
JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 6 May 2004 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors D Budd (MBC), A Cunningham (SBC), R Payne (HBC) and D Fitzpatrick (R&CBC).

****PRESENT AS OBSERVER:**

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives)

OFFICIALS

D Tyrell (Teesside Archive Service), C Barnes (R&CBC), S Atkinson (HBC), S Anderson (SBC);
T White, C Mellor, J Willis (MBC).

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair. It was unanimously agreed that Councillor R Payne, Hartlepool Borough Council, be appointed as Chair.

ORDERED

- 1. That Councillor R Payne, Hartlepool Borough Council, be appointed as Chair for the meeting and for the Municipal Year 2004/2005.**

(Councillor Payne in the Chair)

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor A Cunningham (SBC) declared a non-prejudicial interest in respect of NEMLAC.

INTRODUCTION

The Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) provided an overview of background to the Committee and an outline of the three submitted reports prior to their individual presentation to Members.

NOTED

INSPECTIONS OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES SERVICE BY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to present Members with the inspection reports of Teesside Archives by the Public Record Office which was attached as Appendix A to the report, and Historical Manuscripts Commission (now amalgamated into the National Archive), attached as Appendix B to the report.

It was noted that Teesside Archives was appointed to hold deposited classes of public records under Section (I) of the Public Records Act 1958, including classes of public records of local courts, hospitals and Health Authorities and Coroners and approval to do so was dependent upon inspections by the Inspections Service at the National Archives.

The National Archives held a Royal Warrant which allowed it to make enquiries and advise on all archives other than public records as defined by the Public Records Act. A 'Standard for Record Repositions' had been established as a benchmark for all publicly funded Archives Services and an independent assessment against the standard was provided following the inspection.

Following the inspection from the Public Record Office, continued appointment of the Teesside Archive Service to hold deposited public records had been granted, although it considered conditions for archival storage and access to be sub-standard in some ways. The detailed report (Appendix A) made a number of recommendations which should be worked towards over the next two years in order to ensure future reappointment, which would largely depend upon the extent to which the Service had started to implement the recommendations.

In summary, the key area of concern had been identified as the long-term intentions for storage of records. Other areas which had been identified as key areas to be addressed were highlighted as follows:-

- Regular environmental monitoring
- Teesside Archives Service relative humidity trends
- Photographic store
- Storage accrual space
- Fire risks
- Water risks
- Intruder alarm
- Planning
- Routine monitoring
- Signage
- Public facilities
- Teesside Archive Service web-site
- Cataloguing
- Education/Outreach
- Cross-sectoral partnerships
- Conservation
- Staffing

The report of the inspection by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (Appendix B) concluded it was unable to approve Teesside Archives under its system of recognition but considered there was no reason why it should not meet the essential requirements in due course given adequate investment.

Members were advised that some of the minimal or low cost recommendations had already been implemented by the Teesside Archive Service and it was acknowledged that Lottery funding and funding from the Friends of Teesside Archives had been provided.

During the ensuing discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- It was recognised that there would be serious implications should the Service fail to be reappointed as a place of deposit for public records. Therefore, the progression of a single Action Plan to demonstrate how the Service was moving towards the recommendations made by the independent inspections was essential.
- The issue of current staffing levels within the Teesside Archives Service was raised. It was noted that additional staff had been recommended by the independent inspections and it was considered that an additional Archivist, Conservator and an assistant within the search room would be beneficial.
- Reference was made to storage and the impact it might have in future to the Service. It was confirmed that various options were currently being considered including a rolling stack system which would increase capacity by 30% - 40%, however, this would be dependant upon the floor weighting and would require major capital investment.
- The issue of educational and outreach work was raised and it was confirmed that educational use of the Archives was mainly by colleges and adult groups. Development and promotion of such work would be currently hindered by limited staff resources.

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- In response to a query it was confirmed that the archives were not at risk of damage as the basement area of the building was only used for storage purposes and not for public records.
 - Reference was made to the possibility of a site visit being arranged to Teesside Archives and it was confirmed that arrangements would be made and Members notified accordingly.
 - It was acknowledged that depending upon the solutions to recommendations put forward in the Action Plan, approval for additional funding may be sought from each Member Authority's Executive/Cabinet.

Members were asked to note the recommendations contained within the inspection reports and agree to the formulation of a single Action Plan detailing those recommendations which had been implemented, those still to be implemented and how implementation could be achieved. The single Action Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for endorsement.

RECOMMENDED

1. **That the content of the two independent inspection reports be noted.**
2. **That the formulation of a single Action Plan be progressed and submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.**
3. **That a site visit to the Teesside Archive Service be arranged for the next meeting.**

REASONS

1. **Teesside Archives was appointed to hold deposited classes of public records under Section (I) of the Public Records Act 1958. The continuation of this appointment was dependent on inspections by the Inspections Service at The National Archives.**

ACTION PLAN 2004 – 2005

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to present Members with the Appraisal and Outline Development Plan and Action Plan for implementing its recommendations.

At the Joint Archives Committee held on 2 July 2001 it was agreed that a Development Plan for Teesside Archives Service should be formulated with the work being carried out by a consultant employed by NEMLAC.

The Appraisal and Outline Development Plan, attached as Appendix A to the report, detailed suggested actions for the Service and summarised the following areas as key issues to be addressed:-

- Resources, staff and revenue
- Storage
- Management

Subsequently an Interim Action Plan had been produced, also appended to the report, which detailed the actions required, targets and outcomes, timescales in which to be completed and by whom.

It was noted that recommendations in the areas of the management of Teesside Archives Service and low cost actions such as signage had been implemented in 2003 – 2004 as a consequence of the delay in the Committee meeting. Costs had been borne by Middlesbrough Council and Friends of Teesside Archives.

Adoption of the Action Plan was in line with the requirements to retain the appointment of a place of deposit as delegated by the National Archives. The appointment was essential in order to hold deposited public records.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the contents of the Appraisal and Outline Development Plan and Interim Action Plan be noted.
2. That approval be given to the progression of the single Action Plan which would include the actions already completed and the obtaining of projected costs where required.

REASONS

1. The adoption of the Action Plan was in line with the requirements to retain the appointment of a place of deposit as delegated by the National Archives.

BUDGET 2004 – 2005 REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report confirming the details of the Joint Archives Service budget for 2004 – 2005.

The Committee was advised that members of the Archive Officer Group had consulted their respective authorities and had provisionally agreed that the budget for the Joint Archives Service for 2004 – 2005 should be standstill plus inflation (3%).

RECOMMENDED

1. That approval be given to the budget for the Joint Archives Service for 2004 – 2005.

REASONS

1. Approval of the budget would allow the Service to maintain the current level of operation.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2004/05

A list of proposed future dates for the Joint Archives Committee 2004/05 was circulated which would be confirmed in due course.

NOTED