

## **Celebrating and protecting Glasgow's cultural life – Motion as adjusted, approved.**

**9** Bailie Mearns, seconded by Councillor Molyneux, moved that:-

“Glasgow's identity as a vibrant, internationally renowned cultural city has been built on the strength of its artists, venues, grassroots organisations, and accessible creative spaces. From music and visual arts to performance and community-led initiatives, culture is fundamental to the city's social fabric, economic vitality, and global reputation.

Council recognises significant strides which have recently been made in Glasgow's cultural development, including the refurbishment of the Burrell Collection which has recently received the Design Effectiveness Silver Award; celebrates work which is ongoing to develop culture as a driver of regeneration in the Sauchiehall Street Culture & Heritage District project; and notes ongoing, local investment into Glasgow's museums and collections, which continue to be provided free of charge to Glasgow's residents and visitors.

However, Council notes with concern the many challenges facing Glasgow's cultural sector. While the recent closure of the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) on Sauchiehall Street was not within the Council's control, it is important to acknowledge this has had an impact on other culture organisations and practitioners and has damaged the vibrancy of this part of the city. Council understands that Creative Scotland, as the building's owner, is working on options for its future, and that both the Council and Glasgow Life have interests in ensuring that the city's cultural needs and the regeneration aspirations for the immediate local area are reflected in whatever happens next with the venue.

Council also notes concerns over rising rents and uncapped service charges proposed for the organisations based at Trongate 103, which risks placing them under unsustainable financial pressure. Council recognises that engagement has taken place over several years with the tenants of Trongate 103 to bring forward a sustainable operating and rental model, however believes that current proposals (of the Council's landlord, City Property) do not go far enough to protect many of these cultural organisations from the threat of closure.

Council recognises that without greater collective intervention, important cultural anchor organisations within Trongate 103, such as Glasgow Print Studio, Project Ability, StreetLevel Photoworks, Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre, Transmission Gallery, Glasgow Independent Studio and GMAC may be put in serious jeopardy, along with all of the artists and communities that sustain, and are sustained by, them.

Council also recognises that if additional steps are not taken, the original creative purpose agreed for the building, prior to its opening in 2009, to provide a long-term home for arts and culture may be undermined. This mission was made possible with public funding, including from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and which resulted in the successful rebrand of Merchant City and Trongate as the Culture Quarter.

Council therefore notes with concern that current pressures, relating to increasing rents and service charges, may instead result in artists, communities and key organisations being displaced or forced to close. Council further notes that long-standing tenants, who have contributed to its success over 17 years, since launching as a flagship cultural hub, are under threat due to changes in property management which took place after this building was set up.

In line with positive commitments made in Glasgow's Cultural Strategy 2024-2030, this Council believes that:

1. Culture is a public good that must be actively supported and protected;
2. Affordable, stable spaces are essential for creative practice to thrive;
3. Glasgow's reputation as a cultural leader depends on meaningful, long-term investment and policy support.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Engage urgently with tenants, partners and funders to consider the sustainability of rent and service charge increases for Trongate 103 tenants, explore funding options to mitigate the impact of rent increases and review opportunities for service charge reductions;
2. Work with cultural organisations, artists, and community groups to develop a Cultural Protection Strategy that safeguards key venues and supports the long-term sustainability of the sector;
3. Investigate options for increasing the availability of affordable, cultural spaces across the city and exploring the option of purchasing venues from City Property if there is likely to be an ongoing tension in respect of its remit, recognising that there will be a number of legal, financial and governance implications that will need to be considered;
4. Advocate to the Scottish Government for increased funding and policy support to address the culture funding crisis, and restate the need for national funding to support Glasgow's galleries and museums;
5. Write to the Scottish Government requesting the introduction of a Universal Basic Income pilot for artists, like Ireland recently delivered and is now making permanent;
6. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Minister for Public Finance to seek a further review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to consider the inclusion of appropriate arms-length organisations of local authorities into the scope of the Act and within the schedule of public service bodies it applies to."

Bailie Christie, seconded by Councillor Leinster, moved as an amendment that:-

- (1) after paragraph 1, insert 3 new paragraphs:

“Council continues to support ongoing work and cultural exchanges at a local, national and international level to platform Glasgow’s cultural offer and develop opportunities for the creative sector. Council believes that access to culture is our right, as stated in the Glasgow Culture Strategy 2024-2030, recognising the role of culture in sustainable development; and supports the international calls for Culture to be a standalone United Nations Sustainable Development Goal.

Council also acknowledges the ongoing contribution of Glasgow Life’s Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards, Arts Development programmes and Artists in Communities, which continue to nurture grassroots creativity across the city.

Council recognises the continued financial support for grassroots creativity, strengthened by the £1.25m Glasgow 2026 Festival Fund, which awarded up to £10,000 to 163 projects across all 23 wards. This funding has enabled genuinely local, community-led events, expanded access to culture, supported emerging artists, and helped build lasting creative capacity across neighbourhoods. Council welcomes the Scottish Government’s record national uplift in arts funding, alongside increased festival investment, including £524,000 for four Glasgow festivals. It further notes the wider reach of the new Expanded Festivals Fund across Glasgow’s cultural ecosystem. Council also commends the additional £3.5m awarded to the Citizens Theatre, bringing total government investment to £17.5m, underlining its importance to the Gorbals, Glasgow and Scotland’s cultural sector.”;

(2) at paragraph 2,

(a) delete all up to “Silver Award” and replace with

“Council recognises other significant strides which have recently been made in Glasgow’s cultural development, including the £68.25 million refurbishment of the Burrell Collection where almost half of the investment was committed by Glasgow City Council; Council congratulates Glasgow Museums on the many accolades received since the reopening of The Burrell, including Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2023 and most recently received the Design Effectiveness Silver Award.”

(b) insert “Council” before “celebrates work which is ongoing to develop culture as a driver of regeneration in the Sauchiehall Street Culture & Heritage District project”; and

(c) and add to sentence:

“...noting the National Lottery Heritage Fund award last month which will help restore important heritage spaces, such as the McLellan Galleries and will see groups such as the Scottish Ensemble, Glasgow Film and Articulate moving into the Galleries to bring new activities and a refreshed energy to the much-loved landmark.”; and

- (d) Create new paragraph from “ *notes ongoing ....residents and visitors*” and change to

“Council also notes ongoing, local investment into Glasgow’s museums and collections, including Council already £13m committing towards the renovation of People’s Palace and Winter Gardens, which continue to be provided free of charge to Glasgow’s residents and visitors.”

- (3) at paragraph 4, delete all and replace with:

“Council acknowledges ongoing engagement between City Property, tenants and partners to develop a sustainable, long-term operating model for Trongate 103, recognising the need to protect its cultural purpose while ensuring financial viability. Council agrees this dialogue should continue.”

- (4) at paragraph 5, delete all and replace with:

“Council understands that all the remaining tenants have signed on to monthly rolling leases at £4 per square foot. Council understands City property will work with tenants if they require to make changes to their footprint and that City Property have committed to a rent review in five years to ensure rents are consistent with comparable cultural properties across the city. Council recognises the important work that these cultural organisations including Glasgow Print Studio, Project Ability, StreetLevel Photoworks, Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre, Transmission Gallery and Glasgow Independent Studio do, along with all of the artists and communities that sustain and are sustained by them.”

- (5) after paragraph 5, insert new paragraph:

“Council wants to continue to provide support for cultural and creative organisations in the city and therefore agrees to redirect £200k from the Culture and Recreation Fund to create a new “Culture and Creative Industry Property Support Fund” which would provide grants to support creative and cultural organisations in the city with property costs including rental and service charge costs.”;

- (6) at paragraph 6, delete all and replace with:

“Council also agrees that the original creative purpose agreed for the building, prior to its opening in 2009, to provide a long-term home for arts and culture should be preserved. This mission was made possible with public funding, including from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and which resulted in the successful rebrand of Merchant City and Trongate as the Culture Quarter, however Council also recognises the necessity of securing a sustainable long-term future for the building for all partners.

