
JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 27 October 2004 at 10.30am.

PRESENT:

Councillors D Budd (MBC), P Kirton (SBC), C Hill (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), K Tranter (HBC), L Featherstone (SBC);
C Mellor, T White and J Willis (MBC).

** 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 4 August 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

JOINT ARCHIVES SERVICE – USAGE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to advise Members of the Archives Service usage during the period April to September 2004 inclusive.

It was reported that there were currently no statutory indicators or standards relating to the use of archive services, although a CIPFA statistical return was required on annual basis.

A table appended to the report highlighted the various elements of Archives work, with figures for each authority where possible.

An accompanying map which had been compiled using postcodes taken from completed surveys, showed that 75% of visitors had travelled from within a 12 mile radius of the Archives.

In summary, it was noted that a total of 2,613 people used the service during the period April – September 2004. This marked a slight increase of 3% for the same period during 2003/04 and continuing the trend since 2001.

Details of acquisitions, outreach work and conservation work were detailed in the submitted report.

The Committee was asked to note that research and other formal requests for information were currently charged for at the rate of £17.00 per hour, however, it was not yet known whether this income would be affected by the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the legislation governing the Archives Service took into account the Data Protection Act in relation to the types of information the Service was able to provide. It was possible that there would be cost implications arising from the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, for example, should legal advice need to be sought prior to supplying information. Guidelines were currently being compiled.

RECOMMENDED

1. **That the contents of the report be noted.**
2. **That reports on Archives Service usage be submitted to the Committee on a six-monthly basis.**

REASON

The recommendations were supported by the following reason:-

1. **The data provided a picture of the workload currently undertaken by the service.**

**ACTION PLAN 2002 – 2007: UPDATE
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES**

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to update Members on progress to date against the Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of The National Archive inspection and the NEMLAC external consultant's report.

At its meeting on 6 May 2004, the Joint Archives Committee agreed that it should receive regular progress reports against the Action Plan. A copy of the Action Plan was appended to the report and those actions already completed were identified therein.

Members were advised that 12 of the 30 identified actions had been completed and eight actions had been identified as requiring additional funding to be completed. Reports on staffing and building capacity had been submitted to a previous meeting and work was progressing on identifying financial implications.

Since the last meeting of the Committee on 4 August 2004, progress had been restricted to auditing requirements and identification of associated issues and costs.

It was reported that an approach had been made to NEMLAC to seek funding for a feasibility study into future accommodation requirements.

Members were asked to consider whether biannual or annual reports would be preferred to quarterly reports given the minimal progress made.

It was anticipated that there would be financial implications in progressing the improvement plan and work was currently underway to identify those implications.

RECOMMENDED

1. **That the progress against the Action Plan 2002 – 2007 be noted.**
2. **That progression of identifying external funding for feasibility work be approved.**
3. **That progress reports against the Action Plan be submitted to the Committee on a biannual basis.**

REASON

The recommendations 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 STORAGE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report advising Members on the proposals for additional storage 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 storage.

It was explained that the inspection reports had clearly indicated that storage levels were inadequate for the future development. Current storage capacity was at approximately 95% with the recent acquisition from ICI occupying around 250 linear metres. Around 3,000 linear metres of shelving with approximately 200 available for future requirements remained.

It was expected that full capacity was likely to be reached within the next two to three years, therefore, two options had been identified as follows:-

- i) Installation of rolling stack shelving to existing building (increasing storage capacity by up to 50% per room, subject to suitability of floor loading)
- ii) Investing in off-site storage (releasing space in Exchange House thereby increasing capacity by 33%).

Members were advised that investigations were being carried out to assess whether the floor loading in the current building was suitable to install rolling stack shelving. An indicative cost in relation to this option was identified as requiring approximately £60,000, apportioned as follows:-

Hartlepool -	£10,200	(17%)
Middlesbrough -	£15,600	(26%)
Redcar & Cleveland -	£14,400	(24%)
Stockton on Tees -	£19,800	(33%)

In terms of 'off-site' storage, a number of issues would need to be taken into account including compliance with Health and Safety requirements for staff accessing records and meeting BS 5454 requirements in relation to environmental control and security. There would be revenue budget implications connected to this option in terms of staff time and transport costs in retrieving documents and there would be a reduction in service from that currently provided in relation to public access to records.

Indicative costs for rental of 'off-site' storage were in the region of £30,000 per annum, apportioned as follows:-

Hartlepool -	£5,100	(17%)
Middlesbrough -	£7,800	(26%)
Redcar & Cleveland -	£7,200	(24%)
Stockton on Tees -	£9,900	(33%)

In addition, capital costs would be incurred to ensure that BS 5454 standards were maintained. The sprinkler system recently installed in Exchange House provided an indicative figure of £70,000 as to the cost of maintaining the standard.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- The suggested options and associated budget implications for each authority were discussed.
 - Members were asked to request that each authority make provision for its share of a total of £70,000, as indicated in paragraph four of the report, in the capital budget setting process for

2005/06 to address the issue of storage. The figure could be refined once precise costs had been identified.

- In addition, Members were asked to request that each authority make provision its share of a total of £35,000, as indicated in paragraph four of the report, in the revenue budget setting process for 2005/06 to address the issue of storage should the off site option be chosen. The figure could be refined once precise costs had been identified.
- Reference was made to the records for which the Archives Service was permitted to charge for storing (public records, eg coroner's records, could incur storage charges for up to a maximum of 25 years).
- It was queried as to whether any of the four authorities' jointly owned properties would be suitable for use as 'off site' storage. Confirmation was given that investigations would be carried out to identify suitable properties.
- A suggestion was made as to whether it might be worth assessing current storage arrangements within the existing building to place heaviest shelving on the ground floor and move the offices/ reading room to a higher level and install a lift to comply with public access.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That further investigation into final costs be undertaken and findings submitted to a future meeting.**
- 2. That the potential financial implications contained within the report be noted.**
- 3. That consideration be given by each individual authority to making provision for its appropriate share, as detailed at paragraph 4 of the submitted report and referred to above, in the 2005/06 capital budget setting process, in relation to addressing the Archives Service storage issues, pending resolution of precise amounts required.**
- 4. That consideration be given by each individual authority to making provision for its appropriate share, as detailed at paragraph 4 of the submitted report and referred to above, in the 2005/06 revenue budget setting process, in relation to addressing the Archives Service storage issues, pending resolution of precise amounts required.**
- 5. That further research into identifying external funding sources be undertaken.**

REASON

The recommendations 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.**

****DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was scheduled for 19th January 2005 at 10.30am.