' focus of the proposal alongside historical images of Glencairn House and contextual information on the proposal. This ensured that users of the library building were made aware of the proposals and had the opportunity to input their views to the consultation. In addition to this, a presentation was delivered to the Dumbarton Town Centre Forum providing an outline of the proposals and engagement process undertaken.

##### Online Survey

**4.3** When it closed on 16 June, 238 responses had been submitted to the online survey. This represents a positive engagement on what is a single-issue and location-specific proposal. The main findings were:

- 88% of respondents agreed that it is important that the historic building was brought back in to use;
- 84% agreed that the building should remain in public ownership and should be used in a way which celebrates the history of Dumbarton and the local area;
- 78% of respondents supported the proposal outlined, to transform Glencairn House into a state of the art library and museum; and
- 84% of respondents supported the development of an events space on the 4th floor of the building.

**4.4** A range of suggestions were submitted about how the events space could best be utilised. These focused mainly on wider arts and heritage type uses such as music, exhibitions, author events, community exhibitions, taster classes and lectures. When asked if there were any other ideas for what could be delivered from a redeveloped Glencairn House respondents focused on the opportunity for community education, use of the events space for community groups, links to archaeology, cinema events, and low cost/free activities for local residents

**4.5** Those filling in the survey were also asked a question about the change of use of the existing library into an accessible collections store and archive:

- 74% of respondents agreed that an accessible collection store where objects and artefacts can be viewed would be a good use of the building.

#### Drop-in Sessions

**4.6** More than 100 citizens attended the face-to-face sessions, with many of these visitors attending the drop-in held inside the ground-floor of Glencairn House on Wednesday 12 June. The majority of visitors were keen to understand what stage the proposal was at and what further opportunity there would be to influence the detail of the development.

**4.7** Overall, those who attended the drop-in sessions were supportive of Glencairn House being brought back in to use as a cultural venue celebrating the rich history of the local area. Attendees were also positive about the opportunities of the events space on the top floor of the building, and the potential for the community to make use of this. As with the online survey, some attendees at the drop-in sessions expressed concerns about the parking challenges in the town centre, and the impact that this development might have. There were also individual concerns about whether Glencairn House would be big enough to house a public library and a museum, and whether the public would get regular access to the new collections store and archive space at the existing library.

**4.8** In summary the feedback from the public consultation evidences broad support for the proposals contained in the report that went to Committee in May 2019.

**4.9** The concerns raised by some respondents regarding parking are noted but officers leading this project do not believe this is an issue specifically about the Glencairn House proposal. Pressures on parking in the town have already been highlighted and are the subject of a separate report coming to Committee for Elected Members to consider. Glencairn House will be factored into this. Furthermore it is the professional view of roads officers that facilities such as libraries and museums are ideally located within a town centre location. Dumbarton already has parking locations to support the development, there are good public transport links, the national cycle route is close by, and the soon to be constructed riverside walkway will also support access to the venues. In addition the location also affords the opportunity for users of the High Street to combine planned shopping trips, appointments, etc. with a visit to Glencairn House.

Concerns regarding space at Glencairn House are noted but the Council's professional librarians have considered the space available in the new extended structure and believe it is sufficient to provide a high-quality public library. In making this assessment they also took into account the significant benefits that would come from siting the library in a location where there was a flow of passing pedestrians.

Concerns regarding entry to the new publicly accessible collections store and archive were also noted. Officers leading this proposal are committed to creating a service that enables substantially improved public access to stored collections and actively promotes the collections as a resource for learning and research. At present, access to stored collections is limited by the location and internal layout of the existing collections store, in particular the lack of public spaces within the store to view objects and documents. This option will enable the public to access collection objects and archival materials and therefore represents a significant improvement. While public opening times have not been agreed, arts and heritage officers are committed to continuing to operate a responsive service to ensure that access to collection objects and archival materials by enthusiasts, researchers special interest groups, etc. is facilitated as far as possible, even outwith standard opening times.

