

Brighton & Hove City Council
For general release

Meeting: Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee

Date: 12 September 2007

Report of: Acting Director of Cultural Services

Subject: The Keep: Business Options Appraisal

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present to Members the site location and update on the options appraisal of The Keep, the proposed new historical record office and resource centre, at Falmer.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Support East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) preferred location of The Keep at Woollards Field and to maintain the released land at Falmer Academy as the reserve option.
- 2.2 Note the audit of the on-site storage as detailed in Appendix A of this report.
- 2.3 Request further reports to be submitted to this Committee detailing the full financial options appraisal prior to the City Council entering into any future contractual relationships on the project.
- 2.4 Agree to issue a progress report on the project to Policy & Resources Committee in September 2007.

3 Background

3.1 At the meeting of the Cultural, Recreation & Tourism Committee on 13 June 2007, Members agreed:

- To a full options appraisal for The Keep be brought to the Culture, Tourism & Recreation Committee in September 2007.
- Confirmation of the proposed location for The Keep.

3.2 The complexity of this project and the potential involvement of a number of partners, who have not been able to confirm their commitment to The Keep at this stage has meant that the financial information and other detail required for informing a full options

appraisal has not been available from ESCC. This means that the full options appraisal is not complete and ready for this meeting.

4 Preferred Site Location

4.1 At the June meeting, the Committee was advised of the outcome of further site assessment work; a process undertaken jointly by ESCC and Council officers. That assessment considered Woollards Field, ESCC's original preference, alongside the potential released land at Falmer High School, land that becomes available for development if the Falmer Academy proceeds. Although both sites performed well against ESCC's agreed criteria, Woollards Field had again emerged as their preferred site.

The assessment results were reported to the ESCC Project Board at its meeting on 4 June 2007, with a recommendation to approve Woollards Field. Having considered the various issues, the Project Board agreed there were wider factors and implications to take into account before reaching a final decision, and that it was therefore premature to confirm site location. The main issues being:

- Proper consideration of land values and their financial implications.
- The planning status of Woollards Field as employment land.
- Need to await key decisions on the Community Stadium and progression of Falmer Academy.

It was recognised, however, that a decision would need to be taken by September 2007.

4.2 Since that time, ESCC's Project Manager has met with a Senior Planning Officer from the City Council to explore the site's planning status and any challenges that arise. The outcome of that meeting was positive, with the view that there is potential for a sufficiently strong planning case to be made and that the scheme has a number of positive material considerations. In addition, there has also been the recent approval of the new Community Stadium and, at its meeting on 28 June, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to work commencing on the preparation of the Outline Business Case, the next stage in taking forward the Falmer Academy.

4.3 Advances have been made, but inevitably a number of uncertainties remain, some of which will not become clearer for some time. For example, the current timetable for completion of the Falmer Academy in July 2010 (only then does the released land become available), does not align with ESCC's planned timetable for the New Records Office (NRO).

4.4 Therefore, rather than jeopardise ESCC's progression of the NRO, and to enable them to make headway in developing the scheme (eg design, fundraising, appointing contractors etc), it is considered appropriate to support their decision to proceed with Woollards Field, but that the released land should remain the reserve site.

5 Business Options Appraisals

Members will recall from the report, 13 June 2007, the Council currently pays approximately £350,000 per annum to ESCC for records and archives storage and management. Museums collections are currently housed across all the Museum sites, as well as at an off-site store, which costs £52,000 per annum.

Discussions are in progress with ESCC regarding the costs of the project, although it is difficult to determine at this stage the likely financial implications of housing materials within the proposed new facility. Accurate figures may not be available until detail design is undertaken and external funding streams are confirmed.

No two facilities are the same, although looking at the costs of the latest local authority archive facilities, it is likely that some increase in unit costs will arise. This can be partly explained by the new storage being designed to meet the British Industry Standards required to ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of the items stored. Once there is some clarity on the likely costs of The Keep, a detailed examination will be undertaken to determine what exactly will be stored at the facility in terms of offering value for money. A key factor will be to keep the overall costs within those currently paid for records, archives and collections storage.

5.1 Improvements to the on-site stores

One of the options that the Service undertook to consider was improvements to the on-site stores. An audit of these has been undertaken to ascertain whether they can be made accessible and environmentally suitable for the long-term conservation of the collections. (See appendix A). It should be borne in mind, however, that the position of storage for the collections in Brighton and Hove, although far from ideal, is very similar to the state of collections storage across the country with a few notable exceptions where purpose built stores have been constructed to meet the standards for the long-term preservation of collections.

The key findings from this survey are:

- Most of the on-site stores cannot be made environmentally suitable for the long-term conservation of the collections.
- Most of the on-site stores cannot be made fully accessible for staff and visitors, due to their location in historically sensitive buildings.
- The geological specimens, glass and ceramics are the only artefacts that can be stored in the long-term at the on-site stores.
- Where stores can be made environmentally suitable with investment, they will still be prone to flooding, and this therefore, means that the investment would be inappropriate.
- The Booth Museum is the only site at which the stores can be improved to meet access and environmental standards. However, this would mean that any future plans to redevelop the Museum displays and provide visitor and education facilities

would be very limited in scale. Re-housing the research collections would free up space within the Booth to extend displays and provide visitor facilities.

6 Updated Timetable and Work Programme Summary

- Develop and produce business cases for the future storage of Museums Service collections (June–November 2007).
- Brighton & Hove business options appraisal to be considered by this Committee November/January 2007.
- Brighton & Hove consultation on improving access to collections and services through The Keep (October– December 2007).
- ESCC undertake fundraising feasibility study and strategy September–December 2007.
- Stage 1 application to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)(June 2008).
- HLF decision, December 2008.
- Complete to full design, January–December 2009.
- HLF decision on Stage 2, 2010.
- Construction of building, 2010–2011.
- Moving in and opening 2011.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Council must, however, be confident in entering into a formal partnership to proceed with this ambitious project that it offers value for money and that future revenue costs can be met from existing resources.

Meeting/Date	Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee /12 September 2007	
Report of	Acting Director of Cultural Services	
Subject	New Historical Record Office and Resource Centre Project with East Sussex County Council	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Financial implications	<p>The initial feasibility and design work is being funded by ESCC with no direct costs falling to this Council. At this early stage there is no detailed financial information available to determine whether The Keep project will offer value for money, however, before a formal partnership arrangement is agreed a full appraisal will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>Accountant consulted: Patrick Rice Date: August 2007</p>	
Legal implications	<p>There are, at this stage, no direct legal implications for the council in its membership of the New Records Office Joint Project Board nor are there any adverse implications arising from this report in relation to the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>The Chairman of this Committee will be the Council's representative on the Joint Project Board with East Sussex County Council. Reports on the project will continue to be reported to this Committee, dealing with service issues within the Museum division and to Policy and Resources, dealing with any land, property, financial issues, for decision making purposes. In addition to which update reports will be provided to the Major Projects Sub- Committee.</p> <p>Lawyer consulted: Dianne Bates Date: 14th August 2007</p>	
Corporate/Citywide implications	The preferred site at Woollards Field has the potential to link The Keep project with adjoining developments at the Falmer Academy site and the transport improve-ments linked to the Community Stadium project. This could provide additional benefits and complementary facilities such as	Risk assessment The report indicates the need to complete a full business case with options analysis, service impact and risk assess-ments before any commitment to The Keep project is given.

shared access and car parking.	
<p>Sustainability implications</p> <p>1. The current storage of the collections doesn't conform to the best standards of collections care necessary for the long-term conservation and sustainability of the collections. Purpose-built accommodation will ensure better long-term care of the collections.</p> <p>2. Natural History collections have an important role in understanding the environmental and biodiversity issues that are now faced. The Museum collections can be used to monitor environmental damage eg pesticide levels in egg shell, or more recently the thinning of eggshells as a result of atmospheric pollution. Natural History collections record in some detail the local environment. Using collections it is possible to interpret and restore modern habitats and distributions, and to use this knowledge to measure the sustainable environments we are trying to achieve.</p>	<p>Equalities implications</p> <p>The Keep project provides the opportunity to greatly improve access to the collections for researchers, learners and the public. This improved access to the collections will mean that the collections can be better used and re-interpreted for new programmes and projects and in particular to non- users.</p>
<p>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder</p> <p>None</p> <p>Background papers <i>[Part 1 reports only]</i></p>	
<p>Contact Officers</p> <p>Scott Marshall, Acting Director Cultural Services, ext 1100</p> <p>Janita Bagshawe, Head of Museums and Royal Pavilion, ext 2840</p>	

APPENDIX A

Site	Location	Access	Material Stored	Relative Humidity	Temperature	Likelihood of Infestation	Likelihood of flood	Potential for improvement
Preston Manor	Basement	Good	Books Ephemera Social History artefacts (mixed material) Ceramics	Not controlled	Not controlled	Low	Low	Poor, listed building and the stores are in the oldest part of the building, old heating ducts would need moving and would be difficult
Hove Museum	Attic	Quite good	Toys Paintings Craft Film/photos (including lantern slides) – especially vulnerable to fluctuations in relative humidity & temp	Not controlled	Not controlled	High due to gaps in roof tiles, may be improved with new roof	Low	Air Handling Unit could be possible, but insulation to roof



Brighton Museum	Basement	Poor	Works on paper and canvas Ceramics Glass Costume Photography	Not controlled therefore most suitable for glass and ceramics	Not controlled therefore most suitable for glass and ceramics	Low	Medium	Humidity could be controlled with air handling units. Issue of where to place plant and distance to the basement. Access issues can't be addressed without a second exit and potential flooding issues very difficult to address
Brighton Museum	First floor	Good	Prints and Works on paper (maps etc) Photographs Microfilm	Not controlled	Not controlled	Low	Low	Need new Air Handling Unit to address very high temperatures
Royal Pavilion	Basement	Poor	Archaeology	Not controlled	Not controlled	Low	Medium	Access cannot be improved, due to listing of building
Booth	Mezzanine Floor	Poor	Natural History specimens	Not controlled	Not controlled	High - poor roof cover	Low	Improvements can be made estimated costs £1.5-£2M

