

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Adult & Community Services
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **21 June 2005**

Report Title **Understanding the Future: Museums and
21st Century Life**

Summary The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has issued a consultation document on The Value of Museums entitled 'Understanding the Future: Museum and 21st Century Life'. The report sets out the main thrust of the consultation document in the context of the Warwickshire Museum Service and seeks the Committee's endorsement of the draft response.

For further information please contact:

Helen Maclagan Head of Museum Service Tel: 01926 418127 helenmaclagan@warwickshire.gov.uk	Chris Jeens Head of Heritage & Cultural Services Tel: 01926 412329 chrisjeens@warwickshire.gov.uk
--	--

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) Not applicable
- Other Elected Members Councillor Sid Tooth
Councillor Richard Dodd
Councillor Mrs Marion Haywood – noted – very interested but does require further discussion with those who have spent longer dealing with the library service
- Cabinet Member Councillor Colin Hayfield
- Chief Executive



- Legal Victoria Gould - approved
- Finance Paul Walsh, Financial Services Manager, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards - approved
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**Adult & Community Services
Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 21 June 2005**

**Understanding the Future:
Museums and 21st Century Life**

**Report of the Director, Libraries, Heritage
& Trading Standards**

Recommendation

That the Committee note the DCMS consultation document 'Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life - the Value of Museums' in relation to the County Museum Service and endorse the attached draft response.

1 Background and Context

- 1.1 The Department for Culture Media and Sport has issued a consultation document on The Value of Museums entitled 'Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life'. The Executive Summary of the consultation is attached as Appendix 1. The full consultation document is available at <http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/consultations>. The document seeks responses to 13 specific questions by 30 June 2005. These questions and the proposed responses are attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 The responses to the questions have been framed in the context of the aspirations and experience of the Warwickshire Museum Service. The Warwickshire Museum Service Strategy was the subject of a Best Value Review in 2002 from which emerged a framework for its future development based on four inter-linked strands:
- Localised service delivery through a network of partners
 - Development of a 'virtual' network of service provision
 - A clear focus on learning.
 - Refocused central services and resources

- 1.3 Good progress has been made on the first three of these strands, largely with the benefit of external funding. For the benefit of new Committee Members, a summary of progress so far under each strand is attached as Appendix 3.
- 1.4 Progress on refocusing central services and resources now largely hinges on tackling issues relating to modernising and improving access to the two historic buildings (Market Hall and St Johns House) which house our public displays. The next stage of this is the subject of a bid for capital funding which is to be discussed by the Corporate Capital Group on 20 June. Further information is provided in Appendix 3, paragraph 5.2.

2 'Understanding the Future: Museums and the 21st Century

The introduction to the document covers the Value of Museums – their part in the public realm, their links to the creative industries, their economic, and social role, their role in education and citizenship, and as mediators of knowledge, information and experience. It emphasises the need for that value to be understood 'Together we need to develop a framework through which museums can renew themselves and safeguard the quality of their provision for all citizens.'

The document then focuses on 5 main themes:

Issue 1: Collections and their Uses

It is emphasised that collections lie at the heart of everything museums do, and that, to be successful, collections must remain dynamic. This reinforces the need to continue to add to collections where appropriate. The collecting areas of the Warwickshire Museum Service are defined in the member-approved Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and focus on the archaeology, geology, natural history and social history of Warwickshire. Additions are made to all collections, in a systematic way, as set out in that policy.

The document also deals with collaboration between collecting institutions. In Warwickshire, collecting areas are routinely discussed and agreed with neighbouring institutions (such as Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery, the Pump Rooms in Leamington Spa and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust), material is regularly loaned between institutions, and on occasion permanently transferred, in the interests of efficient use of resources and to avoid duplication of effort.

There is debate of the economic reality of collecting (which is a very dominant issue particularly for art galleries). The document pays perhaps too little attention to the role of donors – donations are a crucial source of additions to the Warwickshire Museum's collections, and donation is also a significant means of community engagement.

The issue of inclusivity is raised – it is recognised that in-depth projects with small groups of non-traditional museum users can make a significant impact.

