

CABINET

10 FEBRUARY 2015

MEDWAY ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES - RELOCATION

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Housing and Community Services.

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director, Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Simon Swift, Head of Greenspaces, Heritage & Libraries

Summary

This report to Cabinet outlines the site options considered for the relocation of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre from its current location in Annex B on the former Civic Centre Site in Strood.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This report is within the Council's policy and budget framework.
- 1.2 The relocation of Medway Archives & Local Studies will require an addition to the capital programme for financial year 2015/16 that is a matter for Cabinet and Full Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Medway Archives & Local Studies are currently located in Annex B on the former Civic Centre site in Strood. As the Civic Centre site has been earmarked for redevelopment and has been declared surplus to the Council's requirements it is necessary to relocate Medway Archives & Local Studies to a new location within Medway.
- 2.2 Annex B has a significant level of required building maintenance, which is estimated to be in the region of at least £450,000. By identifying and securing funding for a new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies, there would be no requirement to draw-down this funding requirement.
- 2.3 Relocating Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre will also facilitate the decant of the remaining uses from the former Civic Centre, which include the Highways and Waste Management teams. Once vacated, Annex B can be demolished, which will result in savings on business rates.
- 2.4 Delivery of the relocation of Medway Archives & Local Studies (if approved) will be project managed through a Project Board led by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services with contract delivery undertaken by the

Capital Projects Team and contract award managed through Procurement Board. Project progress will be reported through Covalent as part of Service Plan reporting.

3. Options

3.1 Six sites were identified as a potential new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies, all of which are within the borough boundary of Medway. The six sites are:

- Strood Library (Bryant Road)
- Chatham Library/Riverside 4 (former RAFA club)
- Gun Wharf
- Finline building, Medway City Estate
- St Mary's Church, Dock Road, Chatham
- Chatham Historic Dockyard.

3.2 An Exempt Appendix to this report sets out an overview of each of the six sites and an assessment of the sites' suitability for being the new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies.

4. Advice and Analysis

4.1 The retention of Medway Archives & Local Studies in Annex B on the former Civic Centre site is not considered either cost effective or desirable due to the level of building maintenance required and the fact that the Civic Centre site has been earmarked for redevelopment, being surplus to requirements.

4.2 Strood Library (Bryant Road) has been identified as the preferred location for Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre for the following reasons:

- Strood Library (Bryant Road) will become a vacant building at the end of the financial year since the Library is moving to a new location on the High Street and the Council has made a commitment to retain the existing Strood Library building for community use
- The building can accommodate the space requirements (including accrual space) for Medway Archives & Local Studies and has the added value of parking and rear service access for secure deliveries. The site is also accessible by public transport
- The site is within a low risk zone in terms of flooding, pollution and conservation area constraints
- The existing community hall could be refurbished and improved as part of the works, providing an enhanced local facility with its own independent entrance
- Strood Library (Bryant Road) is owned by Medway Council.

4.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed (Appendix 1 to this Report) that identifies no adverse impact with the proposed relocation of Medway Archives & Local Studies to the Strood Library (Bryant Road) site as:

- There are no proposed changes to the current opening hours or service offer and
- The preferred new location of Strood Library is accessible, in terms of public transport and car parking and meets the space requirements for the service, specifically accrual space.

5. Risk Management

5.1 Headline risks for the proposed relocation of Medway Archives & Local Studies are shown in the table below. A full risk register will be produced as part of project delivery, subject to funding approval for the relocation of Medway Archives & Local Studies.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Insufficient budget to deliver the relocation of Medway Archives & Local studies.	Project does not proceed or is significantly reduced, causing reputational risks.	Pre-tender exercise has been undertaken to ensure adequate budget build to fund the contract works.	C3
Inadequate project governance arrangements.	Project slippage.	Project Board adopted to manage project delivery.	C3
The current premises remain vacant for an extended period following vacation	Empty properties become a target of antisocial behaviour /vandalism / trespass pending disposal.	Demolition will follow as soon as possible after vacation of the premises	C3

6. Consultation

6.1 Consultation was undertaken with The National Archives, stakeholders and users of Medway Archives & Local Studies during the period 24 November 2014 to 11 January 2015. This consultation ranged from meetings with The National Archives and stakeholders to a consultation display in Annex B, and an on-line survey. In addition the Deputy Director Regeneration, Community and Culture briefed Ward Councillors, Chairman and Vice Chairman and Spokes of Regeneration, Community & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

6.2 A summary of the main outcomes from this consultation is detailed below:

The National Archives

The National Archives (TNA) is the responsible body for the accreditation of Archives and the Deputy Director Regeneration, Community and Culture met with TNA officers during the consultation period. The main recommendations raised by TNA on the relocation of Archives & Local Studies to the preferred site of Strood Library (Bryant Road) were ensuring accrual space of a minimum of ten years, suitable provision for search room facilities and ensuring site security. All of these recommendations have been incorporated into the outline cost plan for the relocation of Medway Archives & Local

Studies to Strood Library (Bryant Road) that has been produced by the Capital Projects Team.

Stakeholder Consultation – Friends of Medway Archives & Kent History Society

Separate meetings were held over the consultation period with representatives of the Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA) & Kent Family History Society (KFHS). The main issues raised were around the proposed name of the service and car-parking provision at the preferred new location. Subject to funding being approved, it is proposed that officers (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Services) undertake further research on the name for Medway Archives & Local Studies with Stakeholder Groups. In relation to concerns around car-parking provision Strood Library (Bryant Road) has a small dedicated car-park that is free to use and there is also free on-street parking provision within the catchment area of Strood Library (Bryant Road). Options to expand on-site car parking provision will be investigated as part of the development of the project, along with ensuring publicity on the availability of free on-street parking.

