

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
16 JANUARY 2014**

**EXECUTIVE
21 JANUARY 2014**

**STORAGE OF ARCHIVES RESULTING FROM
DEVELOPER-FUNDED ARCHAEOLOGY**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend a new mechanism for dealing with the storage of archaeological finds and records resulting from excavations funded by developers within the city.
- 1.2 To recommend an approach for dealing with the legacy of past archaeological collecting.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Museums Storage Facilities Working Group (MSFWG) was established in December 2012 to discuss this topic; it met on four occasions.
- 2.2 The principal drivers for the establishment of the working group were the demise of Exeter Archaeology which left a legacy of undeposited archives in the city's care; and RAMM's decision to cease acquiring new developer-funded archaeological collections from 2011 as the two warehouse units on Marsh Barton had become so full that accepting more boxes was jeopardising the staff health and safety. The current leases on the units expire in March 2014.
- 2.3 Since 1990 specific planning guidance has ensured that the impact of development on archaeology is a material consideration; and that if the destruction of remains is unavoidable they should be excavated, recorded and archived. The archaeological finds and records (called the archive) resulting should be made publicly accessible.
- 2.4 Developers pay for the excavation and analysis of finds as well as a box fee to the City Council as a one-off fee to cover storage. For some larger sites Section 106 funding has been obtained to help cover the costs of storage: Princesshay and St Loyes have £65,000 of funding from S106 remaining. The box fee was historically set at a fixed rate with no allowance for inflation which does not cover the current or future costs.
- 2.5 The volume of developer-funded archaeology has increased significantly over the last two decades and many local authorities face the same challenges as Exeter. In 2011 a national survey revealed that 47 local authorities had stopped receiving archives, leaving more than 9,000 archives, over a 1,000 cubic metres, held by archaeological units.

- 2.6 The Ark, the Museum's main store, has minimal spare capacity to receive more collections: its capacity was reduced to save costs prior to its development. For this reason the Museum continues to use two privately owned warehouses for storage purposes. Rentals of £5520 p.a. and £7600 p.a. are paid through the Museum's ECC revenue budget plus business rates.
- 2.7 The Museums Association Code of Ethics deems it to be irresponsible for a museum to collect material for which it does not have the resources to care for it adequately.

3.0 NEW STORE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The working group began by considering the total storage volume required to accept:
- (a) the former Exeter Archaeology material and documents
 - (b) the contents of RAMM's storage units
 - (c) estimated future requirements for approximately ten years

This was estimated to be in the region of 375 sq m.

- 3.2 After discussing a number of options, including building a second floor at The Ark with an estimated cost of about £1.5m, a more detailed costing was sought for erection of a prefabricated building outside of RAMM's Exton Road store, The Ark. The costs of this option were estimated to be in the region of £338,500.
- 3.3 Subsequent to the working group another option investigated was re-use of an existing ECC building, Wat Tyler House, King William Street. Floor loading issues meant that mobile racking could not be used, reducing storage capacity and providing no future expansion. Business rates are also likely to be significantly higher for this option. The Wat Tyler House refurbishment was costed at about £250,000.

4.0 OTHER STORAGE OPTIONS

- 4.1 In recent years low cost storage facilities have emerged which make off-site deposit a viable option, such as at the Cheshire salt mine, Deepstore at Winsford. The preparation costs, transport and administration charges are relatively high with an annual storage fee of about £1.20 for a standard sized storage box. The environmental conditions do not permit the storage of metalwork, organics or fragile artefacts.
- 4.2 Paperwork and site images are increasingly either produced digitally, or retrospectively digitised, with the assets deposited with the Archaeology Data Service. This means that paper records need not be retained, saving on space but there is a cost for creating these archives and their hosting.

5.0 PROPOSAL FOR ALL FUTURE AND POST 2010 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

- 5.1 RAMM ceased to accept archaeological archives into its collections from 1 January 2011.

- 5.2 RAMM's new Collections Development Policy (2014-19) proposes that RAMM no longer seeks to hold all of a site archive from developer-funded archaeological excavations from within its collecting area. The museum will work with the planning archaeologist and contracting unit to assist with the formation of a site archive. The time taken by the museum to contribute to the formation of the archive will be charged to developers.
- 5.3 Only artefacts of an exceptional nature will be accessioned into the museum collections. The remaining material will be subject to agreed sampling and disposal strategies and the resulting archive will be placed into deep storage off site. The transport, preparation and storage will be at the expense of the developer. Any artefacts accessioned into RAMM will be subject to a one-off box fee that will be assessed on a basis to reflect increasing overhead costs and inflation.
- 5.4 RAMM will no longer accept the paperwork associated with a developer funded archaeological excavation. Contracting units will be asked to deposit a digital archive with the Archaeology Data Service hosted by the University of York.
- 5.5 The museum will cease to have any role in the management and access arrangements of material in Deepstore. The intention is that there will be no financial implications for ECC for long term storage if an appropriate box fee is secured as described at 5.3.

6.0 OPTION 1 FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES PRE-2011

- 6.1 This includes all archaeological archives from the defunct Exeter Archaeology (including Princesshay) plus the accessioned archaeological archives from RAMM's holdings currently held in the two warehouse units. All would be moved into Deepstore.
- 6.2 Some of the Exeter Archaeology legacy material is metalwork or fragile, so could not be deposited in Deepstore. The remaining boxes would cost in the region of £17,520 for 15 years storage.
- 6.3 RAMM's legacy material represents a much larger assemblage. This would cost in the region of £55,200 for 15 years storage plus £22,000 preparation and set up costs.
- 6.4 Advantages of option 1
- It is a secure and safe option for holding reserve collections.
 - There is no new capital cost for ECC and annual storage fees are low.
 - Section 106 monies can be used for some of the Exeter Archaeology legacy (Princesshay), but RAMM holdings cannot benefit.
 - It may be possible to save on rent and service charges for the two warehouse units, but as not all material can be deposited at Deepstore and there remains the need for additional storage capacity that cannot be accommodated at the Ark.

6.5 Disadvantages of option 1

- There is no capacity to receive any new archaeological finds from Exeter in the locality.
- There are likely to be great PR challenges in explaining to the public the deposit of accessioned museum collections down a Cheshire salt mine and similarly trying to recoup full costs from the public. Restricting public access to this material may also compromise the museum's ability to meet the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, also an eligibility requirement for external funders.
- Some investment in non-ECC estate
- Section 106 money cannot be used for storage of RAMM's legacy material. This means ECC needs to find up front costs of £22,000 and ongoing revenue of £3,700 p.a.

6.6 The total cost for a 15 year period and the annual average cost of option 1 is

<u>Funding Breakdown</u>	Average Annual Cost	Total Cost
Section 106	4,333	65,000
ECC	15,748	236,220
TOTAL	20,081	301,220

6.7 There will be significant staff salary, travel and accommodation costs in enabling public access to the museum collections held in Deepstore, Cheshire. The cost of a visit to Cheshire is anticipated to be in the region of £650 per visit.

6.8 Members of the public may wish to view the material. Willingness to pay £650 plus their own travel costs is unknown and may prove controversial as it could be seen as restricting public access to public collections. Consequent reputational damage may be incurred by ECC with the public, potential donors and the external funders.

6.9 Prohibitive public charges limiting access may compromise the museum's ability to meet the Museum Association's Code of Ethics (also an eligibility standard for external funding).

7.0 **OPTION 2 FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES PRE-2011**

7.1 In this option the Museum would continue to make use of the two leased warehouse units on Marsh Barton. They could be retained in the medium term and the storage capacity increased.

7.2 Space in the two warehouse units currently presents health and safety issues due to the current layout. However, one could be refurbished to remedy these matters and provide a storage volume of almost half as much again as is currently available. Insulation of the internal 'environmental' shell can be undertaken by in-house (Museum) technical staff at minimal cost.

7.3 The Increased storage capacity will be achieved by mobile or roller-racking. The task will have to be implemented in 2 phases, as existing collections will have to be moved temporarily to the other unit. Once the re-racking is complete, it will be able to store all of the archaeological material currently therein, the accessioned material from Princesshay and St Loyes and the remaining Exeter Archaeology legacy; as well as providing modest expansion as set down in RAMM's new

Collections Development Policy.

7.4 The racking system can be dismantled and moved/re-erected if the lease on the unit becomes unaffordable in the future, at a cost.

7.5 Advantages of option 2

- As the Princesshay and St Loyes finds will be accommodated, Section 106 monies can be drawn on for this option which will benefit all collections and create a safer working environment for staff.
- This option gives modest expansion space for future selected artefacts. Material that does not need to be part of the museum collection would be funded for Deepstore deposition by future developers.

7.6 Disadvantages of option 2

- Some investment in non-Exeter City Council estate.

7.7 The total cost for a 15 year period and the annual average cost of option 2 is

<u>Funding Breakdown</u>	Average Annual Cost	Total Cost
Section 106	4,333	65,000
ECC	11,898	178,470
TOTAL	16,231	243,470

8.0 OPTION 3

8.1 This option is similar to Option 1 with all material placed in Deepstore. It also explores the viability of ceasing use of the Exeter warehouse units. All collections currently in one of the storage units and all Exeter Archaeology legacy material to be placed into Deepstore to allow release of storage units.

