

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 12 September 2007.

PRESENT:

Councillor Tumilty (Hartlepool Borough Council), Councillor Budd (Middlesbrough Council), Councillor S Clarke (Redcar & Cleveland Council) and Councillor Mrs Womphrey (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).

OFFICIALS:

G Jarritt (Hartlepool Borough Council), J Bennington, C Mellor and D Tyrell (Middlesbrough Council), J Richardson (Redcar & Cleveland Council) and L Featherstone (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).

PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group)

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair for the Municipal Year 2007/2008. In accordance with the agreed protocol for the appointment of Chair on a rota basis the chairmanship transferred to the Member representative from Hartlepool Borough Council.

ORDERED

That Councillor Tumilty (Hartlepool Borough Council) be appointed as Chair of the Joint Archives Committee for the Municipal Year 2007-2008.

(Councillor Tumilty in the Chair).

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

**MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 1 November 2006 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

TOUR OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES

As requested by Members a site visit of the Teesside Archives Building had been undertaken immediately prior to the meeting.

David Tyrell of the Teesside Archive Service had led the Committee on a tour of the facilities and gave an overview of the Teesside Archive Service.

Specific reference was made to the storage of various documents, plans, ledgers and photographs including the processes for preservation and restoration.

ORDERED

That the Officers be thanked for the tour of the Teesside Archives Building and information provided which was noted.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2006 - 2007

The Chief Librarian presented a report, which gave an update on performance for 2006 – 2007 and details of performance indicators for 2007 - 2008. Information was also provided on the development of the 2007-2010 Action Plan.

The Joint Committee was advised that there were no statutory indicators or standards relating to measure the performance and use of the Archives Service. It was noted, however, that the Committee had agreed local indicators and performance achieved against each of the indicators set out below.

It was noted that the last inspection for Teesside Archives had been conducted in 2001/02. Inspections were undertaken on a two/three year cycle with progression against recommendations expected. A self-assessment had been completed this year with a view to inclusion in CPA for 2007/2008. The service had been given a two star rating out of three.

Specific reference was made to two local indicators for 2006/2007, which had both exceeded targets as follows: -

- a) a 6.2% increase in the number of visitors to Archives against a target of 5% on the 2004/2005 baseline which was an increase from the previous figure and also reflected the additional use whilst the Central Library had been closed;
- b) 68 lifelong learning events had been held against the target of 50 as a result of the appointment of the Learning and Access Officer in September 2005 and following increased national publicity from television family history programmes.

Details of the work undertaken by the Learning and Access Team was outlined in their End of Year Report 2006/2007 in Appendix B of the report submitted.

The proposed local indicators for 2007-2008 were reported as follows: -

- i) an increase of 5% in visitor numbers from 2006-2007 baseline;
- ii) 75 lifelong learning events to be organised.

The outstanding actions in respect of the Action Plan 2002/2007 related to the expansion of storage facilities and the installation of a computerised management system the subject of a further report later in the meeting.

The Joint Committee was advised of the development of a three-year Action Plan details of which would be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Committee. The Action Plan would be based on an analysis of the self-assessment report, which had highlighted areas for improvement primarily relating to strategic development plans and policies.

The Service had made 161 acquisitions of archive material during the period, which had included the following: -

- additional Iron and Steel Company records which together with previous deposits were the subject of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources by the University of Teesside to make it more accessible;
- a collection of 14 school copy books of the Holiday family of Egglecliffe;
- archives of several former shipbuilding companies.

Details were given of Outreach events, which included the following: -

- the annual Day School focussing on the changes to and development of towns and landscapes in the Teesside area which had been arranged in collaboration with the

library service of the four Boroughs and had received its largest attendance to date of over 90 delegates;

- local shows and fairs including the national Family History Fair at Gateshead;
- a wide variety of talks and group visits;
- a wide range of learning opportunities undertaken by the Learning and Access Team including sessions which had been attended by 336 school children ranging from KS1 to KS3 and 221 adults;
- following the receipt of a grant from MLA North East work had commenced on the creation of history trails in the parks of the four Boroughs.

