

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION & PROTECTION  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2002 AT 10.30 A.M.**

**HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES (HALS)  
ACCOMMODATION - PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of the Director of Community Information

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Executive Member: Derrick Ashley

**1    Purpose of the Report**

To update the Community Information & Protection Scrutiny Committee on action taken to address Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies (HALS) accommodation problems since the meeting in March 2002.

**2    Summary**

The Committee has requested that an update on this matter continue to be submitted to every meeting for the foreseeable future. At the last meeting Members welcomed the possibility of building an extension at County Hall as a workable option.

**3    Actions to date**

- 3.1 Further work has now been carried out and has confirmed that the space adjacent to the Register Office Block is adequate for HALS' accommodation needs, subject to the removal of the electricity sub-station. Any solution involving the existing site is the most cost-effective irrespective of the sub-station costs. Draft plans indicate that the new building could work well alongside rooms in the existing building, suitably refurbished for re-use.
- 3.2 Two options were considered: a 'minimum' option based upon a new repository block, and a second option which would provide further enhanced public facilities. The new building would provide at least 15-20 years accrual space (45% addition); enhanced public facilities would include a combined reading room and a larger education/lecture room.

- 3.3 A useful visit by staff to the Surrey History Centre in Woking demonstrated a successful new archive building which was part-funded by the Heritage Lottery fund. This building, which cost around £6.5 million in 1998, provides purpose built, environmentally controlled strongrooms, excellent public facilities, and well laid out staff offices and document preparation areas.

#### **4 Future actions**

Instructions have been given to advisers to prepare 'category 3' costings i.e. adequate for preparing a capital bid later this year. This will also be used for seeking the necessary planning permissions. The project will also be the subject of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for a contribution towards the cost of the new building. However, this will not cover the basic costs of whichever proposal is adopted. Lottery funding, if available, can only be used to enhance the public facilities. A solution involving the existing site is the most cost-effective of the ones identified in the previous report by our consultants.

#### *Background papers used by the author when compiling this report*

None.