



**Glasgow City Council**

**City Administration Committee**

**Report by Bailie Annette Christie, City Convener for Culture, Sport and International Relations**

**Item 1**

**3rd September 2026**

**Contact:**

**Jane Rowlands, Head of Museums and Collections, Glasgow Life**

**Alex MacLean, Head of Property Consultancy Services, NRS**

## **PEOPLE'S PALACE AND WINTER GARDEN REFURBISHMENT**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To update on the proposals to restore, reimagine and enhance the People's Palace and Winter Garden and preserve this nationally significant cultural heritage asset; deliver a new museum offer; improve the flexible civic space in the glasshouse and seek Glasgow City Council capital investment.

### **Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to:

- note the content of the report and significant project progress since August 2023
- note the approach to Community engagement informing current building proposals, approach to museum displays, and future programming
- note the updated programme, cost estimates and funding model
- note the submission of a Stage 2 application to National Lottery Heritage Fund at the end of May 2026 and its decision-making Board in September 2026
- note the commitment from the Scottish Government of up to £14M to support the project
- approve the request for a further £5M of Glasgow City Council capital investment, required to deliver the proposed development

Ward No(s): 9

Citywide: ✓

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

## 1 BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS

1.1 The refurbishment and re-imagining of the People's Palace and Winter Garden is the latest major museum project that the Council and Glasgow Life are undertaking. Successful redevelopment projects at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Riverside Museum and The Burrell Collection are evidence that the city has a track record in delivering large-scale cultural projects for the benefit of citizens and the economy.

1.2 In August 2023 a paper outlining a project to restore and enhance the People's Palace and Winter Garden and seeking approval to submit a Stage 1 (Development Phase) National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) application was tabled at the City Administration Committee.

1.3 This NLHF application was successful, and the project was awarded a development phase grant of £850,000.

1.4 Table 1 below shows key dates during the Development Phase.

| <b>TABLE 1</b>                                           |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                          | <b>Date</b>         |
| NLHF announcement of Stage 1 (Development Phase) funding | Jan 2024            |
| NLHF Development Phase - Permission to Start             | July 2024           |
| NLHF Development Phase activity (2yrs)                   | Jul 2024 - May 2026 |
| Mid-term NLHF review                                     | Feb 2026            |
| Building design - RIBA Stage 3 completion                | May 2026            |
| NLHF Stage 2 (Delivery Phase) application submission     | May 2026            |

1.5 The positive outcome of the mid-term review with NLHF enabled the submission of a full Stage 2 (Delivery Phase) funding application in late May 2026, with a decision to be made at the NLHF Board in September 2026.

1.6 Since 2024, significant work to hear from communities across the city has taken place, with over 7,000 people sharing their views about all aspects of the project. This has directly informed the updated plans, and a planning application was submitted to the Council in July 2026.

1.7 In addition to funding contributions from Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a further £2.8M of funding has been secured by Glasgow Life from a capital fundraising campaign. In total, £19.55M has been secured to date with further funding opportunities continuing to be explored.

1.8 Following an announcement by the First Minister in April 2026, a commitment to deliver support for the People's Palace and Winter Garden within the first 100 days was made. The Scottish Government established a Partnership Group and has recently announced funding of up to £14M to support Glasgow to reopen the People's Palace and Winter Garden.

## 2 PROJECT AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The project will restore, reimagine, and enhance a critically important cultural and historical asset located on Glasgow Green, ensuring its long-term future through significant investment for the benefit of the people of Glasgow.
- 2.2 Objectives have been informed by community and stakeholder engagement, by city council strategy and funder interests, they are:

| <b>TABLE 2</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>An innovative social history museum</i>          | Develop and promote the People's Palace as a destination for Glaswegian, regional, national and international visitors, that represents and celebrates the people of Glasgow and tells the city's stories |
| <i>A dynamic, community-led museum and space</i>    | Develop interpretation and programming that engage with local people and expand co-production work, to instill pride, encourage repeat visits and improve the health and wellbeing of the community       |
| <i>An accessible, inclusive museum</i>              | Offer improved and inclusive access for everyone to the whole building and the collections – onsite and online                                                                                            |
| <i>A sustainable museum</i>                         | Provide improved environmental conditions for visitors and the collection using appropriate, sustainable and environmentally friendly technologies                                                        |
| <i>A connected museum</i>                           | Better connect the building to Glasgow Green and the city through an external events space, facilities that support activities on the Green, accessible routes and active travel                          |
| <i>A vibrant visitor attraction in the East End</i> | Increase commercial opportunities through improved catering, retail and multi-purpose event/function offers to become a key visitor attraction in the city and bring positive economic impact to East End |