Members were advised of conservation work, which had been carried out, on a variety of archives during the last six months in order to make them available to the public for research. In total 925 items had been repaired and repackaged. It was acknowledged that the conservation policy was to carry out work on a priority need basis and seriousness of condition.

Reference was also made to the redesigning of the web pages relating to Teesside Archives on the Middlesbrough Council website, which had also resulted in increased usage of the Teesside Archive Service. As part of this work an on-line request form was to be compiled which was considered would assist in generating additional income in particular from users elsewhere such as the United States.

It was acknowledged that there was scope for the other local authorities to assist further in promoting the Teesside Archive Service and to develop current links and extend local knowledge. An indication was also given of the possibility of the Joint Officer Working Group to pursue opportunities for grant applications to the MLA North East for specific projects.

In commenting on current projects Members emphasised the importance of continuing and developing the work with schools across the four Boroughs.

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.**
- 3. That on behalf of the Joint Committee and the Friends of Teesside Archive Group grateful thanks be extended to the Learning and Access Team for their hard work and support in raising the profile of the Teesside Archives Service.**

REASON

The recommendations made recognise the work currently being undertaken by Teesside Archives.

CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

Further to the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 1 November 2006 the Chief Librarian gave a verbal update on the current position with regard to the proposals and funding arrangements previously agreed by the Joint Committee to expand storage facilities and to install CALM a computerised management system.

It was confirmed that final approval of the proportionate funding from Redcar & Cleveland Council was still awaited. An indication was given of the current financial position in respect of Redcar & Cleveland Council details of which would be clarified.

It was pointed out that the proposals to meet certain requirements had been the subject of previous discussions for some years and initial approval for the proportionate one-off funding from the four Boroughs had been agreed two years ago. Members emphasised the importance of addressing the outstanding actions from the Action Plan 2002-2007 in respect of the need to increase storage capacity and the installation of an archives and records management system.

Should it prove necessary to proceed on the funding guaranteed to date the Chief Librarian indicated the possibility of progressing the installation of the computer management system and undertaking the expansion of the storage facilities on a phased basis.

An indication was given of the likelihood of further funding requests in order to progress areas of improvement included within the next Action Plan and to continue the development of the service in the future.

The support and work of the Friends of the Teesside Archive Group in particular their fund raising efforts were acknowledged.

ORDERED

- 1. That the information provided be noted.**
- 2. That clarification be sought on the financial position of Redcar & Cleveland Council in respect of the request for proportionate funding for the expansion of storage facilities and installation of the CALM computerized management system.**

BRITISH STEEL ARCHIVE

Further to the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 1 November 2006, the Chief Librarian reported that Teesside Archives had obtained records from Corus formerly British Steel and with the assistance from Teesside University a bid had been submitted for Heritage Lottery funding. It was confirmed that the first priority was to undertake a conservation assessment of the collection and the records to be catalogued to enable them to be available for educational and public use.

The collection was considered to be of national and international importance and therefore an application for Designated Collection status was being sought. Such a level of importance meant that there was a future opportunity to exploit the collection to generate income. It was planned to maintain publicity for this collection so as to enhance the official papers with the addition of local memories and items. In this regard and given the extent of the work to be undertaken it was hoped to employ an additional Learning and Access Officer to promote the collection and gain additional local information and knowledge and pursue other fund raising initiatives.

Reference was made to the intention to seek the support and assistance of other local authorities to the project.

ORDERED

That the information provided be noted.

****ANY OTHER BUSINESS – SUBSTITUTES - MEETING DATES**

With the approval of the Chair and bearing in mind the need to achieve a quorum for meetings of the Joint Committee a discussion ensued on the possibility of the representative authorities

operating a system which allowed the appointment of substitutes. Details were provided of current arrangements.

It was noted that arrangements had been made for future meetings of the Joint Committee to be held on the following dates in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough in respect of the remainder of the Municipal Year: -

Thursday 18 October 2007 at 10.30 a.m.

Thursday 7 February 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

Thursday 24 April 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

In view of the need to re-schedule the current meeting and given the likely extent of business to be transacted it was suggested that the meeting scheduled for 18 October 2007 be cancelled.

NOTED AND APPROVED