



HTF Local Authority Skills Summit

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Manager

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Chichester District



- Chichester District covers an area of almost 800 km² and is the largest of the seven districts and boroughs within West Sussex
- South Downs National Park cover about 70% of the District
- In the south is the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment



Outside the National Park the historic environment comprises:-

- Over 2,000 Statutory Listed Buildings
- 23 Conservation Areas, plus 2 shared with the NP
- 46 Scheduled Monuments
- 2 Historic Parks
- Over 70 Locally Listed Buildings, within Chichester City

In addition

- Currently around 900 buildings identified as positive through the Conservation Area process
- We have so far identified over 32 undesignated heritage assets through the planning process



Historic Environment Service



Team of specialists advising on Historic Environment and Design. We are also responsible for monitoring of S106 agreements

Personnel

- 2 Full-Time Historic Building Specialists
- Archaeologist, providing archaeological Advice and also manages the District Historic Environment Record (HER)
- S106 Monitoring Officer
- Manager who is also the Districts Design/Urban Design Officer

Areas of Work



- Statutory Planning – advice on Planning applications/Listed Building Consents
- Input to Policy development
- Reviewing Conservation Areas, implementing Article 4s
- Maintaining the HER
- Maintaining and reviewing local Heritage at Risk Register
- Development of the Local List
- Heritage Crime
- Management advice – scheduled monuments/archaeological sites as well as built heritage



Historic Environment: Local Authority Capacity
(HELAC)

Chichester West Sussex Councils Project

HELAC



- English Heritage funded research
- Provided funding for a independent facilitator
- Project involved all Districts/Boroughs of West Sussex (Adur and Worthing, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid-Sussex), The South Downs National Park Authority, West Sussex County Council and English Heritage



Project Objective



"Identification of a preferred option for delivery of viable, robust, integrated, flexible, consistent Heritage & Design/Urban design services within current and future funding sources"



Service areas covered



- Historic Environment advice including archaeology
- Conservation Area Character Appraisals
- Historic Environment Record (HER) coverage
- Design/Urban Design advice
- Assisting community lead/ neighbourhood plans and village design statements
- Community engagement (SDNP)



Methodology



1. Review existing resources
2. Assessment of service demands
3. Analysis of each authorities political objectives and expectations
4. Comparison of these objectives with other areas/authorities experiences

Historic Environment: Local Authority Capacity (HELAC)
CHICHESTER (WEST SUSSEX COUNCIL) PROJECT



FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2011

Existing Historic Environment Resource



- 7512 Listed Buildings (176 Grade I, 298 Grade II* and 7,039 Grade II)
- 345 scheduled monuments
- 232 Conservation Areas (165 in South Downs National Park)

September 2011 Skills Resource Situation



- 3 Archaeologists (2 at West Sussex County Council and 1 Chichester District Council)
- 2 HER posts (1 each at West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council)
- 3.1 FTE Specialist HB/Conservation Officers (+ 2 SDNP)
- 3.7 Urban design/Design Officers (Most covering Historic Environment as well)
- English Heritage 4 staff allocated to West Sussex

Workload Pressure



Each year

- 10.3% Listed Buildings generate a LBC applications = 800 LBC applications.
- Over 600 Historic Environment pre-application enquiries each year
- 131 English Heritage notifications

National average is 7.3%. Therefore nearly 50% more applications per Listed Building in W Sussex.

In addition 4 Districts/Boroughs recorded 122 pre-application design advice cases

Issues



- LBC rates per specialist officer appeared high if full range of proactive conservation work and pre application engagement is also required
- NPPF requires positive strategies for conservation of Historic Environment. English Heritage objecting to policies that do not include commitment to proactive conservation

Key Findings



- Historic Building Advice: No real scope for savings.
- HER: there is some potential for saving by combining Chichester and WSCC HERs
- Design is under-resourced in relation to likely major sites/Urban Extensions requirements
- West Sussex is a wealthy area, which results in pressures on historic environment with higher than average level of applications/listed building.
- One authority with 10% of Listed Buildings in West Sussex would have no in-house specialist advice.

