

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY INFORMATION & PROTECTION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2003 AT 10.30 A.M.

Agenda Item No.

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**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 January 2003.

2. Summary

The Committee has requested an update on this issue at each meeting for the foreseeable future. At the last meeting Members were informed of progress on bids to the Capital Panel and the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding. The latter bid is waiting for a firm financial commitment from the County Council.

3. Actions since last meeting

- 3.1 Members of the Cabinet visited HALS in January for a tour of the facilities and to see the accommodation problems. Members raised a number of questions about the service and options for ways in which to retain Place of Deposit status.
- 3.2 The Director of Community Information and the Heritage Services Manager met with senior staff of the Inspections Unit at the Public Record Office in February. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the action the PRO would take were HALS to be de-appointed as a Place of Deposit, and to seek their assistance and support. The PRO indicated that they would not regard the option of off-site storage of records as anything but an interim solution.
- 3.3 The Public Record Office (to be subsumed into the new National Archive Service in April) stated their willingness to work with the County Council to identify a positive way forward.

In particular they stated flexibility over the 2004 deadline subject to being convinced that the Council was making serious efforts to resolve the matter. In this regard they expressed a positive view of the steps already taken such as the property and options review and the work with WS Atkins.

- 3.4 The next several months will see extensive work with the Property Department to identify any further options (short of complete new build) to create suitable storage facilities on-site at County Hall. The results will form part of a paper recommending a way forward likely to go to Cabinet in the summer.

Background papers used by the author when compiling this report

None.