

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, CORPORATE SERVICES,  
HERITAGE, ARTS AND TOURISM**

**CLLR RICHARD CLEWER**

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**Archaeology Store**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To Grant fund the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Trust, the Trust body for an independent accredited museum, Salisbury Museum, towards the purchase of a property for suitable storage and public access of archaeological finds and archives for the people of Wiltshire.
2. The proposal is aligned with Wiltshire Council vision to create strong communities in Wiltshire. This includes the Business Plan 2017-2027 key priorities (1) Growing the economy; (2) Strong communities and (4) working with partners as an innovative and effective council.

**Main Considerations for the Council**

3. Inadequate storage of archaeology finds and archives has been identified as an area of concern by local people and museums, developers and archaeological contractors, the local planning authority and planning inspectorate. The requirement for an archaeology store has been identified in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (*ref. Wiltshire Core Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, IDP2 WC015, Appendix A Wiltshire Strategic, Regional and General, 2011-2016*) and the Stonehenge-Avebury World Heritage Site Management plan 2015-2021.
4. The considerations for the council are therefore:
  - To facilitate improved and sustainable public access to archaeological finds and archives within the county of Wiltshire.
  - To enable local museums, the local planning authority and developers to more effectively discharge duties under the National Planning policy Framework guidelines:  
[http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/12-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/#footnote\\_30](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/12-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/#footnote_30)
  - That there is a robust business model put forward by Salisbury Museum for the future maintenance of a Collections Resource Centre (archaeology store)

and the promotion of access to it

## **Background**

5. Wiltshire Council does not provide a museum service, but supports local independent and Town Council museums through grant funding and officer support via the Library, Heritage & Arts service, Conservation and Museums Advisory Team. Officers, museum trustees and curators have identified inadequate storage of archaeology finds and archives as an area of concern both for the local heritage sector and for the planning authority in four key areas:
  - I. Current storage for Salisbury Museum is on site and is unsuitable in both size and environmental conditions, increasing the risk of lasting damage to archaeology finds and archives.
  - II. Archaeological objects, reports and other records are inaccessible to the general public, academics and curators, inhibiting the understanding of our heritage and environment.
  - III. Current storage takes up prime space needed for gallery improvements and expansion, which is needed to develop wider audiences and enhance the local Wiltshire tourist economy.
  - IV. Preventing the discharge of responsibilities with regard to developer-funded excavations under the National Planning Policy Framework. These issues have also been cited at planning inspections and by a government minister responsible for planning decisions.
  
6. The development of an off-site Collection Resource Centre will enhance the museum offer. The facility will enable the museum to review the collections, assess the condition and exhibition value of materials that have rarely, if ever, been seen by the public, and to arrange for the loaning of materials between institutions. The sharing of resources will enable smaller museums in the county to deliver higher impact exhibitions and generate additional visits at multiple sites simultaneously. Salisbury Museum will also use the facility to engage with the Higher Education Sector and community volunteers. By freeing space in existing city-centre buildings, the museum will be able to move forward with development and expansion plans that will positively impact upon tourism and the local economy, while furthering the museum's aim for sustainability.
  
7. Salisbury Museum has purchased a suitable building for a Collections Resource Centre at a price of £125,000 freehold. The building is 179 sq. m. and has the potential to not only accommodate all the backlog material and archives stored by Salisbury Museum and Wessex Archaeology, but also potential archaeology from the Stonehenge World Heritage site, especially material uncovered during any development of the A303. There is the potential for expansion on site as other units may become available to purchase in future.
  
8. Wiltshire Council officers have reviewed Salisbury Museum's business model

and are satisfied that matched funding is in place and that there is a robust plan in place for funding the continued maintenance of the store. Wiltshire Council officers are also satisfied that the valuation of the property is within market expectations; the property title permits use for the approved purposes; and that the building is fit for purpose.

[See **Appendices A - C**]

### **Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

N/A

### **Safeguarding Implications**

9. There are no implications for safeguarding. The Collections Resource Centre will be managed by Salisbury Museum and will be subject to their internal policies and plans.

### **Public Health Implications**

10. The creation of an archaeology store will release much needed space for local Salisbury Museum. This will allow for gallery extensions and improved heritage activities. Such activity, which also includes volunteering, has a positive impact upon well-being, community identity and a sense of place.

### **Procurement Implications**

11. There are no procurement implications. Wiltshire Council is grant funding a local independent museum to enable local people to come together to provide a solution to an issue that is of concern to local museums and developers.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

12. A low equality risk score (1) has been calculated in all areas against a risk matrix and a full impact assessment is not required. The Collections Resource Centre will be managed by Salisbury Museum and will be subject to their internal policies and plans. Salisbury Museum will undertake any reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the facility is accessible.
13. There is likely to be a longer term positive impact upon equalities as space released in museums will enable leverage of external grant funding for gallery expansion and improved heritage activities for diverse and disadvantaged communities and individuals.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

14. The Collection Resource Centre will be situated in an existing building, Unit 7 Hurricane close, old Sarum, Salisbury, about a 15-minute drive (or bus ride) from Salisbury Museum and is easily accessible. It is a modern terraced

warehouse unit constructed in the 1990s and located in a popular industrial development. The total floor area, including mezzanine, is 179 square meters. The current proposal does not extend the building's footprint on the landscape.

### **Risk Assessment**

15. There are three key risks to be considered with the decision to grant fund Salisbury Museum:
- i. The Collection Resource Centre has a change in use (i.e. no longer an archeology store) or is let or sold by Salisbury Museum. Wiltshire Council intends to register a charge on the property to mitigate this risk, whereby a change in use will cause the grant to be repaid, while the Council will also be paid a share of the net proceeds at full market value should the property be let or sold.
  - ii. Failure to provide a store for developer funded archaeological finds and archives may prevent developers and local museums from properly discharging duties under the National Planning Policy Framework. This will have a consequence upon our future understanding of Wiltshire's historic environment and its communities. It will be mitigated by assisting a major local museums through a one-off grant towards the purchase and creation of suitable and accessible storage facilities.
  - iii. Existing archaeological finds stored in Salisbury Museum are at risk of lasting damage if they remain stored in inadequate environmental conditions. This will be mitigated by the provision of a suitable storage facility.

### **Financial Implications**

16. This will be added to the 2018/2019 Capital Programme and financed by capital receipts.

### **Legal Implications**

17. There is a low risk that this grant could constitute state aid. This is mitigated by claw back provisions in the grant agreement but as always there is a risk that these could be resisted as the claw back would potentially require the sale of the property.
18. The Cabinet Member for Heritage is able to give authority to enter into the grant agreement under the terms of the Wiltshire Council constitution below:

#### ***Grant Expenditure***

*12.2.1 The financial limits for approval of grant expenditure are dealt with in the Chief Finance Officer's scheme of sub delegation. The following delegation of authority applies to the approval of awarding grants to an external body:*

*(b) Above £50,000 and up to £250,000 – Cabinet Member(s) in consultation*

*with Corporate Directors, Chief Finance Officer and the Corporate*

*Procurement and Commissioning Board*

19. Wiltshire Council Legal Services officers have considered all the relevant documentation that has been supplied by Salisbury Museum, including a property survey and agreements with third parties. Legal Services have had sight of the relevant HMRC Land Registry copies in respect of the property and can confirm that it is owned by the vendor. Legal Services has not yet had sight of a report on title and therefore cannot advise on any potential issues with the use of the land but have sought undertakings from the Museum Trust's solicitor that the land is fit for the purposes of the archaeological storage project. A clause providing a warranty from the vendor that the land is fit for purpose has also been included in the grant agreement. Having viewed the Articles of Association of the Salisbury and South, officers are satisfied that this body is properly constituted to enter into an agreement and to receive grant funds.
20. It is proposed that Wiltshire Council will enter into a formal agreement with Salisbury Museum to provide a grant towards the purchase of a property for the storage of existing archaeological finds and archives relating to their geographical collecting area and potentially the whole of the historic county of Wiltshire; future archaeological finds and archives resulting from development-led and research-led archaeological fieldwork and chance discovery in the historic county of Wiltshire; and for the people of Wiltshire.
21. A charge on the property will be registered in favor of Wiltshire Council that will be invoked should Salisbury Museum default on the agreement i.e. the property ceases to be an archaeological store and / or the property is let or sold without alternative suitable accommodation for an archaeological store in place.
22. It is proposed that Wiltshire Council, via Libraries, Heritage and Arts, Conservation and Museum Advisory Team, will monitor the Collections Resource Centre through its existing partnership agreements with Salisbury Museum and Wiltshire Museum.

## **Conclusions**

23. That Wiltshire Council provide a £75,000 grant to Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Trust towards the costs of purchasing a property suitable for storing archaeological finds and archives.
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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** The Salisbury Museum Collections Resource Operating Model.

**Appendix B:** Building Survey Report on behalf of Salisbury Museum: Unit 7, Hurricane Close, Old Sarum, Salisbury; Stephen Linard Chartered Building Surveyors; 17 October 2017.

**Appendix C:** Letter from Garfield Weston Foundation confirming grant funding to Salisbury Museum

## **Background Papers**

None