8.3 Disadvantages of option 3

- Also in the storage units are geological collections (not developer-funded archaeology) which were given by private donors with an expectation that they will be held locally. This could deter future donors and compromise RAMM's ability to meet the requirement of Museum Accreditation and MA Code of Ethics.
- The Museum receives on average 120 requests a year to view geological and archaeological material held in the existing warehouse units. Costs to allow access in Cheshire will be prohibitively high.
- Any future high profile finds from developer-funded excavations in the city, such as coin hoards or Roman mosaics, could not be retained locally with much consequent bad PR for Exeter City Council.
- Certain items (e.g. metalwork) from both RAMM's archaeological collections and Exeter Archaeology cannot be placed in Deepstore as they would deteriorate and be destroyed. Again this would transgress the Museum's Accreditation status (and affect its eligibility for external funding) for instance the £551,000 pa currently received from the Arts Council.
- There is inadequate existing space to accommodate the existing collection.

9.0 OPTION 4

9.1 This option is a combination of various elements described in options 1 and 2.

9.2 It proposes the removal of accessioned material currently housed in the storage unit to Deepstore. It will be replaced by Exeter Archaeology legacy material housed in the refurbished unit and equipped with roller racking funded by S106 money. This will create some surplus space which could be used for future acquisitions (provided they do not require specific environmental conditions).

9.3 Advantages of option 4

- As the Princesshay and St Loyes finds will be accommodated, Section 106 monies can be drawn for the project to refurbish the unit.
- The option creates surplus space for future selected artefacts.

9.4 Disadvantages of option 4

- RAMM material is already accessioned as part of the museum collection. As a public collection and to meet the requirements of Accreditation status (eligibility requirement for such external funding) would entail staff trips to Cheshire and payment to Deepstore for the visits (figure not currently available). Enquiries for this material average 20 per year. Cost per trip £385 = £7,700 pa. Staff time = £5210 pa. If boxes require retrieval from Deepstore site (for extended research) their charges are £2 per box. The number of retrieval requests cannot be predicted. Escorting visits to Cheshire will also impact on curator's work programme.
- Some investment in non-ECC estate
- There are likely to be great PR challenges in explaining to the public the deposit of accessioned museum collections down a Cheshire salt mine and similarly trying to recoup full costs from the public. Restricting public access to this material may also compromise the museum's ability to meet the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, also an eligibility requirement for external funders.

9.5 The total cost for a 15 year period and the annual average cost of option 4 is

<u>Funding Breakdown</u>	Average Annual Cost	Total Cost
Section 106	4,333	65,000
ECC	17,533	262,990
TOTAL	21,866	327,990

10.0 SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

10.1 Option 1

1. Utilises £65,000 of available Section 106 funding.
2. A storage unit would still be needed for fragile artefacts which cannot go to Deepstore. There are too many to fit into the Ark.
3. Additional funds are required for depositing RAMM collections at Deepstore: £22,000 upfront costs and ongoing revenue costs of £3,700 p.a. rental charge

- 10.2 Option 2
1. Utilises £65,000 of available Section 106 funding.
 2. It maintains ECC's reputation, allows local access and means star items can still continue to be collected.
 3. Initial saving on the revenue budget by deploying Section 106 funds to cover lease costs, but once funds are exhausted there will be ongoing budget implications.
- 10.3 Option 3
1. This option has been discounted, see 8.1 above.
- 10.4 Option 4
1. ECC funds are required for depositing RAMM collections at Deepstore: £22,000 upfront costs and ongoing revenue costs of £3,700 p.a. rental charge.
 2. ECC funding needed to cover the cost of storage of material at Deepstore - £55,500 (15 year period).
 3. £65,000 section 106 funding can be used to fund the refurbishment of a unit and to cover a proportion of the ongoing rental cost for the units.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The cost for a 15 year period and the average annual cost to the council for each option is

	Average Annual Cost	Total Cost
Option 1	15,748	236,220
Option 2	11,898	178,470
Option 4	17,533	262,990

- 11.2 The current revenue budget for storage of archives is £13,100 (£196,500 over 15 years).
- 11.3 If option 2 is selected there will be an average annual budget saving of £1,200 (£17,760 over 15 years).

12.0 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 This report sets out a strategy for dealing with developer-funded archaeology excavated from 1 January 2011 onwards. The use of Deepstore for the majority of material excavated in the future will control the financial implications for the council as the developer will be responsible for arranging this storage. Only material of an exceptional nature will be accepted by RAMM and the appropriate box fee will be levied to cover costs.
- 12.2 The report has also examined a range of options with the aim of maximising use of Section 106 funding and minimising ongoing costs to Exeter City Council. This exercise shows that option 2 is the most economic, financially and operationally.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 That Scrutiny Economy support and Executive approve the new mechanism for dealing with developer-funded archaeological archives since 1 January 2011 and arising in the future and that option 2 as set out in the report be pursued.

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RICHARD BALL - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ECONOMY

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None