



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 JUNE 2022

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
ARCHIVES, COLLECTIONS AND LEARNING HUB

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of the report

1. To update the Committee on work undertaken on the development of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub, following a pause in activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report sets out information on proposed next steps and includes indicative timelines for delivery.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The development of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub will support the County Council in achieving its aims under the Great Communities outcome of the Strategic Plan, in particular to ensure Leicestershire's cultural and historic heritage is enjoyed and conserved.
3. On 6 March 2018, this Committee supported the proposal to develop a new Collections and Learning Hub, with the Cabinet subsequently approving the development of the Hub on the County Hall Campus on 12 June 2018. The Committee received a further update on the development proposals, including the management, maintenance and governance of the Museum Service collections, at its meeting in March 2019.

Background

4. The County Council's Archive and Museum Collections and its Creative Learning Service for schools are currently housed in six buildings in various locations across Leicestershire. One of the principal drivers for the development of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub is that the strong rooms at the Record Office, Wigston have reached their storage capacity, in addition each of the six buildings mentioned have drawbacks either through limited capacity, poor condition, having limited or no public access or being a tenancy with ongoing and rising revenue costs.
5. A programme of work has been in place since 2017 to relocate the Collections and Learning Hub with both the Cabinet and Scrutiny receiving updates.
6. On 12 June 2018, the Cabinet approved the development of a Collections and Learning Hub, including a new Record Office, on the County Hall campus. Two options were approved to be developed in further detail. One was a refurbishment of the Eastern Annexe, with an indicative capital investment requirement of £16.54m

and additional net present value (NPV) of £7.8m. The other was a new build on the County Hall campus, with an indicative capital investment of £34.61m and additional NPV of £23m.

7. Further work saw these options evolve into a preferred two-phase development. Phase one would see the Record Office move to the County Hall campus, with public facilities occupying existing space in the Pen Lloyd building and building of a new archive storage facility. Phase two would create the collections hub, bringing together museum collections and the operations centre for the Creative Learning Service.
8. The facility would offer visitors a search room and research facilities, and access to the archives of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as single point access to the wealth of museum collections held by the Council. Schools would have access to resources to support the curriculum as part of the Creative Learning Services offer.
9. It was agreed that the vision was to create a new Archives, Collections and Learning Hub which enabled public access to a range of cultural resources, in particular archival and museum collections, through a single centralised facility, providing secure and environmentally sound storage.
10. The total revenue costs of operating the Record Office are shared proportionally between the Record Office partners – the County Council, Leicester City Council, and Rutland Council. The relocation to the County Hall campus is not expected to result in an increase in revenue costs to partners.

Impact of Covid

11. At the point of commissioning, design architects (Pick Everard) were appointed to undertake a costed feasibility study of phase one. However, this activity was paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
12. Since that time, given the pressure on the capital programme, the Council re-commissioned Pick Everard to carry out a feasibility study into any potential new options resulting from the changes on the campus, in particular the Ways of Working programme which sees more people working from home and less pressure on car parking. The feasibility study was considered important to determine whether there were any changes to the original high level estimated costs.

Proposals/Options

13. The options considered are summarised below:
 - a) Conversion of existing spaces in Pen Lloyd and Rutland Buildings.
 - b) New build strong rooms on the sunken garden site and adapt room G60 for public research facilities to provide a new Record Office and adapt the Eastern Annexe to deliver all the other elements of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub. The model being worked on before the pause.
 - c) New build strong rooms adjacent to the Eastern Annexe and adapt the rest of the building to effectively provide all elements of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub in a single space.

- d) A complete new build, providing all elements of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub in a single space.
14. Option (a) - to convert existing spaces in the Pen Lloyd and Rutland buildings to accommodate the whole of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub in one space - was assessed as unworkable due to insufficient space and access layouts being impractical.
 15. Work to determine costs and spatial requirements for the three remaining options (b) – (d) was carried out involving officers from Adults and Communities and Strategic Property Services with Pick Everard. This work included the current status of, and potential cashable savings from, multiple buildings occupied by the services to be re-located into the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub.
 16. The options considered remain within the original financial parameters, although the upper cost estimate has reduced to £30 million.

Preferred Option

17. Whilst each option explored has its merits the preferred option is Option C (the building of strong rooms adjacent to the Eastern Annexe and adaption to the rest of the building for public research facilities to provide a new Record Office and storage for Registration Services, conservation and technical workshops, facilities for museum collections, public engagement spaces and operational centre for Creative Learning Services).
18. This option will deliver the required standards, including those of the General Registrar's Office and The National Archives, and space for the delivery of services whilst realising the original hub vision of co-location of all heritage and learning assets in one building with a single point of public access. It would enable the service structure delivered in the 2020 Communities and Wellbeing restructure to work to maximum effect and efficiency.
19. It would also enable the co-location of technical and conservation teams, kit and equipment (in the Eastern Annexe) alongside all of the collections reducing risk from unnecessary movement of objects and it will be more efficient in terms of staff time and skills sharing.
20. Achieving the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub in a single building has the potential to present a powerful and positive identity, communicating the clear message of a unique 'one stop shop' for the County's archival, museum and creative learning resources not on display/available in community localities.
21. In addition, it is proposed to include the requirement of the Registration Service. The current storage provision for the Registration Service does not meet the specification set by the General Register Office.
22. Current storage provision for the Registration Service is within the Pen Lloyd building, County Hall, Glenfield, and whilst security improvements have been made, this still falls short of the specification required by the General Registrar Office. The Collections Hub provision, based at County Hall, could satisfactorily address this issue within the scope of the project.

23. The Museum Service is expected to be invited to reapply for Museum Accreditation towards the end of 2022 and the Archive Service is expected to be invited to reapply for Archive Accreditation in 2023. For both applications to be successful it will be important for the County Council to demonstrate it has a clear way forward to address various storage needs. The Committee considered a report regarding the accreditation process and commented on the preparations being made for the next submission at its meeting in March 2021.

Service benefits

24. The proposed approach would enable a consolidation of the archive and museum collections on one campus and enable the decommissioning of the six sites across the County to be re-purposed, sold, rented to other bodies or for the County Council to end its tenancy. It would enable the:
- closure of six current storage and access facilities utilised by the service across the County;
 - release of £114,700 per annum of rental and operational costs;
 - generate £17,000 per annum of rental potential for County Council commercial properties;
 - potential generation of £800,000 of capital returns from the sale of the County Council owned buildings surplus to requirements whilst saving an additional £13,000 per annum of running costs associated with these premises.
25. All options considered were premised on bringing benefits to both the Service and to service users; particularly those who are users of the museum collections and Creative Learning Services as the collections will be co-located on one site rather than six.

Consultation

26. Further consultation, including extensive public engagement, will take place once detailed designs are available. Details will be shared with this Committee at that time.

Resource Implications

27. The forecast implementation costs are based on the information available at this stage of the project. As the project evolves and more detailed survey and design work is undertaken more thorough and robust costs can be confirmed.
28. Option C is anticipated to be the lowest cost of those considered and presents the best value option for the Council to deliver its vision. Based on the current financial indicators this option is £4m cheaper than option b) and £12m cheaper than option d).
29. The ongoing financial benefits of the preferred option would realise £144,000 per annum from the running costs of all existing sites together with the ending of associated tenancies. Further work is required to better understand the ongoing relative revenue implications, including any efficiencies delivered through new ways of working.

Estimates	Proposed indicative cost model
Capital	£15,888,000
Revenue	£1,355,000
Potential Savings (Release of buildings)	-£944,000
Total	£16,299,000

30. Forecast implementation costs include capital costs, costs for management and movement of collections. These also include temporary relocation costs associated with collections and service operations currently housed in the Eastern Annexe (which will need to be moved during refurbishment) and dilapidation costs for premises the County Council would vacate. The costs also include a contingency of 10%.
31. An additional inflationary risk contingency has been included to mitigate against further inflationary pressures. However, the full inflationary impact is exceedingly difficult to forecast in the current environment.

Project Costs

32. An estimated £574,000 has been identified by the Adults and Communities Department for project staffing for three years and these costs are included in the table above.
33. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Risk and Limitations

34. A risks and limitations assessment has been completed on the preferred option. This is summarised below:

	Risk/Limitation	Risk rating
Preferred option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the relocation of teams working in either G60 and/or Eastern Annexe. • The condition of the Eastern Annexe will require a further Survey. • Impact on car parking • Construction on live campus is potentially challenging 	Medium

35. It is important to note that there is the potential for unforeseen elements to arise which are difficult to mitigate against. Robust project management of the programme will be in place to manage such elements and escalate matters through the appropriate channels as necessary.

Timetable for Decisions

36. The governance arrangements for the project have been re-established with key officers across the Council.
37. Work to determine further detail and cost assurances will take place to include:
- a) Resuming the previous competitive tender for Architectural services along with the other indicated design team members through a nominated framework to enable programme efficiencies and continuity.
 - b) The resumption of the competitive tendering process in June 2022, for the workstreams outlined in paragraph 37 c) below to be delivered over the summer and autumn of 2022.
 - c) The appointment of the project team to progress the preferred option to the next stage in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) plan of works. This will include:
 - Accurate spatial analysis and planning for archive records and museum collections.
 - Measured surveys of the museum collections to inform the spatial planning
 - Commissioning of surveys to inform the design including surveys of the existing building(s).
 - Review and agree the sustainability requirements of the project
 - Stakeholder engagement with the Local Planning Authority
 - Further development of the specialist racking design
 - Develop the overall design including engagement with architects, structural engineers, civil engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers.
 - Scope of an engagement plan with the public / targeted communities.
38. Subject to the outcome of the above work, further reports will be presented to the Cabinet and this Committee as appropriate.

Conclusions

39. The Committee is asked to note the work undertaken to date following a pause in activity and invited to comment on the future proposals.

Background papers

- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 6 March 2018 and 11 March 2019 – Archives, Museums and Heritage Collections Hub/Collections and Learning Hub and Museum Service Collections - <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MID=5355https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MID=5687#A158873>
- Report to the Cabinet: 12 June 2018 – Archives, Museums and Heritage Collections Hub - <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=5181#A155440>
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Museum Accreditation – Review of the Last Period of Submission (2015-19) and Preparations

for Next Submission (2022-2026)

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MID=6461>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

40. This report will be circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

41. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) will be undertaken once plans for the preferred option have been developed, although it is anticipated that this project will enhance access to the cultural resources held in trust by Leicestershire County Council.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

42. Environmental Impact: The design brief for the new build strong rooms requires designs to show how they will seek to employ Passivhaus principals. This will enable the building to be highly energy efficient, reduce CO2 levels to the minimum and provide the stable environmental conditions that are a prerequisite of archival storage, without the introduction of additional mechanical control measures.

43. A full travel plan will be developed for the preferred option, but the location of County Hall on regular bus routes from the City Centre means that use of public transport can be encouraged.

44. Aspects of this project relating to the joint provision of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland will be developed in partnership with Leicester City and Rutland Councils.

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