

## EXECUTIVE – 11 JUNE 2002

## FUTURE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR MUSEUMS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Report by Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Cultural Services  
and Director of Environmental Services**

### Introduction

1. In 1998 the Oxfordshire Forum agreed to set up two joint advisory sub-committees to consider and make recommendations to the constituent councils on museums and waste management issues of common interest. Although the Oxfordshire Forum has not been formally wound up, it has for all practical purposes ceased to operate, having been superseded by regular meetings of Leaders of the respective authorities. This report considers the future status of the existing advisory bodies in the absence of their former parent body.

### Museums

2. The Museums Joint Advisory Sub-Committee was created by the Forum in June 1998, on the recommendation of an informal member/officer working group of the six Oxfordshire authorities set up in the context of a major restructuring of the county's museum services. The working group had identified a need for a forum to consider and advise the local authorities on overall strategic issues affecting museums services for the County as a whole, to prevent those services becoming "isolated, fragmented and less effective". The working group also recommended that such a body should take on board the "heritage issues" covered by the former Oxfordshire Heritage Forum.
3. The Sub-Committee was accordingly set up with the following terms of reference:
 

*"to promote and co-ordinate museum services and heritage issues on a countywide basis and to advise the County and District Councils on a countywide heritage and museums and heritage strategy, making representations directly to those Councils where appropriate"* and in particular to:

  - *"advise on policies for the museums collections, outreach, public services etc;*
  - *make recommendations upon and advise on annual service plans;*
  - *consider any proposed museum or heritage developments or schemes and provide advice and recommendations directly to the County and District Councils."*
4. The composition of the Sub-Committee is 3 members of the County Council and one from each district council, together with a representatives of other museum providers: the Oxfordshire Museums Council, Abingdon Town Council, Vale and Downland Museum Trust and the Friends of Archive Museums and Oxfordshire Studies. The South Eastern Museums Service and the Museums and Galleries Commission are also invited to send representatives. The County Council has traditionally been represented by nominees of the three political groups on the former Cultural Services Committee - latterly, Councillors Margaret Ferriman and Jim Moley and the late Councillor Norman Matthews.
5. The Joint Advisory Sub-Committee has considered its future status. It has decided that its preference would be for the flexibility afforded by the informal member/officer working group format, retaining the same membership as hitherto, but with the papers sent to the relevant members of the executives of the respective authorities. In line with other similar working groups (both inter-authority as well as internal) whose remit relates to functions of the Executive, it would be for the Executive itself to confirm the creation of this working group and to appoint members to it.

## Waste Management

6. The Waste Management Joint Advisory Sub-Committee was created as a result of the Oxfordshire Forum considering options for minimising and recycling waste and ways in which these issues could be best managed financially and environmentally. The Sub-Committee, comprising 3 representatives of the County Council and one from each district council, came into being in December 1998, with the following terms of reference:
- "to examine the issues of determining the amount of waste collected for recycling and disposal with the objective of making recommendations to achieve more sustainable waste management for Oxfordshire"* and in particular to:
- *"try to ensure that priority is given to waste minimisation in any advice or recommendation associated with waste management;*
  - *recommend co-ordinated strategies, policies and joint initiatives for waste management;*
  - *consider ways of co-ordinating contracting arrangements for collection, recycling/recovery and disposal;*
  - *advise on ways to encourage the private-sector to offer comprehensive and integrated services and broaden the opportunity for competition and best value.*
7. Since 1998 the Sub-Committee has met about 3 times each year and has proved an invaluable medium for co-ordinating the Oxfordshire authorities' approach on a number of major issues, including drawing up the memorandum of understanding on waste management signed by all six authorities in 2000, the waste management best value review and the household waste management strategy for Oxfordshire, as well as a variety of more specific initiatives.
8. Although Sub-Committee has not formally debated its future status, members have indicated that their preference would be for conversion to a full joint advisory committee of the six authorities, reflecting the importance of this area of service at both county and district level. Assuming there is no change in its composition, this need make little practical difference to the workings of the present Sub-Committee, which already meets in public and fully complies with access to information requirements. However, the creation of a full joint advisory committee, and appointments to it, will need to be dealt with the full Council of each constituent council.
9. Political proportionality would not be mandatory, although the existing Sub-Committee has always been treated as if it did apply. The County Council has traditionally been represented on the Sub-Committee by nominees of the three political groups on the former Environmental Committee - latterly, Councillors Mrs C. Fulljames, Terry Joslin and Anne Purse.

## RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Executive is RECOMMENDED, subject in each case to the concurrence of the respective district councils, to:**
- (a) **agree the setting up of a Joint Museums Group, as a joint informal member/officer working group constituted on the same basis as the present Museums Joint Advisory Sub-Committee together with appropriate officers from each authority and with the same terms of reference, and appoint three county councillors to serve on the Group;**
  - (b) **RECOMMEND Council to agree the setting up of a Waste Management Joint Advisory Committee constituted on the same basis as the present Waste Management Joint Advisory Sub-Committee and with the same terms of reference, and appoint three county councillors to serve on the Committee.**

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Background papers: Nil  
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