

Title of meeting:	Culture Leisure and Sport Portfolio
Date of meeting:	19 July 2013
Subject:	Re-location of the Portsmouth City Archive to 1 st Floor Southsea Library
Report by:	Head of City Development and Cultural Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To identify the pressing need to re-locate the City Archive from its current location in the Records Office Building in Museum Road, making recommendations to relocate to the storage area on the first floor above Southsea Library. The report clarifies the benefits and opportunities this move would deliver and the breadth of the collections. The requirements and considerations for archive storage are identified.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the £600,000 estimated cost to relocate the archive storage facility is met from the corporate capital funding approved in the 12th February 2013 budget report.**
- 2.2 **That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Service to seek tenders for the relocation of the archive to the 1st Floor, Southsea Library and to award the contract subject to a satisfactory financial appraisal being approved by the S151 Officer, Head of Service and Cabinet member for Culture Leisure and Sport.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The archive collections are the collective memory of the people of Portsmouth over the centuries. They are unique and irreplaceable. They record the lives of individuals, families, groups and organisations in Portsmouth from the earliest surviving civic charter (in 1313) to the present day.

The collections of Portsmouth City Records Office comprise: records of Portsmouth City Council and predecessor bodies; 'public records' as defined under the Public Records Acts authorised to be held by local record offices; records of local

Anglican, Roman Catholic and Non-Conformist churches; records of local businesses, organisations, families and individuals. The collections vary in size from a single item to many boxes.

3.2 **The current offer for Archive storage and enquiry**

The current archive storage is no longer fit for purpose. The 'Records' building, where most of the archives are stored, has significant structural problems caused by the siting of the building across the moat and fortifications which surrounded Old Portsmouth until the 1870s. The foundations of the 'Records' building are inadequate foundations and have led to movement and significant cracks have appeared in various parts of the building, including Room 1, the Photo Store, and the old conservation workshop.

It is impossible to maintain stable humidity and temperature levels to professionally accepted standards and the equipment to control the temperature and humidity in the storage areas is old and largely ineffective. Effective environmental control is crucial for the long-term preservation of the archives. Without it, records deteriorate, for instance: mould can grow which can lead to the disintegration of all or part of a document; records can become illegible through mould; they can become dry and brittle so that they crumble at the touch.

The archive storage areas are essentially full. Small deposits can be accommodated, but there is no room for anything larger. In practice this means that some deposits are turned away while others judged essential to take in, are stored in corridors and in similar unsuitable places. If offered a substantial deposit of archives (e.g. another major bequest) we would now be unable to accept it, even if we judged it crucial to take it.

The estimated cost of repairing this existing site and bringing it to a suitable standard to meet National Archive requirements sum is £1,100,000.

This sum allows for:

- Repairs to bring the building into good condition (from the issues identified in the condition survey)
- Underpinning
- Upgrading of mechanical & electrical systems in line with BS EN 5454:2012 (using comparative data from the Southsea Library 1st Floor budget estimate)
- Preliminaries, price & design risk, contingencies and professional fees

The sum excludes VAT, increased costs beyond Dec 2012, loose furniture and equipment and asbestos removal costs (if necessary). This figure is offered to enable a fair comparison with the Southsea Library 1st floor budget estimate of £600,000 (with the same exclusions).

An allowance of £5 to £10k per annum should be budgeted for annual maintenance & servicing if this site is retained.

To undertake only the underpinning and the most urgent and minimal repairs at the Records Office would likely cost in the region of £220,000 at current prices. Allowing for PD 5454 upgrades and on-costs it would provide an estimate in the region of £750k to £800k; if this minimal approach were pursued it would have an impact on higher annual maintenance and servicing costs for ongoing patch repairs etc and would not necessarily provide a suitable facility for archive storage which would not meet National Archive standards.

For balanced it should be noted that the current location of the archive is a freehold asset over which PCC has full control in perpetuity whilst Southsea Library is a leasehold asset with some restrictions and with liabilities for on-going rental and repair/service costs which will be subject of renewal and increase periodically

3.3 The National Archive Council

The Council advises the Lord Chancellor on issues relating to public records that are over thirty years old, including public access to them, at the point of transfer to The National Archives. They are responsible for ensuring that storage and access to archive collections meets professional standards, currently PD4545 2012. The NAC have the authority to remove records from the city if they are not satisfied that they are being maintained to a satisfactory standard.