2.3 The project's innovative 'Pop-Up Palace' touring programme has engaged with more than 2,000 people, testing ideas and ensuring the future museum reflects the lived experiences of Glasgow's communities. Feedback has consistently emphasised the importance of immersive, interactive experiences and the opportunity for visitors to see their own stories represented. The reimagined People's Palace will deliver an innovative social history museum centred on the principle that "People Make Glasgow". Exhibitions will be developed through a mix of curatorial expertise, community collaboration and co-production, allowing visitors to explore themes such as identity, belonging, inequality, creativity, and change.

2.4 Plans for the Winter Garden include enhanced planting, developed in collaboration with community partners, supporting wellbeing, biodiversity and learning. The redesigned space will feature improved accessibility, flexible areas for events and

community use, a café and picnic space, and toilets accessible from Glasgow Green. It will also form the new reception area for the museum, bridging the gap between inside and outside the building.

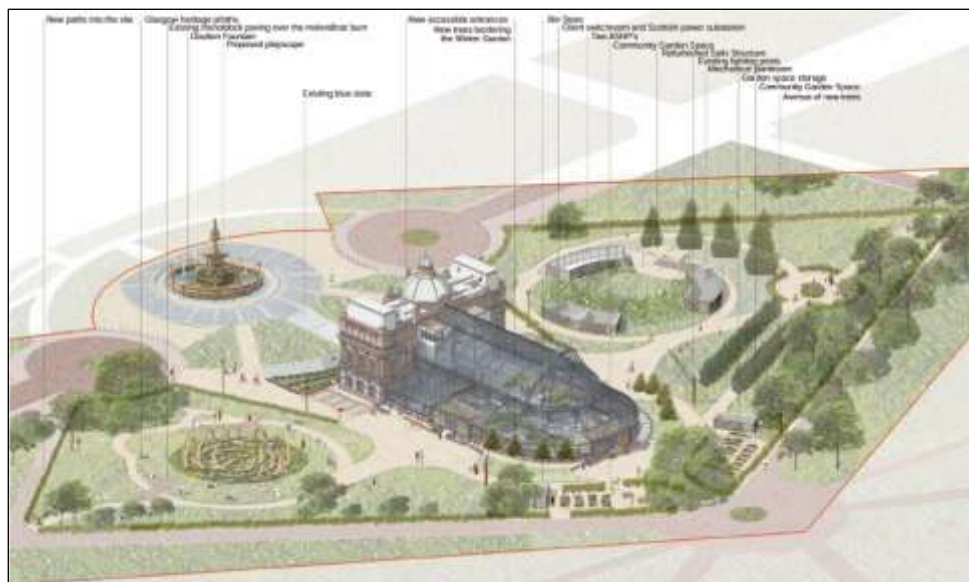
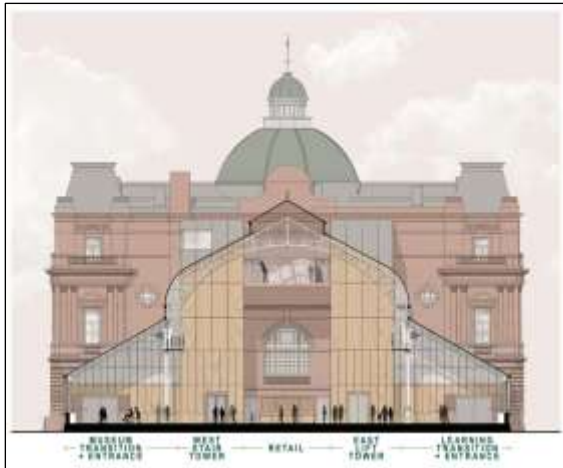
2.5 In summary the project will deliver:

- integration of the sandstone and winter garden into a single visitor attraction and civic amenity operated by Glasgow Life
- full remediation of the structural issues with and full re-glazing of, the winter garden
- re-interpretation of the internal People's Palace museum displays
- improvements to external public realm
- redeveloped social spaces, café, shop and toilets including a Changing Places toilet.
- public and education programming will connect with many audiences.

