

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 23 April 2009.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs M Womphrey (Stockton – on –Tees Borough Council) (Chair), Councillor D Budd (Middlesbrough Council) and Councillor V Tumilty (Hartlepool Borough Council).

OFFICERS:

J Baker, J Brittain, S Cartledge, L Featherstone, V Flynn, D Marlborough, J Richardson and J Tweedy.

PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillor S Clarke (Redcar & Cleveland Council).

**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 11 September 2008 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

BUDGET AND RELATED ISSUES REPORT

The Senior Librarian for Middlesbrough Council presented a report the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with:

- (a) an update on budgetary issues
- (b) an update on the outcome of a recent inspection of the Archives
- (c) an outline of the scope of the service review.

Members were advised that an anomaly had emerged regarding the Archives service budget in that it deviated from the joint agreement relating to the Archives service which included a process for setting the annual revenue budget, a formula for apportioning the budget across four councils and a mechanism for adjustment at outturn. This apportionment was based on population data from the previous year, from the Register General.

The Committee was informed that investigations were taking place to this anomaly and other issues, but this work was not yet completed. A further and more detailed report would be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Archives Committee and the information presented to this meeting was in the form of an interim update.

It was proposed that a draft protocol be drawn up and presented to the next meeting of this committee, to address the anomaly of the budget allocation.

The four borough librarians had met and agreed that a short but comprehensive review of the Archive service should be undertaken, to ensure that it was fit for purpose, that it met the customers' needs and that it delivered value for money. A steering group had been established for that purpose. A set of terms of reference had already been prepared and was attached at Appendix 1 of the report and these would be detailed in full at the next meeting, when the Review was presented to the committee.

These included:

- the role and purpose of the Archives service
- a brief outline of the kind of records held
- a brief description of the accommodation, its location and fitness for purpose
- staffing structure and costs
- main activities, including customer services, cataloguing, conservation, acquisitions, storage, outreach
- hours of opening and operation
- revenue budget, covering both income and expenditure.

The Review Team was to commence work in May 2009.

Members were also advised that the budget for 2009/2010 would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee, in July 2009, which was slightly changed since the new formula was set. Discussion took place and members were agreed that the budget and how it was apportioned was a matter to be decided and agreed by this committee.

Archive Inspection

Members were advised that the National Archives carried out an inspection of the Teesside Archive, in October 2008. A letter received from National Archives, setting out the outcome of the inspection, was attached at Appendix 2 of the report. The key points raised in the letter were:

- (a) a view that the present building fell significantly short of the standard of accommodation required;
- (b) a view that it would not be possible to upgrade the building to meet required standards at reasonable cost and that relocation should be considered;
- (c) the need for extra vigilance in relation to fire hazard, temperature and humidity control;
- (d) the need for improved on-line access;
- (e) a view that the staffing levels were too low and should be reviewed;
- (f) the need for a Collection Development Policy.

Members were advised that these matters would be addressed in the service review exercise as well as the fundamental long-term issues that needed to be resolved.

A fuller report setting out the building issues and options would also be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Archives Committee.

ORDERED

- (i) that the information provided be noted;**
- (ii) that the 2009/2010 Budget be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Archives Committee;**
- (iii) that the report addressing the Inspector's letter also be present to the next meeting.**

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2008-2009

The Senior Librarian for Middlesbrough Council presented a report to inform the Committee of the Performance results for 2008 – 2009 and to update the committee on the 2008 to 2010 Action Plan.

The last inspection of Teesside Archives by the National Archives (TNA) was held in 2008 and was referred to in the previous report. Since 2006, the inspection regime had been supplemented by an annual self-assessment, scored by National Archives.

There were currently no statutory indicators or standards relating to archives services. A C.I.P.F.A return was required on an annual basis. Local indicators for 2008-2009 were included at paragraph 8 of the report. The range of work undertaken by Teesside Archives was varied and included conservation and outreach work. This report provided a summary of this work and

Appendix 1 of the report showed a statistical report of activity for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Self-assessment for local authority archive services was completed in 2008, for which the service scored three stars (out of a possible four) and was said to be neither improving nor deteriorating. The self-assessment letter was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

Details of four local indicators for 2008/2009 were included in the report, which indicated that two of the four had been met and two had not. As a result of the service review being undertaken, the local indicators for 2009/2010 would be brought to committee for approval after the review had been completed.

The Action Plan for 2007-2010 had been approved at committee on 7 February 2008. A total of 30 actions had been completed and details of these were included in Appendix 3 of the report. A summary of acquisitions, events and conservation were included in paragraphs 14-24 of the main report. There were a total of 181 acquisitions; there had been 117 events/talks/visits/displays over the relevant period. In conservation, a total of 884 items were repaired, cleaned and re-packaged, of which 550 were from the four boroughs and 334 were from collection within the whole Teesside area.

With reference to outreach, it was noted that Members should contact their local radio stations and local free newspapers, with a view to promoting the Archives Service. All present were requested to contact their Archives officer if they wished to include anything specific into the forthcoming review.

ORDERED

- 1. That the performance report for April 2008 – March 2009 be noted.**
- 2. That the development of the Action Plan 2007 – 2010 be noted.**
- 3. That members should contact their Archive representative if they wished to include any input into the forthcoming review**

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

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

Thursday 23 July 2009 at 10.30 a.m.
Thursday 22 October 2009 at 10.40 a.m.
Thursday 21 January 2010 at 10.30 a.m.
Thursday 22 April 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

NOTED AND APPROVED