

Museum Facilities Working Group

Ros Allwood, 30 July 2009



North Herts District Council

www.north-herts.gov.uk



Tonight's meeting

- Background to the Feasibility Study
- What we asked for from the consultants
- Introduction to the chosen firm
- Discussion on the Terms of Reference
- Any other business

Feasibility Study Background

- In April 2009 Cragg Management produced an initial study looking at whether there was any possibility that Hitchin Town Hall could be used as a museum
- Following the Cragg Report, Cabinet decided that NHDC should go ahead with a more detailed Feasibility Study
- The Directors of the major museum services in the East of England Regional Hub were asked for recommendations for consultants. The County Museum Development Officer was also asked, as was the manager of Bedford Museums
- Four specialist firms were approached, and all visited Hitchin

Feasibility Study Brief

The chosen firms were asked to consider the following:

- Structural feasibility. We would hope to retain and enhance much of the original fabric of the existing building.
- Space utilisation, efficiency and functionality, including the suitability of the former Town Hall as a site for display and possible storage of museum collections, with suggested layout options.
- Consideration of how to maximise existing (or alternative) uses of the Town Hall.
- Environmental performance and sustainability, including specialist advice on museum-specific environments.
- Scheme costs, inclusive of fitting out, ICT infrastructure and professional fee costs, plus on-going revenue costs.



Feasibility Study Brief cont.

- Advice on application to the HLF for grant-aid towards the museum fit-out element of the project.
- Construction phase health and safety implications.
- Project completion timescale from commencement of scheme design to practical completion (RIBA Work Plan stages B to K inclusive).
- Local planning issues. Hitchin Town Hall is not a Listed building, but is an important building in a town centre Conservation Area.

Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams



Stockwood Park, Luton





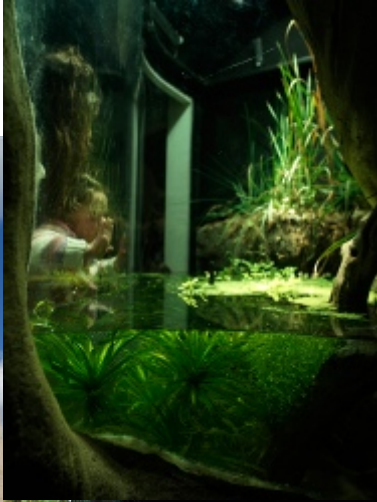
Rotunda Museum Scarborough



Clitheroe Castle



Horniman Aquarium



Government	Percentage
Current government	85%
Previous government	15%

Terms of Reference

(Draft for discussion)

Project Aims:

- To establish a high quality, fit for purpose, district museum for North Hertfordshire, which will generate increased usage.
- To provide a museum that can accommodate displays of the important heritage of the area, accessible to all including school parties, and that can function more widely as a community facility.
- To ensure the plans for the museum are affordable both in terms of the capital available and the on-going operating costs.
- That plans are in place to allow savings from the closure of Letchworth Museum to be realised, in line with the agreed timescale of March 2011.

Terms of Reference cont.

Group Role:

- To inform the development of the feasibility study for a district museum.
- To assist with community consultation and communication.
- To provide advice and direction in the development of proposals for relative priorities for the available space.
- To optimise links with all interested partners (e.g. local societies; LGCHF; Baldock Museum, Royston Museum, Hitchin British Schools, Ashwell Museum) to ensure maximum community benefit
- To ensure the project team is aware of any best practice ideas and learning which can help add value to the plans for this facility.

A word cloud featuring various terms related to community, culture, and education. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape and include:

- Fun
- Culture
- Children
- Museum
- Pottery
- Shop
- Apothecary
- Research
- Exhibition
- Archaeology
- Community
- Cafe
- Agriculture
- Paintings
- Yeomanry
- Markets
- Textiles
- Families
- Archive
- Costume
- Library
- Event
- Video
- Gallery
- Glass
- Schools
- History
- Nature
- Loos
- Education
- Craft



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Next meeting

Thursday 6 August
7pm, Hitchin Town Hall

Thank you

