

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 30 August 2012.

PRESENT: Councillors D Budd (Substitute – Middlesbrough Council), K Dixon (Stockton Council), J Lauderdale (Substitute – Hartlepool Council) and C Massey (Substitute – Redcar & Cleveland Council).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

OFFICIALS: J Brittain, M Freeman, R Hobbins, C Lunn, S Vickers, M Walker and D Worthington.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Hill (Hartlepool Council), O Peters (Redcar & Cleveland Council) and C Rooney (Middlesbrough Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point of the meeting.

12/7 APPOINTMENTS OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2012/2013

In accordance with the agreed protocol for the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair on a rota basis, the chairmanship transferred to the Member representative from Stockton Council. The Member representative from Redcar & Cleveland Council, the authority next in rotation for the Chair, accepted the appointment as Vice-Chair of the Committee on behalf of Councillor Peters.

ORDERED

- 1. That Councillor K Dixon be appointed as Chair of the Joint Archives Committee for the Municipal Year 2012-2013.**
- 2. That Councillor O Peters be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Joint Archives Committee for the Municipal Year 2012-2013.**

REASON

The decisions were supported by the following reason:

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

12/8 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Joint Archives Committee held on 26 April 2012 and 26 July 2012 were submitted.

ORDERED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

12/9 REVISED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE - REPORT OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES MANAGER

The Head of Library Services explained that following discussion at the Joint Archives

Committee meeting on 26 April 2012, and the period of consultation following this, which ended on 31 May 2012, Appendix 1 of the submitted report showed the resulting revised proposal for the SLA, and Appendix 2 the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee. The report had originally been due to be considered at the 26 July 2012 meeting of the Committee, however due to a quorum not being achieved, it was deferred to this meeting for consideration.

It was highlighted that if the proposed changes were agreed, the main alterations to the SLA and Terms of Reference would be as follows:

- The Joint Archives Committee would meet only once per year, in February, to agree the budget, but provision would be made for meetings to be called at other times;
- Each Council must appoint at least one deputy and nominate up to three persons whom may act as a deputy (substitute); and
- Any three members of the Joint Archives Committee would form a quorum.

Although it was proposed that the Joint Archives Committee would only meet formally once per year, the Officers for the Library Services in each authority would meet on a regular basis during the year to discuss both progress and development of the Teesside Archives Service.

It was highlighted that if the revised SLA and Terms of Reference were approved, these identified changes would take immediate effect.

Concerns were expressed from a representative of the Friends of Teesside Archives group that if only one Committee meeting was scheduled per year, there would be a lack of opportunity to offer input to discussions regarding the Archives Service, and/or to raise any issues directly with the Committee. In response to these concerns, it was explained that the Archives Manager would continue to hold regular meetings with the Friends group, where any matters could be raised and discussed and/or referred back to the Committee, as appropriate. It was highlighted that under the First Schedule of the Revised Agreement, additional meetings to consider urgent business could be convened as required.

Members considered the revised SLA and Terms of Reference and agreed to the changes proposed. It was reiterated that the changes would come into immediate effect with the next meeting of the Committee being held in February 2013, unless any urgent business were to arise in the interim.

ORDERED

That the revised SLA and Terms of Reference be approved.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

To ensure the future operation of the Joint Archives Committee.

12/10 **BUDGET UPDATE REPORT - REPORT OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES MANAGER**

The Head of Library Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to update members on the expenditure for April to June of the 2012-2013 revenue budget.

Appendix 1 of the submitted report showed the revenue expenditure to 30 June 2012. It was explained that there was an under-spend on the staffing budget due to a staff vacancy within the Archives Service. The vacancy had been advertised internally, however as a suitable appointment could not be made, an external advert would be placed.

Following completion of the service review in March 2012, the resulting ER/VR cost to the service was £6,781.00. The cost would be apportioned out for each Council and the final quarter payments would be adjusted to reflect the required payments, which were outlined as follows: Hartlepool Council - £1,103.00; Middlesbrough Council - £1,700.00; Redcar &

Cleveland Council - £1,657.00; and Stockton Council - £2,321.00.

The quarter 1 invoices would be issued according to the amounts indicated in Appendix 1.

A query was raised in relation to the derivation of the figures. It was explained that these were based on mid-year population estimates from the previous year, therefore marginal adjustments to the figures could be expected each year.

ORDERED

That members note the expenditure on the 2012-2013 budget.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

For members to approve quarter 1 expenditure.

12/11

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR APRIL 2012 - JUNE 2012 - REPORT OF THE ARCHIVES MANAGER

The Archives Manager presented a report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the performance of Teesside Archives for the period April 2012 - June 2012.

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 925, compared to 1,833 for the same period last year. A breakdown was shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

It was indicated that the drop in visitor numbers reflected the move of the microfilmed family history material to Middlesbrough Reference Library. It was explained that, because the Central Library was open six days per week, the purpose of the move was to facilitate accession to the microfilmed material. In response to a query, it was indicated that in the time since the material had been moved, visitor numbers to the Library had slightly increased.

It was commented that a high standard of service was being offered to those accessing the microfilmed material at the Library, however the space that had been made available could have been improved. It was explained that this could perhaps be looked at in the future, however unless sufficient finances could be achieved, further expansion to the Library building in order to better accommodate the microfilmed material would be difficult.

The number of documents issued during this period was 1,937, which remained constant despite the cut to the Archives opening hours. The new system appeared to be working reasonably well, although a few minor complaints had been received.

Details regarding deposits/acquisitions, outreach work, volunteer activity and conservation work that had been carried out were provided in the submitted report.

Further reference was made to the decline in visitor figures in relation to online accessibility to archived material. It was explained that, nationally, Archives Services were reducing their opening hours. It was felt that there was an expectation for material to be made available online; Teesside Archives had been working with 'Find My Past' in order to provide digitised records.

In response to a query, it was indicated that an annual visitor survey was undertaken; it was suggested that this be forwarded to the Committee in the future.

A discussion ensued with regards to visitor figures and how these could be improved. Suggested ways included: undertaking work in other areas of interest and raising awareness of this - the examples of cataloguing Stockton Title Deeds and Thornaby Planning

Applications were given; carry-out further outreach work with community and other groups; loan items from the partnering authorities and display these accordingly; undertake theme-specific events; and increase partnership working and the use of other channels such as social networking and Borough-specific publications.

Reference was made to the review of the Archives Service and the vacant Archivist post. It was felt that these had taken time away from focusing upon the progression of the Service, however, now that the review had been completed and the Archivist post was being advertised externally, focus could now be resumed.

ORDERED

That members note the performance report for April 2012 - June 2012.

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

For members to acknowledge quarter 1 service performance.