

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 26 April 2012.

****PRESENT:**

Councillor S Clarke (Substitute – Redcar & Cleveland Council), Councillor K Dixon (Stockton Council) and Councillor C Rooney (Middlesbrough Council).

****OFFICERS:**

M Braithwaite, J Brittain, M Freeman, R Hobbins, C Lunn and D Worthington.

****ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Hannon (Redcar & Cleveland Council) and Councillor Hill (Hartlepool Borough Council).

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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.

During discussion, as the issue of quoracy had arisen on numerous occasions over previous years, concern was expressed that this continued to be an issue. It was felt that late apologies and absenteeism was of great detriment to the workings of the Committee, with progression of key issues and decisions often being delayed. Consideration was also given to the potential impact upon those working for The Teesside Archives Service.

Further to discussion at previous meetings of the Committee, it was highlighted that with regard to changes to Governance arrangements, work had progressed. A report had been submitted and would be discussed under agenda item 6 – Proposed Revised SLA for Joint Archives Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the information, as presented, be noted.

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 26 January 2012 were submitted.

RECOMMENDED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

BUDGET OUTTURN 2011-2012 AND BUDGET APPROVAL 2012-2013

The Head of Library Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to a) update Members on the final outturn of the 2011-2012 revenue budget, and b) to seek approval of the proposed 2012-2013 budget for Teesside Archives.

Appendix 1 of the submitted report showed the revenue expenditure to the 31 March 2012. It was explained that 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.

The commitment that was given to achieve an in-year saving of 10%, prior to the review, had been achieved.

Appendix 2 indicated the proposed budget for 2012-2013 and reflected the changes made following the Teesside Archives Service review that had been undertaken in 2011-2012. The contributions from each authority reflected the population based on the mid-year estimates for 2010. It was noted that the contributions from each authority changed on an annual basis.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) That the expenditure on the 2011-2012 budget be noted.**
- (ii) That the proposed budget for 2012-2013 be approved.**

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

To enable the budget for 2012-2013 to be set.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2012 – MARCH 2012

The Archives Manager presented a report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the performance of Teesside Archives for the period January 2012 – March 2012.

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 1,345. A breakdown was shown in Appendix 1 of the report. It was highlighted that following increased effort to improve performance, visitor figures had, in comparison to last year, increased by 18%.

Details were provided in respect of document issues, acquisitions, outreach activity and conservation work that had been carried out. Mention was made of the difficulties encountered in carrying out school group activities for reasons pertaining to financial pressures, SATs examinations, seasonality and specific educational themes. Regarding the two latter points, the examples of Victorian-related study and local interest in the Centenary of the Transporter Bridge were given. Particular reference was also made to the use of social networking sites such as Historypin in reaching different and wider audiences. The Archives Manager indicated to the Committee that a tour of Teesside Archives would take place after the meeting. The Education Officer would be available to answer any questions in relation to the outreach work being carried out.

Details regarding the digitisation of parish records and work being undertaken by Archives volunteers were provided in the submitted report. It was hoped that work being completed with Find My Past in digitising parish records would generate revenue for the Archives Service. Reference was made to a Teesside University student who had recently completed a placement cataloguing the papers of Mo Mowlam. The student would continue to work at the Archives as a volunteer, as well as undertaking outreach work within the local area.

In response to a query regarding specific events and activities undertaken, it was indicated that an exhibition held last year in relation to the Royal Wedding had not been met with a very high response. Work was currently being carried-out in relation to the London 2012 Olympics. With regard to sporting records, although there was not a high number of sporting records currently held by Teesside Archives, a film would be shown on the same weekend that the Olympic torch was scheduled to pass through Middlesbrough in order to commemorate the event. Mention was made of Ayresome Park's historical links to the World Cup.

In terms of being reactive to national events, it was indicated that staff at the Archives Service would, where possible, do their utmost to deliver services to those people showing an interest in particular events.

The representative of the Friends of Teesside Archives informed the Committee of work that the group had been undertaking. A number of outreach talks/presentations had been carried out across the local area, with specific focus on relevant archives material for each area being made.

Regarding the cataloguing and digitisation of records relevant to each partnering authority, it was explained that the cataloguing and digitising of records for Hartlepool had been completed. The material would be forwarded to Hartlepool in due course.

RECOMMENDED

That the performance report for January 2012 – March 2012 be noted.

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

To acknowledge quarter 4 performance.

PROPOSED REVISED SLA FOR JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Further to previous discussion regarding quorum issues, the Library Services Manager presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide members with a period of consultation on the proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) document, before a final proposal would be presented at the 26 July 2012 meeting of the Committee.

Following discussion at previous meetings of the Committee, it was agreed that the SLA for the Joint Archives Committee would be reviewed. A draft revised SLA was attached at Appendix 1 of the submitted report. It was explained that in order to ensure that any amendments could be incorporated into the draft document prior to submission of the final proposals at the next Committee meeting, the consultation period would end on 31 May 2012.

In response to a query regarding the title of the service, it was clarified that irrespective of any changes made to the SLA, the service would continue to be known as 'The Teesside Archives Service'.

The Senior Governance Officer informed the Committee that any changes made to the SLA would need to be reflected in the Committee's Terms of Reference. Copies of the current Terms of Reference were tabled for Members' perusal.

With regard to option appraisal, a number of suggestions were outlined to the Committee in terms of identifying potential ways forward. These included: increasing the number of named

substitutes for each authority to up to three; allowing for any three Members of the Committee to form a quorum; and decreasing the number of meetings from four to one - the Committee would meet once per year in February in order to agree the budget. There would, however, be provision for meetings to be called at other times, if required. It was felt that a March meeting, as previously suggested, would be too late in terms of incorporating budget-related decisions into each Council's financial cycle; Members acknowledged this point.

It was highlighted that in accordance with the Committee's current Terms of Reference, the Joint Committee had full power to make further rules regarding its proceedings and the conduct of its business, and to vary such rules, provided that meetings where decisions were being made were quorate, i.e. four Members or their substitutes were in attendance, and that at least three members voted in favour of the resolution. Emphasis was placed on the 26 July 2012 meeting being quorate in order to ensure that a decision regarding the final proposals could be made.

A discussion ensued with regards to the proposals. It was indicated that it would perhaps be more workable to reduce the number of meetings down to one and the quorum figure to three.

It was suggested that the impact of portfolio changes and the current circumstances facing partnering authorities could have been responsible for non-attendance, and that once these issues had been resolved, quorum could perhaps be achieved. Reference was made to previous attendance figures and the number of meetings that had been inquorate over the past few years. It was felt that despite these issues, the Archives Service had continued to operate well, though difficulties had been experienced by the deferral of some significant decisions.

A query was made in relation to substitution and Non-Executive/Cabinet Members. It was explained that because the Committee was an Executive Committee with delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of each partnering authority's Executive/Cabinet, any named substitute must have been an Executive/Cabinet Member.

Regarding the suggestion that one meeting be held per year, in February, in order to agree the budget, Members recommended this, with the proviso that other meetings could be scheduled, as appropriate, and that stipulation be made that a representative of each partnering authority must be available to attend the meeting.

Regarding the suggestions to increase the number of named substitutes and reduce the quorum number to three, Members recommended these.

In light of the recommendations made, amendments would be made to the Committee's Terms of Reference and the final proposed SLA, which would be forwarded to the 26 July 2012 meeting for ratification. Any further comments received during the consultation process would also be implemented into the final proposals.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) That changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference and proposed draft SLA be incorporated into the final proposals and forwarded to the 26 July 2012 meeting of the Committee for ratification.**
- (ii) That further comments regarding the proposed draft SLA be forwarded to the Library Services Manager by 31 May 2012.**
- (iii) That the information, as provided, be noted.**

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

To progress development of a revised SLA for the Joint Archives Committee.

MEETING DATES 2012-2013

With regard to the 2012-2013 Municipal Year, subject to ratification of the recommendations made in respect of the draft SLA proposals, arrangements had been made for meetings of the Joint Archives Committee to be held at 10.30am in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough on the following dates:

Thursday 26 July 2012
Thursday 25 October 2012
Thursday 17 January 2013
Thursday 25 April 2013.

RECOMMENDED

That the information, as provided, be noted.

REASON

The recommendation was supported by the following reason:

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.