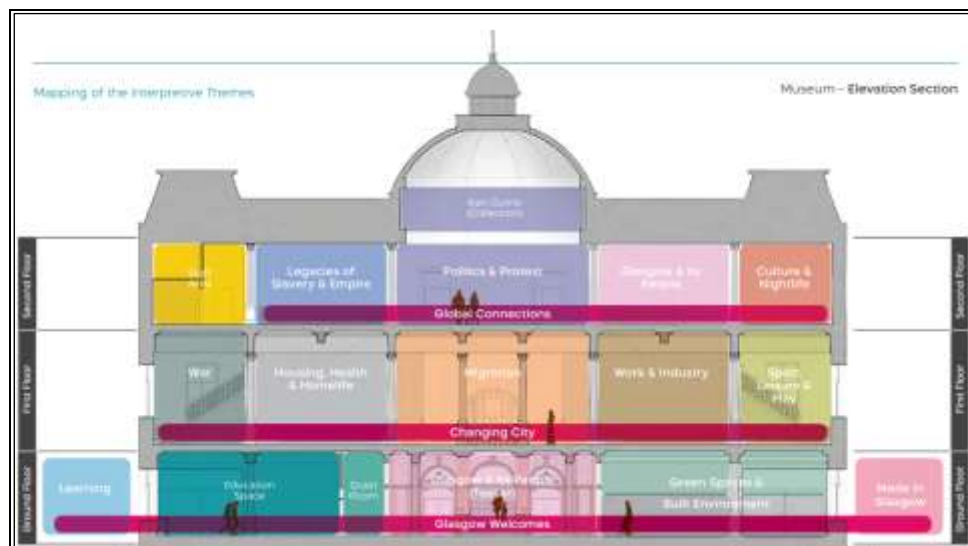
2.6 The drawings below show:

- A sectional elevation of the building, showing the museum galleries on the left, the lift and staircase in the centre and the amenities in the glasshouse
- An elevation showing how the glasshouse meets the sandstone museum, with new large openings between them and the improved vertical access
- A schematic layout of the ground floor, showing the learning room. Shop and information desk, as well as planted areas, new toilets and café
- The outside space, with improved accessible pathways and entrances into the building and opportunities for improved gathering spaces, play and planting





2.7 The image below, illustrates how museum content themes are distributed and how they support a coherent, engaging and distinctly Glasgow visitor experience. This approach allows for multiple perspectives, evolving content, and continued community input.



2.8 These updated plans merge the needs of a modern museum service, with telling the full story of the city, in a way that responds to the clear community view that the People's Palace and Winter Garden should provide community amenities and benefits.

### **3 PROJECT PROGRAMME**

3.1 Subject to securing all the relevant approvals, including the NLHF funding in September 2026, it is intended that the works will follow the updated headline programme outlined below. This moves the project beyond its estimated completion date of Autumn 2027.

3.2 During the Development Phase, the updated programme, shown in Table 3 below, has been developed with input from the design team and other stakeholders and allows time for meaningful community engagement.

| <b>TABLE 3</b>                                 |                     |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                | <b>Date</b>         |
| Building Design Team Procurement complete      | Aug 2026            |
| NLHF Delivery Phase - decision                 | Sept 2026           |
| NLHF Delivery Phase - Permission to Start      | Nov 2026            |
| NLHF Delivery Phase – activity (3yrs)          | Nov 2026 – Dec 2029 |
| Building works start onsite                    | Jun 2027            |
| Building Construction and café fitout complete | May 2029            |
| Museum and retail fit out complete             | Dec 2029            |
| Opening activities commence                    | Dec 2029            |

### **4 PROJECT COSTS**

4.1 At the end of RIBA stage 3, a cost exercise was undertaken and the project cost increased from the initial estimate of £35.9m to £50.86M. This reflects updated technical advice, particularly relating to the complex restoration of the Victorian glasshouse, alongside construction sector inflationary pressures and an extended project programme.

