

Appendix A: Detailed Summary of Options

1. OPTION 1: Remain at Ruthin Gaol

- 1.1. The space is now full, and this would necessitate finding and funding alternative storage locations for new material. Given the need to house the material in an area with appropriate climate control, the lowest cost option would be to send all new material to a specialist commercial storage facility. This would initially cost circa £3k per annum initially but increasing as new deposits are received. Alternatively, the Council could adapt part of its existing building stock to house new material, this could easily cost in excess of £1m given the specialist nature of the equipment etc.
- 1.2. Splitting up the archive collection would make it more difficult to access, and more costly in terms of staff time to manage.
- 1.3. The current environmental management system and gas fire suppression systems (necessary to maintain air quality and to protect the materials) in the Gaol is in desperate need of being replaced, as do about 60% of the data loggers, (which are needed to record temperature and humidity levels in each cell), at an approximate total cost of £1.13million.
- 1.4. Inefficient layout, as the Archive Service uses 64 cells spread over 3 floors. They all need to be managed to ensure that they meet stringent archival standards. In addition, a significant amount of staff time is spent on retrieving and returning documents, creating a very inefficient service.
- 1.5. Ruthin Gaol is prone to flooding: the last incident occurred in January 2021, and took 2.5 years and cost £400k to make the building fully operational again.
- 1.6. In summary, even with the necessary £1.13 million investment the building is inadequate, as the location, size, layout and construction of the building are such, that it will remain unsuitable and fit for purpose. The grade II* listing prohibits any significant change to the fabric of the building, and as such the performance and life expectancy of any replacement mechanical and/or electrical systems installed will be limited. The need to find alternative storage solutions due to the

building being at capacity and the flood risk remain as significant issues, as does the risk to the accreditation status.

2. OPTION 2: Single Archives Building Option (the Preferred Option)

- 2.1. The proposed new archive centre allows NEWA to combine its resources from across its 2 sites, bringing together 13 staff and over 900 years of archives. Having just one building to manage and operate from provides the platform for a 'hub and spoke' delivery model. Resources can be released to deliver outreach work out in local communities, working with partners such as libraries, care homes, schools and community groups (see Appendix F), for outline activity ideas).
- 2.2. The proposed scheme totals £12,520,896 and includes an archive centre on the Theatr Clwyd campus. It is proposed that DCC and FCC submit a joint funding bid to the NLHF Wales, seeking a capital grant value of £7m. FCC match fund contribution would be £3,078,538M, with DCC's match contribution being £2,052,358 (at an annual PB cost of circa £138k pa for 25 years).
- 2.3. The site plan and concept designs are within Appendix G.
- 2.4. The proposed site in Mold has been determined through an independent site options appraisal of vacant sites within Denbighshire and Flintshire, which confirmed that the site adjacent to Theatr Clwyd was the most favourable. Given the most recent review this year of available DCC sites, there is confidence that the site in Mold remains the best option in terms of cost, sustaining accreditation status, protecting Denbighshire's documentary heritage for the long term, providing service resilience and attracting external funding from the NLHF.
- 2.5. The proposed site represents the best chance to attract investment from NLHF, given the opportunities it provides for involving a wider range of people in heritage, using archives as a source material for creative arts and developing wider engagement activities.

- 2.6. DCC's Heritage Service continues to express the ambition to expand their attraction offer at Ruthin Gaol (see Appendix H). This could be scaled up in line with investment available but extra funding is not necessary in the first instance.
- 2.7. There is a longstanding commitment to retain an Archives presence in Ruthin: it is expected that this will be fulfilled by having an Archivist on site one day each week to handle public requests and queries. Furthermore, there will be opportunities for Archives to enhance public events hosted by the Heritage service.
- 2.8. The main risks are potentially increased construction costs, the need to find alternative storage for new material until the new building is complete and additional costs should the environmental management system and gas fire suppression systems at the Gaol fail before the new build is complete, although these risks are common for all options as they reflect the current position.

3. OPTION 3: Two Alternative Buildings Option

- 3.1. If the NEWA service is to be delivered across two sites, then there are still two buildings to maintain with additional costs over time compared to Option 2. In addition, to manage and staff 2 sites is less efficient and will result in limited capacity to develop any community outreach programmes. This will severely impact the likelihood of attracting external funding.
- 3.2. Nevertheless, concerns have been expressed about the proposal to invest in a new building in Flintshire while Council-owned buildings in Denbighshire are underutilised. A feasibility study has therefore looked at available sites and buildings in Denbighshire to store Denbighshire-only archives, included new build options and refurbishment of existing assets (attached at Appendix I). The minimum build costs (not full project costs) are identified as £5.9m for the cheapest option.
- 3.3. We could apply for funding for these options, but the chances of success are reduced compared to the more significant advantages of the joint DCC/FCC project. In any event our match funding requirements for these projects would not be significantly less than the £2m required for the joint project.

4. OPTION 4: Ruthin Gaol, collections in commercial storage

- 3.4. DCC's archive service would retain the search room, a secure and environmentally controlled document handling area and staff facilities in Ruthin Gaol, but the entire collection would be stored off site in commercial storage. Documents from the archive collection would need to be pre-ordered with the archive service, and would be retrieved from commercial storage. The estimated cost to store the entire collection off site is currently circa £98k per annum and the anticipated costs to retrieve and return items is circa £25k per annum. These costs will increase each year as extra items are deposited and annual increases to charges from the commercial provider are applied. Future private deposits may not be accepted and could be lost to future generations.
- 3.5. In addition to the cost to store the collection off site there would be a one-off cost of circa £50k to move the collection to storage, preceded by a period of closure of at least 12-18 months to catalogue and repackage the collection in readiness for the move.

