

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 9 June 2011.

QUORUM/SUBSTITUTION

In the absence of a quorum and given the business to be transacted, it was agreed by those present to proceed with the items on the agenda on an informal basis. Any decisions would be formally considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Owing to that fact that this was now the third meeting in succession that had been inquorate, a short discussion ensued in relation to this. Potential remedial suggestions concerning this issue were made; however these would require further investigation as they could have potential implications for the Committee's Terms of Reference.

PRESENT:

Councillor S Clarke (Redcar and Cleveland Council), Councillor C Rooney (Middlesbrough Council) and Councillor H Thompson (Hartlepool Council).

****OFFICERS:**

J Brittain, R Hobbins, G Jarritt, C Lunn and E Tennant.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor K Dixon (Stockton Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Joint Archives Committee held on 22 July 2010, 28 October 2010 and 27 January 2011 were submitted.

It was agreed by those present that, in the absence of a quorum, the minutes of the meetings would be formally ratified at the next meeting of the Committee.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2011 – MARCH 2011

The Archives Manager presented a report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the performance of Teesside Archives for the period January 2011 – March 2011.

It was explained to the Committee that Teesside Archives had completed the self-assessment survey for the National Archives (TNA). The results of this exercise had now been received and Teesside Archives had been downgraded from a three star to a two star service. This was a close run decision taken by TNA on the grounds of governance. The fact that only one professional archivist was in post was influential here, as was the lack of certain policies relating to professional standards they would expect to see in place. Some of these policies had now been written and made available through the website. 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.

The Friends of Teesside Archives had helped to develop a programme of volunteering and to put this onto a more formal basis than had been the case in the past. It was noted that future reports

would reflect the work that volunteers carried out and demonstrate the value that they added to the service.

The number of visitors to Teesside Archives during this period was 1,443. A breakdown was shown in Appendix 1 of the report. The total number of visitors over 2010-2011 was 5,788, which was a slight decrease on the total for the previous year 2009-2010 when 6,102 people visited the service. However, document issues over the same period were up from 5,241 to 6,738 (plus an additional 3,884 items issued to British Steel project workers/volunteers recorded separately). These figures mirrored the national trend for visitor numbers to archive services to decline, as more and more material became available on the Internet, whilst at the same time, more documents were issued as users became more aware of archival holdings. In future reports, the number of virtual visitors would be included to encompass all the different ways customers accessed the information held within the Archives.

Details were provided in respect of Acquisitions, Outreach and Conservation work that had been carried out.

With regards to the Archives Service Review, following a proposal outlined at the 27 January 2011 meeting of the Committee, consultation had taken place with the Friends of Teesside Archives and it was decided that further consideration was needed before this could be taken forward. A number of changes would be made to the proposals prior to further consultation being undertaken. An Impact Assessment would be conducted alongside the service review process.

Concerning the British Steel Archives, the Committee congratulated the work of the staff and volunteers involved in the project, and for the national recognition that the project had achieved.

A query was raised in relation to the number of outreach activities currently being undertaken with schools. In instances where the figures appeared quite high for some areas in comparison to others, the Archives Manager explained that this had occurred because several consecutive days of activity with the same schools had been arranged, with many children attending them. It was highlighted, however, that schools in all four districts were pro-actively being contacted and encouraged to partake in outreach activity. With regards to transportation, it was suggested that Council fleet buses not being utilised during certain hours of the day could perhaps be used to transport children from schools to the Archives building. Those members present agreed to follow this suggestion up. Further to this, however, it was felt that fuel prices and other financial restrictions could prevent schools from partaking in such outreach activity. The Archives Manager acknowledged this point, and indicated that possibilities for the Archives Service to visit schools were currently being explored.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the suggestion pertaining to Council fleet buses being used for the transportation of children to the Archives building, for the purpose of outreach/educational activity, be referred to appropriate personnel within each authority.**
- 2. That the performance report for January 2011 – March 2011 be noted.**

REASONS

The recommendations were supported by the following reasons:

- 1. To increase the number of outreach/educational activities being undertaken with schools.**
- 2. To inform members on the performance of Teesside Archives.**

BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Library Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to a) update members on the final outturn of the 2010-2011 revenue budget and b) to seek approval of the proposed 2011-2012 budget for Teesside Archives. It was agreed by those present that, in the absence of a quorum, a decision in respect of the budget would be made at the next meeting of the Committee.

Appendix 2 of the submitted report showed the revenue expenditure to the 31 March 2011. There was an under-spend on the staffing budget due to staff vacancies within the Archives Service. The budget under-spend was reflected in the quarter four invoices to each authority.

Appendix 3 indicated the proposed budget for 2011-2012. It was explained that the contributions from each authority reflected the population based on the mid-year estimates for 2009. However, a commitment had also been given to achieve an in-year saving, prior to the review, of 10%. Therefore the anticipated outturn would be £223,353. Expected contributions from each authority were identified within the report.

The 2011-2012 budget was required to provide the service at a level in line with the staffing requirements to retain the appointment of a place of deposit as delegated by The National Archives. The withdrawal of the appointment means that the service would not be able to hold deposited public records under Section (I) of the Public Records Act 1958.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That, in the absence of a quorum, a decision in respect of the proposed budget for 2011-2012 would be made at the next meeting of the Committee.**
- 2. That the expenditure on the 2010-2011 budget be noted.**

REASON

The recommendations were supported by the following reason:

To enable the 2011-2012 budget to be set.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday, 28 July 2011 at 10.30 a.m. in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough.

RECOMMENDED

That the information, as presented, be noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

REFERENCE LIBRARY

Following discussion at a previous meeting of the Committee, a query was raised in relation to the suggestion of moving certain aspects of the Archives Service to Middlesbrough Reference Library. The Head of Library Services indicated that this matter was currently being pursued as part of the review of the Archives Service, and that further information would be reported in due course. A short discussion ensued in relation to the Reference Library, with mention being made of its centenary next year.

RECOMMENDED

That the information, as presented, be noted.