**4.10** The original outline capital costs for the redevelopment of Glencairn House were estimated to be in the region of £3.75m (Appendix 1, page 72), including a provisional sum for internal fit out and external fabric costs. An additional 10% has been added to take account of site surveys, inflation, legal fees and insurances. It has been noted that since this estimate was undertaken in 2017 building costs have continued to rise by approximately 5%. As a result a prudent figure of £4.35m has been allocated for this element of the project.

The capital cost of fitting out the Strathleven Place site for the publicly accessible collections store and archive, incorporating office space is estimated at around £0.7m. This combined with the £4.35m for Glencairn House makes the overall cost of this proposal £5.05m. This figure includes one-off relocation costs.

- 4.11** It is proposed that £1m from the Council's Capital Regeneration Fund is allocated to this project. The Council's Capital Regeneration Fund is intended to help drive forward operational efficiencies (spend to save); continue to focus on maximising external public and private sector investment to our area; continue our focus on growing our economy; and increasing jobs and housing. The Glencairn House project would help to drive forward operational efficiencies by freeing up Poplar Road for annual revenue savings. The project also has a high chance of bringing in external funding into West Dunbartonshire for both the Glencairn House and Strathleven Place elements. The proposal would also grow the economy by helping to revitalise the High Street.
- 4.12** Initial discussions with external funders have indicated that subject to submitting successful applications, there could be potential funding support for the Glencairn House element of the project from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (previously the Heritage Lottery Fund) and Regeneration Capital Grant Fund – particularly if some form of community involvement can be incorporated. It is considered that £2m is a realistic funding target for this element. There is also strong potential to secure funding to support the collections-based element of this work at Strathleven Place from a number of funding/grant making bodies, including the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Museums Galleries Scotland, and the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. It is hoped that an additional £0.3m in grants could be brought-in to create an enhanced, expansive and high-quality finish design and fit-out. As a result a total external funding target of £2.3m has been set.
- 4.13** Creating the new publicly accessible collections store and archive and associated office space at Strathleven Place allows for the existing Poplar Road office space to be vacated. Moving out of the Poplar Road office and leasing, or demolishing the building generates property savings for the Council. These savings have been built into the following financial analysis.
- 4.1** Taking into account of these factors, the following lifetime costs (over 40 years) of this proposal have been estimated and are shown below in comparison with current costs:

	<b>Current</b>	<b>Glencairn &amp; Strathleven PI</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Revenue Expenditure</b>		
Loan Charges from Capital Costs	0	2,754
Employee Costs	7,389	7,389
Property Cost	8,693	6,465
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>16,082</b>	<b>16,608</b>

**4.15** For illustrative purposes, the table below details annual revenue costs in year 1 for each option. This shows that whilst the new proposals will cost less to run, they (including the closure of the Poplar Road site) will generate a net additional annual cost of £0.015m per year because the capital has to be repaid:

	<b>Current</b>	<b>Glencairn &amp; Strathleven PI</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Revenue Expenditure</b>		
Loan Charges (*average)	0	69
Employee Costs	129	129
Property Costs	149	95
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>Additional Revenue cost p/a (*average)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>

**4.16** Based on the information available to officers it is recommended that the Council progresses with a proposal which will deliver both a new library and museum at Glencairn House, and an archive/office facility at the existing Dumbarton Library.

**4.17** If approved officers would apply for funding to the external partners listed above with an expectation that an initial decision would be received in summer 2020. If these applications met the funding target, and following an update to the Council's Capital Plan, officers would undertake a tender exercise to identify external architects to create the final designs of Glencairn House and Strathleven Place. This would be followed by a tender for the work to the two buildings. The outcome of these would be reported to the Tendering Committee. Following this timescale it is expected that construction work could commence in 2021 and the buildings open before summer 2023.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** In respect of the library and museum proposal the service is confident that staffing could be found within existing resources to cover the venue professionally.

**5.2** Beyond this the service is confident that there are no other significant people implications from this report other than the resources required by various services to take this project forward. It is accepted that various employees would be working in new locations if the proposal was agreed, but the Council has a strong track-record of successfully moving employees to new workplaces.

## 6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 Transforming Glencairn House into a library and museum, and repurposing the existing Dumbarton Library into a publicly accessible collections store, archive and office hub costs an estimated £5.05m.

6.2 The following funding model is proposed:

<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£5.05m</b>
Regeneration Capital Fund	£1.0m
External Funding Target	£2.3m
Additional borrowing in Capital Plan	£1.75m
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>£5.05m</b>

This model has a net average annual revenue cost of £0.015.

6.3 Any change to the Capital Plan and/or request for additional capital would require a Council decision, and it is proposed that this would be taken in March 2020 when setting the new Council budget for 2020/21. Updates on the project will be provided to members on an ongoing basis through budget control reports. In the event that the £2.3m external funding target is not achieved then officers will bring a report back to Committee.

6.4 All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £0.05m is subject to a contract strategy. If approval is given, and before the tender is published, the contract strategy for Glencairn House will include, but not be limited to: Service Strategy/Forward Plan, Supply Market Status: Social Benefits, Procurement Model and Contract Management.

6.5 Currently Glencairn House sits in the Council's non-operational portfolio and technically there is an expectation that it could bring in a rental income at some point in the future. Moving it from the non-operational to operational portfolio permanently removes scope for this future rental income. However as outlined in the report to Committee in May 2019 there is no expectation that such income would be realised in the foreseeable future.

## 7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is a risk that the estimated costs of the building renovation are too low. To mitigate this we have used a professional agency with specialist knowledge in this type of work. The project team also asked the Council's own professional experts to review the projections.

7.2 There is a risk that fitting a service this size into a building with a small footprint could lead to issues with fire safety, planning permission and listed building consent. We have mitigated this by seeking professional advice both internally and externally as part of the outline proposal. Moving forward we would be sympathetic to any restrictions applied to a project such as this.

- 7.3** There is a risk that the project might not receive significant external funding. This appears unlikely given the ambitious transformation of a historic public asset and the fact that West Dunbartonshire has previously been identified as a priority area for National Lottery Heritage Funding. The Council could also consider using its own funds to support a project such as this if that unlikely scenario took place.
- 7.5** There is a risk that the Council does not find a new tenant for the Poplar Road building quickly and this would have a negative impact on the business case outlined in this report. Demand remains high on the Broadmeadow industrial site and we would hope there was interest in a corner plot such as this, particularly since it has its own private yard area to the rear. If demand did not materialise then there remains the option to demolish the building to realise the savings and mitigate any risks to the business case.
- 7.6** There is a risk that the Council does not take action with Glencairn House and the building lies empty for the foreseeable future. This will have a negative effect on Dumbarton High Street and fail to respond to the views of the community who stated that they wished to see the building renovated and kept in public ownership. As could be seen by the options appraisal in the May Committee report the 'do nothing' option scored very poorly, whereas the proposed project would mitigate against those risks.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this proposal.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** The Council has undertaken extensive public consultation on this proposal as outlined in this report.
- 9.2** Internally the project has been considered by senior officers from Libraries and Culture, Regeneration and Economic Development, Assets, Finance and Procurement.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** The Glencairn House project would support the following Council strategic priorities:

- A strong local economy and improved employment opportunities
- Meaningful community engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents

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**Date:** 6 August 2019

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Identification of Uses for Glencairn House

Appendix 2 - Artist's impressions and illustrative images of Glencairn House, and the publicly accessible collections store and archive at Strathleven Place

Appendix 3 – Overview of the Glencairn House and Strathleven Place proposal, and linked investment in Dumbarton heritage and regeneration

**Background Papers:** Report on Regeneration of Glencairn House, Dumbarton, and the creation of a Dumbarton Community Archive – IRED Committee May 2019;  
Identification of Uses for Glencairn House Report;  
Glencairn House Economic Impact Appraisal  
Dumbarton Library Options Appraisal Report  
The Dumbarton Town Centre and Waterfront Revised Urban Strategy 2014

**Wards Affected:** All

