A Vision for Glasgow Libraries

Foreword

Glasgow's public libraries belong to its citizens and communities. We believe that people should have lots of opportunities to shape what they do. We want to be great partners, helping where we can, to contribute positively to the lives of our citizens across Glasgow's neighbourhoods.

The original Vision for Glasgow Libraries, published in 2015, was built around the clear messages we received by asking local people, communities and organisations what they wanted from their public library services. In the years since we've worked hard with you to make the Vision for Glasgow Libraries real in your communities and across the city.

Lots of things have changed since 2015. The future is being shaped in ways that can be difficult to understand, creating challenges for all. Libraries are there to help with the cost-of-living crisis and develop local approaches to the climate emergency. We've abolished library fines and our buildings are warm and welcoming. We also recognise that many of the key things that people and partner organisations want from Glasgow's public library service remain consistent.

In late 2022, we consulted the public on a refreshed Vision for Glasgow Libraries and many of you told us what you value most about your library service. You told us:

- It is important to continue to offer the core services around reading, digital and safe, inclusive spaces in local libraries and offer the highest quality experience to service users;
- There is a strong sense of ownership amongst Glasgow's public library users and they want to be involved in the design of their local services. They also want them to be protected and prioritised;
- The importance of friendly, approachable, well-trained library staff;
- The cost-of-living crisis, poverty, inequality and the experiences of Covid-19 have re-emphasised the critical necessity of the physical and digital spaces and services that libraries provide, free at the point of use;
- Access to free WiFi and PCs remains crucial for a significant number of people;
- Libraries actively support their local communities and are valued for the benefits they bring and the information that can be accessed;
- Libraries are places where people new to the city go to better understand their local community. Libraries need to continue to be welcoming and reflect a wide variety of different lived experiences.

The refreshed Vision for Glasgow's Libraries will ensure that they remain at the heart of local community life in the future.

Bailie Annette Christie
Chair, Glasgow Life

In late 2022, we consulted the public on a refreshed Vision for Glasgow Libraries and many of you told us what you value most about your library service. You told us your priorities were a library space that offers:

Books and materials that help you to discover new ideas, stories and perspectives
Reading is still one of our great pleasures. It's the most popular cultural activity in Scotland. Books, reading material and information will always be the focal points of Glasgow's Libraries. Good literacy helps everyone discover and achieve their potential, question and understand the world around them, or just escape for a while. Glasgow's Libraries have a fundamental role to promote reading as well as support and enable everyone to have the skills to access the information they need.

Free access to internet and WiFi
Digital is often the way we want and expect to access information and services. We have become used to the things we want being delivered quickly, easily and tailored to our personal preferences. We want to continue to ensure that every citizen has access to all the digital world can offer, and that libraries are the place where everyone can safely access it.

Events programme for all ages and interests
Glasgow is Scotland's most diverse city. Public libraries are an expression of this and we will continue to build on the progress we've made to ensure we reflect the different ways we all live and the different things that are important to us.

A skilled workforce, dedicated to offering an excellent service
Glasgow's libraries are committed to supporting and developing staff and volunteers to deliver high quality, responsive services to all.

There are five themes that underpin these basic values and aspirations. These are:

Culture

Libraries help people and local communities to express and experience culture. Culture can mean many things, it could be spoken word, a performance, a celebration of our communities or a combination of all of these. It could be thought-provoking or entertaining. We want to work with you to programme activities and events that you want in your local library. Reading is the most popular cultural experience in Scotland and can open doors to other cultural experiences. Furthermore, libraries foster a sense of place and civic pride through programmes that tell the story of the city, its communities and its past, providing a sense of enduring continuity.

That's why we will:

- continue to invest in our physical and digital books and reading material ensuring they are at the heart of all service delivery and programming;
- continue to increase access to our unique collections and resources of cultural significance that help us tell our stories, the city's stories, and the nation's stories;
- develop the role of libraries as gateways to the widest possible range of inclusive cultural experiences and opportunities across the city;
- encourage local cultural participation that is relevant, empowering and accessible in the heart of local communities;
- ensure our online and digital content complements the local library offer and connects customers between the two;
- continue to develop resources and programmes that support the delivery of local history and heritage activities within local libraries.

Health & Wellbeing

We all want to feel more in control of our own health. Sometimes access to information is all we need. Sometimes we need more than information - someone to listen, signpost or help to find our way through complicated situations. Reading is also great for relaxation and for helping make sense of things. We want your libraries to be places where you can find this information and get access to help and support when you need it. Glasgow's libraries will continue to develop services that help to improve your overall health and wellbeing.

That's why we will:

- be your trusted, quality-assured information provider with access to health and wellbeing information;
- develop local health and wellbeing volunteer opportunities and give you additional support during tough times, but also enable you to support others;
- continue to provide reading experiences and opportunities for self-management relating to health issues for customers who for health, or other reasons, are unable to visit their local library;
- work with organisations and agencies to provide specialist information, advice and support services within our local libraries.

- Contribute to Glasgow Life's Live Well Community Referral programme, promoting inclusion, happiness and health.

Social

Libraries provide a safe space where local communities can come together

Whether that means some quiet time or being around other people. Maybe taking part in programmed activities, maybe just to get out of the rain. Everyone is welcome. Your libraries are places where you can find social connection and a friendly welcome in a warm, comfortable building.

That's why we will:

- continue to invest in libraries' infrastructure to make them accessible, warm and welcoming;

- develop programmes and activities that connect across communities and reduce isolation and loneliness;

- develop a wide range of interesting and fun volunteering experiences that help others develop new skills and make new friends;

- create spaces enabling you to work, think, share and acquire knowledge, be on your own or with other people;

- identify ways to involve the community in the development of local services that support local interests and needs;

- support communities to access tools and resources to allow them to influence decisions that affect their local community.

Economy

We can help you develop business ideas, look for a job and ensure you receive all the benefits you are entitled to. Libraries are there for whatever you need, from support with filling in forms, to accessing expert advice and connecting you with other organisations that can help. Our libraries are also a place of learning, supporting literacy and numeracy and offer a wide range of opportunities to develop new skills, including digital learning.

That's why we will:

- continually update our access to digital and on-line information to support jobseekers and people with business ideas that need technical or specialist

support;

- help you to learn and develop the new skills you want to achieve;
- further develop digital and online learning resources with partners, building them around what local people want and need;
- provide WiFi and support to access it;
- further develop partnerships and programmes to support Glasgow's businesses, social enterprises and entrepreneurs.

Environment

We are helping Glasgow achieve carbon net zero by improving your public library buildings' energy efficiency, but we also want to be spaces where communities can organise and build resilience to adapt to the consequences of climate change. Libraries are built on principles of access, sharing and lending for a common good. Information will always be at the heart of this, but we want to apply these principles in ways that help us all live sustainably. We want to work with partners to help us realise the potential libraries can offer.

That's why we will:

- work with environmental and sustainability partners to help local people use energy more efficiently;
- work with partners and local communities to develop collections and services that support the circular economy;
- work with local people to connect them to community food programmes, reduce food waste and support them to make more sustainable choices;
- continually work to reduce the energy consumption in our buildings and identify operating practices to support reduced carbon emissions;
- support connection to climate conversations through events, collections and programmes;
- adopt the principles of Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-25 including the aspiration to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030;
- implement the Green Libraries Manifesto and address net zero targets across everything we do.

Glasgow Libraries belong to everyone. Join us on the next part of the journey, as we develop an action plan to bring the strategy to life.