



Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR REGENERATION, HOUSING, PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Date	7 FEBRUARY 2019
Title	ISLE OF WIGHT RECORD OFFICE – PROGRESS REPORT
Report of	COUNCILLOR JOHN HOBART, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

In May 2018, members received a paper setting out the latest developments towards the establishment of a new Record Office for the Isle of Wight. This paper seeks to update members on progress towards that goal.

In May there had been an agreement in principle to commission a feasibility study to look at the practicalities of building a Record Office meeting the standards necessary for the office to be appointed as a Place of Deposit for Public Records. Such an appointment would permit us to continue to hold key series of public records relating to the Island. The proposed site for the new facility would be the area previously occupied by Waltzing Waters in the Westridge Centre in Ryde.

The scope of the feasibility study was agreed in the late summer. A budget of £50,000 was secured and a project board was established. The feasibility study document asked for no less than five architectural design proposals, two of which would use the existing footprint of Waltzing Waters, two would look at adjoining areas to see whether there was benefit in incorporating them in any final plan to maximise the efficiency of the building, and one final option would explore the possibility of demolishing the main swimming pool hall and plant room, constructing in its place a new building of an appropriate scale. In addition there would be outline budget estimates for each proposal, condition surveys, and a preliminary fire risk assessment. The scope of this study was shared with the National Archive (TNA), the national body leading the sector, and setting the UK wide standard for archive services.

The feasibility study was subject to a tendering process which ran through the autumn of 2018. Four bids were received and analysed. The successful bidder was Stride Treglown Ltd, a Bristol based firm with offices in Winchester. The successful bid was for £58,126 and this has been funded corporately.

The company commenced their work in January and are due to report in twelve weeks. We are currently awaiting the outcome of their study, and the outline budgets and

architectural design proposals will then need to be considered so that next steps can be decided upon, and subjected to the same processes as all capital projects for the authority. The option of applying for assistance with funding can be investigated once the scale of the project is agreed. However, it should be borne in mind that funders will have their own outcomes which they need to have fulfilled by any project that they support. To address these there could be additional goals to be met, and therefore some additional costs.

The National Archive continues to express its willingness to support the Council in its wish to address the challenges faced by the Record Office in terms of space and accommodation. They have started monitoring the environmental conditions in the existing building, with members from their collection care department. To date some five months of data have been provided and this will continue until the spring, when a decision will be made as to whether current conditions pose an unacceptable risk, and there will be an assessment of how long the current situation can be accommodated.

The Heritage Service Manager continues to liaise with colleagues at the National Archive and is grateful for the constructive advice that they are giving to the authority and to the service. It is likely that representatives of the National Archive will want to discuss next steps with the authority in the late spring, once the outcome of the feasibility study is known, a sign of their continued interest, concern and support.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None used in the preparation of this report.

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