



REPORT TITLE: REVIEW OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES SERVICE

REPORT TO: JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

**REPORT BY: INTERIM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION
KEVIN PARKES**

DATE: 23 July 2009

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report advises the Committee of the findings and outcomes of the review of the Teesside Archives Service, identifies a number of options arising from the review and makes recommendations to the Committee.

BACKGROUND

2. Following the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee on 23 April the review of the Teesside Archives Service (TAS) has been completed.
3. The purpose of the review was to provide an in depth examination of TAS with regard to its functions and operations, fitness for purpose, and cost effectiveness. The need for the review arose from a number of recent changes, particularly to financial arrangements, which are creating upward financial pressures.
4. The Review Team consisted of the following:
 - Steering Group: comprising Chief Librarians/Heads of Library Services from each of the four partner local authorities, chaired by Middlesbrough's Head of Economic & Community Regeneration (for the Interim Director of Regeneration);

- Working Group: comprising TAS Acting Manager and a librarian from each of the four local partner authorities.
5. The scope of the review was agreed by the Joint Archives Committee. In addition, and to provide direction to the review, the Steering Group identified a number of key issues/lines of enquiry for the Working Group to specifically consider. These were:
- benchmarking key areas against other archives – using Cipfa and other sources;
 - consider outreach work, digitisation, marketing and access to the service; how can we deliver these with the resources we have?;
 - if efficiencies have to be made consider how we would make efficiencies of 3, 5, and 10%;
 - National Archives Standards –
 - how do we measure up to these;
 - what do we need to do to meet them;
 - what happens if we do not meet the standards;
 - benefits of meeting these standards;
 - how do the customers in each authority benefit from the service?;
 - graduate trainees/work experience – are these a possible source of increasing staffing? Either by offering a graduate trainee position (salary paid by us) or by work experience opportunities e.g. in conservation where the candidate obtains a bursary;
 - potential means of increasing income.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

6. The Review Report is attached at Appendix 1
7. The key findings of the Report are as follows:
- there are no obvious areas for significant efficiency cuts;
 - results of a self-assessment conducted in 2008 show that, by comparison with other Archives regionally and nationally, Teesside Archives provides a three-star service, out of a possible four stars and is said to be neither improving nor deteriorating;
 - however, improvements made in the past, based on TNA recommendations, if not maintained would have an impact on retaining status as 'Place of Deposit';
 - in order to maintain the current status as a 'Place of Deposit' the National Archives (TNA) has imposed the following conditions to be met immediately:
 - i. formal subscription to be made to TNA Standard for Record Repositories;
 - ii. installation of flood alarms in the basement strong rooms with 24/7 external monitoring.

In the longer term more significant issues need to be addressed in relation to the building;

- in order to achieve 'TNA Approved' status the service would need to make significant improvements to the building, public access to records, staffing levels and Collections Policy. In view of the current economic climate the Review Team do not recommend that 'TNA Approved' status be sought at the moment;
- the desirability of strengthening outreach activities, particularly to improve usage by non-Middlesbrough residents;
- the desirability of strengthening links with the other library authorities;
- there is still a need to look at outstanding issues including issues with the current premises and charitable trust status;
- a 10% saving will be achieved in the current year due to a vacancy in the post of Principal Archivist.

8. These findings have been subject to review and challenge by the Steering Group at joint meetings held on 5 June 2009 and 7 July 2009.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

9. The Working Group was asked to consider savings of 3%, 5% and 10% as a way of focussing thinking around efficiencies. The Review Report provides illustrations of what each would require and their likely impact. Following further discussion by the Steering Group, the following options are put forward for consideration by the Joint Archives Committee.

Option 1

- that the Service continue to be delivered as currently configured (with minor revisions), and a revised budget be agreed on this basis. A budget based on this option is attached at Appendix 2. This option would require an increase in financial contributions from Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton Councils.

Option 2

- the Service be enhanced to take into account a number of desired improvements arising from the review, suggestions include:
 - increase staffing to include Principal Archivist and 2 Senior archivists(+ 1 fte);
 - expand outreach programme (+ .5 – 1 fte);
 - expand opening hours to include Saturday half day (within current costs);
 - additional ICT equipment (costs tbi);
 - additional cataloguing staff (+ 1 fte);
 - additional marketing resource (tbi).

It is obviously difficult to propose a budget here given the wide scope of these potential improvements. Therefore a budget including a budget line of £50k for 'Improvements' is attached at Appendix 3. Again, this would require an increase in contributions from Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton.

Option 3

- that the Service be reconfigured within the funding levels currently committed by member Authorities.

