

TITLE OF REPORT: NLHF Capital Project Proposal for Central Library

REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval to proceed with the placing of orders to commit National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) funding to the value of £499,200 and to provide match funding to the value of £75,762 capital funding to support a project that will improve access to the local studies collection at the Central Library.

Background

2. Council approved the submission of a funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund on 17 July 2018. A successful stage two application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund, now renamed the National Lottery Heritage Fund, for funding to improve access to the local studies collection at the Central Library. This collection comprises over 40,000 items including unique and rare newspapers, maps, books, photographs and pamphlets dating from 1640s to the present day.
3. 95% of the collection is currently kept in secure stacks at the Central Library and as a result the public cannot freely browse the collection and it is under used. It is hard to promote the breadth of the collection or the wealth of material in it.
4. The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) has approved this stage two application and released £499,200 for the Council to implement the full project. In December the terms of the grant were accepted using delegated powers and the capital allocation from the Council adjusted.
5. The capital project will create a much improved, larger public facility within the Reference section of the Central Library. Around 60% of the collection currently stored in staff areas will become public access, with up to 7,000 books becoming available for the public to browse. Improved study facilities will support easier group and independent research. New interactive terminals will also allow easy access to the unique collection of maps, newspapers and photographs.
6. Digitisation and conservation of the collections will ensure material can increasingly be used online or on our digital interactives to preserve fragile originals. For some larger items (e.g. maps) digitisation work will be outsourced, but an ongoing digitisation programme will also begin inhouse, with up to 20 volunteers contributing to the work and a digitisation area with specialist equipment created.
7. An outreach element and activities programme will promote the collection beyond the Central Library and encourage use of it. A 'Friends of Gateshead Local Studies' group will be formed and members will promote the collection in their localities and support a programme of events and activities promoting Gateshead's heritage. There will be improved use of the local studies archive with schools and community groups. Appendix 1 provides more detail on planned community activities.

Project delivery phase

8. The Council engaged Keir Services Limited through the SCAPE Minor Works Framework during the development phase, to provide design assistance and inform the stage two application for project funding. Having secured full funding for the project, it is now proposed to appoint Keir Services Limited for the completion of the delivery phase of capital elements of the project. The capital works are estimated to last for 14 weeks, with works currently scheduled for completion September/October 2019. The works will be preceded by the replacement of windows in the relevant part of the building. This work will be undertaken outside of the contract to Keir Services Limited and is included in the in-kind capital contribution by the Council.
9. The full delivery phase of the project is scheduled to run for 18 months, giving time for a wide programme of events and community activities as part of an opening programme and celebration of Gateshead's history.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) Delegates authority to the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, to sign the Delivery Agreement with Kier Services Limited via the SCAPE Minor Works Framework, for the delivery of the Local Studies redevelopment at Central Library.
 - (ii) Delegates authority to the Acting Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, following consultation with the Strategic Directors, Corporate Services and Governance and Corporate Resources, to agree the final terms, scope and costs of the contract awards.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To greatly improve public access to the unique local history archive held at Gateshead Central Library.
- (ii) To allow the implementation of a project that will engage a wide range of community organisations and volunteers in the heritage of Gateshead and the resources held within the collection.

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Policy Context

1. The project set out in the report directly supports Gateshead Council's Thrive Pledges. The project activities will seek to put the community at the heart of the project and will look at innovative ways of ensuring that residents who need help most benefit most from the project. The project will develop new volunteering opportunities to help people build new skills, especially digital skills. The project will also strongly promote a sense of local identity and belonging for local people.
2. The proposal as set out in this report will also accord with the provisions of the update of the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 – 2020. In particular, investing in Council assets to maximise use and provide enhanced service delivery for residents of the borough.

