

**Councillor David MacDonald**

**Glasgow Life – Chair of CSG Board**

**82 George Square**

**Glasgow**

**G2 1DU**

Dear David,

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland<sup>i</sup> (CILIPS) is the affiliate body of CILIP, the leading professional body for librarians in the UK. Many of our members work in services including Glasgow Life and we write in response to your proposals for a phased service recovery of your library services.

Firstly, it is important to note that we welcome that services are returning and we completely understand that this crisis has created unprecedented challenges, following several already difficult years in public sector finance and we also recognise that many of these will be temporary measures. However, we have real concerns over the plans to only open one third of Glasgow's libraries between now and October and the fact there is no clear plan in place yet to open the remaining branches.

Glasgow's libraries are a cornerstone of the city and provide vital social infrastructure that has never been more needed than now and should be an integral part of all recovery plans. Libraries will be essential in tackling social isolation<sup>ii</sup> and supporting mental health and wellbeing<sup>iii</sup> in coming months, as evidenced by the Scottish Government. Libraries also play a key role in supporting the current digital strategies in Scotland<sup>iv</sup> by providing free access for people unable to get online at home, delivering substantial democratic, social and economic benefits to citizens and communities. Also, studies have shown that around a quarter of Scotland's adults have issues with literacy<sup>v</sup> and libraries tackle this by providing adult learning and promoting access to reading at a community level.

The phases do not include clear plans for opening some of the city's busiest and largest libraries such as the Mitchell, Langside, Hillhead, Cardonald and many others. This could create a postcode lottery of provision and will leave huge gaps across the city. The plans also state that you are prioritising Education and Childcare and yet most of the children's book stock and resources will be inaccessible in closed branches where no access for young people will be possible.

Having a building that is easily accessed by the whole community is essential. Not providing this raises serious questions over whether the Council will meet its statutory requirements for library provision under the Local Government Act and could also be a breach of the Equalities Act<sup>vi</sup>.

For this reason, we would be keen to see a clear plan in place to open most of your remaining libraries and offer some protection for your dedicated and hard-working staff who will be extremely worried about the future.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara, Head of CILIP Scotland

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cilips.org.uk/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-communities/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-easier-health-literacy-action-plan-scotland-2017-2025/pages/6/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/realising-scotlands-full-potential-digital-world-digital-strategy-scotland/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/339854/0112382.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.cilips.org.uk/advocacy-campaigns/guide-to-lobbying/legislation/>