(7) at paragraph 7, delete all and replace with:

“Council therefore notes that the landlord City Property is continuing to offer a highly subsidised level of rent, well below market rates, and is working with tenants to explore ways whereby essential services, such as cleaning, may be delivered at lower cost.”

(8) at paragraph, 8,

(a) insert the following after at the end of bullet 3:

“...and collaborative partnership working across the culture sector”;

(b) after “This Council therefore resolves to:”, insert new bullet point 1:

“Agree to create a new Culture and Creative Industry Property Support Fund”

(c) Change original bullet no 1 to:

“Continue to engage with tenants, partners and funders to secure the long-term sustainability of rent, service charges for Trongate 103 tenants, maintain the significant rental subsidies currently provided, explore potential mechanisms for further rent relief and review opportunities for service charge reductions”;

(d) delete bullet no 2 and replace with:

“Continue to work with cultural organisations, artists, and community groups to take forward the Culture Strategy Priority 2 commitment to Cultural Participation and work in partnership to ensure a place-based approach to investment in cultural spaces, promote community-led programming and recognise the value of cultural participation to community wellbeing. Also, reaffirm Council’s commitment to Culture Strategy Priority 4 to ensure the economic sustainability of our cultural sector.”;

(e) delete bullet no 4 and replace with:

“Advocate to the Scottish Government for increased funding and policy support to address the culture funding challenges facing the sector, acknowledging the significant increases already delivered;”;

(f) delete bullet no 5 and replace with:

“Request that the Scottish Government explores targeted income-stability support for artists through existing cultural programmes, informed by international examples like Ireland’s Universal Basic Income for artists and aligned with devolved powers;”.

Councillor O’Lone, seconded by Councillor Mooney, moved as an amendment that:-

(1) at paragraph 4,

(a) insert the following after “financial pressure”:

“Council notes that City Property has advised that no tenants are being evicted and that existing leases are being brought to an end to allow for new agreements from April 2026, following an independent rental assessment process. Council further notes that this assessment identified higher potential market rents but recommended a sustainable rate for cultural and creative organisations in recognition of the building’s long-standing role as a cultural hub and the financial position of tenants. Council also notes the write-off of historic arrears and ongoing engagement between City Property, Glasgow Life and tenants regarding affordability and operational sustainability.”;

(b) then insert an additional paragraph to read:

“Council recognises that engagement has taken place over several years with the tenants of Trongate 103 to bring forward a sustainable operating and rental model, however believes that, despite these measures, significant concerns remain as to whether the proposed rent and service charge arrangements are affordable or sustainable in the long term, and whether they go far enough to protect cultural organisations from the risk of closure or displacement.”;

(2) at paragraph 6,

(a) insert the following after “arts and culture”;

“, at affordable and accessible rates for creative organisations,”

(b) insert the following after “public funding”:

“, and contributed to the successful development of Merchant City and Trongate as a recognised Culture Quarter.”;

(3) at paragraph 7, insert the following after “forced to close”;

“Council further notes concerns regarding the transparency and adequacy of engagement with tenant organisations, the methodology used to assess affordability and long-term sustainability, and the extent to which decisions relating to Trongate 103 align with the ambitions set out in Glasgow’s Cultural Strategy 2024–2030, including commitments to community wealth building and the protection of cultural infrastructure, within the context of ongoing real-terms financial pressures on local government.”

