



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 SEPTEMBER 2019

PROGRESS REPORT ON RECORD OFFICE RELOCATION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Committee with an update on Phase One of the Collections and Learning Hub Project – the re-siting of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) to the County Hall campus, and, as part of forthcoming stakeholder engagement, to present an opportunity for the Committee to shape the design brief.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Cabinet approved the development of a Collections and Learning Hub on the County Hall campus in June 2018. The approved option offered two potential schemes - a new build with capital costs of £36 million and a refurbishment of an existing County Council building with capital costs of £16 million. Following further work, a proposal was agreed that reduced the capital costs to £13 million. This would deliver over two phases, with a relocation of the Record Office (Phase One) at a cost of £10 million and a base for Museum and Creative Learning Service collections through a refurbished Eastern Annexe (Phase Two) at a cost of £3 million.

Record Office statutory responsibilities

3. The service delivered by the Record Office enables the County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland Council to meet their obligations under the following main pieces of legislation:
 - The 1972 Local Government Act;
 - The 1958 Public Records Acts (as amended);
 - The 1978 Parochial Registers and Records Measure.
4. The Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 cover the rights of citizens to access the information held. These are generally based on European legislation requiring information to be made available proactively and reactively.

Standards and approvals

5. The Record Office is required to meet national standards of collection management and access, including approval by The National Archives (TNA) for the holding of public records (these are often records of national bodies created locally such as court and NHS records) and other controlled archives.
6. TNA administer the accreditation scheme which ensures minimum standards of care and access. They can grant and withdraw licences to keep public records and external funding applications will need their support.

Background

7. The Record Office is part of the Communities and Wellbeing Service, in the Adults and Communities Directorate. The Record Office has been located on Long Street, Wigston since 1992. The Record Office provides public access to the collections, via publicised opening hours, events and through its online catalogue.
8. The Record Office is delivered in partnership between the County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland Council. The County Council own, manage and operate the facility on behalf of the partnership, and staff are employed by the County Council.
9. The Record Office has achieved The National Archive accreditation standard, which ensures all three partners fulfil their statutory responsibilities to provide an approved place of deposit for the public record. The Record Office receives around 11,000 visitors per annum and gives physical access to around 30,000 documents to users/enquirers. A programme of digitisation enables increasing levels of remote public access.
10. The Record Office has reached its storage capacity and, as a temporary measure, additional offsite storage has been provided within the Eastern Annexe, on the County Hall campus. The temporary storage is limited and inadequate in terms of environmental conditions and public access, and therefore the need for permanent resolution to the current storage situation is pressing.
11. In addition to the lack of expansion space, the existing Record Office building presents the service with a number of issues, principally inadequate floor loadings and failing racking; compromised compliance with fire regulations; poor energy efficiency and inefficient and inflexible layout of public and staff areas.
12. The service employs a number of measures to minimise the impact of these challenges on service users and staff. These include, working closely with the racking provider to resolve racking failures as quickly as possible, limiting the amount of time access is restricted; areas with compromised compliance with fire regulations are accessible to staff only and have a robust fire management plan. Staff are deployed to ensure search room users are properly supported.
13. The Registration Service has a statutory duty to provide storage for registration records and registers of births, deaths and marriages. The Registration Service records and registers are stored within the County Hall's Pen Lloyd building. The current storage location does not meet General Register Office (GRO) standards,

which are similar to those required for the Record Office, and it is therefore proposed that the specification for the new building will also include these requirements.

14. Moving the new Record Office from its current site will enable the three local authority partners to present a more modern space for service users, as well as meet its storage requirements for the next 25 years. It will:
- Improve and continue sustainable preservation of, and access to, archive collections;
 - Increase accessibility due to its central single site location;
 - Provide fit for purpose accommodation to satisfy TNA and GRO requirements and retain accredited status with TNA;
 - Improve storage space and conditions;
 - Significantly contribute towards the delivery of the “Great Communities” corporate strategic outcome, particularly the sub-outcome of *Preserving and Caring for our Heritage*.

