
JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 13 April 2005 at 10.30am.

PRESENT:

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

****PRESENT AS OBSERVER:**

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives).

OFFICIALS:

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillor Cunningham (SBC).

**** 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 19 January 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

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.

On 6 May 2004, the Joint Archives Committee agreed that progress reports against the Action Plan would be presented on a regular basis. The submitted report was the second of the update reports in respect of the Action Plan which was attached at Appendix A.

It was noted that a total of 17 of the 30 identified actions had now been completed. The revenue and capital implications of the remaining actions had been brought to the Committee's attention and the four authorities were currently seeking the revenue budget for implementation in 2005/06. It was proposed that each authority provide a verbal update during the meeting.

Members were informed that the Service had instigated more rigorous performance measures and that the revised fees and charges for the Service were implemented on 1 April 2005.

It was confirmed that external funding had been obtained for specific outreach work and that NEMLAC was funding a project to record histories of black African immigrants to Middlesbrough as a regional pilot. A willingness to part fund other educational outreach work across all authorities had been indicated by NEMLAC and Creative Partnerships.

Members were advised that following further investigations with regard to the feasibility of installing rolling stack shelving and mobile shelving in the Archives Building, the Structural Engineer had confirmed that the floor loading within the building was inadequate. Therefore, both actions would be deleted from the Action Plan and each authority would investigate alternative off-site storage. The

custodian properties manager had been requested to identify additional space within the current building and the Committee would be kept informed of progress.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Members approve the progress against the Action Plan.**

REASONS

The recommendation was 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.**

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2004 – 2005 REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LIBRARIES

The Head of Libraries submitted a report to inform Members of the Archives Service usage for the year 2004 – 2005.

It was explained that there were currently no statutory indicators or standards relating to the use of Archive Services, although a CIPFA return was required annually. Local indicators had been agreed upon and would be reported to the Joint Archives Committee every six months.

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

In summary, it was noted that a total of 5,605 people used the Service in 2004/05. This marked a slight increase of 2.3% from 2003/04 and continuing the trend since 2001.

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

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the contents of the report be noted.**

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:-

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

UPDATE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Head of Libraries recapped that the Committee had agreed, at its previous meeting, to seek additional funding for the Service through each individual authority. The capital costs previously identified would now need to be revised following the outcome of the feasibility study into the provision of rolling stack shelving within the current building and alternative arrangements would be investigated and costed accordingly.

The revenue costs previously identified would remain the same, however, Members were asked to note that the recent Job Evaluation Exercise carried out in Middlesbrough would have an effect on the salaries of Archives' staff. Full financial implications of the exercise had not yet been received although it was estimated that there would be a total increase of approximately £14,000 per annum

before on-costs. Detailed calculations would need to be carried out in due course and each authority provided with details of the additional costs on top of revenue implications.

It was confirmed that Middlesbrough would provide the additional revenue funding previously identified from the Corporate Initiative Fund and it would be integrated into the budget setting process for 2006/07.

Both Hartlepool Council and Redcar and Cleveland Council confirmed that their respective authorities had approved provision of additional revenue funding but were unaware of the exact amounts agreed upon. Both had referred the outcome to Middlesbrough's Director of Finance.

Stockton Council confirmed that a revenue sum of approximately £45,000 over a three year period had been agreed and referred to Middlesbrough's Director of Finance.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the verbal updates be noted.**

REASONS

The recommendation was supported by the following reasons:-

- 1. To allow the Service to maintain the current level of operation.**

ROTATION OF CHAIR

The Governance Officer advised that nominations for the appointment of Chair would be sought at the next meeting of the Joint Archives Committee which would be held in the new Municipal Year (2005/06). In accordance with the devised rota, Chairmanship of the Committee would transfer to Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for 2005/06.

NOTED

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NEMLAC Creative Partnership Grants

The Head of Libraries provided details of the grants currently being pursued through NEMLAC/Creative Partnerships. A willingness to provide funding for educational work across the Tees Valley (including Darlington) had been indicated. The project would include working with teachers and Archives. In addition, £10,000 had been offered to the Service to carry out feasibility work on the Archives building. A brief was currently being devised identifying the Service's requirements.

NOTED

Development of IT Equipment for the Blind/Partially Sighted

L Featherstone, Stockton Council, advised that since the previous meeting of the Joint Archives Committee on 19 January 2005, she had held discussions with NEMLAC and was advised to bid for an Innovation Grant in order to obtain appropriate IT equipment for blind/partially sighted Archives Service users. If successful, it was hoped that a specialised IT suite could be provided within the Archives Service and the provision of two PCs, one with JAWS package and one with Supernova package, a CCTV reader and scanner were currently being explored. Consultation with various organisations for the Blind had been undertaken and further consultation was planned with relevant organisations/groups in the Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland areas. A letter of support for the initiative was requested from the Friends of Teesside Archives.

Jim Nicholson, Friends of Teesside Archives, expressed his gratitude at the work which had been undertaken and advised that he was currently awaiting the outcome of a bid for a PC also for blind/partially sighted service users.

NOTED

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Joint Archives Committee would held in the Municipal Year 2005/06 with the date being confirmed in due course.