



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOPIC – ANALYSIS AND DISPOSAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL FROM THE BAR END MUSEUMS STORE

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Geoff Denford, Head of Museums, tel 01962 848 396, email gdenford@winchester.gov.uk

Democratic Services Officer: Nancy Graham, Tel: 01962 848 235, email: ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

- One of the Council's two large museum stores is located on the former depot site at Bar End. This warehouse-style store contains large numbers of objects which form the 'reserve' collections, used for temporary displays around the District, for education/outreach work, for research and for loans to other museums.
- In order to make provision for the re-use of the Bar End site, it is necessary to transfer the reserve collections from the present store to the other large museums store known as 'F2' on the Bar End Industrial Estate on the opposite site of Bar End Road.
- F2 is a commercially leased warehouse unit which currently houses the City Council's archives and general stores in addition to museum objects.
- In order to complete the transfer to F2, three pieces of work need to be done:

- a) the transfer of corporate stores to another site, yet to be identified by the Estates Team;
 - b) the further rationalisation of the reserve collection held at the Bar End site in order to reduce the total storage requirement, and
 - c) the fitting out of F2 to accommodate the additional museum collections and the removal from Bar End to F2.
- This Decision Notice relates to the second of these tasks.
 - Whenever funds have been available in recent years, the Museums Team has sought to pursue its programme of disposal. The work consists of specialist post-excavation recording and subsequent selective disposal of archaeological material deriving from excavations by the Council's Archaeology Unit between 1974 and 2004.
 - The final phase of work required at the Bar End depot to complete disposals on some of the bulkiest materials. These are soil samples, ceramic building materials and slate. The total cost has been estimated at £25,000.
 - Officers propose that the work be divided between two of the leading firms of archaeology consultants: Oxford Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology. They have both worked regularly in Winchester over many years, both for private developers and with the Council. They know the collections and the history of the Town area extremely well, and it is therefore proposed that the contracts for this required work be divided between them to ensure continuity of approach in building the archives.
 - Since the time when large amounts of excavations materials were deposited with the Council, protocols have changed. This means that analysis/recording is done by the developer's contractors before the final – much smaller – deposits are transferred to the Council for long term stewardship. Once completed, there is no risk of significant archaeological disposals work being required again in future although there will inevitably continue to be some growth as a result of local excavations work.
 - The rationalisation supports the Council's wish to be efficient and effective, by reducing the requirement for bulky storage over the long term and so keeping costs contained.

DECISION

- a) That approval is given to release up to £25,000 from the Bar End Depot revenue budget with immediate effect for the purpose of commissioning the final disposals work outlined above.
- b) That a direction under Contract Procedure Rule 2.4a be made and the Head of Museums be authorised to negotiate contracts with Wessex Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology for the delivery of the disposals work outlined in this Decision Notice.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

It makes good sense to do this work in advance of any project to re-use the depot site. This will ensure that the analysis is not rushed, and that the Council does not unnecessarily pay for the transfer or re-storing of materials.

Following the Council's decision to transfer management of museum collections, buildings and staff to a new independent trust in the autumn of 2015, this rationalisation work will also eliminate unnecessary legal work pertaining to the Bar End museums store.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

A total one-off revenue budget of £100,000 was brought forward into 2013/14 to support delivery of a project to re-use the Bar End depot site.

It is proposed to use £25,000 of this budget to pay for the required disposal works, ahead of any further work on the project as a whole.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

None.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

None.

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 07.01.2014

Councillor Rob Humby – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development