

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 27 October 2011.

**PRESENT:

Councillor S Clarke (Redcar and Cleveland Council), Councillor K Dixon (Stockton Council), Councillor C Hill (Hartlepool Council) and Councillor C Rooney (Middlesbrough Council).

**OFFICERS:

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

**CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP – HARTLEPOOL COUNCIL:

Councillor Hill explained to Members that following a change in Executive Portfolios at Hartlepool Council, Councillor Hill had replaced Councillor Thompson on the Joint Archives Committee. Councillor Thompson sent her best wishes to everyone involved in the Archives Service. Members welcomed Councillor Hill to the Committee.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name of Member	Type of interest	Item / Nature of Interest
J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group)	Personal/Non Prejudicial	Representative of the Friends of Teesside Archives Group – the group was currently working with Teesside Archives on a number of projects.

**MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 28 July 2011 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

An update was provided in respect of the following item:

MINUTES – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2011 – MARCH 2011

With regards to the utilisation of Council fleet buses for the transportation of children to the Archives building, it was hoped that this matter could be pursued once all of the partner authorities had completed their individual budget reviews.

ORDERED

That the information as presented be noted.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JULY 2011 – SEPTEMBER 2011

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

It was explained that the range of work undertaken by Teesside Archives was varied and included conservation and outreach work. The submitted report provided a summary of this work.

The number of visitors to Teesside Archives during this period was 2,142. A breakdown was shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

With regards to acquisitions, it was highlighted that a total of 14 small deposits had been received during this period.

It was noted that work carried out by volunteers was progressing well. A report detailing the volunteer activity at Teesside Archives had been completed by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and was shown at Appendix 2 of the submitted report. It was highlighted that further volunteer training had been organised.

ORDERED

That the performance report for July 2011 – September 2011 be noted.

REASONS

The decision was supported by the following reason:

To acknowledge quarter 2 performance.

BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Library Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the expenditure for July 2011 – September 2011 of the 2011-2012 revenue budget.

Appendix 3 of the submitted report showed the revenue expenditure to the 30 September 2011. It was explained that budgets were on target, including the commitment to deliver the 10% saving this year.

ORDERED

That the expenditure on the 2011-2012 budget be noted.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

To approve quarter 2 expenditure.

ARCHIVES REVIEW UPDATED PROPOSAL

The Head of Library Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to present Members with an updated proposal for the Archives Service.

Following previous meetings consultation had taken place with the Friends of Teesside Archives and the Lead Officers of each of the four Boroughs regarding an alternative option for delivery of the service.

Following consultation, the previous ideas had been refined to incorporate the following:

- Acknowledgment of the need to have two trained archivists and one conservator working on collection care in order to meet The National Archives Standard for this size of collection.
- Learning and access/outreach work across all four authorities should work more closely with library staff, in particular Reference Library staff, in all partner authorities.
- Each authority would have some dedicated staff hours allotted to them each month. This time would be used following discussion with the Archives Manager and the Lead Officer in each authority.
- Original archive documents would not be transported between the Archive building and the Central Library for viewing, but remain at Archives to be examined in the search room, during a pre-booked session.
- The more popular holdings on microfilm would be transferred to Middlesbrough Central Library for increased access. This would be an interim measure until available parish records were online.
- Work towards the digitisation of parish records with a private partner would continue in order to enable online access to the most popular holdings across all four authorities.

The premises costs for the building were a fixed charge and the supplies and services budget, which included conservation material, was 8% of the total budget. Therefore, in order to achieve the required savings and ensure Teesside Archives continued to provide a service fit for purpose, a review of the staffing would need to take place.

The submitted report outlined three possible options to achieve an acceptable level of savings in respect of the Archives service. It was explained that all options were likely to lead to staff being at risk of redundancy, although the potential for redeployment to vacant posts would be explored. Any requests for voluntary redundancy/early retirement would be considered to avoid any compulsory redundancies arising. All four authorities would share any redundancy costs. An Impact Assessment report was tabled for Members' perusal. The Committee was asked to determine which option should be pursued.

During discussion, it was queried whether a decision could be deferred until the next meeting, whereby further details in relation to budget reviews currently taking place within each authority would be known. It was noted that if this approach were followed, the issue of timing would become a significant factor, particularly in relation to delivering savings and for staff facing redundancy. It was highlighted that it was in the Committee's remit to make a decision and for that decision to be taken back to each of the partner authorities. Reference was made to the Committee's Terms of Reference in respect of this point. Owing to the potential savings and impact upon service delivery, it was proposed that option two be selected.

Clarification was sought with regards to the number of staff redundancies if option two was selected. It was explained that 2 F.T.E. posts would be removed.

It was explained that the options presented had resulted from significant discussion with all partner authorities, and although the proposals would impact upon delivery of the Archives Service, a number of counter-balance arrangements, as previously indicated, would be introduced in order to minimise any such impact.

Members discussed the proposals. On the proviso that further discussions be undertaken if impacts of the preferred option did not accord with the budget review work currently being undertaken by partner authorities, option two was agreed.

The representative from the Friends of Teesside Archives queried the position of any monetary donations in respect of the 2012-2013 Archives Service budget and related savings. It was explained that any donations received would be kept separate from the budget savings made.

Disappointment was expressed that the Archives Service, like many others, was being hit during these difficult economic times. It was felt that the service was valuable and that hopefully in due course focus could return to service improvement and development rather than service cuts.

A short discussion ensued in relation to archives material becoming accessible online. The Archives Manager explained that royalties would be gained by making records available online, which would increase both income and visitor numbers for the service.

The Archives Manager highlighted that visits to the Teesside Archives building could be arranged for any Members of the Committee wishing to attend.

ORDERED

That on the proviso that further discussions be undertaken if impacts of the preferred option did not accord with the budget review work currently being undertaken by partner authorities, option two be agreed.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

To allow the service review to progress and savings to be made, as outlined in the submitted report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday, 26 January 2012 at 10.30a.m. in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough.

ORDERED

That the information, as presented, be noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Friends of Teesside Archives

The representative from the Friends of Teesside Archives Group provided the Committee with information in respect of a project currently being undertaken. It was explained that the purpose of the initiative was to increase the Friends' involvement with all of the partner authorities. Catalogues detailing the materials and services available in respect of Teesside Archives would be produced for each authority. A file created for Hartlepool Council was displayed to members. It was hoped that production of the information would generate more visits from each authority area. The Committee welcomed the work being undertaken.

ORDERED

That the information, as presented, be noted.