Item 4

10th August 2023

Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee

Report by Chief Executive, Glasgow Life

Contact: Duncan Dornan Ext: 75900

DISPOSALS FROM MUSEUMS AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Purpose of Report:

- To note the role of the Working Group within the procedure for disposal of Museums and Library collections
- To endorse the recommendations from the Working Group regarding disposal of material in line with ethical and professional guidelines

Recommendations:

Having considered the professional context for the management and review of collections, the committee is asked to

- note the procedure for the review and authorisation for disposals from the civic collections and role of the Working Group therein
- note the recommendations of the Working Group for ethical disposal of the following items as cited under:

  1.3.1 Museums and Collections
  1.3.2 Mitchell Library – General Services

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1.1 Background

A committee paper was submitted to the City Administration Committee on 15th June 2023 to notify the council of the requirement for collections rationalization and disposal from the civic collection, the criteria applied, and the role of professional officers within Archives, Museums and Library in carrying out these functions.

The committee agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Repatriation and Spoliation Working Group be extended to include review of disposal recommendations from Museums and Library Special Collections.

The paper tabled can be found here:
https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDNZ3Z3DXUTNT

Other disposals which form part of standard evaluation system for stock development or archive appraisals are approved by the senior professional officer responsible for that collection area as part of their job function i.e. Senior Library professional or City Archivist. In some cases, however, while permission is not required of the council as the governing body, information will be notified to the Working Group so that the council is aware of ongoing practice.

1.2 Reporting process to ensure Audit and ethical compliance

Glasgow City Council is the Governing Body for the civic collection and the civic collections are subject of the council's internal audit procedures and sectoral ethical compliances.

Disposal is an auditable process requiring that all disposal transactions be fully documented and transparent and have approval of the Governing Body. This process ensures compliance with codes of ethics whereby decisions regarding disposals are within the public domain.

Review and discussion by the Working Group of proposed disposals will ensure compliance with the criteria laid out in the paper to the City Administration Committee before final recommendation for approval is made to this Committee.

Museum rationalisation criteria and processes for disposal are set out in "The Museums Association's Disposal Toolkit Guidelines" which can be found using this link:
https://www.museumsassociation.org/app/uploads/2020/06/31032014-disposal-toolkit-8.pdf

1.3 Items for disposal

In accordance with the above, the following items have been reviewed for disposal against the criteria approved by the City Administration Committee on 15th June 2023 the Working Group recommends the follow for disposal:

1.3.1 Museums and Collections

All museum disposals are assigned a unique file reference and are recorded on the museums central asset management system. This system logs each stage of the disposal process and authorizations creating an audit trail.

1.3.1.1 Transport and Technology collections

31 disposal recommendations covering 65 items/components:

4 Agricultural horse drawn vehicles; 1 bailer and 1 thresher; 2 hand carts; Subway rail sections x3, fittings, electrical switches, and pully wheels; 2 station lamp posts; 2 railway hand trucks and 1 platelayers' trolley; 3 delivery cycles; 1 cycle; 3 cars and components; 2 vans; 2 motorcycles;1 weigh bridge and components, 3 replica plaster cast ship models,1 showman's caravan.

Associated file references:
Disp. 2022. 13
Disp. 2023. 01, 05-09,16-23, 25, 29, 32, 34 to 36, 38-47

1.3.1.2 Social History/Education collections

3 disposal recommendations covering 3 items/components:

1 bannerette; 1 epidiascope and 1 epivisor

Associated file references:
Disp. 2023. 26,27,49

1.3.1.3 Decorative art (furnishings) collections

10 disposal recommendations covering 53 items/components:

1 room installation 'Oakbeams' and elements; 5 beds and components; 2 bedroom suits including wardrobes, washing and dressing tables, towel rails and chairs; 1 corner cabinet and display cabinet.

Associated file references:
Disp. 2023. 62 to 71

1.3.1.4 Natural History collections

2 disposal recommendations covering188 items/components:

185 animal remains transfer from the freezer at Glasgow Museums Resource Centre to National Museums of Scotland (NMS) who have capacity to process them; 3 mice/shrews in poor condition requiring to be destroyed

Associated file references:
Disp. 2022 06D
Disp. 2023 03D

1.3.1.5 Archaeology collections

3 Disposal recommendations covering 272 items/components

270 finds from excavation in Benbencula in 1950's: transfer to NMS to amalgamate with their larger assemblage of site; bag of carbonized cereal grains transfer to AOC Archaeology Group; stone axe head transfer to Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Associated file references:
Disp. 2015. 27D
Disp. 2022. 08,14

1.3.1.6 Temp Numbers: items found in collection without an ID number

31 Disposal recommendations covering 65 items/components:

1 Batricar Powerider; 1 mobile crane;1 velocipede display prop; 1 folding cycle frame; 1 pram;1 cradle; 2 fire guards and fireplaces; 1 gas fire; 4 horse drawn cart components; 2 cupboards and variety of cupboard doors; 1 turnstile and components;1 gas mask;1 metal box and frame; 1 display didactic and components; 1 piece of old signage; book of newspaper cuttings; an upholstered chair; 4 gazebo doors (for return to Pollok House)

Associated file references:
Disp. 2016 10
Disp. 2018 04
Disp. 2020 01
Disp. 2021 01
Disp. 2023 02,10-13,15,24,28,30,31,37,50,52-59,72-78

1.3.1.7 Props/Not Collection: items brought in for temporary use

7 disposal recommendations covering 11 items/ components:

5 Plaster cast architectural replicas; 1 vending cycle;1 cycle; 1 reproduction marble tabletop;1 tray;1 donation box;1 reproduction frame

Associated file references:
Disp. 2023. 14,33,48,51,60,61,71

1.3.2 Mitchell Library – General Services

ML.Disp.2023.01
UN committee reports, booklets, brochures, occasional papers and updated regulations. The Mitchell Library was a semi depository for UN material, however this is no longer the case. There are approximately 600 shelves of resources which are now available, and easier to search, on-line. Therefore, there is no requirement to retain this material. Customers will be directed to online resources should enquiries arise.

ML.Disp.2023.02
European Patents. There are approximately 500 boxes of patents in the form of aperture cards which are no longer readable and 10 bays of hardcopy resources. However, these patents are now available, and easier to search on-line. There is therefore no requirement to retain this material at the Mitchell. Customers will be directed to online resources should enquiries arise

ML.Disp.2023.03
US Patents. There are approximately 400 volumes (2 pallets). These items are now available, and easier to search, on-line

ML.Disp22023.04
Aperture Cards inc. cabinets (situation on Level 3) which are no longer readable. However, these patents are now available, and easier to search on-line.

2 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	Glasgow Life revenue budget for third party transportation should this be required.
Legal:	None.
Personnel:	Glasgow Life Museums and Glasgow Library personnel.
Procurement:	Glasgow Life may require to tender for transport services, through its own procurement team.

Council Strategic Plan:	Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	Grand Challenge 1, Mission 4: Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant Rationalisation of collections will enable further acquisitions to the civic collections that will be more representative of the community in Glasgow as it is currently.
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate	Grand Challenge 3 Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

Plan actions? Please specify:	
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	This process will gradually reduce the collections storage footprint and enable more efficient storge options.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	See above

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	None
Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

3 Recommendations

Having considered the professional context for the management and review of collections, the committee is asked to

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- note the recommendations of the Working Group for ethical disposal of the following items as cited under:
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