

**EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**Joint Archives Committee Report - Archives Accreditation Scheme**

**Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities**

**Director Kevin Parkes**

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

---

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the implications of the introduction of the scheme.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That members note the implications

**IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?**

3. It is over the financial threshold (£150,000)   
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards   
Non Key

**DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE**

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

Non-urgent   
Urgent report

If urgent please give full reasons

## **BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

5. The introduction of the Archives Accreditation standard by The National Archives will begin in 2013 and services will be expected to achieve the standard to maintain their status of Place of Deposit for Public Records. There will be a period of grace to allow services to bring their working practices up to this standard by 2017.
6. This report outlines what the service has to do and some actions that will need to be taken in all four boroughs to achieve this standard.
7. The main area of concern for Teesside Archives lies in the fact that it currently does not have any provision for caring for 'born digital' records and records that are digitised by staff and volunteers. There are financial implications as investment in IT systems will be needed in order to care for these records. All local authorities will be creating records in this way and they must be cared for in the same way that traditional paper records have been cared for in the past.
8. Better records management procedures are needed to ensure that each local authority retains the correct material. At present there are no systematic procedures in place and vital records are lost. An example being school admission records that prove people were educated in the UK so they can work abroad. The recent Hillsborough enquiry illustrates the importance of retaining Public Records such as inquest papers.
9. The condition of the current building also falls short of the standard deemed necessary for storing archives. The building is expensive to maintain and suffers from problems that sometimes have health and safety implications. There is no access by lift to some of the strong rooms and the lift was out of order for 6 weeks in 2012 due to problems with acquiring replacement parts. This had a knock on effect for the public service as some items stored are too large and heavy to be moved safely by staff with use of a trolley. Other problems include an inefficient heating system and the need to install flood alarms in the basement or move the records currently stored there to more appropriate space on the upper floor of Exchange House.
10. The National Archives categorises Teesside Archives as a 'large' service, under that assessment the staffing levels are inadequate to deliver the expected outreach and education programmes. However, working in partnership across the Tees Valley with libraries and museums should help overcome this.
11. The value of the Archives Service also needs to be included in corporate strategies and plans such as the Heritage Strategy that Stockton Council has in place.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IA)**

12. N/A

## **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. N/A

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

14. There are no financial, legal or ward implications, at the present time. However, there is a need to note the likelihood of future financial investment in IT systems and accommodation costs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

15. For members to note the following recommendations:
  - Future investment in IT systems to manage born digital records.
  - Better records management practice in all boroughs.
  - Investigate the possibility of moving to new premises or invest in current building.
  - Maintain staffing levels and improve partnership working.

## **REASONS**

16. To inform members of recommended actions needed for the service to reach the necessary standard.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/accreditation.htm>

**AUTHOR: Ruth Hobbins**

**TEL NO: 01642 727732**

---

*Address: Teesside Archives, Exchange House, 6 Marton Road, Middlesbrough.*

*TS1 1DB*

*Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>*