



Joint Archives Committee

4 August, 2004

Action Plan 2002 – 2007 - Staffing

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (REGENERATION): TIM WHITE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To advise Members on the proposals for additional staffing resources both to meet and to implement the recommendations of The National Archive inspection and the NEMLAC external consultants report.

BACKGROUND

- 2 At the meeting of this committee on 6 May 2004 it was agreed that projected costs would be identified and brought for members consideration.
- 3 The inspection reports identified three key issues to be addressed:

Staffing
Storage
Management

This report discusses the first of these - staffing.

- 4 The inspection reports clearly indicate that staffing levels are inadequate for the level of current service and future development. Investment is recommended in the priority areas of cataloguing, education and conservation. It is suggested that the first two of these are of more immediate concern to progress the development of the service both in terms of a community resource and the wider role of promoting the region both nationally and internationally.

- 5 Cataloguing is a constant problem for archives – accessions (collections received) may be one document or in the case of the recent ICI collection 200m of documents. On average 140 ‘collections’ are received a year, of the 66 so far receipted this year only one has been catalogued. The total backlog is approximately 30% of holdings. Priority is given to those documents most likely to be demanded by the public. The increasing number of visitors and subsequent demands on staff time mean the situation will not improve without additional staffing input. The specialist requirements of cataloguing mean that it is essential that appropriately qualified staff are used. If the collection is not catalogued then it cannot be used.

- 6 There is an increasing use made of the service by the public leading to increased pressure on staff to advice and supply the assistance so that this use is constructive and fulfilling. In addition the service holds a vast wealth of resources which can be used to support the national curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 4 (GCSE level). Documentation for over 500 years of the regions history is held much of which could be exploited to promote local pride and community cohesion as well as the national and international reputation of the region. For example the collection of architectural plans is one of the finest in the country. Current staffing levels mean that there is no educational outreach work programme and only a minimal provision on request. There have been no organised visits by schools.

- 7 There are no national standards or benchmarking available to inform the level of staffing required however a comparison has been done with other public record offices in the north. The current staffing at Teesside Archives is 50% below average serving a larger population.

	Archivists etc.	Assistants	Total staff	Population
Teesside	3	2	5	640,000
Durham	4	7	11	500,000
Northumberland	5	4	9	307,000
Tyne and Wear	9	10.5	19.8	1.1mill

- 8 The appointment of an Assistant Archivist/Education Officer and an Assistant for the Search Room would enable the service to start addressing these areas of work. There are various combinations of hours/person requirements that would meet the needs of this work, the costs of which are identified below. A further appointment of a Conservator would need to be considered in the medium term, again there are alternative methods of procurement that will be investigated for future meetings.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSEMENT

- 9 The adoption of the Action Plan is in line with the requirements to retain the appointment of a place of deposit as delegated by The National Archives. The continuation of this appointment will rely on reasonable improvements and developments being in place in line with past recommendations. The withdrawal of the appointment means that the service would not be able to hold

deposited public records under Section (I) of the Public Records Act 1958. These include records of local courts, hospitals and health Authorities and Coroners.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10 The appointment of two FTE staff as outlined in paragraph 5 would have the following implications for the four authorities. External funding is being investigated with NEMLAC and HLF but it should be noted that this would only provide a solution for a time limited period and that this funding is not guaranteed. This should be considered and applications made where feasible, however the service development needs should not be reliant on short term funding. The reports both clearly state the need for additional permanent staffing for which a programme of budgetary provision to meet costs is required.

11 Costs below based on 2003/04 (top of scale) + 3% inflation. This will allow for any immediate pay increase and progression through increments to be met.

	Archivist (Scale 5) £	Assistant (Scale 1) £	Total £
Hartlepool	4010	2784	6794
Middlesbrough	6135	4258	10393
Redcar and Cleveland	5663	3930	9593
Stockton-on-Tees	7786	5405	13191
	23594	16377	39971

BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

12 The projected costs will require identification as a budget pressure and should be included in each authorities 2005/06 budget setting process as a growth item. If the above external funding in paragraph 10 is successful growth will still be required but in later years there will still be a need to budget to sustain these posts. Updates on the bidding process will be provided via the officers group and future committee meetings. In the interim it is suggested that growth be pursued within each authority's budget area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13 That members note the financial implications and accept for consideration within each authority for implementation in 2005/06.

14 That members approve the further research into identifying external funding sources.

REASONS

15 The recommendation is supported for the following reason

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A Teesside Archives Action Plan 2002 – 2007

HMC report

PRO inspection

AUTHOR: Chrys Mellor, Chief Librarian

TEL NO: 729048

Address:

Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>