

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 20 October 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors J Beall, G Hall and S Kay

OFFICIALS: S Blood, R Hobbins, L Kibble, S Lightwing, R Horniman, C Nicol and E Tennant.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor M L Smiles

20/7 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were read and taken as a true record.

20/8 **BUDGET UPDATE**

The Archives Manager provided an update to members on the outturn of the 2020-21 revenue budget for Teesside Archives.

The report outlined that the budget showed that spending was on target for the current financial year. Income may be slightly down due to the service being closed because of Covid19, but the service should still reach its target. The budget paper (appendix A) showed an underspend accumulated over the previous two financial years that was intended to be spent on a system for managing born digital records. This sum should now be considered in light of the proposal set out to move the service and the revised option to manage born digital records (Appendix B). This proposal offers a way forward without incurring additional ongoing costs at this stage.

In light of Covid- 19, the Chair asked after the wellbeing of staff members within the Archives Service. The Manager outlined that some did find the initial working from home quite isolating, however the Head of Service had ensured her staff did not feel alone by having weekly catch up sessions and the Manager was going into the office once a week to do safety checks e.g. smoke detectors. A number of staff members worked in different roles during the pandemic e.g. on the phones and putting together food parcels for the most vulnerable. Most staff members have now returned to the office and working socially distanced.

During the initial few months of the pandemic, the Manager advised staff were able to concentrate of added items to their catalogues, and areas which may have been out on hold during busier times.

AGREED-

That members note the expenditure on the 2020-21 budget.

20/9 **TEESSIDE ARCHIVES ACCOMMODATION UPDATE**

The Director of Regeneration and Culture provided a verbal update to the Board in relation to the Archives accommodation.

The Director outlined that the building was not suitable and was currently deteriorating, and during the pandemic there had been some issues with the building. The issue has been raised on many occasions, however the prevention in any solution has been a reliable plan B. The Director has looked at other accommodation elsewhere, however these do not fit criteria/standards set out by the National Archives and without a considerable input of external funding, it is unlikely that a new build would be viable.

A detailed options appraisal has been developed, and this would be circulated in due course once funding had been finalised.

There were four options:

1. Alternative building within Middlesbrough
2. New building
3. Look at buildings elsewhere
4. Commercial storage.

Whilst a paper would be brought to the committee, the Director advised that option 4 was looking most favourable. This would mean storing the Archives outside the region, with having the front end based in Middlesbrough (staff would be based at home or in an alternative building). Members of the public would request archives, which would be delivered to Middlesbrough for collection.

The Committee queried where this archive would be kept and in response, the Director outlined that there were two types of storage: Standard and Heritage. The standard storage (which was felt would be adequate) was based in Spennymore and the Heritage was based in Oxford.

The cost of commercial storage would be more than the current Joint Archives service, however in the long run would be more cost effective and manageable once divided across the 4 local authorities.

AGREED-

That the update be noted and a further options appraisal be submitted to the Committee in due course.

20/10

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED- That the press and public be excluded

20/11

TEESSIDE DIGITAL ARCHIVES PROPOSAL

The Archives Manager provided a report in respect to a digital archives proposal.

During the meeting, the Chair lost connection and the meeting became inquorate and therefore the meeting was adjourned and would be reconvened at a later date to consider this item.

AGREED-

That a further meeting of the Joint Archives be convened to consider the exempt item on Teesside Digital Archives.