Teams from the National Archives visit record offices at five-yearly intervals to approve them as suitable places of deposit: formally for 'public records' under the Public Records Acts, but in practice this inspection has evolved into a more comprehensive assessment of storage and access, monitoring the suitability of the storage to comply with the national archive legislation listed above. They are aware of, and concerned about, the issues outlined above, and are anxious to see a resolution of them in a way that meets accepted standards of protection, security and access. The proposed storage development outlined at 3.10 has been drawn together with their input and agreement. The proposed development has been subject to scrutiny by the National Archive Council and frequent questioning. They now confirm that they are in full support of the proposals as set out in this report.

3.4 Archive and Library collections

The archive enquiry point was re-located from Museum Road to the Central Library in June 2011 as part of the Portsmouth History Centre. At this time approximately 20% of the archive resources, which are most frequently used, were relocated to the 2nd floor storage area adjacent to the History Centre, displacing less frequently used library collections. Work is currently underway to bring an additional 20% of the archive to the 1st floor store, displacing further historical library collections. This action is being taken to minimise the number of items that cannot be immediately produced in response to enquiry.

Recalling items from offsite locations is a considerable burden on staff time and transport and needs to be kept to a minimum. Delay also has a detrimental impact on customers seeking the items for research.

This relocation has resulted in the displaced library collections, which are also unique resources and records, being in need of a long term storage solution. These will be distributed to the Central Library Lower Ground Floor store and the Southsea storage area.

3.5 Portsmouth History Centre Performance

Since the Archive Searchroom came over to the Central Library in June 2011, the figures of overall usage have remained high. Many users have identified the benefits of having archive and local collections enquiries available at one source as many areas of research will require resources from both collections.

Date	Visitors	Telephone Enquiries	Letter enquiries	Email enquiries
June 2011	649	55	4	46
July 2011	677	193	19	70
August 2011	818	232	6	66
September 2011	699	180	9	79
October 2011	757	205	18	103
November 2011	766	200	11	78
December 2011	482	131	6	71
January 2012	762	194	7	82
February 2012	791	182	13	87
March 2012	936	231	9	104
April 2012	656	175	7	79
May 2012	736	204	10	69
June 2012	700	133	12	68
July 2012	617	162	11	83
August 2012	763	165	8	81
September 2012	751	165	10	79
October 2012	853	220	12	77
November 2012	608	190	4	60
December 2012	448	121	5	47

3.6 Collection cataloguing backlogs

Once catalogued, archive collections can be used by researchers at Portsmouth History Centre to deal with remote enquiries. The entry and content are visible and of value as part of the record.

The backlog of un-catalogued collections consists of some records of Portsmouth City Council and of local businesses, organisations, families and individuals.

The backlog also includes the indexing of the News and other regular publications. Resources and collections however prestigious are of no value without a catalogue entry. They are invisible and inaccessible, unable to support research and enquiry while remaining a burden in terms of storage and management.

This backlog must be urgently resolved in order to retain the value and integrity of the collections. Although work is ongoing by existing staff members, there is not the staff capacity to significantly address these concerns.

Volunteers are currently being used to work on the collection and deliver related tasks in the Portsmouth History Centre and City Museum. Currently 13 volunteers work in the History Centre and a further 16 at the City Museum on similar activities. If the backlog is to be significantly addressed with the current financial constraints, it can only be achieved by growing the volunteer offer. To achieve this, the following is required:

- The extension of work space and related facilities, including the presence of a specialist to offer advice and support when required. The space above Southsea library would accommodate this, with a volunteer workspace overlooking Palmerston Road at the front of the building.
- The support of an Officer with responsibility for recruitment, retention and training of volunteers. Currently the library service is developing a post which will work with volunteers across all library and archive areas

An HLF funding bid is also being developed which would, if successful further assist this process and escalate the rate at which the backlog is addressed.

3.7 Southsea Library Storage

The 1st floor space above Southsea Library is a large low ceiling area with poor light levels, previously used as the storage area for the Woolworths store which resided on the ground floor. The space is not currently heated; there is no adequate lighting scheme or environmental controls. The space benefits from a large goods lift to the rear which can facilitate access directly from the loading bay at the rear of the building. There is a smaller accessible lift at the front of the building which can be used to transport staff or volunteers.

The space at the front of the building benefits from natural light from the row of windows at the front of the building overlooking Palmerston Road. However the structural beams at this end of the building are lower than in other parts of the first floor by circa 150 - 200mm. This area has been partitioned off to provide a temporary art space that has proved successful in attracting exhibitions from local artists. After a very wide ranging exploration of potential uses, it has been concluded that the first floor can offer significant benefits as a storage space but is not suitable for a public access area. The better lit space at the front of the building would provide an excellent work area for volunteers and archive specialists working on the collections backlog.

3.8 Benefits and opportunities

The following benefits and opportunities have been identified in locating the archive to the first floor storage area and the related embedded association with the library service:

- Archive access and promotion will be enhanced across the city using Library Service sites, which have a good geographical spread across the city. This includes the north of the city where the Museum Service does not offer any publicly accessible sites.

The offer would include short stay, regularly refreshed archive exhibition, promotion and display opportunities.

- Residents across the city will also have limited pre-arranged access to archive enquiry and material through the use of secure library spaces for prearranged viewing and advertised drop-in sessions.
- The Library Volunteer Coordinator post could be utilised to recruit, retain and support volunteers working on the archive, specifically at the Southsea site
- The Southsea Library site forms part of the building already leased by PCC offering the 1st floor as uncommitted void space. Therefore the storage of the archive at this location would not incur additional rental costs and would offer improved value for money
- Monitoring of temperature and humidity has been undertaken from June 2012 and revealed modest fluctuations, which would be beneficial for archive storage, potentially reducing costs on mechanical interventions.
- The shape and nature of the space above Southsea Library enables it to be made secure, with control of the natural light by relatively low cost interventions at either end of this long narrow space.
- Library staff are in the building 7 days per week. This will deliver savings in staff time, avoiding the necessity of History Centre staff travelling to collect or return items. Existing library staff will be trained to locate items, make them ready for collection, returning items to the store when the enquiry is complete. Currently this is a significant pressure on professional staff time to travel with the van to collect and return items and the delay for customers is a concern
- The daily presence of library staff will facilitate regular inspection, improving the security of the collections in terms of potential threats from environmental conditions or security issues
- The Palmerston Road location, in the retail heart of Southsea, provides an attractive accessible location to engage and retain a regular group of volunteers to work on the collection. A high proportion of existing volunteers already live in this areas of the city

With consideration of these factors, the report recommends that the space above Southsea Library should be developed for City Archive re-location. On this basis the following feasibility study and cost estimates have been undertaken taking account of the current standard PD 5454:2012.

If the archive is relocated as described, then further consideration will be made regarding the future of the existing records office, including whether it should be declared surplus to operational requirements and an appraisal as to the best form of development/disposal for the site.

It should be noted that the existing Records Office site has been valued at £500,000 on the basis of redevelopment of the site for low rise housing; The Planning Service has indicated that high rise development of up to 6 storeys may be acceptable on this site. The Head of Corporate Assets, Business and Standards advice advises that the valuation at £500,000 should be taken as a base line as higher density, high rise schemes have not been market tested at this time.

3.9 PD 5454:2012

PD 5454:2012 gives recommendations for the storage and exhibition of documents, including books and other library materials. These recommendations apply to permanent and temporary storage of documents, and equally apply to material which is subject to restricted access or is on display.

The recommendations in PD 5454:2012 have been designed to help create and maintain appropriate conditions for document storage and use, and to enable a repository for archives to be built or converted to a high standard. They can be used where an archive is located in a mixed use development and can also be used as guidance for custodians of collections in historic buildings, defining best practice for archival materials while recognizing that best practice for the conservation of a building might require a compromise, based on a risk assessment. They have been developed to cover the United Kingdom's common geological and atmospheric conditions.

PD 5454:2012 is for use by archivists, librarians, conservators, museum curators, architects, facility managers, contractors, engineers and those concerned with the planning, construction, equipment, maintenance and working of storage repositories and their associated search-rooms, reading rooms and display areas.

The recommendations in PD 5454:2012 apply to archives of all traditional archival materials and formats, such as paper and parchment documents, books, maps and plans, and also cover guidance on photographic media common to archives and on more modern machine-readable media.

