

LANGSIDE LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (Sept 2024)

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

Glasgow Life, the charity that leads culture and sport in Glasgow, is carrying out a refurbishment of Langside Library to improve the service to better meet the needs of the local community. The upgrades include a full interior and exterior restoration and improvement that will ensure the Category B listed building, which is protected by Historic Environment Scotland for its architectural and historical interest, is more accessible and sustainable for the future.

A new, flat level, accessible main entranceway on Battlefield Road will be created and an exciting children's zone and improved adult reading and study area which will enhance the wide range of library services and activities on offer. A bookable community meeting and learning room will be created and equipped to support local community activities, and the re-arranged interior spaces will provide flexibility to meet a variety of uses. Additionally, an increased number of customer toilets will be provided, including a Changing Places toilet.

The refurbishment will also see the installation of new electrical and mechanical services and improvements to the fabric of the building demonstrating Glasgow Life's commitment to meeting its sustainability climate targets and energy usage performance. The investment project demonstrates Glasgow Life's ongoing commitment to improving library and community services across the city.

Overview on Progress

Throughout 2024 the refurbishment proposals for Langside Library have been progressed to RIBA Stage 3 status with the intention to submit a Planning Application by the end of Sept 2024. £4.4m of capital has been secured from the Community Asset Fund and works are programmed to commence in January 2024.

Public Engagement - Methodology

The Stage 3 design proposals represent an appropriate milestone in the evolution of the project in order to re-engage with the local community before progressing with a full Planning Application. Glasgow Life promoted and facilitated an extensive community engagement exercise during September 2024, inviting local people to view emerging designs for the library, providing an opportunity for them to offer their comments and opinions on the design process and better understand the timeline for the project development up to and including the official public opening.

Design proposals including plans and images have been on display at Langside Library (2 Sinclair Dr, Glasgow G42 9QE) since Saturday 7th September 2024 - and will remain so for the foreseeable future so that anyone who was not able to view them is still able to do so.

Members of the public were able to offer comment on the proposals in several ways:

1. In person at three sessions staffed by Glasgow Life representatives:
 - Saturday 7th September 2023 (10am-5pm)
 - Tuesday 10th September 2024 (1pm-8pm)
 - Thursday 12th September 2024 (10am-5pm)
 or
2. Online via the Glasgow Life website.

The Stage 3 plans and images of the refurbishment will remain on display at Langside Library before being replaced by more detailed plans that will form the basis of the Planning Application to Glasgow City Council by the end of Sept 2024.

The Stage 3 proposals can also be viewed online within the Glasgow Life website: <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/venues/langside-library>

Public Engagement - Feedback

The table below contains comments received from members of the public, either in person, using the on-site Comment Cards or submitted online, alongside Glasgow Life’s response:

Topic	Public Comment	Glasgow Life Response
Closure impacts	Closure for 2 years is very long – I struggle to see why the project would take this long? It would be good to see a timetable or plan of works to understand why it would be closed for such a long period of time when it is a well-used facility.	<i>A timescale of 2 years is estimated for the construction works to take place, safely accounting for the presence of asbestos and potential unknowns which cannot be quantified until “opening up” and specialist surveys are carried out.</i> <i>These surveys cannot take place in advance as this would result in further library closures ahead of project commencement and a single closure is less disruptive in terms of library usage.</i>
	A 2-year refurbishment? Are you building a whole new library?	
	Why is it going to take 2 years?	
	Two years is a long time to go without a local library.	

	<p>2 years is far too long to be without our library. Everyone will have forgotten about it by the time it reopens. They will lose the habit of visiting the library.</p>	<p><i>The aim is to better the closure programme where possible & reduce the timeframes, but this will be entirely dependent on favourable progress and outcomes.</i></p>
	<p>2 years is too long to close the library.</p>	
	<p>Concerned over the length of the proposed construction programme.</p>	
Access / exterior signage	<p>Is there not level access at the back?</p>	<p><i>The construction works will require the closure of the community garden space on the basis that site accommodation will be required for workers and to safely facilitate site works and deliveries. This will be a secured space with no public access to ensure the necessary levels of health and safety are maintained.</i></p>
	<p>Is this a new accessible entrance only or more extensive?</p>	
	<p>I would like to see the external hanging signage at the Sinclair Dr entrance maintained and perhaps replicated at the new entrance.</p>	<p><i>A new level access to the library has been proposed from Battlefield Road to allow inclusive access for all users, with improved and clearer signage and visibility. The existing access ramp into the rear of the property (garden side) will remain in place.</i></p>
Community groups / community garden	<p>Seeing as the community is losing the library for such a long time it would be preferable to keep access to the library garden so there remains a community space of some sort.</p>	<p><i>The construction works will require the closure of the community garden space on the basis that site accommodation will be required for workers and to safely facilitate site works and deliveries. This will be a secured space with no public access to ensure the necessary levels of health and safety are maintained.</i></p>
	<p>Would be good to still have access to the garden during the works.</p>	
	<p>It feels like a big loss to the community if the access to the garden is cut for the full duration of the renovation. I do welcome the changes to the library, however.</p>	<p><i>Glasgow Life has consulted with the community garden user groups and will continue to maintain regular contact and provide monthly updates. The project team will also endeavour to facilitate local school visits to the site during the construction works. As part of the community engagement with the garden volunteer group on 16 Sept 2024, the following principles were agreed in order to develop & support a positive relationship:</i></p>
	<p>I would like to see more detail of the landscaping proposals, particularly to the new Battlefield Rd entrance. This road is relatively narrow and can be busy so essential that a safe and welcoming entrance space is created if access is to be from this side.</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointment of a landscape architect to work with the community group on a garden reinstatement proposal for implementation post refurbishment and to facilitate a considered approach to the overall landscaping design. - Glasgow Life to seek amenity space funding from Glasgow City Council. - Ensure regular communications on progress with the build.
	What will happen to the knitting group?	<i>The knitting group will be moved to either Pollokshaws or Govanhill library. The members of the group have been consulted as part of the wider project consultation and were provided with options that they are discussing between the wider group members before deciding on a new location.</i>
Library stock	Please don't reduce the selection of books for adults, as it looks like the space will be smaller.	<i>We will be investing in new stock and ensuring that the library reopens with a wide and diverse range of new and existing titles. The space allocated to adult books has a similar shelf meterage to our existing provision. We are also always investing in our e-Offer, ensuring current and popular titles are available in a range of formats to support accessibility.</i>
Future of asset	Let's hope it actually reopens after 2 years.	<i>These design proposals are planned refurbishment works which represent a significant investment to extend the lifespan of the library for continued future use. There are no plans for permanent closure.</i>
	This is closure by stealth.	
	Let's hope they reopen the 'refurbished' libraries.	
	The library will close and never reopen.	
	Please reopen the library when the works are complete, it is a vital resource for our community.	
I just hope this isn't a veiled plan to 'close for refurbishment' then never reopen!		
Alternative infrastructure	Those who can't afford heating our places will have to find another public space nearby.	<i>Library users can continue to use our services at nearby libraries, including Couper Institute, Govanhill, Pollokshaws and Castlemilk libraries.</i>
Aesthetic	I hope the original feel, wood and murals will be retained.	<i>The original wood panelling and the Battle of Langside mural will be retained in their current locations. The war memorial plaques will also be retained.</i>

	<p>That's all great BUT the entire building needs new windows, or the existing ones refurbished. They are literally going to fall out.</p>	<p><i>New design elements such as carpets, furniture & general redecoration are proposed to supplement and refresh the existing look and feel of the library interior.</i></p> <p><i>The existing windows form part of the original category B listing of the property and as such are to be retained. The refurbishment will provide for extensive window repairs including refurbishment of the existing window frames, fixing/securing and installing new double-glazing in a sympathetic approach that will align to the category B listing.</i></p>
	<p>It's not clear from available materials the extent of proposed works to the 'modern' section of the building.</p>	
	<p>Happy to hear fabric improvements will be made in terms of operational energy, with the obvious caveat that this should not impact historic features including windows and internal plasterwork. Will proposals include a restoration of the Battle of Langside Mural?</p>	
Facilities	<p>Langside library is a fantastic resource with a superb range of books. The children's area is spacious and the study area is well used. I'm writing to request that there are tables maintained for the use of people with laptops, or for quiet study without the use of a computer. Some other libraries have brought in more PCs and taken away the capability of library users to bring their own devices, or to use a table for other types of study - reading, drawing, looking at larger scale books - and this is a real loss. The other issue with many Glasgow Libraries is not being allowed to plug in devices to charge them. This means that you can't spend as long as you need to in the library if you are using a laptop with a shorter battery life.</p>	<p><i>A mix of new design elements including fixtures, furnishings and equipment is being proposed for a flexible approach to customer use, whether it is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• a mix of seating types,</i> <i>• tables and chairs for study, laptop use and space for large scale books.</i> <i>• PCs and desks.</i> <p><i>We are very much aware of the need for independent study space, and this has been considered as part of the space planning and internal design exercise. We are looking to enhance the provisions that we already provide rather than remove any. We are aware of the need for additional power sources to support our customers to study and work for longer periods of time. We will investigate ways to improve the ability to charge devices within the library as part of the library design exercise.</i></p>
Design proposals	<p>It was good to have knowledgeable staff on hand to explain the proposed plans for Langside library.</p>	<p><i>Noted.</i></p>
	<p>Our family is very happy Langside Library is being refurbished. It is the only family resource we have in our area. We have spent many hours there.</p>	

	Really impressed by the proposal. Didn't think they'd put as much money into this asset.	
	Refurbishment looks great.	
	Great to see the works that are planned for this real community asset.	
	I fully support these proposals. All of the proposals are well-thought out and would greatly benefit the users of the building. More of the libraries in Glasgow should be retrofitted in this manner.	
	Generally positive to see refurbishment to the library and the appointment of an architect with a good reputation for conservation.	
	It is great to see it is going to be saved and preserved, returning to its former glory.	

Please note that a full planning application is to be submitted (end of Sept 2024) where plans and images of the library refurbishment will be made available for online public view and comment. In the meantime, if there are any questions or comments on the development, we will be happy to provide further information.