

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 1 November 2006 at 12.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors D Budd (Chair) (MBC), D Fitzpatrick (R&CBC), J O'Donnell (SBC) and R Waller (HBC)

OFFICIALS:

G Jarritt (HBC), C Arbuthnot (MBC), C Mellor (MBC), E Tennant (SBC) and D Tyrell (Teesside Archive Service)

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr V Tumilty (HBC), L Featherstone (SBC) and C McIntosh (R&CBC)

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2006 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2005 - 2006

The Director of Regeneration submitted a report giving Members an update on the performance for 2005 – 2006, and presented details of performance indicators for 2006 - 2007.

The Chief Librarian presented the report and outlined that no statutory indicators or standards existed to measure the performance of the Archives Service. However, the Committee had agreed local indicators and performance achieved against each of the five indicators is set out below. The Committee was advised that the Service had met or exceeded four out of the five set targets for 2005-2006.

- An increase in the number of visitors to the Archives of 21% against a target of 3%. The increased use had been largely due to the transfer of material following the closure of Middlesbrough Central Library.
- In the most recent customer satisfaction survey, a 100% satisfaction rating had been achieved against a target of 94%.
- A total of thirty Lifelong Learning events had been held, against a target of twenty.
- There was a decrease of 2.3% in virtual visits compared to a 3% target. This was set against an increase of 4.8% in postal/email enquiries. The likely increase in material available and public awareness on the Internet had led to a decrease in telephone enquiries.
- The target relating to enquiries about planning applications was on target to reach 154 enquiries for 2005/06, against a target of 150.

Local indicators for the year 2006-2007 were proposed as follows:-

- (a) An increase of 5% in visitor numbers from 2004-2005 baseline
- (b) 50 Lifelong learning events to be organised.

The Service had made eighty-eight acquisitions during the period, from each of the four boroughs, including:

- additional Parish registers from Yarm, Carlin How and Loftus;
- a record book on ships built at Richardson Dock, Stockton;
- documents and photographs on the construction of the bottle of notes
- Hartlepool Coroners records from 1997-2003

It was also noted that the Mo Mowlam Archive Trust had donated material relating to the late Mo Mowlam MP. This material would need to be catalogued before the Trust granted access rights.

Details of Outreach events held or attended were reported, the numbers of which had increased significantly. This had been largely due to the appointment of two permanent Learning Access Officers on a job-share basis.

Details of the variety of materials repaired and repackaged were reported and the Committee reminded that conservation policy was to carry out work on a need basis rather than concentrating on one particular area.

The Chair extended thanks to all the staff involved for their hard work in achieving the customer satisfaction rating of 100%.

ORDERED

- 1. That the Performance Report for 2005-2006 be noted.**
- 2. That the local indicators for 2006-2007 as shown in paragraph 5 of the report and set out above be approved.**

REASONS

- 1. The recommendation is made as it recognises the work currently being undertaken by Teesside Archives.**

MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2006 - 2008

The Director of Regeneration submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update in relation to the improvements required of the Teesside Archives Service and sought guidance on the progression of the improvements.

The Chief Librarian presented the report and outlined that previous inspection of the Archives by The National Archives (TNA) was carried out in 2001/02. The inspection had identified three key issues that would need to be addressed in order for the Teesside Archives to retain its appointment to retain public records. These had been identified as staffing, storage and management (which included IT systems, performance, education and access). The issues had been addressed in the Action Plan, and the issue surrounding staffing had been resolved following the employment of the two Learning Access Officers.

It was noted that all the possible actions could be achieved without securing further funding. The report identified possible solutions to the two remaining action areas to be addressed, namely storage and management.

Two options to increase storage capacity had been examined.

Option 1 (Preferred Option). To increase capacity within the existing building. This would inevitably require further building work to be completed to ensure that the correct standard was met, and the addition of extra shelving. An additional benefit of the restructuring would be the provision of an education area. Total costs £74,297.

Option 2. To utilise off-site storage. In selecting this option factors to be considered, would include meeting Health and Safety requirements for staff accessing the records and meeting

British Standard 5454 in relation to environmental control and security. It was noted that a decrease in customer satisfaction was possible, in relation to public access to the records. Total costs £31,500.

In order to address the management issues, which included environmental controls, strategies and procedures, and the purchase of an archives and records management system, it was recommended that the CALM software system, currently operating within the Libraries Service be purchased. Total cost: Capital £35,589, Revenue £4,233.

The Chief Librarian stated that the figures presented in the report were definitive figures for the necessary amendments. The original figures that had been presented to the Committee eighteen months previously, had been quotes, and the figures had been agreed by each of the four boroughs at that time.

It was hoped to gain final approval from each Authority by mid-December.

ORDERED

- 1. That the increase in capacity within Exchange House be approved.**
- 2. That the purchase of the CALM system be approved.**
- 3. That the financial implications be taken through the budget setting process with each Authority for 2007/08.**

REASONS

The decisions were supported by the following reasons:

- 1. It would allow the service to increase capacity and continue to retain the Appointment as a deposit for Public Records from The National Archives.**
- 2. The purchase of the CALM system would allow all four Authorities continued access to the Archives**

OPTION APPRAISAL

The following two options were considered:

- 1. Option one – increase capacity within the existing building.**
- 2. Option two – utilise off-site storage.**

Further details of each Option were contained within the submitted report.

****URGENT ITEM**

****In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chair agreed to consider the following item on the grounds of urgency in order to comply with the bid timescales.**

LOTTERY BID

The representative from the Teesside Archives stated that the records from Corus, formerly British Steel were due to be transferred from their Records Centre to the Archives Service. It was noted that this would mean a very large deposit of over ten years worth of records.

The social history of British Steel was very important in the local area, and was common to each of the four Authorities. The records had generated a lot of interest from academics at Teesside University; however, the Archives did not have the staff necessary to catalogue the records.

To resolve this issue, academics from Teesside University and the Archives Service proposed the submission of a bid for Lottery funding to enable the records to be catalogued and made available for educational and public use.

The Chair expressed support for the submission and proposed that a letter of support for the bid be submitted with the bid.

ORDERED

That a letter of support for the bid be prepared.