User Consultation

A total of 110 user surveys were returned during the consultation period (59 hardcopies and 51 online). Key findings from the user surveys around the service offer will be incorporated within the project proposals (provision of quiet space, access to a valued collection and professional expertise) and comments on the provision of on-site car parking will be addressed through reviewing options to expand existing car-parking, along with ensuring publicity on the availability of nearby free parking on-street.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Capital Projects Team have produced a Feasibility Study that identifies a capital budget requirement (inclusive of professional fees and decant costs) of £971,604. This capital budget requirement also includes funding provision for the replacement of the database system used for collection management and public search access on Archive Records. This budget allocation is required as this database system is out of date, does not meet accreditation standards and is at serious risk of failure as it is no longer (due to its age) a supported system.
- 7.2 The capital funding requirement can be met through a virement of the balance of funds that had been earmarked to meet potential claims from a CPO Scheme, the requirement for which has now time-expired leaving a residual capital budget of £647,000, and additional funding of £324,604 from capital receipts.
- 7.3 The Council's policy and budget framework (Rule 7.3 of the Financial Rules) requires Full Council approval for additions to the Council's capital programme.
- 7.4 Revenue costs for the operational management of Archives & Local Studies following its relocation will be met from savings that will be accrued from the demolition of Annex B.

7.5 Annex B has a significant level of required building maintenance, which is estimated to be in the region of at least £450,000. By identifying and securing funding for a new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies there would be no requirement to draw-down this funding requirement.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The decision to select a new site for Medway Archives and Local Studies is a decision for Cabinet, subject to Full Council's approval of the addition to the capital programme.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet approve Strood Library (Bryant Road) as the preferred new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies and recommends to Full Council the addition of the scheme to the capital programme.

9.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, to undertake further research and secure agreement on a proposed name for the Archives.

10. Suggested Reasons for Decisions

10.1 To enable the Council's redevelopment aspirations for the former Civic Centre site in Strood and reduced building maintenance liabilities, a new location for Archives needs to be identified and funded.

Lead Officer Contact

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Background papers

Corporate Property Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 4 April 2006.

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=2047>

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Medway Archives & Local Studies Relocation
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	31 October 2014
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Simon Lace Heritage Services Manager

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

Medway Council is proposing to move the Location of Medway Archives & Local Studies from its current location at Annexe B Civic Centre to a new location Within Medway. A number of potential sites have been identified with a preferred new location for Medway Archives & Local Studies at Strood Library (Bryant Road) that will become a vacant building in 2015-16. Medway Council will be seeking views from users and stakeholders of Medway Archives & Local Studies on the sites that have been identified for a new location. As part of this consultation it is also intended to change the name of Medway Archives & Local Studies.

Archives are a statutory service under the Public Records Act (1958) and are subject to External Accreditation by The National Archives.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

Evidence to support the need to move Medway Archives & Local is:

1. The Civic Centre site has been earmarked for eventual redevelopment and has been declared surplus to the Council's requirements – Council Report 14 June 2007
2. The floor slab of the current building (Annex B) is suffering from structural defects caused by subsidence, which would not be cost effective to rectify.
3. Annex B also has a significant level of backlog repair liabilities which is estimated to be in the region of at least £450,000 – stock condition survey 2010-11.
4. Part of Annex B is scheduled to become vacant in 2015-16 due to Customer Contact moving to the new Strood Community Hub so there is a further business case to move Archives & Local Studies to reduce operational running costs for buildings.

Diversity impact assessment

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- *Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?*

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age			X
Disability			X
Gender reassignment			X
Marriage/civil partnership			X
Pregnancy/maternity			X
Race			X
Religion/belief			X
Sex			X
Sexual orientation			X
Other (eg low income groups)			X

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
- *How will they be affected?*

There are no negative impacts through the proposed move of Medway Archives & Local Studies due to:

1. No proposed reduction to the opening hours or current service offer.
2. New location will be DDA compliant.
3. Preferred new location has provision for free car-parking on-site and adjacent roads (in the current location car-parking is chargeable).
4. The level of car parking is not expected to increase.
5. Preferred new location is accessible by Public Transport and close to its existing location, i.e. 10 minute walk from Strood High Street and will be signposted.
6. Improved pedestrian crossing points are to be installed onto Strood High Street (as part of the Strood Community Hub project) that will support safe crossing to the preferred new location.
7. Preferred new location can be adapted to meet the accreditation requirements for

Diversity impact assessment

the National Archives and will include provision for an appropriate numbers of year's accruals.

8. The current Community Hall at Strood Library will remain in use as a community resource even after the relocation of the archive.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- Are there alternative providers?
- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

1. There are no adverse impacts
2. Provision of an archive is a statutory obligation for the Council. Although it could be provided at alternative sites recent studies have identified the Strood Library building as the best and most cost-effective solution.
3. The provision of archives services requires a very sizeable strong-room and publicly accessible search rooms. These cannot be accommodated in any of the other Council operated libraries. Locating these facilities in one building is both the solution preferred by the Council and the one required by the National Archives.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
N/a		

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change implementing action plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

It is the recommendation of the lead officer to proceed with the change.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Richard Hicks Deputy Director Regeneration, Community & Culture

Date

31 October 2014

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC: phone 2443 email: annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk
 C&A: phone 1031 email: paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk
 BSD: phone 2472 or 1490 email: corppi@medway.gov.uk
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Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication