

**Report of the Director of City Development**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**Subject: Design & Cost Report for Re-location of West Yorkshire Archives Leeds**

**Capital Scheme Number: 16388/000 / 000**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: 10.4(3) Appendix number:1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of Main Issues**

- 1 This report sets out a proposal to relocate storage facilities for Leeds' archives required due to the deterioration of the current store at the former Sheepscar Library.
- 2 The building is in the freehold ownership of LCC but the service is managed by West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS). The building is in a poor state of repair and there are major issues of access both to the building and within it. In addition the collections themselves are at serious risk of deterioration and damage due to the buildings poor condition.
- 3 In March 2009, the National Archives advised that the Sheepscar property was not fit for purpose, and that it fell below the standards required to be designated a "place of deposit". The National Archives have the statutory authority to rescind this status and instruct that material is stored elsewhere, in more appropriate facilities, possibly by other bodies outside the authority's boundaries.
- 4 This report explores the potential re-location of the archives to premises in Morley, wholly owned by LCC and occupied by WYJS. These premises are fully accessible and, with some adaptation, will reach a standard acceptable to National Archives.

**5** It is proposed that the adaptation works will be part funded through the sale of the property at Sheepscar with any funding gap or additional costs being closed by WYJS through prudential borrowing. Current estimates of the cost of the scheme and the potential receipt for sale of the Sheepscar property appear in the confidential appendix to this report.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Members are recommended to:-

- i. declare the former library at Sheepscar surplus to requirements;
- ii. agree the sale of the Sheepscar property, and the ring-fencing of the receipt value is identified in confidential appendix 1, to fund works at Morley WYJS;
- iii. inject into the capital programme the funds detailed in the confidential appendix as a contribution to fund the adaptation of the premises in Morley;
- iv. authorise expenditure of the funds detailed in the confidential appendix as a contribution to the project.

### **1.0 Purpose of this Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Executive Board of the need to improve storage facilities for Leeds' archives. It outlines proposals to re-locate the archives from the former Sheepscar Library to the Central Archive Store in Morley. It seeks the authority to declare the former Sheepscar Library surplus to requirements. The report also seeks an injection into the capital programme as a contribution to the construction works in Morley as detailed in the confidential appendix to this report.

### **2.0 Background information**

2.1 The provision of archives is a statutory service for Local Authorities under the Local Government and Local Government (Records) acts. WYJS was established by a legal agreement dated 22nd October 1999 known as the West Yorkshire Joint Services Agreement. It was for an initial period of five years, but was revised in 2004 to an open ended agreement. The Leeds archive service is managed by West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS), which is funded and governed by the five West Yorkshire local authorities.

2.2 The WYJS Agreement requires that property shall be made available for storage of the archives, until the Agreement is terminated. Upon termination there is provision for the five Councils to come together to determine appropriate terms for the release or continued use of property. Division of costs associated with the operations of the Agreement are specified in the Agreement. Leeds is responsible for 35.25%.

2.3 Although the archives are managed through West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS), the archive collections themselves remain the legal responsibility of the individual authorities. If WYJS were for any reason to cease to exist, then the

Leeds parts of the collection would remain the legal and administrative responsibility of LCC.

- 2.4 The archive collections that are the responsibility of LCC, cover the whole of the Leeds metropolitan area. They comprise historic property, personal, business and corporate documents, and are used by researchers for a wide variety of academic or business purposes.
- 2.5 Currently the Leeds archives are held in three different places: the former Sheepscar library building dating from 1938, where the public service is provided; the nearby Nortech outstore and the Central Archive Store in Morley. Both Sheepscar and Nortech are in need of replacement, but Sheepscar is the principal concern because of the speed of deterioration in the building's fabric and the threat to the collection of historic documents.
- 2.6 In March 2009, the National Archives wrote to WYJS following a property review in 2008. The letter concluded that the Sheepscar property was not fit for purpose and fell below the standards required to be designated a "place of deposit". The National Archives have the statutory authority to rescind this status and instruct that material be stored elsewhere, if necessary by other bodies outside the authority's boundaries.
- 2.7 The Sheepscar building sits in the middle of a number of large roads including a major ring road junction and has no dedicated parking. Access by public transport and on foot is also difficult. Internally there are no lifts and access to the upper floor is only possible using the stairs. In addition the building suffers from severe water ingress in a number of areas. Security arrangements, including for staff during opening hours, are inadequate. It has been estimated that it would cost around £960,000 to bring the building to an acceptable standard.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 On 30th July 2010, taking account of the £960,000 capital cost required to improve the Sheepscar building, the Leaders of the five authorities comprising the West Yorkshire Joint service agreed that the Archive building at Sheepscar should be closed due to non-compliance with national standards. Consideration should be given to the re-location of the archive. The National Archive has indicated that they would prefer the transfer of the archives to a more suitable location, even if this falls short of the British Standard BS5454 for archive storage
- 3.2 In view of this, in 2010, WYJS commissioned a feasibility and options study from Norfolk Property Services (NPS), to consider how further archive space could be created in the Central Archive Store in Morley. NPS identified two options and also assessed the cost for upgrading the options to meet in full BS 5454. Details of the option costs appear in the confidential appendix to this report.
  - Option 1 was for the relocation of the Sheepscar archives only to the Central Archive Store in Morley
  - Option 2 was for the relocation of both the Sheepscar and Nortech