10. It is acknowledged that the cost of the Service has risen above the funding level previously agreed by the member authorities (indeed, this was the reason for undertaking the review in the first place). This is due to a number of factors, which have previously been outlined to the Committee and include:

- increased staff costs due to job evaluation and increased staffing costs following TNA Inspection (+ approx £25k from 2007/8);
- costs of extending archives storage to meet TNA requirements although these have been off-set by reduced cleaning costs (equates to inflation increase only overall);
- the on-going revenue costs associated with the purchase of CALM (+ approx £45k increase from 2007/8);
- for some Authorities, changes to the apportionment of costs across the four Boroughs.

11. There is an added complication here in that the four Authorities' budgets are no longer in line either with the previous costs of the service, or with each other in terms of the apportionment of the overall service cost as per the agreed funding formula (based on annual population estimates). This is summarised in the table below (columns A, B and C). To resolve this it is suggested that an assumed budget figure of £220,000 be used, reflecting a rough average of the funding that the Authorities other than Middlesbrough have confirmed is available. Column D and E of the table illustrate what impact this would have on each Authority.

Archives budget/Local Authority share, based on existing finances 2009/10					
	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
	£	£	£	£	£
	Funding currently available/budgeted for each District for 2009/10	Share of funding as per agreed estimate of population formula	Total potential service budget based on funding available x percentage split (Column A x Column B)	Suggested approach/funding share based on total service budget of £220,000	Adjustment to each budget required
Redcar & Cleveland	54,400 ()	24.9%	218,474	54,780	380
Hartlepool	37,550 ()	16.3%	230,368	35,860	-1,690
Stockton	73,138 ()	34.0%	215,112	74,800	1,662
Middlesbrough	61,545 ()	24.8%	248,165	54,560	-6,985
Total	226,633	100%	221,318*	220,000	

*(average of non-Middlesbrough budgets)

12. The Review Team did not consider how the Service could be reconfigured to bring it back within the funding level previously in place. However, it did consider savings of 10% (Illustrations 4 in the Review Report). These are outlined below, however if the approach outlined at paragraph 11 above is adopted the required savings would be closer to 12%. Cuts to the service required to deliver Option 3 are therefore in the region of the following:
- cutting outreach services by 50% (from 37 hours to 18.5 hours) PLUS one of the following:
 - reduce either the Archivist or Senior Archivist post from 37 to 18.5 hours;
 - reduce Conservator post from 37 to 18.5 hours;
 - reduce Archives Assistants posts by 1 fte.

A further option has also been identified:

- re-configuring the Principle Archivist and Senior Archivists posts into 1 fte, with changes to the roles of the three current Archives Assistants. This would leave the service with only one permanent qualified Archivist.

No assessment has yet been made of possible costs of redundancy associated with these changes.

13. These sub-options need though to be seen in the context of the review findings set out at 7 above, and particularly that:
- there are no obvious areas for significant efficiency cuts;
 - improvements made in the past, based on TNA recommendations, if not maintained would have an impact on retaining status as 'Place of Deposit';
 - the desirability of strengthening outreach.
14. Each of the sub-options above could represent a retrenchment from commitments given in response to previous TNA inspections. Pursuing Option 3, in any of the sub options put forward, therefore represents a threat to the ability of TAS to retain its current TNA Place of Deposit Status.
15. It should be understood that the risk of the loss of Place of Deposit Status is a serious one. This would mean that Teesside Archives Service could no longer continue to hold certain records, with the likelihood that they would need to be held by a service elsewhere which does have Place of Deposit Status (Durham and Northallerton being the closest). As Local Authorities have a legal responsibility for the maintenance of public records there would still be a cost (unknown) if records were held by Archives Services elsewhere. It is likely that there would be significant community and political concern therefore if the Teesside Archives Service failed to retain its Place of Deposit Status.
16. It is recognised that each option has implications which cannot be dealt with solely by Joint Archives Committee. Options 1 and 2 will represent an increased

budgetary commitment from each partner authority; Option 3 will threaten service standards and the retention of TNA Place of Deposit Status which is a risk which requires corporate consideration. It is therefore proposed that this report, with Archives Committee's recommendation regarding a preferred option, be forwarded to the Tees Valley Joint Chief Executives' Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. It is recommended that the Joint Archives Committee consider the findings of the review of the Teesside Archives Service, and the options presented, and identify a preferred option.
18. This report then to be forwarded to the Tees Valley Joint Chief Executives' Group, along with the Committee's recommendation, for further consideration.

FUTURE ACTIONS

19. There are a number of further actions to be completed once the final outcome of the review is confirmed. These include:
 - a. revision of the SLA
 - b. revision of the service workplan
 - c. begin consideration of the serious challenge facing the Service in relation to premises issues
 - d. explore Charitable Trust status

It is proposed that the Review Team arrangements be kept in place to assist in the joint process of working through these remaining tasks.

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