

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Agenda Item No.

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2003 AT 10.00 A.M.**

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

Report of the Director of Community Information

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

1. Purpose of the Report

To update the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on action taken to address the issue of Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies (HALS)' accommodation since the meeting in June 2003.

2. Summary

The Committee has requested an update on this issue at each meeting, until it is resolved. At the last meeting Members were informed that an option to convert a room in the attic at County Hall into an archive store were far more costly than hoped, and that Mace would be instructed to carry out a further review of available accommodation at County Hall and its environs.

3. Actions since last meeting

- 3.1 Mace have carried out a review of the options available to provide HALS with an archive store for its public records, which would meet the national standard (BS5454:2000) and provide reasonable document retrieval times for the public. It is expected that this action would enable HALS to retain its status as Place of Deposit for public records in Hertfordshire.

- 3.2 Mace's report concludes that the most cost-effective option would be to construct an archive store beneath the rear car park at County Hall. This option would provide sufficient space for the volume of public records held, together with modest expansion space, and would enable staff to continue to offer document retrieval times at the current level of service.
- 3.3 Initial feasibility work has indicated that this option could be constructed to meet BS5454, with the necessary fire, flood and security precautions and temperature and humidity controls.
- 3.4 The costs of site surveys and initial design are being met from the capital allocation for HALS in the current financial year. The full costs of construction work are likely to be the subject of a further capital bid for funds in 2004-5.

4. Rural implications

None.

Background papers used by the author when compiling this report

HALS Public Records Storage: Feasibility Study Report
MACE, August 2003.