The project carried out by the Warwickshire Museum with the Pupil Reintegration Unit and a freelance photographer, which resulted in an exhibition at the Market Hall, exemplifies this. There is also welcome recognition of the power of collections. 'Museum collections ... have the potential to mobilise a range of emotions and provide tolerant spaces in which difficult issues can be addressed ... Collections offer means for personal identification and discovery. They can and should be used to acknowledge and tell different individual and communal stories.'

The document refers to the potential of the internet to provide access to collections from more than one source – the Windows on Warwickshire project, led by WCC Heritage and Cultural Services, in which Compton Verney, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Warwick Castle are also partners, is a good example of this kind (Appendix 3, paragraph 3). Attention is also drawn to the further potential of ICT for the sector.

Issue 2: Learning and Research

The document emphasises the relationship of museums to learning, and the particular benefits of learning through objects – at all stages of life. Education and learning services at the Warwickshire Museum Service are comparatively well developed and regarded, and continue to progress.

Mention is also made of the government's forthcoming museums education strategy, to be published jointly by DCMS and DfES, which will set out the entitlement of every child of school age to creative curriculum, and the role of museums in this. This is awaited with interest.

The importance of research and scholarship – the work which draws out what can be learned from the objects – is also stressed. Some work of this nature is carried out in the Warwickshire Museum Service, but perhaps less than used to be the case – as a result of other pressures on the service. For scholarly work and for detailed and extensive research, the Service is largely dependent upon partnerships with other Museums and with Universities – for example, Birmingham Museum provides us with expertise on Egyptology; a forthcoming catalogue of an important coin collection within the museum has been prepared by Dr Stanley Ireland of Warwick University. In turn, the Warwickshire Museum acts as a collection point for natural history data which feeds into and informs the national picture on, for example, climate change. The approach we are already taking is very much in tune with the thrust of the consultation document, which encourages links with Further and Higher Education.

Issue 3: Careers, Training and Leadership

This section addresses the workforce, career development, training, diversity, leadership and governance. The workforce includes volunteers – it is estimated that 60% of the total museum workforce nationally is voluntary. In Warwickshire, professional museum staff are strongly supported by volunteers, who bring expertise, enthusiasm and very welcome practical help.

Many of the smaller museums and heritage groups in the county are run largely or even entirely by volunteers. Support to these, including advice, training and workforce development, is provided by the Community Museums Officer (funded as part of a regional project under Renaissance in the Regions, see Appendix 3, paragraph 2.2).

A significant category of volunteer – perhaps under-acknowledged in the consultation document – is retired people, who are keen to keep active (and thereby healthy), and to continue to contribute to the community. An important role of community and voluntary museums is the promotion of community identity and cohesion, through shared appreciation of heritage.

In addition to the training for WCC museum staff provided departmentally, there are increasing opportunities through centrally funded training provided under Renaissance in the Regions.

There are a number of national initiatives to address the lack of cultural diversity in the museum workforce nationwide; these include Positive Action Traineeships. Discussion is currently under way over joint provision of a Traineeship shared between Coventry and Warwickshire Museum Services, again enabled by Renaissance in the Regions funding.

Issue 4: Coherence and Advocacy

This issue concerns the coherence of the sector nationally. Whilst there are strong advocates for National Museums, and for those run by larger local authorities (mainly but not exclusively Metropolitans and Unitaries), there is not a very coherent voice for county and borough/district services. The possibility of a unitary funding council is put forward.

Issue 5: Partnership and Measuring Value

The document recognizes that museums often work in partnerships, and encourages them to achieve more in this way – even internationally. Partnership working is a key strand of the Warwickshire Museum strategy (see Appendix 3, paragraph 2).

It also raises the tricky issue of measuring cultural value. Currently, Best Value Performance Indicators are relatively crude, measuring overall usages, visits in person, and visits by school groups. These indicators do not readily measure some of the more subtle work – for example outreach to disadvantaged groups, widening of audiences, providing access to collections off site in innovative ways. There are many areas of work which DCMS promotes which the Audit Commission indicators do not measure.

Warwickshire Museum Service participates in a regional benchmarking scheme, 'Fast Forward', for museums across the West Midlands, which collects and publishes comparative data every 2 years across a range of aspects of service.

Conclusion

The consultation document highlights issues of relevance to museums both nationally and locally, many directly pertinent to the development of the County's own service. Proposed answers to the specific questions raised follow those questions in Appendix 2.

Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life

Executive Summary

Museums are the way we connect our past with our present and our future.

