

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 30 July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors J Beall, G Hall, S Kay and M L Smiles

OFFICIALS: A Allen, S Blood, M Freeman, R Hobbins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Gemma Pkat

19/1 **MINUTES- 5 SEPTEMBER 2018 AND 13 MARCH 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 and 13 March 2019 were submitted and approved as a true record.

19/2 **FUNDING FOR MANAGING BORN DIGITAL REPORTS**

The Archives Manager provided an update on managing Digital reports. The Chair outlined that he had been aware that at the meeting of 5 September 2018, a report was presented to the committee requesting additional funding to allow for the provision of a digital preservation system to allow Teesside Archives to care for digital records to recognised standards.

Following on from that meeting, it was approved that members sought 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.

The Archives Manager outlined that whilst 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. 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.

The Director of Culture, Communities and Communications advised that the Archives service had been awarded accreditation, however this was only awarded for 2 years (normally 5) on the proviso that there was an introduction of digital records and improvements / move of accommodation.

The panel had a general discussion and was agreed that local authorities would be approached regarding the increase of fees and that the business case would be circulated to members.

AGREED as follows:

That the local authorities be approached and a decision on the increase of fees to cover the £12,000 (split between the authorities) be approved.

REASON;

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

19/3 **TEESSIDE ARCHIVES - BRIEF HISTORY**

The Archives Manager provided a report to the committee advising members of the brief

background and history of the Joint Archives Service.

The Archives Manager outlined that the Joint Archives service was established in 1974 when Cleveland County was created and based in Middlesbrough Reference Library to serve the 4 boroughs. Archives were either stored in North Yorkshire or Durham County Record Offices or in various locations around Teesside. The archive service briefly moved to premises in Borough Road before moving to its current location in the mid-1980s. At that point the collections were brought together and continued to grow from there. By the early part of the 21st century the service was not keeping up with developments within the profession but in 2008 it secured a partnership with the University to carry out a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded project to catalogue the British Steel Collection.

This caused a change to the service with new staff, the introduction of computers and a modernising agenda began. The old paper catalogues have been put onto computer and are now being updated and moved online. Policies for managing the service have all been published and last summer we were awarded Accreditation which is granted to a small percentage of UK archive services. The award was provisional on the basis that problems with the accommodation were addressed, which has been ongoing issue since the building was deemed unsuitable in 2008. The other area where the service was currently weak was in managing born digital records – which prompted the business case that was submitted to the Joint Archives Committee in September 2018.

AGREED- That the report be noted

19/4 **JOINT ARCHIVES SERVICE UPDATE**

The Joint Archives Manager outlined that this was follow on from the background report, however provided some information on volunteering and projects.

In terms of volunteers, there were currently over 30 active volunteers in the archives. The volunteers all carry out different duties, depending on their experience and this can range from listing records to packing Archives.

Projects that the Archives have been involved in include, for example. steel stories, River Tees undiscovered and rememorial WW1.

AGREED as follows:

That the position be noted.

19/5 **JOINT ARCHIVES - FUTURE ACCOMMODATION UPDATE**

The Director of Culture, Communities and Communications provided a verbal update to the Joint Archives Committee in relation to the future accomodation.

The Director advised that the current building was not fit for purpose and in order to maintain their accreditation, the accomodation of the archives needed to be addressed.

The Director outlined a number of possible options that had been considered, these being:

1. Application to Heritage Lottery Fund
2. Look at the current spaces e.g. the library to see if there is suitable space for some of the archives.

It was discuseed that they wish for the Archives to be more accessible to the public. Feasibility studies have been undertaken and there was discussions of moving the archives to the Town Hall, however the building did not meet national stanards to house the Archives.

At present, the issue was still uncertain and future options would be discussed in the near

future.

AGREED as follows:

That the position be noted.

19/6

JOINT ARCHIVES FORMAL BUDGET

The Executive Director for Growth and Place submitted a report to update members on the outturn of the 2018-19 revenue budget for Teesside Archives and seek approval for the proposal budget for 2019-20.

The budget for 2018-19 showed an underspend of £12.133. The income target was met, no major expenditure has been required and there had been a vacant post. The proposed budget for the 2019-20 financial year (appendix a of the report) showed no increase to rent, rates or costs other than staff pay rises and it was projected that was an underspend, although it was hoped the vacant post would be filled in due course.

The members queried a number of the figures on the budget, however these would be clarified.

The Archives Manager also advised that the underspend of £12.133 could potentially be used to pay for the first year of the Digital records. This would be discussed as a possible option.

AGREED as follows:

1. **That subject to clarification, that the expenditure for 2018-19 budget be noted**
2. **That subject to clarification, that the proposed budget for 2019-20 be approved.**

19/7

FRIENDS OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES

The Archives Manager read out a letter which had been received from the Friends of Teesside Archives advising the Joint Archives Committee that the group had disbanded.

The panel were advised that the Archives did intend to develop a new group to support the Archives operation but a proposal would need to be brought to a future meeting.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to the former Friends of Teesside Archives and this would be coordinated by the Democratic Services Officer.

AGREED as follows:

1. **That the position be noted.**
2. **That a report in relation to developing a new group to support the Archives operation be brought back to a future meeting.**
3. **That a letter of thanks be sent to the former Friends of Teesside Archives.**