(4) at paragraph 8,

(a) after “supported and protected”, insert:

Culture’s social and community value cannot be assessed solely on the basis of commercial rental value, and must reflect the wider contribution of cultural organisations to Glasgow’s communities, wellbeing and economy;” ;

(b) after bullet point 1, commencing “Engage urgently with tenants...”, insert the following

“, and report back to the relevant committee within six months with clear recommendations, including options for intervention, financial support and any required policy changes.”;

(c) at bullet point 2, after “Work with cultural organisations, artists, and community groups to develop a Cultural Protection Strategy” ; insert the following:

“, including criteria for identifying and safeguarding key cultural assets, mechanisms to prevent displacement, and options for long-term affordability of creative spaces;”;

(d) at bullet point 3, after “financial and governance implications that will need to be considered”, insert the following

“, and to review whether current governance arrangements for arms-length organisations are delivering outcomes consistent with the Council’s cultural and community objectives”;

(e) at the end of bullet point 4, insert the following:

“, including multi-year funding settlements for local government and targeted support for cultural infrastructure in cities with nationally significant cultural assets;”

Bailie Mearns, with the approval of her seconder, accepted the amendments by Bailie Christie and Councillor O’Lone, resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

“Glasgow’s identity as a vibrant, internationally renowned cultural city has been built on the strength of its artists, venues, grassroots organisations, and accessible creative spaces. From music and visual arts to performance and community-led initiatives, culture is fundamental to the city’s social fabric, economic vitality, and global reputation.

Council continues to support ongoing work and cultural exchanges at a local, national and international level to platform Glasgow’s cultural offer and develop opportunities for the creative sector. Council believes that access to culture is our right, as stated in the Glasgow Culture Strategy 2024-2030, recognising the role of

culture in sustainable development; and supports the international calls for Culture to be a standalone United Nations Sustainable Development Goal.

Council also acknowledges the ongoing contribution of Glasgow Life's Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards, Arts Development programmes and Artists in Communities, which continue to nurture grassroots creativity across the city.

Council recognises the continued financial support for grassroots creativity, strengthened by the £1.25m Glasgow 2026 Festival Fund, which awarded up to £10,000 to 163 projects across all 23 wards. This funding has enabled genuinely local, community-led events, expanded access to culture, supported emerging artists, and helped build lasting creative capacity across neighbourhoods. Council welcomes the Scottish Government's record national uplift in arts funding, alongside increased festival investment, including £524,000 for four Glasgow festivals. It further notes the wider reach of the new Expanded Festivals Fund across Glasgow's cultural ecosystem. Council also commends the additional £3.5m awarded to the Citizens Theatre, bringing total government investment to £17.5m, underlining its importance to the Gorbals, Glasgow and Scotland's cultural sector.

Council recognises other significant strides which have recently been made in Glasgow's cultural development, including the £68.25 million refurbishment of the Burrell Collection where almost half of the investment was committed by Glasgow City Council; Council congratulates Glasgow Museums on the many accolades received since the reopening of The Burrell, including Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2023 and most recently received the Design Effectiveness Silver Award.

Council celebrates work which is ongoing to develop culture as a driver of regeneration in the Sauchiehall Street Culture & Heritage District project noting the National Lottery Heritage Fund award last month which will help restore important heritage spaces, such as the McLellan Galleries and will see groups such as the Scottish Ensemble, Glasgow Film and Articulate moving into the Galleries to bring new activities and a refreshed energy to the much-loved landmark.

Council also notes ongoing, local investment into Glasgow's museums and collections, including Council already £13m committing towards the renovation of People's Palace and Winter Gardens, which continue to be provided free of charge to Glasgow's residents and visitors.

However, Council notes with concern the many challenges facing Glasgow's cultural sector. While the recent closure of the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) on Sauchiehall Street was not within the Council's control, it is important to acknowledge this has had an impact on other culture organisations and practitioners and has damaged the vibrancy of this part of the city. Council understands that Creative Scotland, as the building's owner, is working on options for its future, and that both the Council and Glasgow Life have interests in ensuring that the city's cultural needs and the regeneration aspirations for the immediate local area are reflected in whatever happens next with the venue.

