

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 5 September 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors N Wilburn (Chair), G Hall, C Quartermain and M Thompson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: A Metcalfe, local democracy reporter (Gazette)

OFFICIALS: S Blood, R Hobbins, M Harvey, G Ptak, E Tennant and A Allen.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None declared

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

18/1 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 were accepted as a true record.

18/2 ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

The Head of Archives presented a letter from the Accredited Archive Service, which had awarded Teesside archives with a provisional award. The Accreditation service congratulated Teesside Archives on its high range delivery across its remit, but acknowledged its difficulties in terms of premises, and therefore the award was provisional due to this factor.

The committee congratulated the service on its excellent achievement and acknowledged that were three issues which needed to be addressed:

1. Premises
2. Digital archives
3. Consultation

AGREED- that the position be noted.

18/3 UPDATE ON TEESSIDE ARCHIVES BUILDING

Martin Harvey, Community Infrastructure Manager updated on the committee on the current provision of the Archives building.

The Committee were aware that at present, there were problems with the current provision. Collections were kept well but there were issues with storage.

Over the past 6 months , proposals had been put forward.

The first was to the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the second to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Director of Culture, Communities and Communications outlined that the Combined Authority had allocated their funded to three major projects and although they were excited about the archives, at present there was no funding to allocate to this project.

The Community Infrastructure Manager outlined that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had suspended their grant programme until January 2019, and therefore a grant application was being developed for this time, focusing on priorities and ensuring it meets all the criteria of the

funding bid.

Nevertheless, the bids were being developed so that when funding was available, the bid could be submitted at the earliest convenience.

The committee were made aware that the bids focused on the Story of Tees Valley, looking at identify and developing a narrative. The Archives was a fundamental part of this story and had heritage at the heart of their story.

The bid to the Combined Authority would fit with the City of Culture 2025 bid, whereas the bid to the HLF would focus on the importance of the archives in maintaining heritage and history across the town.

The Director of Culture, Communities and Communications further added that the Mayor of the Combined Authority chaired a steering group regarding Tees River, and the profile of Teesside Archives had been raised to this group.

AGREED: That the position be noted and a further update report be presented to the committee in March 2019

18/4

BUDGET REPORT

The Head of Archives presented a report to update members on the outturn for the 2018-19 revenue budget for Teesside Archives.

Agreed

That members note the outturn for the 2018-19 budget and expenditure so far.

18/5

DIGITAL PRESERVATION PROPOSAL

The Head of Archives presented a report the purpose of which was to request additional funding to allow for the provision of a digital preservation system to allow Teesside Archives to care for digital records to recognised standards.

The report outlined that Teesside Archives required additional funding to allow for the provision of a digital preservation system so the service can care for digital records to recognised standards. While systems and processes for the management of paper records have been in place for decades, the management of digital records presents an entirely new challenge. Born digital and digitised records are currently stored on a variety of servers and hard drives without any provision for their long-term preservation. The service is not able to adequately provide access to these records and cannot offer safe storage to records created in digital formats by the four Teesside Boroughs such as Council Minutes and reports.

Teesside Archives has limited staffing and resources and requires an increase in funding to allow for the procurement of a dedicated digital preservation solution. This web hosted solution would provide 100% data integrity and file format preservation to ensure the records will remain accessible in the long-term.

Online access to selected digital resources would revolutionise the use of key collections for people living in the four Teesside Boroughs and wider communities reducing the need for people to travel into Middlesbrough to benefit from the service.

The provision of a dedicated digital preservation solution would allow the service to conform to best practice and save time and money by reducing the requirement for on-site digital storage while improving search functions to make the records easier to locate.

A general discussion took place regarding the necessity for digital records and there was a general consensus that a conservation would take place within each local authority to discuss how the funding would be allocated, and discussions to take place with information governance.

Agreed:

That members seek views from their authorities regarding the increase of funding to Teesside Archives (percentages previously agreed), which would approve a proposed budget increase of £12,000 per annum from 2019/20 to allow for the provision of an appropriate digital preservation system. With the set-up fees coming out of the existing budget.

REASON;

The budget of Teesside Archives would increase by £12,000 per annum and a digital preservation system would be procured.