

Council meeting 1 & 2 February 2005

OPEN BUSINESS

## Accommodating the new Council

### **Purpose**

To agree in principle a way forward with accommodating the new Council

### **Recommendation**

Council is asked

- i) to agree in principle the approach outlined below and
- ii) that plans be drawn up for presentation to the special Council meeting in May for consideration.

### **1. Background**

With the sealing of the new Charter on 7 December 2004 the Society's new Council will come into office on 25 May 2005.

The new Council comprises 30 members. The current Council Chamber, which was designed specifically to accommodate the Council as constituted under the 1954 Charter, is not of an adequate size for meetings of the new Council. The furniture is purpose built and fixed in position with 26 seats and a small table for the shorthand writer. It is not possible to have a suitable space for the new Council to meet without changing at least the furniture.

Along with the Council Chamber, the committee rooms, the first floor foyer area and the Hall are used by all of the Society's committees and working groups. The Statutory Committee is the major user of the Council Chamber and the committee rooms. The rooms and hall are from time to time let out to other organisations and thus bring in a small amount of income. There is great pressure on all of the Society's meeting facilities as demand consistently exceeds supply. Future development of supporting structures for the new Council will inevitably add to this pressure.

Since the refurbishment of the Hall and the first floor meeting suite there has been a revolution in the nature and quality of supporting facilities for meeting spaces. In considering the space in which the new Council will meet it will be essential to incorporate modern, up to date audio-visual, sound and recording facilities as well as providing a suitably comfortable environment which also projects an appropriate sense of authority for the deliberations of the Council and the Statutory Committee

The Society now has the opportunity to review the provision of meeting space and consider the development of a, flexible and modern facility to underpin the operation of the Council, its supporting structures and enhance the Society's public image..

### **2. Options**

- 2.1 The option of least change is to gut the existing Council Chamber, redecorate it and furnish it with appropriate modular furniture. It may be possible to include some enhanced audio-visual facilities.

2.2 The second option is to redevelop the first floor meeting suite, which will require some structural changes to incorporate part of the existing committee rooms and foyer into a slightly larger Council Chamber. This will lead to a reduction of meeting space available in the building.

2.3 The third option is to consider redevelopment of the Hall and the first floor meeting suite into an integrated, flexible and modern conference facility.

### **3. Conclusions**

It is not possible to accommodate the new Council in the present Council Chamber. In addressing this there are several approaches which can be taken. This paper seeks approval in principle to undertake initial work to draw up detailed proposals for above options.

### **4. Risk Implications**

The risk in exploring the proposed options is minimal. In not addressing this issue now there is a substantial risk that the new Council could find itself in the position of being able to carry out its functions and procedures without a rearranged or new Council Chamber.

### **5. Resource Implications**

A modest expenditure will be needed to commission an architect to draw up initial plans. Ultimately the level of resources required will depend on the which route to pursue. In the short term Council may have to meet after June in outside accommodation which will require funding.

### **6. Recommendation**

Council is asked

- i) to agree in principle the approach outlined above, and
- ii) that plans be drawn up for presentation to the special Council meeting in May for consideration.

Bernard Kelly  
Director, Finance & Resources