Museums are centres of knowledge, with a clear – and growing – role as educators. They support the creative industries. They act as a powerful engine for regeneration, and are a primary reason why overseas visitors come to this country. Their impact on the economy, and the tangible effect they have on the imagination and spirit of the people who visit them is enormous. Their international reputation for excellence is well justified.

Museums are rightly a source of pride for us all. And for us, the Government, they are something more – a means of helping citizens understand their place in the world and its heritage.

This paper celebrates their achievement, but does not stop there. Its purpose is rather to look at what aspects of England's museums need to be addressed to face the challenges of the 21st century.

The Public Realm

Museums, regardless of how they are funded, are at the heart of what we call 'the public realm'. The public realm is the shared space – and the network of public institutions and practices – over which all citizens have ownership, and which is held in trust by Government in all forms and at all levels. Museums are central to this, because they are part of the wealth we all hold in common.

Museums, Identity and Citizenship

Museums have always satisfied a very human need: to create a permanent record of how people have lived, and what they have achieved, across what we have come to recognize is an interdependent world. Globalization has changed the rate and pace of change, and connects the local to the global. Within this context, museums are spaces where people can explore personal beliefs in amongst universal truths. In short, they can show how events and beliefs from the past shape people's experience of the present, and help create a sense of identity. Because cultural identity in the 21st century is not necessarily defined by national borders.

There is a 'public benefit' too. Public benefit has been a key aspect for museums for more than 300 years but the difference these days, of course, is that the definition of 'citizenship', which is tied to it, has evolved. We are more inclusive, and less elitist, more diverse and less deferential. There is a different balance of rights and responsibilities, and a relationship between Government and the citizen that is – for the first time – governed by clear lines of accountability

Consequently the context in which the public enjoys and makes use of museums – their collections, knowledge and buildings – has altered. Today people have different expectations, preferences and needs. Their cultural identity is perceived as more difficult to define and pin down, they are in large measure more demanding about the experiences they seek.

Museums' relationships with the public are consequently transformed.

So it is timely to look again at some of the other fundamental principles of these institutions, and to see how comfortably they fit within the public realm today. We want to begin a debate about the areas of greatest challenge, and try to pick out ways that Government and the museums sector can respond.

1 Collections and their Uses

Collections are at the heart of all that museums do, but they need to remain dynamic resources. They should, and in many cases do, reflect the vitality, the uniqueness and the diversity of contemporary communities and their lives.

The economic reality of collecting in the 21st century, however, means that ways of collecting must adapt if museums are to maintain this momentum. Collaborations on scholarship and purchasing are becoming more commonplace. This could go further, with more – and more innovative – sharing of collections. In this way, the concept of national collections changes too. The Internet holds the greatest potential here, and museums must look at ways of using its potential to build understanding of collections, cutting across institutional (and national) boundaries.

In this new century, it will be more important than ever for museums to create access to their collections. This may redefine conventional questions of ownership. The debate about ownership of collections is a national and an international one.

2 Learning and Research

Museums can help people to learn at every stage of their lives. Links with schools are already well-established. This can be taken further when parts of collections – and the expertise that goes with them – are taken into schools or, to take this further, into residential homes, hospitals or prisons. The Government sees the continuation, and strengthening, of this trend as a priority for museums.

The success of all this, of course, depends upon a bedrock of high quality research and scholarship in each institution. Unsurprisingly, the picture is not consistent across the sector. But whilst it is for individual institutions to negotiate the balance of learning and research, strengthening research and the promotion of learning must be key elements in partnership working.

The Government wants to work with museums to help bring about a healthy research culture, and to see whether funding and evaluation can be enhanced through closer links with the Higher and Further Education sectors.

3 Careers, Training and Leadership

The success of museums – their collections, scholarship and initiatives to broaden access – depends upon the people working within them at every level, including volunteers. A committed and focused workforce can help make museums vital, open, accessible and exciting places to be.

There are issues surrounding both training and career development in the sector, however. In the same way that the Government wants to see collections and scholarship shared within the museums community, so there should be scope for more staff mobility between institutions, and a greater emphasis on professional development through secondment and internships. Museum staff should also have the benefit of access to bodies able to advise on – and provide – training.

