



Development and Regeneration Services

SHAWLANDS CIVIC SQUARE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY: MARCH 2015

Introduction

In delivering the Shawlands Town Centre Action Plan it has been proposed to create a new Civic Square at the junction of Pollokshaws Road and Langside Avenue. This would entail a number of measures including the closure of the existing slip road and reconfiguration of both taxi and access arrangements adjacent to Langside Hall. The purpose of the space will be to provide a heart for the Cultural Quarter of Shawlands, to act as a meeting and events space and also a new gateway to the Hall and the Queens Park.

Consultation Process

In determining the proposals, the Council and its partners held an extensive consultation throughout September and October 2014 the results of which have been compiled in an extensive report which has been shared and supported by local Councillors, the Shawlands & Strathbungo Community Council, Event Groups and the Shawlands Business Association. This summary is intended to inform consultees of the initial findings, outline the main recommendations and options that should be considered in the Civic Square design brief and to present a first step towards shaping the new space.

What did the stakeholder consultation tell the Council?

From a consultation of over 400 residents, business and stakeholders, overall, 168 Questionnaires were returned, consisting of 115 online submissions and 53 hard copy submissions. Within the online submissions there was strong response with 92% supporting the Civic Square proposal and 87% support from hard copy submissions.

Respondents told the Council their overarching priority in designing the square was to develop a high standard of greenery & landscape, quality lighting, ambiance and accessibility. At the same time respondents also wanted the space to be safe and inclusive, use high quality materials and have a clear role and purpose in their town centre.

The historic buildings around the space, the gateway role and natural setting are important considerations in designing the civic space and respondents told the Council that where possible these attributes should be developed.

At the same time, consultees also recognised a number of constraints for the site such as the fact the site slopes, water and traffic management. Retaining too much greenery it was felt could also undermine the potential of the space so although there was a clear mandate to remove the trees in front of Langside Hall, it was recognised a balance had to be struck. There was a degree of concern about the how to realise the potential of the space and ensure it did not attract anti-social behaviour. Accordingly lighting and CCTV were underlined as essential elements of a new Civic Space.

In terms of potential opportunities, there was general consensus the space should be used for markets, events, arts, as a public forum for meetings and performance. Respondents were particularly keen that uses should form the basis of an 'annual calendar' of attractions and integrate with indoor activities taking place in the buildings around the space such as Langside Hall and the Shed. Activities should also cater for all ages and demographic and particular thought was recommended for events that would be suitable for children. Members of the community highlighted a range of activities they would ideally like to encourage including live music arts based activity and film and were keen to share their ideas on how for example Langside Hall could be regenerated.

In this respect, they suggested a range of ideas including retro cinema, gallery a library or education facility. Many were of the view that as a focal point for the space, Langside Hall should also be illuminated.

In capturing the opportunities the space presented, there appeared to be a general consensus the space should not be overly commercialised, particularly in relation to the green space around the park. A number of individuals explained that where attractions were not particularly 'unique,' in their view, if alternative locations already available in the town centre, such as empty shops then where possible these should be prioritised first.

There was however strong consensus the location of and prominence of the space presented considerable potential for a regular market.

Respondents considered there to be a number of threats to successfully delivering a new Civic Square. On the one hand it was recognised the taxi rank had to be relocated but on the other there was a degree of concern about the reduction in spaces on Langside Avenue. A core consideration was that although an additional rank was proposed for Kilmarnock Road, the lack of an over ranking facility at Langside Avenue could mean that club goers may linger longer once the Shed closed. Their perception was that like most nightclubs, it could create the potential for anti-social behaviour. A solution would therefore require to be incorporated into a future design. Similarly SPT were of the view the space would benefit from the inclusion of a bus stop facility. This, they felt would allow visitors to connect better east/west as well as north/south bus journeys. The alternative perspective however, is that by creating a 'bus interchange' additional clutter may then be introduced which could undermine the potential and ambiance of the space. A number of individuals highlighted the need to carefully consider parking access around Langside Hall to ensure its functionality was not lost.

There was particularly strong feedback from cyclists who wanted a more pedestrian and cycle friendly approach both around the park and wider town centre and a request that the Council ensure that design solutions included appropriate cycle facilities and cycle routes through the park.

Further threats to successfully developing the space were identified as using poor quality materials that required extensive maintenance, selecting poor examples of public art and over regulation and charging which some respondents felt could prevent local groups from using the space quickly and effectively without excessive bureaucracy.

How should the Design Brief deliver the project?

- Ensure access to Langside Hall is maintained
- Better signage and elements which underline gateway role
- Illumination of the hall and space with carefully selected lighting features
- Selective removal of trees and highlighting of key buildings
- Trees removed should be replaced elsewhere in the area
- Reconfiguration of traffic and taxi arrangements
- Build in facilities to the space which enable events to take place easily
- Build in facilities which support an annual calendar of events and attractions
- Retain and build on natural elements of the park, trees, flowers and greenery, bio-diversity, wildlife
- Ensure a balance of quality hard as well as soft surfaces
- Consider reintroduction of original fountain
- Ensure water management
- Design out potential for anti-social behaviour
- Seating and other elements to encourage people to enjoy but not misuse the space
- Introduce appropriate public art
- Remove unnecessary barriers and clutter
- Place community at core of design and development and future use
- Ensure new space has impact in terms of Shawlands, the Queens Park and wider Southside
- Space to be flexible and ensure it continually responds to the demographic of customers both existing and future

Materials

- Materials should include a mix of Stone, grass, wood, water
- Materials should take cognisance of the historic pallet of the Conservation Area
- Accessibility should be maintained and care taken to support customer mobility and safety
- Surfaces should be easily maintained and remain fresh for the long term

Landscapes

- Create a space where customers are comfortable sitting and gathering 'A park in or into the Town Centre'
- Introduce an open outlook to the Hall
- Interaction, interest and exploration
- Green and colourful throughout the year
- Inclusion of water elements

Lighting

- Illumination of historic facades
- Energy efficiency and contemporary
- Lighting combined with art?

Furniture

- Solid, simple, well made and designed
- Craftsmanship
- Natural
- Weather resistant
- Colourful
- Fulfilling a purpose and need, resting and relaxing, cycling, holding an event, play, exercise

Public Art

- Cautious = Dull?
- Adventurous = Risk?
- Curved – Linear
- Purpose?
- A piece or a space for display of local work?
- Changeable, seasonal?
- A puzzle
- A shared purpose?
- Educational?

A Name & Identity for the Civic Square?

There were a number of ideas suggested by respondents for the space, from nothing at all (It is part of the park. It is already part of Shawlands Cross) to Langside Square and Langside Gait.

There were ideas based around Mary Queen of Scots, Robert Burns and given the timing the themes of the Scottish referendum but in general there appeared to be a fairly consistent set of suggestions around simply 'Shawlands' and 'Square.'

It is suggested therefore that Shawlands Square be provisionally recommended.

For further information and an opportunity to discuss the Town Centre Action Plan and Civic Square proposals:-

Write to:-

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