

# Cheshire East Council

## Cabinet

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| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017                     |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | Executive Director Place                            |
| <b>Subject/Title:</b>    | Future Accommodation for Cheshire Archives          |
| <b>Portfolio Holder:</b> | Councillor David Brown, Highways and Infrastructure |

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### 1. Report Summary

1.1 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALs) is a shared service of Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester. The requirement to relocate the Archives and Local Studies Service has been recognised by both authorities and a new future service delivery model agreed (Shared Service Joint Committee September 2016). The model sees two new history centres being established in Chester and Crewe. This will deliver improved access to and conservation of, unique and irreplaceable collections, improved service delivery, extended online services and a more extensive activity and event programme. This paper sets out the current position, the scope and timeline for this project and seeks approvals that will enable the project to progress. There is a parallel process taking place in Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC).

### 2. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1 Approve the proposed vision for a new History Centre in Crewe.
- 2 Approve applications for funding to support the project including the application to Heritage Lottery Fund for Cheshire Archives and Local Studies.
- 3 Approve the proposed Terms of Reference for governance of the project.
- 4 Approve Shared Services Joint Committee making all necessary decisions to deliver the project within agreed budgets.
- 5 Agree that the 'Old Library' site in Crewe is selected for a new History Centre.

- 6 Note the proposed timescale for the project.
- 7 Note the capital costs required to delivery this project including costs of demolition.
- 8 The above recommendations are made subject to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 approving the proposed Terms of Reference for the governance of the project.

### **3 Other Options Considered**

- 3.1 Doing nothing has been discounted by both Councils as it would lead to losing the accredited status of the service; resulting in financial penalties, reputational issues for both Councils and non-delivery of statutory functions.
- 3.2 Following an extensive site selection process in Cheshire East and West a number of potential sites were short-listed for consideration in Crewe and Chester. These have been further addressed, following independent feasibility work and site selection exercises.
- 3.3 Governance models have been discussed with Legal and Finance in both Councils. The proposed model has been agreed by all members of the project team.

### **4 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The need to find a replacement facility for the current Record Office in Duke Street, Chester, has been recognised by elected members from both authorities and is a key recommendation arising from the National Archives Accreditation report from November 2015.
- 4.2 Since 2012 work has been carried out on building a detailed understanding of the requirements and potential costs of replacement archive facilities.
- 4.3 A recent site selection exercise carried out by Halliday Meecham Architects has recommended the 'Old Library' site as the preferred site for a history centre in Crewe. The report concluded that "The Library site has many of the advantages and few of the disadvantages of the other sites". An analysis of the pros and cons of each of the three sites considered is attached at Appendix A
- 4.4 In order to progress this project, both Councils have agreed a shared vision (Shared Services Joint committee January 2016) for the service and have developed a project plan to move this forward. In addition, a 'vision' for a History centre has been developed to articulate the delivery of the shared vision for the service (Appendix B). Specifically in respect of Crewe, the History Centre will be an important, transformational aspect of Crewe's regeneration, which will provide a statement of confidence in the town's future, rooted in the strength of its heritage. It

will provide another 'anchor' for regeneration and help increase footfall in an area with nearby civic, cultural and leisure facilities.

- 4.5 The Councils are eligible to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding for both the development phase and the build phase. The process being followed is that recommended by HLF for projects of this scale. 'Stage one' involves gathering all the basic information required about the project ie. the what, when, where and how. It is not expected at this stage that applicants have all the information in a great deal of detail. If successful at stage one, the detail is then developed during the development phase. Following this, a 'stage two' application is submitted which is a detailed business plan and project plan. If successful at this stage then building can begin.
- 4.6 The stage one application is currently being developed, with a number of separate pieces of work being commissioned to inform the bid. This stage is fully funded within the current Capital programmes of both the Council and CWAC.
- 4.7 Terms of reference for the project have been developed in order to establish a decision making processes. Although developing two History centres, this is one project requiring an overarching project management and decision making framework. However, it is essential that decision making and procurement processes of both Councils are met. The terms of reference which have been developed set out to achieve this, whilst ensuring that appropriate delegations are made to ensure that the process is not unnecessarily burdensome and complex.

## **5 Background/Chronology**

- 5.1 In September 2016 the Shared Services Joint Committee endorsed the proposal to develop 2 new history centres based in Crewe and Chester. A Vision for a history centre, including the aspects specifically related to one based in Crewe, is attached at appendix B.
- 5.2 Public consultation in 2014 tested preference of a number of locations around the County. From this, Crewe and Chester were approved by both Joint Committee as locations for the centres with a number of potential sites identified in accordance with criteria agreed by Joint Committee. Further engagement with existing and potential users will be undertaken as part of the development phase for this project as well as being part of Masterplanning and town centre regeneration plans for Crewe.
- 5.3 These were subject to a feasibility study which tested the appropriateness of each and from this recommendations were made for 3 potential sites on the East and 3 further potential sites in Cheshire West and Chester. In Crewe, the three sites investigated were; Municipal Buildings, the 'Old Library' site and the Police Station site.
- 5.4 The Joint Committee in September 2016 recommended a two centre solution. This was the result of extensive discussions between members

and officers in both authorities, taking account of the result of previous consultation and options analysis work. As a result of this it was agreed that Chester and Crewe should be the focus of a vision for service delivery.

5.5 A History Centre would be created in Chester which would house the bulk of the archive, facilitating storage, conservation and research needs in one place. The case for this to be in Chester takes account of the city's long standing relationship with the delivery of the service and takes account of feedback from existing users in the 2014 consultation. It provides a natural, logical home for the service given the city's long history as the seat of county government. The centre would be an access point for people to do research, view exhibitions connected to the history of the county and its people and attend events and workshops. It would be the base for most staff and volunteers together with specialist functions such as digitisation and conservation. It would also be the home of the county-wide Local Studies collection.

5.6 The second History Centre would be based in Crewe. The centre would reflect the story of Crewe and its locality in addition to housing material related specifically to the East of the county. This centre would have a programme of curated exhibitions, a large special collection (including Local Studies material relating to the East of the county), digital access through a bespoke digitisation programme, local newspapers and photographs, access to archives from the other centre for projects and exhibitions, and space for staff and volunteers. In addition it will house a large gallery / exhibition space for use not only by Archives but to host cultural exhibitions of local, national and international interest. The 2014 consultation identified that Crewe had the greatest potential to attract new audiences. A vision for a History Centre is attached at appendix B

5.7 The centre in Crewe is also a potential home for the Family History Society of Cheshire, which has a long-standing relationship with the Archives service and is seeking new premises. This would give access to the Society's collection of copies of genealogical material and to their expert knowledge.

5.8 The History Centre in Crewe would also store and give access to railway/engineering company archives for research purposes. The railway archives held by the service are a nationally significant collection and Crewe is unique in Cheshire in there being archives which relate to an activity which so define a particular place and which activity was instrumental in the creation of that place. Placing them in Crewe would increase the use of these archives and complement the proposal to create permanent and temporary exhibitions, space for workshops and activities, etc. The railway company archives could sit alongside the LNWR Society's own (community) archive and for example, a range of activities for schools could be run relating to the history and development of Crewe.

5.9 Both centres would provide digital access to family and local history, access to film and sound archives, have facilities to support community history

projects including space for their collections, space for public art, performance and digital installations which tie the service closely to the wider cultural offer in that area. Each centre will also have space for talks, events and activities such as workshops with schools.

5.10 A site selection process has now been undertaken by independent consultants in accordance with the requirements of the facility. A similar exercise has taken place for Chester. Sites in Crewe were identified through discussions which took into account; The council's regeneration priorities, Crewe Masterplanning processes, the Council's Cultural Framework and the views of key stakeholders.

5.11 In Crewe, the three sites investigated were; Municipal Buildings, 'Old Library' site and the Police Station site. The recommended site is the 'Old Library' Site. Any future regeneration of the 'Old Library' site will require demolition of the current building. A decision regarding demolition of the current site will therefore be required in order to facilitate this project.

5.12 A full project plan is being developed and an indicative summary is below:

| <b>Stage 1 Application Preparation</b>        |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Activity planning (procurement to completion) | July-Dec 2017                    |
| Digital engagement                            | Aug-Dec 2017                     |
| Exhibition and installations                  | Aug-Dec 2017                     |
| Funding bid development                       | Aug 2017-Feb 2018                |
| Building design work                          | Oct 2017-Jan 2018                |
| Sites confirmed and allocated                 | Sep 2017                         |
| Business planning                             | Oct-Dec 2017                     |
| MOU for project agreed                        | Nov 2017                         |
| Cost plans development                        | Nov 2017-Jan 2018                |
| Development stage briefs and job descriptions | Sep 2017-Jan 2018                |
| Funding bid submitted                         | Mar 2018                         |
| HLF Decision                                  | June 2018                        |
| <b>Stage 2 development phase</b>              | <b>Autumn 2018 – Summer 2020</b> |
| Stage 2 HLF submission                        | Summer 2020                      |
| HLF Decision                                  | Autumn 2020                      |
| <b>Build phase</b>                            | <b>Winter 2020 – Summer 2022</b> |

This essentially breaks down into three distinct phases of work; Preparation of stage one application, stage 2 development phase and build phase.

## **6 Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

6.1 This report relates to Shared Services that operate across both Cheshire East and Cheshire West, so all wards are affected in both Councils. However there will be a specific impact on central Crewe and Chester wards due to the locations of the History Centres.

## **7 Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1 Policy Implications**

The project specifically supports Council objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5. Developing a history centre in Crewe will contribute to the Councils Quality of Place agenda, to Masterplanning and to town centre regeneration plans for Crewe. It will also assist delivery of the Council's Cultural Framework and Cultural Priorities and the developing Skills and Employment Strategy. The project helps to align cultural and visitor economy activity to contribute to the success and quality of the priority regeneration areas.

### **7.2 Legal Implications**

The project team includes representatives from Legal and Finance in both The Council and CWAC. Terms of reference have been produced to guide the governance of the project. These will be reviewed once Stage 1 HLF funding is obtained as part of the development stage. Terms of reference are attached at Appendix C.

### **7.3 Financial Implications**

7.3.1 The service will submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) request additional financial support from the HLF for the project. This will provide additional funds to support the development phase and the build phase. At this time match funding from the Councils will need to be confirmed. It is currently anticipated that this will be in the region of £4.2m from each authority notwithstanding any significant changes. However, it is also anticipated that the capital receipt from the sale of the current Record Office in Duke Street, Chester, can be put towards delivery of the relocation project as part of the matched funding for a HLF grant.

7.3.2 A budget of £225k is included within the approved capital programme for the Option Development phase. The budget for the build phase, of which the Cheshire East contribution is currently £4.2m, is included in the addendum to the capital programme. At the stage where the business case is sufficiently developed and deemed to be affordable the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Section 151 Officer will be asked to consider approval for the scheme to proceed and form part of the main capital programme.

7.3.3 The total cost of the scheme, currently estimated at £13m, will be included in the capital programme of both authorities.

7.3.4 The costs of demolition of the current building on the Old Library Site will need to be considered in addition to the capital build costs of this project. That cost is dependent on a decision as to which of 3 options for demolition is taken. These are currently estimated at between £800k and £1.9 million (dependant on specification and scope of works), in order to realise the regeneration potential of this site. Accepting that these costs may be required anyway in order to re-develop the sit, this would take the total investment to between £5m and £6.1m.

7.3.5 Opportunities for other external funding will be considered and taken forward where relevant. Revenue costs for the proposed way forward will be established as part of the development phase.

#### **7.4 Equality Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in April 2014 when public consultation over potential locations for the service was undertaken. Active engagement with existing and potential audiences for the service will be critical to the success of the service in the future and this will be central to the external funding bid, with an outline Activity Plan being written in support of the bid which will also inform the design of the history centres.

#### **7.5 Rural Community Implications**

The proposal will allow for easier access to archive collections relating to the County's rural and urban heritage, improving access for Cheshire East communities.

#### **7.6 Human Resources Implications**

All staff within the Archives and Local Studies shared service are employees of CWaC as the host authority. All staff are being kept informed and being consulted as part fo the project development, which will continue throughout the project. The project will also extend volunteering opportunities.

#### **7.7 Public Health Implications**

There is potential through the development of a history centre in Crewe to engage positively with public health outcomes, particularly through working with people with mental health issues and dementia. For example, this may be by providing volunteering opportunities, skills development and pathways into work, or though project work inspired by the archives.

#### **7.8 Implications for Children and Young People**

The vision for the history centre describes the audience demographic which will be targeted. This includes schools, for whom there will be improved education facilities and outreach. Young people will benefit from increased connections to employers in the area and informal education and skills

development opportunities. Young people are already being engaged in the scheme through a Heritage Lottery Funded project, which involves them researching archives relating to Crewe Town Centre and interpreting them through the media of MineCraft.

### 7.9 Other Implications

The building will be designed to high environmental standards to reduce impact on the environment and to reduce running costs.

## 8. Risk Management

We are maintaining a full risk log using the corporate risk management template. The following table provides a short summary of key risks:

| Risk  | Impact   | Mitigation   |
|---|--|--|
| Do nothing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loose accreditation from The National Archives</li> <li>- Reputational damage to the authority</li> <li>- Financial implications</li> </ul> | There is a joint CEC and CWaC Project team in place to support the application to HLF for developing this project further.   |
| Preferred Crewe site not approved                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial implication</li> <li>- Time implication</li> </ul>  | A comprehensive feasibility study has been carried out, which has resulted in the recommended site.  |
| Project timescales – submission of HLF bid by February 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reputational damage to the authority if we are unable to submit our HLF application</li> </ul>  | There is a joint CEC and CWaC Project team in place to support the application to HLF for developing this project further to reduce the financial burden on the authority and in turn Residents. |

## 9. Access to Information/Bibliography

Background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.



## 10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

**Name:** Brendan Flanagan  
**Designation:** Head of Rural & Cultural Economy  
**Tel. No.:** 01625374415  
**Email:** [Brendan.flanagan@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Brendan.flanagan@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Name:** Helen Paton  
**Designation:** Cultural Economy Manager  
**Tel. No.:** 01270 686089  
**Email:** [Helen.paton@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.paton@cheshireeast.gov.uk)