



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

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Report of: *Kate Martin, City Futures*

Report to: *Strategy and Resources Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *21/12/23*

Subject: Identifying the future role of Central Library and Graves Gallery Building

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>					
2466					
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	/	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	/	<input type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

Central Library/Graves Gallery building is a beloved Sheffield landmark which needs to be reimaged for the future. Members need good information on the feasibility of various options for its future, to help decide a way forward.

Integral to this process are:

- A vision and location for Central Library and Archive services.
- A vision and feasibility for the future use of the building, as a nationally significant destination gallery.

Resources for repair surveys are required immediately to allow a repair programme to be designed and costed, and progress made as options are considered.

A proposed way forward, with potential timeline, is set out for Member discussion and approval.

Recommendations:

The committee is recommended to:

1. *Approve the process of exploring the options as set out in this paper, including:*
 - *Further work to understand the full extent of the Central Library building's condition*
 - *Development of a vision for a 21st Century Central Library and Archives including options for how and where this could be located*
 - *Development of the vision and work to assess the viability of transforming Central Library/Graves building into a nationally significant destination gallery.*
2. *Approve the use of reserves of £420k to fund initial surveying costs, to begin facilitation of an interim repair programme to be designed and costed.*
3. *Note a request for funding to be identified to support further design costs as well as a financial model to support identified investment in Building as part of the Accommodation Strategy*
4. *Note the interdependencies with the City Centre Accommodation Strategy*
5. *Note the potential outline timeline for the activities, including a further report in June 2024*
6. *Note that Place Feasibility Funding is being sought to support the options/visioning activity in Recommendation 1*
7. *Endorse the development of a public engagement plan for the elements of this project.*

Lead Officer to complete:-

1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications	Finance: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Jonny McQuillan
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	indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Legal: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Robert Parkin
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Ed Sexton
		Climate: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Kathryn Warrington
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>Kate Martin</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllr Tom Hunt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Diana Buckley	Job Title: Director Economy, Skills and Culture
	Date: 12/12/23	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Context

Sheffield's Central Library and Graves Gallery building opened in 1934. It is steel-framed, faced in Portland stone, with decorative mouldings and specially designed fittings in Art Deco style, and is Grade II Listed. It is the largest lending library in the city, which also provides business services and access to computers. The top-floor art gallery was founded following a bequest by JG Graves and is run very effectively by Sheffield Museums. There is also a small theatre in the basement, originally designed for public speaking rather than drama, which is a popular affordable venue for amateur dramatic groups despite limited facilities.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The building has been in a poor state of repair for a number of years. A number of studies have taken place in the past, both on the building itself and on the parameters of its preferred function including;

- a study by DCA Associates in 2015 which was part-funded by Arts Council England.
- ARUP and Fourth Street report looked at a range of examples from across the UK, to inform a vision for a central library and gallery provision.
- SCC Capital Delivery Service has undertaken building surveys

However, due to the resources required to progress the project, austerity and COVID, a decision has not been taken. We now hope to progress an agreed future plan for the building and set out the proposed steps to get there in this report.

1.3 Proposal

The building's future - as a refurbished library and art gallery; a flagship standalone art gallery; or another use – needs to be agreed, based on sound information.

1.3.1 It is proposed to create a suite of information which can inform a clear decision on the future use of the building; the potential for the building to become a destination gallery; and the provision of a twenty-first century Central Library and Archives service.

1.3.2 The options explored will have complex capital and revenue implications which need to be accurately modelled. Some options may be appropriate for capital grant funding/central government support but a significant contribution from SCC will also be required. Any preferred option will need realistic business plans to ensure sustainability. This information will allow for an informed cross-party decision of the options considered, and a business case for investment to be drawn up.

As these options are explored, further investigation of compliance works in the building needs to take place, both to inform the decision-making process and to identify a designed and costed interim repair programme.

1.4 Principles

The Council's values are; people are at the heart of what we do; Openness and honesty are important to us; and together we get things done. In response to these values, the proposed programme of work will be delivered under the following principles / ways of working.

- **Cross party leadership of the process we undertake to come to a decision point.** We propose that this committee (*Strategy & Resources*) approve this process whereby the information required to make the decision is commissioned, and processes set out, with clarity on how and where a future decision will be taken. *Communities, Parks and Leisure* and *Economic Development and Skills Committees* will also be required to shape the feasibility work.
- **Collective Leadership at Officer Level** – A joint officer programme board to bring together Estates, Libraries, Culture, Regeneration and Planning (plus Sheffield Museums Trust and others as required), so we can have collective conversation with Members and represent the range of considerations at play. This also recognises the complexity of this project and the range of expertise required.
- **Openness and Transparency** – That we set out in public (through this report) the process we are undertaking, and as far as commercially possible share information and reports which inform the decision. Comprehensive public consultation will be needed to steer decision-making, once capital and revenue costs are fully understood.
- **Early Financial Consideration** – We know that this project will cost from £25m to what could be £60-100m depending on the options pursued. We believe that a substantial amount could be brought in via grant and philanthropy but substantial capital investment, and increased future revenue will likely be required from SCC.