4.2 The figure of £50.86M includes a total of £7.57M for inflation, optimism bias and contingency. Benchmarking with other current glasshouse projects in the UK indicates that maintaining a figure of this scale is recommended.

4.3 This project cost covers the building fabric construction works to the glasshouse and sandstone building, museum content redevelopment and fit out works, contractor overheads and profit, non-construction costs, professional fees and client direct costs.

4.4 The building scheme is at an optimal level; it preserves the building and upgrades facilities such as toilets, stays within the original footprint of the building and adds minimal extras. Square metre rates have been assessed against other projects and have been pragmatically chosen to reflect the nature and extent of the redevelopment opportunity, ensuring that the vision for the venue and its contents is maintained whilst being mindful of the economic landscape and city budget pressures.

4.5 As the project moves to the next, more detailed technical design stage, and as the procurement of key consultants, contractors and the main contractor is completed, every chance will be taken to question proposals to ensure the project is realised within this project cost.

| <b>TABLE 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Est. Cost £M</b> |
| Total building cost – incl ancillaries and fees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | £31.34              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full repair of the building envelope (sandstone and glasshouse elements)</li> <li>• Full building M&amp;E installation to facilitate museum conditions in galleries</li> <li>• New elements including café, retail, toilets, vertical circulation upgrades and new floor within the glasshouse</li> <li>• Significant access upgrades and works to the external 'Diamond' space</li> </ul> |                     |
| Total visitor experience works – incl fees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | £6.39               |
| Total client direct costs – incl project delivery team                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | £5.55               |
| Total contingency and inflation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | £7.57               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>£50.86M</b>      |

## 5 PROJECT FUNDING MODEL

5.1 The project has received support from Glasgow City Council, NLHF, Trusts, Foundations and private philanthropic giving.

5.2 The recent announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic of up to £14M of funding support from the Scottish Government is very welcome and shows their confidence in the project the Council and Glasgow Life are seeking to deliver.

5.3 UK Government has been approached and to date has declined the offer to support the project.

5.4 To date a total of £33.55M (66%) has been secured and is outlined in Table 5 below.

| <b>TABLE 5</b>                   |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Secured Funding</b>           | <b>£</b>    |
| GCC Community Asset Fund Capital | £2,900,000  |
| GCC Capital Contribution         | £11,000,000 |

|                                                                                                                                        |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Glasgow Life redistribution of Community Asset Fund Capital (approved funding)                                                         | £2,000,000         |
| National Lottery Heritage Fund (development phase funding)                                                                             | £850,000           |
| Glasgow Life led Development and Fundraising (Trusts, Foundations); including Historic Environment Scotland positive initial decision. | £2,800,000         |
| Scottish Government                                                                                                                    | £14,000,000        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>£33,550,000</b> |

5.5 Table 6 below shows the funding still to be secured.

| <b>TABLE 6</b>                                                                            |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unsecured Funding</b>                                                                  | <b>£</b>           |
| GCC Capital Contribution – additional                                                     | £5,000,000         |
| National Lottery Heritage Fund – delivery phase funding                                   | £9,150,000         |
| Glasgow Life led Fundraising – other public funding, Trusts, Foundations, Public Campaign | £3,160,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                              | <b>£17,310,000</b> |

5.6 Glasgow City Council are being asked to provide an additional £5m in capital funding. This commitment will be built into our capital planning from 2028. The total contribution of the Council will be no more than £20.9m, subject to the NLHF requirement to underwrite the fundraising.

5.7 A Stage 2 NLHF application is seeking support of £9.15M Delivery Phase funding. There is a site visit with NLHF at the end of August in advance of an expected decision in late September 2026. Should the project secure the funding, the project would be 94% funded.

5.8 Other public funding opportunities, an active capital fundraising campaign targeting Trusts, Foundations, Corporates, and private and public philanthropic giving will seek to secure the remaining £3.16M (6%) to bridge the final funding gap.