Council acknowledges ongoing engagement between City Property, tenants and partners to develop a sustainable, long-term operating model for Trongate 103,

following concerns raised by tenants over rent and service charge rises and the risk of closure or displacement. Council notes that City Property has advised that no tenants are technically being evicted and that existing leases are being brought to an end to allow for new agreements from April 2026, following an independent rental assessment process, however notes that the levels proposed are higher than the independent recommendations. Council understands that all the remaining tenants have signed on to monthly rolling leases at £4 per square foot. Council understands City property will work with tenants if they require to make changes to their footprint, however this may not be possible for many of the organisations due to operational and safeguarding needs, for example; and that City Property have committed to a rent review in five years to ensure rents are consistent with comparable cultural properties across the city. Council agrees this dialogue should continue.

Council recalls the original creative purpose agreed for the building, prior to its opening in 2009, to provide a long-term home for arts and culture, at affordable and accessible rates for creative organisations. This mission was made possible with public funding, including from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and which resulted in the successful rebrand of Merchant City and Trongate as the Culture Quarter. Council recognises the important work that cultural organisations including Glasgow Print Studio, Project Ability, StreetLevel Photoworks, Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre, Transmission Gallery and Glasgow Independent Studio do, along with all of the artists and communities that sustain and are sustained by them. Council also recognises the necessity of securing a sustainable long-term future for the building for all partners and the need to protect its cultural purpose while ensuring financial viability.

Council wants to continue to provide support for cultural and creative organisations in the city and therefore agrees to redirect £200k from the Culture and Recreation Fund to create a new “Culture and Creative Industry Property Support Fund” which would provide grants to support creative and cultural organisations in the city with property costs including rental and service charge costs.

In line with positive commitments made in Glasgow’s Cultural Strategy 2024-2030, this Council believes that:

1. Culture is a public good that must be actively supported and protected;
2. Affordable, stable spaces are essential for creative practice to thrive;
3. Glasgow’s reputation as a cultural leader depends on meaningful, long-term investment and policy support and collaborative partnership working across the culture sector.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Agree to create a new Culture and Creative Industry Property Support Fund;
2. Continue to engage with tenants, partners and funders to secure the long-term sustainability of rent and service charges for Trongate 103 tenants, maintain the significant rental subsidies currently provided, explore potential

mechanisms for further rent relief and review opportunities for service charge reductions. Council requests that this work continue at pace;

3. Continue to work with cultural organisations, artists, and community groups to take forward the Culture Strategy Priority 2 commitment to Cultural Participation and work in partnership to ensure a place-based approach to investment in cultural spaces, promote community-led programming and recognise the value of cultural participation to community wellbeing. Also, reaffirm Council's commitment to Culture Strategy Priority 4 to ensure the economic sustainability of our cultural sector including criteria for identifying and safeguarding key cultural assets, mechanisms to prevent displacement, and options for long-term affordability of creative spaces;
4. Investigate options for increasing the availability of affordable, cultural spaces across the city and exploring the option of purchasing venues from City Property if there is likely to be an ongoing tension in respect of its remit, recognising that there will be a number of legal, financial and governance implications that will need to be considered;
5. Advocate to the Scottish Government for increased funding and policy support to address culture funding challenges, acknowledging the significant increases already delivered, and restate the need for national funding to support Glasgow's galleries and museums including multi-year funding settlements for local government and targeted support for nationally significant cultural infrastructure in Glasgow;
6. Request that the Scottish Government explores targeted income-stability support for artists through existing cultural programmes, informed by international examples like Ireland's Universal Basic Income for artists and aligned with devolved powers; and
7. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Minister for Public Finance to seek a further review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to consider the inclusion of appropriate arms-length organisations of local authorities into the scope of the Act and be within the schedule of public service bodies it applies to."