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Role of the National Advisory Services at TNA

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NCA seminar 24/06/2005



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Who are we?

The National Advisory Services bring together the former Historical Manuscripts Commission advisory, regional and inspection teams and the former Public Record Office archive inspection unit



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For those planning new or refurbished archival buildings we can

- Discuss your archival strategy and how new accommodation or partnerships can help to deliver it
- Discuss the options for sites and types of buildings e.g. with air conditioning/passive controls



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Why do we do this?

- We may need to inspect and approve the new or refurbished repository
- We have a wider mission to improve the archival health of the nation and to advise custodians and external funding bodies accordingly
- We have recognised knowledge and expertise in this area



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How can we serve all interests impartially?

- We are generally best placed to advise applicants on meeting national standards through our advisory, standard-setting and inspection role
- This role also enables us to advise grant awarding bodies as to whether building schemes are sound, are likely to meet standards and offer value for money



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- We do not wish to exclude applicants to HLF or other bodies from the same advice that all seeking our advice are entitled to
- But we cannot coach them and will only comment on their plans from the point of view of meeting archival standards
- Grant-awarding bodies know that we will fairly point out the strengths and weaknesses of any scheme in advising them



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What criteria do we use?

- General considerations
- Site
- Functions to be accommodated
- Standards
- Materials and structure
- Use of space
- Access



Other issues

- Does a scheme deserve priority because it delivers wider national, regional or other specific strategies?
- Does it offer value for money?
- Is it (or the organisation running it) viable and sustainable in the longer term?
- If the project has drawbacks or flaws, can it be altered or resubmitted to overcome these?



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