## **6 BUSINESS PLAN AND FUTURE OPERATIONS**

6.1 A business plan considers revenue consequences, operational management expenditure and commercial opportunities through improved catering, retail, appropriate venue hire and other commercial partnerships and more integrated support for large scale events on the Green.

6.2 The opportunities have been explored in parallel with the local community's expressed wish for regular community use and will ensure that commercial activity supports rather than displaces everyday access.

6.3 To maximise these benefits, the glasshouse and some areas immediately outside the building will be managed and programmed by Glasgow Life and the boundary line will be amended to reflect this.



## 7 POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

### Resource Implications:

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Financial:</i>   | Capital funding of £15.9M has already been approved. Assuming that the target for fund-raising is met, the additional £5M of capital funding noted at Table 6 will be built into capital planning from 2028. |
| <i>Legal:</i>       | Amendments to existing Glasgow Life Lease                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Personnel:</i>   | Officers from Glasgow Life, Property & Consultancy Services, Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability are in place to progress this work.                                                             |
| <i>Procurement:</i> | The procurement of relevant design consultants, specialist contractors and a management contractor are required, with input from GCC and Glasgow Life procurement teams.                                     |

|                                |                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Council Strategic Plan:</b> | <b>Strategic Plan 2022-27</b><br>Aspects of the project support all Four Grand Challenges and Missions within each Challenge. |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

A commitment explicit to the Peoples Palace and Winter Garden is noted under Grand Challenge 1, Mission 4.

### **Grand Challenge 1**

#### **Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities**

##### **Mission 3**

- Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities

##### **Mission 4**

- Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant

#### **Commitment (pg 24)**

- Secure investment for the People's Palace and Winter Garden.

Link to Glasgow City Development Plan

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=58784&=0>

### **Grand Challenge 2**

#### **Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens**

##### **Mission 1**

- Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work

##### **Mission 2**

- Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy

##### **Mission 3**

- Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people

### **Grand Challenge 3**

#### **Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow**

##### **Mission 2**

- Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

Link to Glasgow's Climate Plan

[Glasgow's Climate Plan - Glasgow City Council](#)

### **Grand Challenge 4**

#### **Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities**

##### **Mission 1**

- Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods

##### **Mission 3**

- Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative council structure that delivers value for money

### **Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

|                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.</i>     | <p>The proposals seek to improve access to all and remove physical and perceived barriers which currently prevent people from accessing the venue and its immediate surroundings.</p> <p>This supports the Council's ambition to reduce inequality.</p> <p>The project will deliver 4no employability opportunities, which will be recruited taking positive action and seeking to support individuals from the local community.</p> |
| <i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>                    | <p>Positive impacts for those with physical disability or sensory impairment, through access improvements and reinterpreted collection which will be required to be monitored over the course of the project as set out in the EQIA.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i> | <p>The proposal's success is dependent on the inclusion of local communities' input and will be defined by community led programming and resources.</p> <p>Providing career opportunities and facilitating local commercial ventures along with attracting significant local and national</p>                                                                                                                                        |

tourist economic input may address local socio-economic disadvantages in line with GCC's Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

### **Climate Impacts:**

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions?<br/>Please specify:</i> | <p>The proposal supports the Climate plan through action:</p> <p>No29 - Ensure that historic buildings are resilient to the impacts of climate change, protecting Glasgow's rich heritage.</p> <p>This will be achieved by implementing Historic Environment Scotland guidance on Adaptation of historic buildings to the impact of Climate Change.</p> |
| <i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>    | <p>Building fabric upgrades along with environmentally sustainable building service redevelopment will reduce utility use and therefore limit climate impact.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>       | <p>Investment in sustainable technologies within the redevelopment will further reduce ongoing operational and maintenance requirements and cost which will further support reaching the net zero carbon target.</p>                                                                                                                                    |

### **Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:**

No

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

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The committee is asked to:

- note the content of the report and significant project progress since August 2023
- note the approach to working with communities informing current building proposals, approach to museum displays, and future programming

- note the updated programme, cost estimates and funding model
- note the submission of a Stage 2 application to National Lottery Heritage Fund at the end of May 2026 and its decision-making Board in September 2026
- note the commitment from the Scottish Government of up to £14M to support the project
- approve the request for a further £5M of Glasgow City Council capital investment required to deliver the proposed development