Progress

15. The following progress has been made on developing Phase One, following approval by the Cabinet of the capital funding:
- Governance has been established to ensure that service redesign, partnership negotiations and stakeholder engagement take place alongside the design and build;
 - Engagement with the Record Office partners has taken place in advance of detailed discussions around the nature of the partnership. A representative from TNA is scheduled to facilitate a workshop with partners to agree priorities for service delivery on 6 September 2019;
 - Work has been undertaken with Strategic Property on the timetable for design and build, and Finance regarding the overall cost of delivering the new Record Office, including revenue costs;
 - The spatial requirements for the site are being validated to inform the design and build of a strong room and public access facilities on the County Hall campus;
 - A site survey has taken place on the proposed location of the strong room (new build);
 - Visited Hereford Record Office, as an example of a modern archive, using Passiv Haus design principles.
16. Key stakeholders, including the Friends of the Record Office, are being kept informed of the process and will be engaged in shaping the public access aspects of the new development.

Design

17. Work is underway to develop a design brief to inform the commission of the necessary build and associated works. Any development of the new facility will need to meet the statutory requirements set out below:

- The provision of a strong room for storage of records and Registration documents that meets British Standard (BS) 4971:2017, which outlines the care standards required for archive collections;
- The provision of staff and volunteer working spaces;
- The provision of public spaces, including reception;
- The provision of a search room which is secure and invigilated.

18. In addition, there is some flexibility to determine other aspects of provision and activity that can take place at the new venue. It is anticipated that stakeholders will be engaged in shaping the space in order to inform the emerging design brief. There are a range of activities that can be considered:

- Alternative ways for visitors and service users to interact with the collections including digital access, participatory workshops, formal and informal learning opportunities;
- Flexible study and engagement spaces;
- Options for access to refreshments;
- Parking and alternative transport options;
- Opportunities that would be of corporate benefit, such as including a Changing Places facility, event space, reviewing the current food court location to allow for public access and improve catering facilities;
- Opportunities for increased income generation by, for example, renting out temporary storage space;
- Opening hours that meet the needs of users within the resources available.

19. The Committee is invited to consider these activities and suggest any additional aspects that may shape the final design brief.

Next steps

20. Prior to starting the build, the project will:

Activity	Indicative Timeline
Seek the views of the Committee, partners and Friends of the Record Office in developing the design brief.	September/ October 2019
Develop a full business case, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of operating costs, space requirements and consideration of new opportunities for generating income; • a target operating model for the service from the new facility, including opening hours and consideration of opportunities to expand digital access. 	November 2019

Activity	Indicative Timeline
Prepare the design brief.	November 2019
Establish new partnership agreement with Leicester City and Rutland, including revenue contribution (note: Partners will take the agreement through their own governance processes).	Winter 2019
Appoint a professional team and contractors for the design and build and seek planning permission.	Winter 2019

21. Design and build activity is expected to commence in 2020. The new Record Office is scheduled to be in full use by December 2023.

Resource Implications

22. £10 million capital has been allocated for the delivery and completion of this project and work continues on this basis. The completion of the design brief and the appointment of the quantity surveyor will further validate these figures.
23. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Recommendation

24. The Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the progress made with the report;
 - b) Comment on the activities set out in paragraph 17 on potential activities for the site.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure*

25. None.

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. No implications are currently anticipated, but the project will be subject to a screening Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment during development of the full business case.

Environmental Implications

27. Records and archives should be stored in “fit for purpose” accommodation, that meets the required professional standards (TNA Accreditation and BS 4971:2017) for long term preservation of items.

28. A new strong room would be built in line with BS EN: 16893:2018, the standard for buildings intending to conserve cultural heritage.
29. Any new build or refurbishment should also contribute to the County Council's Environment Strategy.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

30. The current Record Office is delivered through a partnership between the County Council, Leicester City and Rutland Councils. The partnership agreement will be reviewed as part of this project, to take into account each partner's service requirements, to confirm the financial arrangements for each partner, including risk sharing and contingency planning.

Officers to Contact

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