Of concern is the lack of diversity in the sector. If museums are to become – and remain – the ‘vital and open’ places we want, it is essential that currently under-represented groups become fully integrated into the workforce at all levels.

These building blocks – career development, training and diversity – will be essential if the museums world is to stimulate a pool of potential leaders to develop the sector into the 21st century.

4 Coherence and Advocacy

Strong leadership is important. The way the sector has evolved – particularly in terms of its funding and governance – means that it can appear fragmented and disparate. Perhaps museums would prosper more if they found a way to present a more unified front, with a common direction and purpose. The Government would welcome a debate with the sector around whether current structures impede the sector from developing a shared national strategy for themselves and their publics. There could be value in debating whether structures within which museums operate prevent delivery at national, regional or local level, and what options should be considered, including that of a unitary funding council.

This debate could be informed by a fresh look at funding models in other European countries.

For the contributions of the sector to be recognised – socially, economically, politically and culturally – there has to be coherence and cohesion as well as vision.

5 Partnerships and Measuring Value

Much work towards this coherence has already been done, so museums will not be coming to this from a standing start. Museums working together – locally and nationally – are already an important part of our cultural

landscape. Partnerships should continue to be part of the museums landscape in the future.

New partnerships should emerge too. And these should not be confined to institutions within the UK. The enlarged EU provides an opportunity for developing stronger and perhaps more strategic alliances. In the longer term, shared ownership and use of collections could be built up between museums, not just in different countries, but in different continents too.

The final piece in the jigsaw is, in some ways, the hardest to bring about. It is important to acknowledge the intrinsic value of culture. But how do we measure and understand cultural value? There needs to be consensus on what constitutes quality, and what a future evidence base should consist of. It is only by arriving at this that Government – working with those in the sector – can authoritatively measure the impact that is being made and make the case for continuing public investment.

Next steps

Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life is a consultation paper. It is centred around the 13 questions dispersed throughout the paper and summarised again at the back in the Annex.

In the pages that follow, key challenges and opportunities facing England's museums are identified and suggestions made for positive change. These provide a context for the questions.

Government is not the only, or even the main, driver for the changes we will be discussing, and part of the challenge will be to identify and clarify responsibilities between Government, bodies such as the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), governing authorities and the museums themselves.

The responses to this consultation will form the basis of a report containing strategic directions and specific policy intentions. These in turn will feed into a DCMS delivery plan explaining how this Department will work with its sponsored bodies – and wider stakeholders – to tackle the emerging priorities.

Consultation Questions and Draft Responses

General Comment

The document tends to focus on human history, and perhaps art, with less reference to natural history and science collections – thereby perhaps undervaluing the contribution these make to understanding, and caring for, our physical environment.

Issue 1: Collections and their Uses

- Q1: How should museums develop and utilise their collections to serve the concerns and interests of the whole of the population most effectively? Should this include releasing parts of their collections to others, including outside the museum?
- A1: Greater emphasis should be placed on the active role of donors in enriching the collections of museums, both with the objects they offer and with the accompanying information they can provide, which greatly enhances the value of the object. Museums should encourage access to their collections in a variety of places, and be prepared to consider innovative approaches to this, provided that this does not significantly compromise the long-term preservation of the collections themselves – which is an expectation which society has when objects are entrusted to the care of museums.
- Q2. How can the sector ensure that the opportunities offered by ICT, electronic access and digitisation are fully utilised for the benefit of users and to reach out to non-users?
- A2: It is important that projects undertaken to date – for example with New Opportunities Fund grant – are evaluated to see how they are actually used, and that account is taken of that evaluation in developing new projects. Evaluation should include the impact of collaboration. There is also a need to raise understanding within parent organisations that electronic access to museum collections and data is an integral part of addressing e-government objectives.

Issue 2: Learning and Research

- Q3: How can museums strengthen their commitment to education as a core and strategic priority within the overall commitment to collections and users?
- A3: In many cases that commitment is already present. However, this is not well measured by the current suite of national performance measures – and seeking to improve performance on those can divert resources from other worthwhile areas. Indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, which relate more closely to objectives in this area, would encourage stronger performance in local government museums.
- Q4: How can a strong research culture be built and sustained, as well as quality measured across the museums sector? What role should Government play?
- A4: Realism is needed as to the potential for a developed research culture in smaller museums. Opportunities for secondment, with funding for back-filling, could encourage individuals to maintain and pursue personal research

interests.

Q5: How could stronger links be created between the Higher and Further Education sectors and museums?

A5: Funding targeted for collaborative projects would encourage stronger links. Links with Further Education are likely to concentrate on essential skills and visitor services, and those with Higher Education more on Collections Research.

Issue 3: Careers, Training and Leadership

Q6: How can the sector achieve the right balance of pre- and post-entry training to build skills for the range of their workforce?

A6: The demanding entry requirements for curatorial posts tend to reinforce traditional recruitment patterns. A wider choice of training routes, including for example Modern Apprenticeships, would be helpful.

Q7: What initiatives and targets would increase mobility, training and career progression for all types of museum professionals?

A7: Opportunities for secondment, with funding for backfilling, should help. Overall, levels of pay are an issue, as mobility frequently requires relocation, which can be costly. Staff structures need to provide developmental opportunities, but also provide routes for promotion for specialists who are unwilling or unsuited to become generic managers. Secondment opportunities should be available to all staff (not just the curatorial); networks now being established through Renaissance in the Regions may assist with this.

Q8: What must be done to secure a better representation of currently under-represented groups in the museum workforce, and in the sector's governance?

A8: Build on and broaden strengths of existing Positive Action schemes; complement with variety of routes such as Modern Apprenticeships. Also consider and promote the opportunities offered by school age work experience placements.

Issue 4: Coherence and Advocacy

Q9: Would structural changes better support museums and provide effective means of ensuring a national strategy for museums?

A9: It is difficult to comment on the potential benefits of structural change without further detail of the proposals. However, clearer and more relevant national standards and targets might help to channel expectations and focus delivery. Discretionary services provided by local authorities are vulnerable without these.

Q10: How best do we combine more coherent and efficient delivery of museum services with a service that is responsive to the needs of local communities and users?

A10: Museums need a stable environment and funding regime within which to plan and deliver, and to be able to meet expectations which may be raised in the communities with which they work. Local museums need to be able to gain, and sustain, the confidence of their funders and users. There may be scope for closer partnership working between publicly-funded museums in a locality, to improve efficiency.

Issue 5: Partnership and Measuring Value

Q11: How can partnerships within the museums sector and with other sectors be better embedded?

A11: Continuity is essential, as evaluation has demonstrated that partnerships strengthen and become more productive over time. Therefore work should build on Renaissance in the Regions and the Museum Manifesto, and those parts of the sector currently not well represented should be encouraged to make their voice heard. In relation to other sectors, clear shared objectives and desired outcomes also form the foundations for effective partnerships.

Q12: What systems or methods should be used to assess quality and success in the museums sector?

A12: The West Midlands regional benchmarking initiative, Fast Forward, has proved very useful and could be strengthened and extended. Other standards – such as Accreditation, and BVPIs- need to be developed as more sophisticated measures, and to link more closely to aspirations for the sector. Until this happens, it is inevitable that resources will be directed to measured targets.

Q13: What would need to happen to make international strategic alliances possible between museums?

A13: Pump-priming funding would be needed – as would recognition that setting up such alliances would impact on day-to-day service delivery. The benefits to those funding each service would need to be demonstrable.

Museum Service - Progress against Best Value Outcomes

1. The Warwickshire Museum Service Strategy was the subject of a Best Value Review in 2002 from which emerged a framework for its future development based on four inter-linked strands:
 - Localised service delivery through a network of partners
 - Development of a 'virtual' network of service provision
 - A clear focus on learning.
 - Refocused central services and resources
2. **Network of Partners.** Localised service delivery involves both working with individual partners and building and developing networks of smaller museums and heritage bodies.
 - 2.1 At present, significant **work with individual partners** includes:
 - support to **Roman Alcester** (a partnership between the County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the Alcester Heritage Trust). **Roman Alcester** houses and displays the Museum Service's major collection of locally excavated artefacts. It has recently achieved full Museum Registration, which is the national quality mark for museums, and received over 5,500 visitors in its first year of operation.
 - **George Eliot Hospital NHS Museum, Nuneaton.** This Museum, which has enormous potential but very low staffing levels, focuses on using its collections to promote awareness and understanding of broader health issues and the National Curriculum Science units on Health and Growth and Keeping Healthy. The Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee has recently provided funding for a feasibility study for the future of the Museum, and WCC staff are working closely with GENHS staff on this.
 - **Chedham's Yard, Wellesbourne.** Museum staff are working with the parish council and others to assess the long term economic and social future of this exceptionally well preserved wheelwrights workshop, which may have potential as a rural tourism/heritage visitor attraction.
 - 2.2 **Developing the Partnership Network:** Funding from the Government's 'Renaissance in the Regions' initiative, and from MLA-WM (Museums, Libraries and Archives West Midlands) has enabled the appointment of a temporary part-time Community Museums Officer, Glynis Powell, from 2004-2006, to develop networks and support for the many smaller independent and voluntary museum and heritage groups in the County. The regional programme in which Warwickshire is a partner provides a range of specialist services, advice and training to improve the standards of collections care and visitor services. A County-wide network is to be launched at an inaugural meeting in June.

3. **Electronic service provision**

An increasing level of information and service from the Museum is available over the internet, both through the WCC web pages and through additional projects, including:

- **Timetrail:** the web-enabled Sites and Monuments Record, (www.warwickshire.gov.uk/timetrail) is now receiving approximately 1500 visits per month. Users range from academic researchers to general interest enquiries. It was established with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- **Windows on Warwickshire:** (www.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk) In addition to resources from the County Council's Museum and Archive services, this partnership project provides electronic access to material from Compton Verney, Warwick Castle, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery. Material on the site is currently achieving over 20,000 views per month. It was established with the support of the New Opportunities Fund.
- **Rich or Poor in Tudor Times:** a web based learning package for Key Stage 2. External evaluation has shown the learning outcomes for pupils include: fulfilment and satisfaction from achievement; increased self-confidence and self-esteem, increased cultural understanding and respect and tolerance of others.

4. **Clear Focus on Learning**

Learning is an integral part of all these initiatives. Formal learning provision with National Curriculum linked projects is offered at our sites in Warwick (Market Hall and St John's) and at Alcester and GENHS Nuneaton, and through web based e-learning modules. Assisted by regional funding, new education modules which take objects and images out to deliver sessions in schools, are being developed and trialled – the first two are a Toys and Games module for Key Stage 1 children and an Egyptians module for Key Stage 2. The potential of virtual life long learning is also being realised through the Timetrail, Windows on Warwickshire and Alcester catalogue web sites. The regular 'What's On' programme offers opportunities for lifelong learning to community groups of all ages across the County using library and other heritage and cultural premises.

5. **Refocused Central Services and Resources**

5.1 **Core Systems**

In order to extend the capacity for service provision of all sorts, preparatory work has been undertaken for a computerised Collections Management System for the Museum. Such a system would enable easy access for learning and general interest to the wealth of information held on the over 250,000 items,

from all over the County, held in the collections. Presently, records are held on a mixture of paper and stand-alone electronic databases: a computerised collections management system is an essential foundation for improving the way in which we manage and use our collections for the benefit of all. Continuation of this project is dependent upon securing additional funding from the WCC e-govt budget or other sources.

5.2 Premises

A key review outcome was to consolidate central services on to fewer sites in Warwick. The Museum now occupies all or part of 4 buildings in Warwick (the lease on the Doll Museum, which closed in 2004, having been surrendered). These are Market Hall and St Johns, which provide public facilities and some staff accommodation, The Butts, which provides offices, Collections Care and Storage and staff working areas, and Montague Road, which provides further Collections Care and Storage space. The future of both The Butts and Montague Road are under discussion as part of the corporate overview of property.

Significant parts of both Market Hall and St Johns House are not fully accessible. Many of the displays are now ageing and in urgent need of refurbishment and replacement. Staff have been working with architects Stanton Williams to develop radical and exciting proposals for a new future for Market Hall and St John's (and thereby for the service as a whole). Early thinking on this was presented by the architects at a Members Seminar held on 2nd December 2004.

In order to move to the next stage, significant detailed and technical work is needed, and this is the subject of a current capital bid (Strategic Redevelopment of Museums Sites), to be discussed at Corporate Capital Group on 20th June. If successful this will enable the production of properly researched and worked up proposals, an essential preliminary to be used to lever in external funding.

NOEL HUNTER
Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards

Shire Hall
Warwick

20 May 2005