1.5 Potential Options

1.5.1 A number of potential options have been discussed over many years, for the future use and purpose of the building. Informative work has been done in the past, however the picture remains incomplete, and we still need to understand both the Capital and Revenue implications of any potential decision.

We propose to undertake feasibility works to explore the following options:

Options to be explored
<i>Further work to understand the full extent of the Central Library building's condition</i> – Look to bring the building back into full compliance for use as is.
A single regenerated building housing a Central Library and Gallery. City Archives location would also need to be considered. A single building housing both functions could be more cost-effective than two separate buildings. However, the building does not have scope to accommodate a City Archives, Central Library and an Art Gallery. We need to understand the vision and synergies between the 3 functions – Library, Archives, Gallery – and likely explore other nearby options.
A separate flagship central library, and the current building being transformed a nationally significant Gallery. This would be the more costly option both in terms of Capital and Revenue, however we expect it could deliver biggest benefits and match funding. City Archives location would need to be considered along with the synergies with the Gallery and Library. This would require exploration of the following in further detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A vision for a 21st Century Central Library and Archives including options for how this could be housed.</i> • <i>Vision and viability of the Central Library/Graves building as a nationally significant destination gallery.</i>

1.5.2 The Central Library/Graves building's future must also be considered in the context of other SCC buildings in the city centre to masterplan repair and usage issues, such as the Town Hall and the City Archives at Shoreham Street.

1.6 **Indicative timeline for activity**

1.6.1 This timeline below is indicative for the feasibility phase of the programme. This will be subject to change, based on feasibility fund bids and procurement timelines.

1.6.2 A full project timeline will be developed alongside the feasibility phase, and confirmed when a decision is made.

Date	Action
December 2023	Submit Feasibility Fund bid for capacity and development work: Library, Gallery, and Archives
December 2023	Identify building survey budget
January – September 2024	Vision and feasibility work: Gallery, Library and Archives
January – July 2024	Procure building surveys
June 2024	Update report to Strategy and Resources
September 2024	Options appraisal to ascertain preferred option: Library, Gallery, and Archives

Further Considerations - Immediate building issues

The building has building control compliance and repair issues that must start to be addressed to ensure its continued use. The Council has put in place effective temporary arrangements to mitigate compliance defects, but these are insufficient in the medium to long term.

Major repair works are necessary to achieve compliance, improve building efficiencies, preserve historic and heritage features, and prevent further deterioration. The most recent assessments (RIBA Stage 1) do not include changes in building use or full re-development, but rather establish estimates to bring the building back into full compliance for use as is.

How much will it cost to understand what is needed for building compliance?

A very high-level estimate for Capital Delivery Services to undertake surveys and designs is **£1.5m**. Discussions are taking place with Finance to identify a budget for these essential works; it is hoped that the work could be cash-flowed with reserves which can be repaid once Moorfoot savings are realised in 26/27.

Following this work, a much clearer picture of future costs and timescales will be possible. Depending on the level of work undertaken, compliance works will cost between £20m and £50m.

The façade of the building is a particular priority, given the current use of safety hoardings which are neat and functional but not attractive.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1 Sheffield's emerging City Goals include:

A Creative & Entrepreneurial Sheffield - Where we all have opportunities to invent, make, create and build in ways that grow shared prosperity, create jobs and enrich our communities and ourselves.

Goal #1: We build a just, diverse and creative local economy that attracts talent and investment while giving everyone the opportunities they need to thrive.

Goal #2: We have access to the skills, resources and training we need to pursue our curiosity and develop new ideas that benefit ourselves and others.

Goal #3: We enable artists, musicians, makers and creatives to thrive, by sharing and learning from one another, as part of an enriching cultural economy.

A Central Library and Archives service includes access to literature, information, technology, advice and information, Intellectual Property guidance and more; and gallery spaces provide inspiration, ideas and heritage to fuel creativity.

In the 1930s, Sheffield businessman, philanthropist and art collector, JG Graves recognised that a successful, healthy and talented population needed creative inspiration for new ideas to flourish and innovation to thrive. His pioneering work with the Council and his generous gift to the people of Sheffield created this much-loved home for city's visual art collections and the library service.

Sheffield City Council has recently adopted the Joined-Up Heritage Sheffield Heritage Strategy. While the Strategy covers far more than buildings, it does argue for the retention and restoration of historic buildings which give Sheffield its distinctiveness and which attract visitors and investment.

Past discussions on the use of the Central Library/Graves Gallery building have demonstrated that many in the city feel very strongly that the building should be central to the city's civic life.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 At this stage, we are asking Members to agree a process for gaining more information, including on the views of Sheffield people and organisations, regarding the future of Central Library/Archives provision and the current Central Library/Graves building.

3.2 We have been in continuous consultation with Sheffield Museums regarding their views and ambitions for the Graves Gallery.

3.3 There have been many individual conversations, plus a campaign by The Star, seeking progress for the building, so the need for this direction

of travel seems evident.

- 3.4** While undertaking work on a vision for the Central Library and Archives, the vision for a landmark gallery and the future of the building, public and organisational consultation will be essential so that all options can be fully understood.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Public libraries play a key role in providing low-cost access to knowledge, information, and leisure activities; a warm and safe environment for study and social interaction; and essential access to computers for study, work, job applications, other transactions and leisure. The Central Library fulfils all these roles and more, and these functions are essential for the wellbeing of citizens from across Sheffield.

4.1.2 Sheffield Archives hold the stories of the city and underpin our heritage and history. The Dig Where You Stand project with the University of Sheffield is carrying out work of national importance on decolonising the Archives, finding untold stories and widening the range of material being collected.

4.1.3 The City's visual art collection is a long-term investment in Sheffield's people. Developed over the past 150 years, it is a resource for learning, for joy and inspiration, to help question and to help develop our thoughts as individuals. Art has the power to build bridges, to speak without words, to bring us together. It can help us reveal hidden or erased narratives and look afresh at the world around us. A recent exhibition by renowned artist Keith Piper used the city's collection to question how histories are recorded and who by, inviting visitors to consider their knowledge and the influences that shaped it.

'I was quite taken aback by a recent visit to Graves Gallery. With exhibitions by Sheffield artists past and present and fresh redisplay of the Sheffield art collection, it felt like a true celebration of the city. Exactly what I want to see in my city art gallery.' Visitor comment

4.1.4 Free access to art and creativity is essential for individuals and communities to thrive, for learning, skills development and cohesion. Galleries and public libraries are also a key part of the city centre visitor economy offer.

4.1.5 The current Central Library building has poor access and amenities for those with restricted mobility, including steps, inadequate lift access and a lack of accessible toilets.

4.1.6 The proposals in this report set out a roadmap for improving central library services and the existing non-compliant buildings, so equalities

implications will be positive.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1

The project represents a significant cost both in terms of any works proposed but also that of the survey and design works. However, there is a cost implication of delays to any remedial works as ongoing support needed to avert further deterioration of the building fabric increases, coupled with increases in the remedial works themselves as the buildings condition deteriorates.

In order to facilitate the initial surveys needed (costed at £420k) we propose temporary funding of this from the reserves. The further costs of the Design process are to be supported from funds identified as part of the ongoing Accommodation Review estimated at £1,087,890.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1

The Council is under a legal duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons, under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. In meeting this duty, the Council is led by its assessment of need, vision, and asset use strategy, and may consider alternative sites to deliver the service, depending on its prevailing future policy and should consider any central library offer as part of its overall library provision.

4.3.2

Any future proposal for the site should be assessed against any obligations arising out of the terms of any trust, through which the council holds the site, as well as any procurement obligations applying to a given process of disposal, contracting, sale, or re-provision.

4.4 Climate Implications

The proposed studies highlighted in this report envisage an appropriate re-use of a heritage building, with structural improvements to reduce carbon impact. Any alternative site (if identified) for a central library service would be adapted/developed with high levels of environmental sustainability to future proof the building.

4.5 Other Implications

n/a

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Other options have been considered but are not recommended:

- Do nothing – which would have consequences for health and safety, would lead to the building's closure, and would incur costs in keeping the building secure.
- Take a decision without the feasibility work.
- Members have already made clear that they do not wish to vacate the building and market it as a development opportunity.

5.2 By commissioning additional information and survey work to inform the long-term development of the Central Library/Graves Gallery, Members will have the best opportunity to make a sound choice on the future of the building. Without this additional information it will be difficult to make an appropriate choice; therefore, an alternative option is not being considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1

The recommendation above set out a process and indicative timescale for gaining the in-depth information needed to inform future decisions on the Central Library/Graves Gallery.

Without this additional information, Members will not be able to make a well-grounded decision.

There is real urgency for the future of this Sheffield landmark to be secured, with the potential for exciting options for future gallery and library development. However, the financial, operational and service-provision implications need to be fully understood.

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