

Shadow Executive

Extract from minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Advisory Board
held on 1 March 2019

Dorset History Centre - Capital Project Update

- 6 The Board considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme, Dorset County Council, which provided an update on the Dorset History Centre capital project. It also provided indicative revenue costs for external storage space, should the capital project not proceed.

The County Archivist presented the report highlighting the key points within the report and provided an update where the reported situation had changed.

Members noted that although it was reported that there was sufficient space for archive expansion for the next 2-3 years, the addition of the Bournemouth Echo archives would mean that additional space would be needed within 12 months. This highlighted the urgent need for the capital project to go ahead.

The feasibility report on the Capital Project had been completed and the current estimated cost was £3.1m with a funding gap of £919k. However, since the reorganisation of the regional structure of National Lottery Heritage Funding, the amount of potential available funding had increased, with the potential for the funding gap to reduce to £620k. Discussions with members of the Shadow Dorset Council were ongoing as to whether the capital project should proceed on this basis.

It was explained that Poole Museum were also likely to re-submit an application for National Lottery Heritage Funding. Members were told that it was unlikely that two bids from the same area would be successful should bids be submitted at the same time. Officers were to discuss the timing of submissions and the best way forward.

With regard to future capital project funding, it was noted that although Dorset Council had included an allocation in the budget for the next financial year, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council had not indicated any future allocation. County Council officers were to meet with leading Shadow Dorset Council members the following week to discuss capital funding before taking any further action.

Members recognised the need for action to be taken whether this was in support of the capital project or to find other means of storage. They were concerned at the possible loss of records during the transition period and that space would need to be found to store these. They recognised the limited time available to address these issues and the urgent need to secure support for the capital project from both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils.

With regard to the options set out in the report, officers recommended the support of Option 1 - the submission of a second application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in first half of 2019 rather than seeking commercial out-storage (Option 2). Given the concern expressed by members it was:-

Resolved

That Option 1 be supported as the best value, long-term solution for the Joint Archives Service storage requirements.

Recommended

That as a matter of urgency after 1 April 2019, an approach be made to both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Dorset Councils' Executives for their support for this capital project, bearing in mind the urgent need for additional space.