



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOPIC –GRANT FOR WINCHESTER EXCAVATIONS COMMITTEE

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: Eloise Appleby, Assistant Director (Economy and Communities), tel: 01962 848 181, email eappleby@winchester.gov.uk

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

SUMMARY

- Between 1962 and 1971 The Winchester Excavations Committee carried out the largest programme of archaeological excavations and historical research ever undertaken in a British city. The Council's own archaeology unit worked on the excavations, under the direction of Martin Biddle.
- Martin Biddle and his associates have worked since this time to record the findings of these digs in a series of publications known collectively as *The Winchester Studies*.
- The plan has always been to publish, through Oxford University Press, eleven volumes in seventeen parts. At the time of this report, there are seven publications. The understanding of Winchester's past grows with each publication, and feeds into the day-to-day work of the Council's Museums Team, including exhibitions, guide books, on-line collections and research projects.

- Much of the background to the *Winchester Studies* is included in previous Cabinet reports, and Members are referred in particular to [CAB1223](#) which was approved in March 2006, when a previous loan of £10,000 to the Excavations Committee was converted into a grant.
- The group last received a grant of £22,500 from the Council, split over three financial years from 2008/09 ([CAB1895](#), 16 September 2009 refers). This was made available from unallocated Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) funds held by the Council, on condition that the group also raised match funding from other sources.
- At that time, the publication of three volumes was anticipated in 2010/11. Of these only *The Winchester Mint* has been completed – in part because of the long illness and eventual death of Prof Biddle's wife and associate, Birthe - although *The Winchester Map* was produced in 2012, and three further publications are planned for delivery to Oxford University Press in 2014/15. In addition, *The Winchester Historic Towns Atlas* (the final planned volume) is being produced jointly with the Historic Towns' Atlas Committee and is scheduled for publication by Oxbow in 2014.
- Alongside this work, two new publications are being developed which are aimed at the visitor market. The *Illustrated History of the Anglo-Saxon Minsters* and the *Illustrated History of Winchester's Castle* (both working titles) will be picture-led and self-financing. As these are being overseen by other members of the Excavations Committee, it is not anticipated that they will hold back the delivery of further volumes of *The Studies*.
- The Committee – supported from 2012 by a Friends group - continues to be active in its fundraising efforts which have generated some £150,000 including Gift Aid over the past three years. Current figures show £64,000 generated through other grants, donations, lecture proceeds etc in the last financial year.
- The progress of the Excavations Committee over the years has been greatly affected by availability of funds. Most of the major contributors give their time and input free of charge, as has Prof Biddle in relation to both his own written contributions and the detailed editing of all volumes. However, there are costs for manuscript typing (including specialist script work), architectural and archaeological drawing, professional photography, travel, some research and writing, alongside the overheads of the Oxford Research office where most of the drawing, wider research and contact meetings take place, and where all the work in progress and bulk of the archives are housed.
- the project costs over the three financial years from 2013/14 are estimated to be £90,000. A grant from the City Council of £5,000 was requested to support this work – originally anticipated for payment in 2013/14.

- At the end of this three year period, the Excavations Committee will terminate the lease on the Oxford premises and will be looking for other institutions to complete any work remaining on the *Studies*.
- The work of the Winchester Excavations Committee directly supports the economic prosperity outcome of the Winchester District Community Strategy, through the first theme of the Council's Economic Strategy:
 "Winchester exploits its reputation as a cultural stronghold [using this as a means to stimulate a modern and creative approach to business, by ... marketing Winchester as a world-class tourism destination..]."
- The Council has powers under S14(b) of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide grant aid to others providing services which assist the Council in undertaking its museum functions.

DECISION

That a grant of £5,000 be made to the Winchester Excavations Committee in 2014/15, subject to approval of a budget carry forward request of £5,000 (to be put forward from unspent budgets originally ringfenced to support retail in the city centre budget in 2013/14).

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

With the passing of time, there is an increasing desire to see the completion of the *Winchester Studies* before the first hand knowledge of those who were involved in the excavations is lost.

The *Studies* reflect well on Winchester, reinforcing its reputation as a cultural centre at a national and international level – in line with the Council's recently adopted Cultural Strategy.

Members could choose not to provide a grant, but this would serve to further slow down the publication process. It could also disable the Winchester Excavations Committee from accessing other grants which require evidence of Council support or match funding.

Ideally, the Winchester Excavations Committee would like to see a three year grant of £5,000 per annum, reflecting the latest three year commitment from Hampshire County Council. However, the City Council still has the option to consider further payments even if it makes a one-year grant now.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

A budget carry forward request of £5,000 will be put forward from unspent 2013/14 budget set aside to support retail initiatives.

Of the original supporting retail initiatives budget of £40,000, the sum of £7,000 still remains. This does not reflect a lack of action in support of City Centre retail: Decision Notice [PHD525](#) sought the release of £18,000 from this fund to create a new film to promote the evening economy, and to commission a study of independent retailing in the City. CAB2571 recorded that a further £15,000 of these funds were being vired into the budget for hardship rate relief for businesses (mainly shops and pubs) following the flooding in February this year. The City has seen other major investment in its retail area in recent years, with the refurbishment of the High Street, the development of the markets, the new 'wayfarer' signage system and a range of maps, web-based promotions, advertising campaigns and other communications activity led by the Business Improvement District, Cathedral and City Council's Tourism Team.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

None, but a number City Councillors sitting on the Excavations Committee have supported this grant request.

**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**

N/A

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

None.

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 20.05.14

Councillor Rob Humby – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development