Other Authorities Experiences



- New Unitaries - Northumberland and Wiltshire had sought economies of scale and cut conservation staff.
- In Wiltshire staff handle 170-220 LBC applications/officer/year
- BEAMS Ltd the Hertfordshire Built Environment Advisory and Management Service handle approximately 100 applications/associate/year
- Essex County Council were establishing a Local Authority owned Trading Company

1st Workshop



Considered a mixture of:-

- Individual authorities sharing provision in house
- Shared services in house
- Host authority providing service and recharging
- Core staff topped up by consultant expertise bought for individual cases or workload peaks.
- Outsourced services - Mutualised/"Right to provide" approach with existing staff taking the initiative
- Outsourced services privately provided

Local Issues identified



- Local knowledge and access to advice
- Possibly different approaches required for archaeology/ HER and HE/Design
- Local political priorities – outsourcing at a time of people making redundancies
- The cost of a shared service compared with buying in services
- Community Engagement, important for the National Park

Emerging Options



Following the initial workshop and input from Heads of Service 3 stand alone options prepared, plus an additional shorter term-arrangement (Option 4).

1. A host authority providing the shared service.
2. A wholly owned Local Authority trading company.
3. A joint venture commercial partner outsourcing.
4. The formation of less formal conservation alliances.

1. Host authority and re charging



- Service Level Agreement in advance
- Flexibility – for users
- Potential to utilise any spare capacity/resource optimisation
- Cover better with larger area.

However:-

- No control of overheads + on costs
- More familiar for staff but no obvious candidate host
- Management costs + expertise?

2. Wholly owned trading company



- Approach adopted by Essex
- Could be LA owned or staff mutual
- Ability to market service
- Greater flexibility to take on non LA work
- Could start with secondments or transfers under TUPE
- Requires longer term SLAs (3 years+?)
- Longer set up and funding timescales than Option 1

3. Joint Venture Outsourcing



- Transfers in existing staff on existing conditions and TUPE
- Creates commercial approach
- Greater freedom to introduce better IT and business systems
- Better cost control likely and profit/savings to LAs
- Greater flexibility to take on non LA work - Longer contracts
- Resilience, maximising capacity and control over overheads,
- Greater job opportunities on non LA work
- Potential conflicts if other work becomes mainstream

2nd Workshop Outcomes



- The Outsourcing/Joint Venture option likely to be too radical in the immediate short-term.
- Rather than looking at options as alternatives it was agreed to look at them as a process.
- More information will be required on set up costs, hidden costs and TUPE
- Some concern at costs for limited gain some see historic environment as an element of a larger (planning) service

However



- It was recognised that conservation skills are marketable
- Need to recognise that in the context of local authority work Historic Environment is a relatively low priority.
- Importance of the value attached to the Historic Environment politically and by communities was recognised.
- There was a desire to maximise the use of Historic Environment resources as efficiently as possible and to find a more resilient structure for Historic Environment and design services

Short-Term Preferred Option (4)



- Given specific resourcing issues Chichester should assist Arun with recharged LB advice
- Chichester assist Adur/Worthing with recharged CACA or urban design advice
- Early discussions should begin between EH, WSCC and CDC re HER maintenance
- Horsham, Crawley and Mid Sussex start to form a LB advice alliance to give greater resilience in the short term

What happened next



- A Service level Agreement has been entered into between Chichester and Arun to provide a Historic Building Officer 1 day a week
- Chichester has used income from this agreement to appoint a part-time Historic Building Assistant
- Discussions were entered into between EH, WSCC and CDC regarding merging of County and Chichester District HERS. However stalled due to TUPE issues in relation to existing staff.
- Chichester have implemented a charging scheme for Historic Environment Advice which has extended the part-time assistant HB Assistant post to full-time

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS