

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Director of Hampshire 2050
Date:	31 March 2025
Title:	Cultural venue withdrawal and asset disposal (Ashcroft Arts Centre and Eastleigh Museum)
Report From:	Assistant Director Regeneration and Growth (Culture, Communities and Strategic Assets)

Contact name: Emma Noyce

Email: Emma.noyce@hants.gov.uk

The decision:

1.1 That the Director of Hampshire 2050 agrees to the proposal of Hampshire Cultural Trust (the Trust) in relation to the future of Ashcroft Arts Centre's assets and Eastleigh Museum collection and other non-museum objects that were loaned or transferred to the Trust in 2014 as outlined in the exempt Decision Report.

1.2 That the Director of Hampshire 2050, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the freehold disposal of the Ashcroft Arts Centre.

1.3 The future of Eastleigh Museum will be subject to further review of alternative use for other County Council services. If, following the completion of this review, no further county council use is identified, that the Director of Hampshire 2050, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the freehold disposal of Eastleigh Museum.

Reason(s) for the decision:

2.1 The proposal submitted by the Trust to Hampshire County Council (the County Council) in relation to the future of Ashcroft Arts Centre's assets and Eastleigh Museum collection and other non-museum objects addresses all matters required by the County Council under the Management and Funding Agreement and Collection Loan Agreement. Furthermore, the proposal has no financial implications for the County Council.

2.2 Ashcroft Arts Centre is surplus to the County Council's requirements and would be costly to maintain. A freehold sale is financially beneficial for the County Council and limits the County Council's future liabilities with regards to this asset.

2.3 Further work is required to understand potential future use of Eastleigh Museum.

Other options considered and rejected:

3.1 The Trust has considered several options in relation to the future of the museum collection, as outlined in the exempt Decision Report. The option to remove the collection to central store and manage as a reserve collection is the most suitable in terms of benefits and risks.

3.2 In relation to Ashcroft Arts Centre, disposal options were identified and evaluated. These included (i) retain and reuse the assets for the County Council's service delivery, this option was rejected on the basis that there is no County Council requirement that aligns with the constraints and limitations of the assets, and (ii) lease the properties; this option was rejected on the basis that it is not financially viable as the investment required to make them attractive to the market would outweigh the potential income.

3.3 Options for the future use of Eastleigh Museum are still under consideration.

Conflicts of interest:

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None.

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: None.

Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.

Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

Statement from the Decision Maker: none.

Approved by:

Date:

31 March 2025

**Gary Westbrook
Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Hampshire 2050**