
JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 4 August 2004 at 10.30am.

PRESENT:

Councillors D Budd (MBC), P Kirton (SBC), C Hill (HBC) and D Fitzpatrick (R&CBC).

**PRESENT AS OBSERVER:

T Parry (Friends of Teesside Archives).
L Ferguson (MBC)

OFFICIALS:

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

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair. It was unanimously agreed that Councillor C Hill, be appointed as Chair.

ORDERED

1. **That Councillor C Hill (HBC), be appointed as Chair for the Municipal Year 2004/2005.**

(Councillor Hill in the Chair)

** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members at this point of the meeting.

** MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 May 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

TOUR OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES – SITE VISIT

As requested at its previous meeting, the Committee Members conducted a site visit of the Teesside Archives Building. D Tyrell, Senior Archivist, led the Committee on a tour of the building whilst providing an overview of the Teesside Archive Service. Storage of various documents, plans ledgers and photographs was highlighted, including methods and processes used for preservation and restoration.

ACTION PLAN 2002 – 2007

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to present Members with the single Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of The National Archive inspection and the NEMLAC external consultant's report.

The Joint Archives Committee agreed at its meeting on 6 May 2004 that the formulation of a single action plan be progressed. A copy of the single action plan was appended to the report and those actions already completed were identified therein.

It was explained that 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 and continuation of the appointment would rely on reasonable improvements being implemented.

It was noted that work was currently underway to identify the financial implications associated with progressing the improvement plan.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the revised Action Plan 2002 – 2007 and the actions already completed be approved.**
- 2. That progression of establishing financial requirements and further research into identifying external funding sources be approved.**
- 3. That the provision of regular reports on progress against the Action Plan be approved.**

REASON

The decisions were supported by the following reason:-

- 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.**

ACTION PLAN 2002 – 2007 – STAFFING

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report advising 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 consultant's report.

Members requested, at the meeting held on 6 May 2004, that projected costs in relation to the three key areas identified in the inspection reports be identified and submitted for consideration. The key issues identified for address were staffing, storage and management. The submitted report related purely to staffing.

It was noted that the inspection reports had clearly indicated that staffing levels were inadequate for the level of current service and future development. Investment had been recommended in priority areas of cataloguing, education and conservation. Cataloguing and education were viewed as more immediate concerns in order to progress development of the service.

It was explained that there was currently a backlog of approximately 30% of holdings and that collections could not be used unless they were catalogued. Priority was given to those documents most likely to be in demand by the public. Growing numbers of visitors resulted in increased demand on staff time and the situation would not improve without additional staffing. In addition, it was acknowledged that the service held a vast wealth of resources able to support the national curriculum. Current staffing levels did not provide for educational outreach work to be undertaken.

A table at paragraph seven in the report showed staffing levels and population levels for Teesside compared with other public record offices in the north. It was noted that staffing at Teesside Archives was currently 50% below average given the population it served.

It was reported that the appointment of an Assistant Archivist/Education Officer and an Assistant for the Search Room would enable the Service to start addressing the issues identified. The appointment of a further Conservator would require future consideration in the medium term.

The report outlined the financial implications for the four local authorities and whilst external funding was currently being investigated, Members were asked to note that this would only provide a solution for a limited period as funding was not guaranteed.

Projected costs for two full time employees were detailed in the report and would require inclusion in each authority's budget setting process. The report suggested that the additional funding be pursued as a growth item within each authority's budget area. A breakdown of the financial implications in respect of each of the four authorities was outlined as follows:-

Hartlepool – total cost = £6,794
Middlesbrough – total cost = £10,393
Redcar & Cleveland – total cost = £9,593
Stockton – total cost = £13,191

Discussion ensued with regard to the projected budget costs and the financial implications for each authority.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the financial implications contained within the report be noted.**
- 2. That consideration be given by each individual authority to the implementation of the identified financial implications within each authority's budget for 2005/06.**
NB: Stockton Borough Council's representative was not in agreement with the above recommendation (2.) and wished his opposition to be recorded.
- 3. That further research into identifying external funding source be approved.**

REASON

The decisions were supported by the following reason:-

- 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.**

PROPOSED DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 200405

The following future meeting dates were agreed for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05:-

Wednesday, 20th October 2004 at 10.30am – to be confirmed.
Wednesday, 19th January 2005 at 10.30am
Wednesday, 13th April 2005 at 10.30am
(All meetings to be held at Middlesbrough Town Hall).

NOTED