Background

3. Gateshead Central Library had a major transformation in 2011 with a £2 million investment, with match of £500,000 from the Council. This project improved access to the building, created a new children's library, new community meeting spaces and completely renewed the lending library.
4. This work ensured that the library could deliver an enhanced offer to both the local community and Gateshead residents from across the borough.
5. Since the works were undertaken there have been a number of reviews of the Library Service. Whilst the outcome of possible future reviews is unknown it is anticipated that the Central Library will continue to be seen as the main hub for the Service in this location in the medium term. This being on the basis that the Service sees the library building's current site the most appropriate occupying a central location supported by local residents and the wider community and there are currently no competing uses for the site nor a more advantageous location for the building. This view is supported by the decision to relocate two organisations from Gateshead Old Town to the building as referenced in paragraph 10 below.
6. As advised above the Central Library attracts users from a wide demographic and is used by many local organisations for meetings. Appendix 2 details the range of services delivered from Gateshead Central Library and the organisations that use the library.
7. The reference and local studies section, containing the local studies archive, of the Central Library was beyond the scope of these capital works. Improving this part of the building will be an important way of maximising the potential of the Central Library asset.
8. The establishment of PC provision within the reference library has been very successful for the last 15 years. The PCs are heavily used, especially by job seekers. This provision of technology resulted in local history resources becoming unavailable to the public. The NLHF capital improvements will sustain very good public technology provision with much improved access, physical and digital, to local heritage resources.

9. The NLHF project will have a very strong community engagement dimension. This will include a Gateshead Community History Festival held at venues around the borough, culminating in a gala day held at the Central Library, a drama performance based on a local historic unsolved crime, a touring exhibition and an oral history project that will capture memories of areas or streets of Gateshead.
10. Following the sale of Gateshead Old Town Hall two cultural organisations, including GEM Arts, have moved into Gateshead Central Library. These cultural organisations have filled vacant spaces and are assisting with the programming of the Caedmon Hall. The Arts Council, the strategic development agency for libraries, sees this as a very positive way of developing the library as a creative community hub.

Consultation

11. In preparing this report consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Members for Culture, Sport and Leisure and Communities and Volunteering.
12. Phase one of the project has involved consultation with a range of stakeholders, especially heritage and local history organisations across the borough. Beamish and Land of Oak and Iron have been consulted, as have existing library customers. Further consultation would continue in the delivery phase and a 'Friends of Gateshead Local Studies' will become active in promoting the collections.
13. UNISON and GMB have been consulted on the rationale for the use of the SCAPE framework for the construction element of this project.

Alternative Options

14. The alternative would be to not progress with the project and limit the potential of the archival collection as a way of engaging residents in heritage learning activities.

Implications of Recommended Option

15. Resources:

a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the costs arising from the provision of match for the implementation of the project is £75,762 and this can be met from within the capital programme.

b) **Human Resources Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance confirms that one fixed term post created for the second stage application will be sustained through the implementation of this project.

c) **Property Implications** – Investing in Council assets which are to be retained for service delivery in the medium to long term ensures that buildings continue to be fit for purpose. The proposed investment in the building and its facilities as outlined in this report will greatly improve public access to the unique local history archive held at Gateshead Central Library and as such enable an enhanced service offer to be delivered from the building for the community.

16. **Risk Management Implication** – The NLHF have accepted the use of the SCAPE Minor Works Framework based on an assessment of the alternative procurement options as it ensures early involvement of contractor to drive forward the pre-

construction process and to identify and deal with all potential cost and other risks.

17. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.
18. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.
19. **Health Implications** - There are no direct health implications arising from this report.
20. **Sustainability Implications** – There are no direct sustainability implications resulting from this report.
21. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.
22. **Area and Ward Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report

Appendix 2 – Central Library background information – services and community use

1. The Central Library provides accommodation for several boroughwide library services and functions, including the children and young people's team, the digital engagement team and the service's back office and management team. The Central Library complex includes the Caedmon Hall performance space, the Central Library Gallery, two community rooms and a Bewick's cafe.
2. The Central Library serves Saltwell, Bensham and Deckham communities as well as drawing customers from across Gateshead. It is a vibrant place and offers a wide range of services to many different customer groups, and currently has approximately 17,000 active users and approximately 350,000 visits per year.
3. Main lending library – the lending library is the hub of the building offering an extensive collection of books for children and adults, for leisure and education purposes. It issues approximately 217,000 books a year, 32% of the total books issued in the borough. The service uses the library as a venue for a wide range of reading promotions, including reading groups, Library Lates and more intimate author events.
4. Heritage and Local Studies – the Central Library accommodate a valuable local studies collection of books, newspapers, maps and pamphlets. The oldest books in the collection date from 1650. The collection includes items of national importance, including unique publications by Thomas Bewick and First World War propaganda posters.
5. Children library – the Central Library issues 39% of all children's books in the borough. The children's library is exceptional and is perfect for activities with children aged from 0 – 11 years. The library is regularly visited by 13 schools and nurseries. The Friday rhymetime is attended by approximately 120 parents and children each week.
6. Young people – the Central Library has developed as a recognised destination for activities for young people. There are several young people's groups that operate from the library, including the Anime / Manga group that organises a range of events including Anime Attacks. This is a major celebration of Japanese culture. This October the event was hosted across the Central Library and Shipley Art Gallery and attracted an audience of approximately 300 young people.
7. Digital Services – the Central Library provides access to 48 public PCs. This service is heavily used by job seekers, who are often supported to develop basic digital skills. The building also hosts a wide range of digital engagement activities including coding clubs and the annual e-day. E-day allows members of the public to access a wide range of emerging technologies including VR headsets, 3-D printers and robotics.
8. Gift shop – The library gift shop was established in May 2017. Following input from a specialist retail consultant a range of high quality gifts are now stocked to appeal to library customers. Three key ranges are stocked; gifts for children, gifts linked to the heritage of Gateshead, and high-quality design led gifts.
9. Caedmon Hall – this provides an equipped theatre venue with sprung wooden dance floor. The venue can be provided in a number of seating arrangements, with a maximum capacity of 240. The venue is used for a number of cultural celebration events, for example GEM Arts use the Caedmon Hall for their Mini Mela. Seven Stories – The National Centre for the Children's Book – recently held a major

celebration event in the Caedmon Hall for nurseries from across Gateshead. The Caedmon Hall is also used for author events and in recent years has hosted visits from bestselling US authors, Jeffery Deaver and Tess Gerritsen attracting up to 185 people, and regular History Wardrobe presentations which attract 100-150 people.

10. Community facilities – the Central Library is used by a wide range of community organisations, school and nurseries. As a venue it is welcoming and provides excellent facilities. The library is also used by a range of government agencies, for example it is regularly used for speed awareness and drink driving offender courses.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Adoption • Arthritis Care • Autism Information Hub drop in • Backworth Male Voice Choir • Brahma Kumaris • British Occupational Hygiene Society • Cancer Research UK • Community Integrated Care • Cruse • Deaf Women's Health Organisation • Education Gateshead • Equal Arts • Eve Trew Dance Show • Friends of Rawling Road Surgery • Fulfilling Lives • Gateshead Local History Society • Gateshead Operatics Society • GEM Arts • Homeless Link • Gateshead Jazz Society • Marquisway • MS Society • North East Council on Addictions • Polymyalgia Rheumatica and Giant Cell Arteritis Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sage Choir • Seven Stories • St John's Hearing Aids • Tyne & Wear Care Alliance • Tyneside Women's Health • U3A (University of the third age) • Unison • WinG • Young Carers • Young Women's Outreach Project • Your Voice Counts <p>School and nurseries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bede Primary • Brighton Avenue Primary • Corpus Christi Primary • Kelvin Grove Primary • South Street Primary • St Aidans Primary • St Josephs Primary • Cedars School • Dryden School • Gibside School • Bensham Grove Nursery • Bridges Nursery • Valley Nursery
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