

## PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

**Subject:** History Centre and University Technical College  
**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 29 November 2011  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Bowyer, Councillor Sam Leaves, and Councillor Jordan,  
**CMT Member:** Director for Corporate Support  
**Author:** Tony Hopwood, Programmes Director  
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**Ref:**  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Part:** I

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### Executive Summary:

Given the transfer of the Royal William Yard estate to Plymouth City Council as part of the transfer of assets from the South West Regional Development Agency it was deemed prudent to consider the most appropriate use of the vacant buildings within the yard.

Given the historical context of the yard and the heritage value associated with the buildings the opportunity to relocate the History Centre from its previously proposed location as part of the second phase of the Accommodation Strategy at the vacant Parkside Community College site is being developed.

The Factory Cooperage building in the Royal William Yard lends itself particularly well for development as a History Centre with space available for other uses including possible artists' studios, display space, and a number of other complimentary uses.

To make better use of Council resources the Schools Library Service and Library can be re-located to the Skills Centre at Camels Head. This building is presently leased to City College Plymouth however they are in the process of vacating the building such that it can be used for this purpose.

This change of direction requires a change to the decision made previously by Council.

Above the benefits that this change will bring to the History Centre scheme and other cultural and artistic partners in the city there are added benefits with respect to greater patronage within the Royal William Yard.

A further and wider reaching benefit facilitated by this change is the freeing up of the former Parkside Community College site for its use as a University Technical College (UTC).

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### Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014:

This programme aligns with and supports the following Corporate Priorities:

- **Deliver growth:** The delivery of a cultural facility such as the History Centre at the Royal William Yard will significantly assist in the development of the Yard and the resultant creation of jobs and opportunities for business in the city.

- **Raise aspirations:** Promote Plymouth and encourage people to aim higher and take pride in the city and its heritage
  - **Provide value for communities:** The scheme will lever investment in the arts and cultural sector in the city whilst providing cost effective protection of the historical collections housed within the city as an attractor to the tourism market.
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### **Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land**

The costs for the History Centre scheme at the Royal William Yard are being developed. Engagement with partners will enable significant funding to be secured from funding agencies that should enable the scheme's delivery.

The £2m council funding presently allocated to the scheme as part of the Accommodation Strategy Phase 2 will to need remain allocated to the History Centre scheme and be required to match fund other grant streams.

There will be a budget pressure of £28.5k per annum in relation to the loss of rental income at Camels Head that will need to be addressed.

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### **Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:**

The relocation of the Plymouth and West Devon Records Office and South West Film & Television Archive will ensure both their physical protection and mitigate the risk of them being relocated out of the city.

Relocation of the Schools Library Service to modern facilities at Camels Head will facilitate the service vacating its existing accommodation which is in a poor condition with significant outstanding maintenance and health & safety liabilities.

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### **Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

Council is recommended to amend the second phase of the Accommodation Strategy Phase 2 to:

- (1) approve the development of proposals to locate the History Centre at the Factory Cooperage building within the Royal William Yard. This requires that the £2m funding presently allocated to the History Centre scheme remains allocated to the scheme in its new location, and
  - (2) approve the use of Parkside Community College as a University Technical College (UTC)
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### **Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

To continue with the Parkside Community College site would, whilst still delivering a History Centre, mean losing the opportunity to develop a more expansive cultural hub in a building with a much greater historical context and with the engagement of partners in the city.

Continuing with the Parkside site would also negate the opportunity to host a University Technical College in the city.

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**Background papers:**

None

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**Sign off:**

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Originating SMT Member Tony Hopwood											