archives to the Central Archive Store in Morley.

3.3 The preferred option of WYJS on the grounds of cost and deliverability is option 1, without the in full BS 5454 upgrade.

3.4 The proposal is to sell the property at Sheepscar, that Leeds City Council has registered freehold title to and utilise the value of the receipt up to a maximum value detailed in the confidential appendix. This will fund the adaptations to the Morley premises. Even though Leeds is only liable for 35% of the WYJS archives overall operating costs, the Sheepscar building is used solely for Leeds archives, and each district makes its own arrangements for housing and accessing its own archives. The receipt up to the maximum value detailed in the confidential appendix would be ring-fenced as a contribution to the funding for the works associated with the removal to Morley.

3.5 In terms of the Council's Capital Receipts Policy, the ring-fencing can be justified as being required to cover legitimate decanting / replacement costs.

3.6 NPS have developed the designs and costs to a level which equates to RIBA stage D. Details appear in the confidential appendix to this report.

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Prior Approvals**

4.1.1 The proposal received the support of Asset Management Board on 11<sup>th</sup> August and the Financial Performance Group on 19<sup>th</sup> August.

### **4.2 Programme**

4.2.1 Key dates on the programme are;

- Executive Board approval – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011
- Issue of tenders – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012
- Start on site – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012
- Completion – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012

### **4.3 Corporate Considerations**

#### **4.3.1 Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation has taken place with finance, libraries arts and heritage, corporate property management and WYJS.

#### **4.3.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

No specific implications other than improved physical access.

#### **4.3.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- i. the project contributes to the following aims from the Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030:-
  - respect the city's heritage, including buildings, parks and the history of

- communities;
  - local cultural and sporting activities are available to all;
- ii. the project contributes to the following aims from the Council Business Plan 2011 – 2015
- create the environment for effective partnership working;
  - develop the Council's cultural events and facilities including changes to sport centres and libraries.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

##### **4.4.1 Full scheme estimate**

Full details are contained in the confidential appendix to this report.

##### **4.4.2 Capital Funding and Cash Flow**

Full details are contained in the confidential appendix to this report.

##### **4.4.3 Revenue Effects**

All revenue costs incurred by LCC relating to the Sheepscar building are currently re-charged to WYJS. The proposed relocation is therefore neutral to LCC in revenue terms. There is however, a risk that LCC will be liable for ongoing maintenance and security costs if the building is not sold before completion of the building works at Morley

The archive staff at Sheepscar are mainly employed by WYJS, who will be re-located to Morley. There are two LCC cleaners who work at the Sheepscar building, their position needs to be addressed by the Business Support Centre.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 The scheme is eligible for call in.

4.5.2 Appendix 1 of this report is Exempt under Access to Information Rule 10.4 (3) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person or company (including the authority holding that information) which may result in prejudicial trading of that company. It is considered it is not in the public interest to release this information as this would compromise the Council's position.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The project will be managed by Asset Management and a risk register will be maintained throughout the project.

4.6.2 The risks associated with the sale of the Sheepscar library building will be the responsibility of LCC, those associated with the construction works at Morley will be the responsibility of WYJS.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

Members are recommended to:-

- 5.1
  - i. declare the former library at Sheepscar surplus to requirements;
  - ii. agree the sale of the Sheepscar property currently housing the archive, and the ring-fencing of the receipt value as identified in confidential appendix 1 to fund works at Morley WYJS;
  - iii. inject into the capital programme the funds detailed in the confidential appendix as a contribution to fund the adaptation of the premises in Morley;
  - iv. authorise expenditure of the funds detailed in the confidential appendix as a contribution to the project.

### **Background documents**

National Archives letter March 2008

NPS Stage D type pre-tender report

Minutes of meeting of the Leaders of the five West Yorkshire Local Authorities July 2010.