3.10 Housing & Property Service Feasibility Scheme and Estimated Costs

A feasibility study has been undertaken in response to a Client Brief to determine the practicality and costs of considering the space above Southsea Library as potential replacement storage to re-locate a substantial proportion of the city archive and outstanding library collections.

The National Archive Council has been closely involved and consulted in this process. PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials

has been referenced to ensure any storage offers best practise in terms of archive storage balanced with risk assessment and available budget.

3.11 **Capital costs to deliver the archive storage and protection - Southsea Library First Floor – Creation of Archive Store**

Building Works comprising: Creating archive store rooms lift lobby and fire escape routes with 2 hour fire rated partitions and doors. Creating working, quarantine and plant spaces with partitions, doors, ceilings and floor finishes. Secondary glazing to Palmerstone Road façade and new windows to Richmond Road façade.	£95,000
Mechanical & Electrical Services Installations comprising: Removing redundant services. Providing appropriate ventilation, heating and humidification plant and distribution ducting. Fire detection, alarm and fire hydrants. Intruder alarm and CCTV installations. Lighting, emergency lighting and power distribution. Telecommunications and data infrastructure. Building management system. Builders work in connection.	£395,000
Contract Contingency	£35,000
Professional Fees and Charges	£75,000
Estimated Cost (at 4th Quarter 2013 prices) excl VAT	£600,000

It should be noted that any increases in prices beyond 4th Quarter 2013 are not included in these estimated costs.

3.12 **Items excluded from the above costing**

It should further be noted that some items have been excluded from the capital costing but will be required to enable the successful transfer of the archive store to take place:

- Purchase of storage racking and map stores. Estimates indicate a total cost of £30,000, which will be funded by the sale of valuable library stock not relevant to local collections.
- Removal costs. Approximately £10,000. This sum will be found from within existing budgets.
- Desks, chairs and computer equipment. These items will be found from existing resources.

3.13 **Additional works considered, but not included in this work stream:**

- Fire suppression system. This was considered to be desirable but not essential for the successful delivery of this project, following a risk assessment.
- Works to the first floor kitchen and toilets. This work is desirable, but not essential to the delivery of the archive. Archive staff and volunteers, can use the library facilities if there are insufficient funds to improve the first floor facility.
- Additional works to other parts of the building. It is likely that improvements will be required to the door area at the rear of the building to facilitate egress from the building for 1st and 2nd floor users in the event of a fire. However this is outside the remit of this project

3.14 **Further proposed actions**

Following the delivery of the actions recommended in this report, permissions should be sought to deliver the following additional actions.

That the Records Office Building be declared surplus to operational requirements and the Head of Corporate Assets, Business and Standards be authorised to undertake an appraisal as to the best form of development/disposal of the site.

That the Head of Corporate Assets, Business and Standards be authorised to develop/dispose of the Records Office site in due course.

4. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 To provide a safe, secure and accessible storage facility for the Portsmouth Archive, to support information enquiry, space for cataloguing and related works and enhanced opportunities for volunteering.

5. **Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1 A preliminary EIA has been completed and agreed

6. **Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Council provides its archive service pursuant to its statutory powers under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and, additionally, as an authorised place of deposit appointed by the National Archives Service under the Public Records Act 1958 for the holding of public records on its behalf.
- 6.2 The Council has a specific statutory duty under section 224 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the Council. Central Government guidance advises that such "proper arrangements" should encompass the storage and preservation of the documents in accordance with recognised standards and the provision of appropriate means of public access to the documents.

6.3 The works proposed for the Southsea Library will need to be procured through a process which is compliant with the City Council's Contract Procedure Rules in Part 3A of the Constitution.

6.4 Under Part 2, Section 3 of the City Council's constitution (responsibilities of the Cabinet) and further in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations at Appendix A to the Executive Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport has the authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

7. Head of Finance comments

7.1 A detailed financial appraisal relating to the recommendation contained within this report will be prepared following the completion of the tender process.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of City Development and Cultural Services

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
PD 5454:2012	Project file; Nationally Published Document
Feasibility drawing 822301_1000 Rev D	Project file
Detailed Brief	Project file

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet member for Culture Leisure and Sport on 19th July 2013

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport