

## JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

<b>Date:</b> Tuesday, 14 January 2025
<b>Time:</b> 11.00 a.m.
<b>Venue:</b> Spencer Room, Town Hall

### AGENDA

1. Welcome and Fire Evacuation Procedure  
  
In the event the fire alarm sounds attendees will be advised to evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Joint Archives Committee - 2 October 2024 3 - 6
5. Tees Valley Heritage Feasibility Update 7 - 20
6. Interim Arrangements 21 - 28
7. Date and Time of Next Meeting - 5 March 2025 at 3.00 p.m.
8. Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered

Charlotte Benjamin  
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall  
Middlesbrough  
Monday, 6 January 2025

### MEMBERSHIP

Councillors C Male (Chair), S Nelson, C Richardson and P Storey

**Assistance in accessing information**

**Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Claire Jones, 01642 729112, [claire\\_jones@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:claire_jones@middlesbrough.gov.uk)**

**JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

**PRESENT:** Councillors C Male (Chair), C Cooke - Elected Mayor and S Nelson

**OFFICERS:** T Connor, R Hobbins, R Horniman, C Jones, G Kirby and M Ramsey

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors C Richardson and P Storey

24/33 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item / Nature of Business
Cllr C Cooke	Non-pecuniary	TVCA Cabinet Member
Cllr S Nelson	Non-pecuniary	TVCA Overview and Scrutiny Member

24/34 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE - 6TH MARCH 2024**

The minutes of the Joint Archive Committee held on 19 October 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

24/35 **TEESSIDE ARCHIVES EXECUTIVE REPORT INCLUDING FUTURE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

The Head of Culture and Archives Manager were in attendance and presented the Executive report to the committee.

The report outlined the following:

Collections

The service had taken significant records of Women’s Institute Teesside Federation, as they had to unexpectedly vacate their premises. Other deposits had included: deeds from Stockton Council including plans for Thornaby Aerodrome, Cricket Club material from Hartlepool and Wolviston, sketch books by Baker Hudson; librarian and curator of Dorman Museum (1889-1920’s), records from Guisborough Town Hall including title deeds from Brotton Estates.

Public Access and Outreach

The service had continued to be very busy and had worked to develop sessions that covered a wider area. It was noted that improved links with libraries had been developed.

Conservation and Preservation

It was noted that the following archives had been cleaned, packaged and repaired:

- ICI Billingham Nylon works photographs
- Large collection of W.I. records covering the whole region
- U/BLM photographic collection covering mostly Middlesbrough
- U/GTH early parchment documents with two examples of Royal seals from the Guisborough area
- Redcar and Cleveland Planning Department photographic collection
- Original building plans for The Crown in Middlesbrough
- West Hartlepool building plans

The Archives Manager reported that the dispute with Restore over the increase in fees to the service has been satisfactorily resolved and credit notes had been issued by Restore to cover the excess charges for which there wasn’t provision in the 5-year contract.

Digital Preservation

A way forward with respect to Digital Preservation had been discussed at the Archives Lead Officers meeting on 24 July. At the meeting, it had been agreed that there were three key actions for the Archives Service to progress:

1. To provide Local Authorities with clarity on what records need to be transferred to the Archives
2. To agree a plan for how long-term digital preservation is done across the four Local Authorities
3. To decide if the Archives Service is committed to born-digital preservation.

#### Marketing and Communication

The service had celebrated its 50th birthday on Friday 5 April with an event at the Dorman to which all heads of service and elected members were invited. The event received some press coverage and was attended by three Teesside Mayors as well as a representative from the Arts Council.

#### Key Performance Indicators

The visits to the archives from April to August 2024 were presented as follows:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>No. of Visitors</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Hartlepool	24	3.7%
Middlesbrough	269	41.8%
Redcar & Cleveland	77	12%
Stockton	77	12%
Other UK	189	29.4%
Rest of the world	7	1.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100%</b>

Total number of document issues (April – August 2024): 1,739

Total number of enquiries (April – August 2024): 1,327

Total number of volunteer hours (April – August 2024): 794

The Engagement Activity delivered by Local Authority from March to August 2024 was presented as follows:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>No. of People</b>	<b>% of total people</b>
Hartlepool	3	0.2%
Middlesbrough	332	21.9%
Redcar & Cleveland	372	24.6%
Stockton	316	20.9%
Tees Valley	306	20.2%
Other	185	12.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,514</b>	<b>100%</b>

A discussion took place in respect of the low Engagement Activity figure for Hartlepool. It was noted that although this was concerning, it was likely due to poor marketing and the unique cultural offer of Hartlepool. This would be investigated further.

#### Future Development of the Service

The Archive Service Accreditation application had completed in time for the July deadline and all policies and procedures were reviewed and updated. The accreditation validation visit took place at the Dorman Museum on 6th September. It was hoped the report would be available in conjunction with the feasibility study when considering future options for the service.

The Heritage Feasibility Study, commissioned by TVCA, was progressing and members of the Archives team had been involved in focus group sessions and as part of the wider stakeholder group to inform the future vision and strategy for the Archives Service. In the next stage of work, Focus (lead consultant) would hold conversations at a senior level with each Local Authority partner to ensure a strong understanding of the particular contexts that each Local Authority was working in, with regard to priorities, structures, budgets, staffing, governance etc.

The topics for these sessions would be:

- Organisational priorities and status of the heritage service within future plans
- Financial model and position of the heritage service / assets
- Property ownership / leasing
- Live / pipeline funding bids
- Capital needs / plans
- Workforce
- Challenges & possible mitigations
- Future ambitions

The timetable for the completion of the feasibility work was delayed and the final report was now expected in December. The Head of Culture has asked TVCA if the Archives options appraisal element of the wider feasibility may be available earlier than that.

In the context of the feasibility study being delayed and individual Local Authority concerns regarding next year's budget, a discussion took place around the implications of one or more Local Authority partner(s) exiting the Joint Archives Service agreement. It was agreed that more work needs to be done to understand the statutory responsibilities in relation to public records and potential costs of disaggregation.

The Head of Service reported that the Archivist, Lara Moon, is expecting a baby and will be going on maternity leave early spring 2025. A plan to cover priority areas of Lara's work will be put together and proposed via the Archives Leads Officers group. The Committee recorded their best wishes to Lara and family.

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#### **TEESSIDE ARCHIVES BUDGET**

The Archives Manager presented the Teesside Archives budget which included:

- Income
- Employees
- Premises
- Transport
- Supplies and Services

The 2024 / 2025 Budget Contributions per Local Authority were also presented.

A discussion took place in respect of the Middlesbrough allocation as the Middlesbrough figures were missing from the budget line. It was noted that this was due to Middlesbrough being the host Local Authority, therefore holding the budget. A note to explain the budget breakdown would be provided on the next Teesside Archives Budget Report.

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#### **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED**

It was agreed that an additional meeting of the Joint Archives Committee is to be scheduled for mid-January 2025, to enable the TVCA Feasibility Study to be considered and review the work done to better understand what any disaggregation of the service would look like, ahead of budget planning.

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## Joint Archives Committee, 14 January 2025

### Tees Valley Heritage Feasibility Update

#### 1. Background

In February 2024, Focus Consultants 2010 LLP were appointed by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) as the lead consultants to deliver the development of the Tees Valley heritage sector vision, feasibility study and business plan. In collaboration with the project team, consisting of Purcell Architects, Blue Sail Marketing and archive consultant Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan, Focus are reviewing the existing heritage offer and developing a comprehensive, compelling and sustainable heritage vision for the region. This includes finding a long-term solution for the Teesside Archives. This is especially important as the current arrangement for the Archives Service is most likely to lead to an ongoing reduction in the service for our customers/audiences and difficulties in meeting our statutory responsibilities.

#### 2. Work to Date

To date, significant progress has been made through:

- Extensive stakeholder engagement across the heritage, culture, and local authority sectors.
- Thematic analysis identifying emerging themes and priorities.
- Market appraisal to understand current positioning and future opportunities.
- Visioning workshops to explore ambition, delivery mechanisms, and the role of the archives.
- Development of emerging options for heritage delivery mechanisms and the future of the Teesside Archives.

#### 3. Emerging Themes and Thinking

- **Central Role of Teesside Archives:** Partners are united in the belief that the Archives should sit at the heart of the heritage delivery model for Tees Valley. There is a collective commitment to bold and ambitious thinking to ensure its sustainability.
- **Connecting Narratives:** A key opportunity is aligning the Archives with wider heritage narratives and place-based storytelling to create stronger, more meaningful connections across the Tees Valley region.
- **Shared Services:** Options for shared services, such as marketing, skills development, and programming, are being explored to build long-term resilience and realise economies of scale.
- **Sustainability Through Digitisation:** There is strong consensus that digitisation must be a core priority. Stakeholders agree that “we’ll have to do it at some point, so why not

now?” The importance of addressing born-digital materials as part of the Archive’s future offer has also been emphasised.

- **University Collaboration:** Teesside University has expressed readiness to support the Archives, particularly through their expertise in digital technologies and resources, which could play a key role in accelerating digitisation and enhancing access.

#### 4. Independent Assessment by the Consultant Archivist

##### a) Summary of Teesside Archives

This is a professionally run archive service that has significant potential to serve the Tees Valley region given the quality of its collections, the aspirations and knowledge of its staff and the possible opportunities with other heritage and cultural activity in the region. However, it is severely constrained by several serious factors including:

- A fragmented and disinterested governance and funding environment
- A lack of suitable and sufficient accommodation in which to serve the public, work effectively, collect and store Teesside’s archival heritage, access collections, generate income
- The lack of digital preservation system to assure the survival of Teesside’s modern experience as captured in digital records
- A very tight funding environment which constrains all public services
- Consequently a very restricted public service offer, low or no profile with funders and residents, and limited relationships

##### b) Cost of Teesside Archives (benchmarking exercise)

Benchmarking was undertaken against four comparators that provide a single archive service for multiple local authorities, with the funding split distributed on population size: Glamorgan Archives, Gwent Archives, West Glamorgan Archives, West Yorkshire Archives Service (WYAS).

**Table 1: Service Cost Comparison**

	Teesside Archives	Glamorgan	Gwent	West Glamorgan	WYAS
Population 2021 Census	569,369	1,112,100	587,700	380,800	2,351,600
No of funding authorities	4	6	5	2	5
Approximate size of archive collections Cubic metres	951	1,296	481	631	4,215
Gross revenue expenditure	£273,755	£908,297	£1,024,138	£330,750	£2,207,405



Population compared with TA	N/A	195%	103%	67%	413%
Collection size compared with TA	N/A	136%	51%	66%	443%
Size of gross revenue expenditure compared with TA	N/A	332%	121%	121%	806%
Cost/ head of population	£0.48	£0.82	£1.74	£0.87	£0.94
Average gross expenditure per local authority	£68,439	£151,383	£204,828	£165,375	£441,481
Average gross expenditure per local authority compared with TA	N/A	221%	299%	242%	645%

Looking at the gross revenue expenditure, it can be seen that Teesside Archives is funded to a significantly lower level than the other services (all of which have faced funding cuts over recent years) and has been for many years. The gross revenue expenditure cost (which will be offset by a small amount of income generation in all cases) of the archive service per head of population in the comparators is ranging from double to almost four times the amount provided to Teesside Archives. On an average basis the local authorities of Teesside pay a half to almost a seventh of other local authorities, even after on-going funding cuts in the comparator services.

**Table 2: Staff Cost Comparison**

	Total staff FTE	No of cubic metres per FTE	No of FTE staff per local authority
Teesside Archives	4.7	202	1.2
Glamorgan Archives	13.1	99	2.2
Gwent	15	32	3
West Glamorgan Archives	6.5	97	3
West Yorkshire Archives	20.9	202	4

Staffing at Teesside Archives is small compared with the four comparators. Bearing in mind that all the comparators have had staffing cuts over the last fifteen years which have left them

significantly understaffed, Teesside Archives still has the smallest staff in absolute and relative terms. Furthermore, three of the comparators' staffing includes staff dedicated to records management for the local authority funders, to assist the securing of local authority records into the archive service whilst Teesside Archives has no such staff member.

### **c) Opportunities for Investment into Teesside Archives**

- Wide ranging, relevant and detailed collections held by TA that have relevance of collections to communities and demographics right across the region – *'The material is truly unique – it tells the story of the locality but also dispel the myth that Teesside is a backwater e.g. Sydney Harbour bridge. It reveals a whole world of international trade and how work in Teesside informed business practice e.g. businesses funding hospitals'*
- Collection knowledge, flexibility and aspiration of staff to engage people with collections in new ways
- Professional skills of staff to collect and conserve collections, gather and structure information, and build networks
- Range of other heritage collections and cultural locations provides endless opportunities for joint working and engaging public experiences across the region
- Significant amount of capital investment provides attractive new locations in which TA can present its collections, work in partnership and create relevant and enriching public engagement
- Value of the TA collections to support the interpretation, maintenance and engagement with other heritage collections and landmarks in the region
- Impending anniversaries providing opportunities for TA to work with others and raise its profile e.g. Captain Cook tricentenary 2028, Middlesbrough's bi-centenary 2030
- Widening the partnership to include other stakeholders e.g. TVCA and Teesside University.
- TA has a very strong reputation with those partners and audiences with which it has worked
- TA is experienced of and is open to working with a diverse range of partners and audiences e.g. artists, poets, industry, etc
- Strong exemplars to learn from that demonstrate the impact of a dynamic, high profile archive service e.g. The Box (Plymouth), Archives+ (Manchester), The Story (Durham), The Hold (Suffolk)
- The reputation, profile impact and regional remit of TVMG
- Political and social agendas which TA can contribute to e.g. poverty proofing, literacy, visitor economy
- Wide range of potential local partners beyond the heritage sector to which TA could have relevance e.g. Age UK, Navigator North, English Heritage, National Trust
- TA can provide services that others in the region know they need e.g. digital preservation, looking after the products of oral history and community engagement, providing expert conservation advice
- Great potential in telling more 'hidden' and 'new' histories e.g. women, migrant populations
- TA providing a driver for cross-borough working in heritage more widely
- Libraries and museums in the region provide ready-made contact points with large numbers of residents who would be natural audiences for TA
- The strong reputation for engagement and flexibility of TA with individuals who have worked with TA

- Economies of scale by housing external archive collections in TA and using that move as a mechanism to sift out duplicate material

#### **d) Assessment of Different Building Options**

##### **New single site:**

###### *Description*

- The whole operation of TA is moved into a bespoke building, either free standing or attached to the building of an existing public service provider such as a museum or library. It is in a central or highly accessible location.

###### *Considerations*

- It is assumed that TA would still have access to the services of a borough council with regards to areas such as HR, IT support, marketing and building maintenance (including cleaning)
- It would need to be confirmed whether there would be any rates relief/exemptions.

###### *Benefits*

- If delivered with ambition can transform the profile and relevance of Teesside Archives as a civic service and visitor attraction
- Delivers a range of public spaces that can be used to deliver new services, develop new audiences and generate income
- If appropriately designed can have income generation capacity built in through attractive spaces for hire and functionality for different types of charged for events, digitisation suite for a commercial reprographics service
- Staff have appropriate working spaces so they can work efficiently and safely
- Collections are stored in conditions meeting professional standards so ensuring their longevity
- Supports TA to gain Archive Service Accreditation
- Drives efficiency for the boroughs by having a single archive service without duplication of elements such as a searchroom, public conveniences and seminar/group room.
- Can provide attractive, functional spaces for use by the other heritage services in the region.

###### *Issues*

- Having sufficient resources to meet the capital cost
- Having sufficient resources to meet the long-term staffing and maintenance of a large building and matching service
- Identifying a suitable site
- Could perpetuate TA's separation from other heritage and library services but could be mitigated if co-housed with other organisation(s)

##### **New dual site:**

### *Description*

- The public spaces and certain staff working spaces are moved into a bespoke building in a central or highly accessible location, which is either free standing or attached to the building of an existing public service provider such as a museum or library.
- The collections storage, digitisation suite and conservation laboratory are all on a separate site that can provide a large footprint site at a low cost i.e. out of town. The off-site storage facility will also include staff office so that staff can work on collections easily.

### *Considerations*

- It is assumed that TA would still have access to the services of a borough council with regards to areas such as HR, IT support, marketing and building maintenance (including cleaning)
- It would need to be confirmed whether there would be any rates relief/ exemptions

### *Benefits*

- If delivered with ambition can transform the profile and relevance of Teesside Archives as a civic service and visitor attraction
- May provide cost savings over a single site by having the storage block in a cheaper location – would need more work to establish.
- Delivers a range of public spaces that can be used to deliver new services, develop new audiences and generate income
- If appropriately designed can have income generation capacity built in through attractive spaces for hire and functionality for different types of charged for events, digitisation suite for a commercial reprographics service.
- Staff have appropriate working spaces so they can work efficiently and safely
- Collections are stored in conditions meeting professional standards so ensuring their longevity
- Supports TA to gain Archive Service Accreditation
- Drives efficiency for the boroughs by having a single archive service without duplication of elements such as a searchroom, public conveniences and seminar/group room.
- Can provide attractive, functional spaces for use by the other heritage services in the region.

### *Issues*

- Having sufficient resources to meet the capital cost
- Having sufficient resources to meet the long-term staffing and maintenance of a large building and matching service
- Retains TA's current inefficiency of having collections offsite which means:
  - All consultation of material by the public must be pre-booked
  - More staff time is taken up with retrieving material as staff will do the collecting themselves (unlike the current Iron Mountain situation where deliveries are undertaken by Iron Mountain)
  - Staff must go to the offsite store to research collections
  - Staff are taken away from the public site so are less available for face to face public service

- Requires management of two separate buildings
- Could perpetuate TA's separation from other heritage and library services but could be mitigated if co-housed with other organisation(s)

### **Multi-site (disaggregation of the service)**

#### *Description*

- Each council takes up operational responsibilities for archives relating to its geographic boundaries. Each council either develops a service and workspace and either builds a new store to professional archival standards or keeps its collection with a commercial heritage storage provider.

#### *Considerations*

- Each borough will have to be approved as a Place of Deposit by The National Archives in order to hold key 'public records' such as court and coroners' records. This is covered by achieving the Archive Service Accreditation Standard.
- There will have to be a massive amount of work to transfer ownership of collections from Teesside Archives to each borough. In many cases it may not be possible to contact the original donor to seek their approval.
- Whether to decide to have certain shared facilities e.g. a digitisation suite (to generate reprographics income and provide a full service as well as create a significant amount of digital content for online activity), where this would be sited and how its costs would be met.
- It is envisaged that the local services such as the libraries and museums will engage with the borough archives to maximise its use and reach to the public i.e. not all outreach will be undertaken by the small archive staff.

#### *Benefits*

- Collections are located in the vicinity and communities to which they relate
- Removes the governance complexity of a regional service
- Gives the borough complete autonomy over the direction of its archive service
- Provides opportunity to co-locate with local museums and libraries and integrate the archive into local services
- Provides opportunities for genuine cross borough working with the other archive services and wider heritage and library services

#### *Issues*

- How to decide on the responsibility of collections that relate to the whole region notably Cleveland County Council
- Where to site the conservator and the conservation laboratory and digitisation suite – this service is critical to the care of the TA archive collections as well as providing advice to museums and libraries holding their own archive collections. It is not financially practicable to have one conservation laboratory per site.

- Duplication of spaces and public services meaning higher capital costs and staff time e.g. the searchroom and its operation would require four sets of staff, of say an archivist and an assistant, rather than one set so less capacity for delivering other services
- Duplication of costs – buildings, staff, software licences, etc.
- Individual sites' staffing is below a critical capacity to do expansive work such as new types of engagement and funding bids.

Through the feasibility study, work is being done to look at the staffing implications of each option.

In addition, at the request of Hartlepool Borough Council, we have estimated the costs of withdrawing records from the Restore facility. The costs in Table 3 below are based on the withdrawal of 3,820 items belonging to Hartlepool. Please note that this doesn't include archives that cover more than one borough, where a separate agreement/budget would be required.

**Table 3: Cost of removal of HBC records from Restore**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>NET Cost</b>
Retrieval from Restore	3,820	£0.75	£2,865.00
Perm Out	3,820	£2.69	£10,275.80
Pallet and shrink	120	£5.00	£600.00
<b>NET Cost of Perm Out</b>			<b>£13,740.80</b>

Transport costs will be additional and likely to be in the region of **£2,000 - £3,000**. Future annual storage and staffing costs for the exiting individual LA would need to be determined by them separately and will vary depending on location and staffing arrangements.

### **e) Digital Preservation**

Digital preservation is the digital equivalent of an archive function for paper records. It is fundamental to ensuring the long-term survival, authenticity and accessibility of digital records through a whole range of structured, on-going activity<sup>1</sup> managed through a digital preservation infrastructure. It is a key element of Archive Service Accreditation.

Digital preservation is a proactive and thoughtful process that includes core activities on an on-going basis: providing the means to move the digital object into the digital preservation system; accurately identifies the technical format which drives conservation decisions; checks for corruption and change; creates new digital objects (through upgrading or software simulation) to

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. gathering digital archives together, identifying formats, describing content and technical make-up, on-going checking for viruses and corruption, 'normalisation' to prevent technical obsolescence, controlling access and alterations, maintaining the original bit stream, providing access, maintaining digital storage

ensure the item is always accessible despite technological changes; has a full description of its content, provenance and access restrictions; maintains the original digital object which can be returned to as necessary along with key technical metadata; stores the digital objects in a secure environment; sustains stable storage media and strategies; creates access copies and provides methods of access such as catalogues and viewing facilities; keeps an audit trail of all activity with the digital object to evidence its provenance and authenticity.

Teesside Archives does not have a digital preservation system. A previous bid by TA for installation and use of the Preservica system<sup>2</sup> was rejected by the funding boroughs as unaffordable in the long term. In the meantime, the boroughs have no means of ensuring the survival of their records, fulfilling their legal obligations under the Local Government Act 1972 to 'make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of their officers'<sup>3</sup> for the preservation and access of both digital and analogue records.

TA has sought to undertake basic activity as far as it can such as creating a Digital Asset Register but is unable to undertake any more meaningful activity.

The borough councils need to invest in a proper digital preservation system to secure their own records, and preserve the modern historical records of the region.

## 5. Accreditation of the Service

Following its application to remain an Accredited Service, Teesside Archives had confirmation in November that it has retained its Accredited status. This status is however provisional, and its retention depends on TA being able to satisfy some requirements by 7 November 2026 and on keeping the Accreditation Panel apprised of developments at the service in the interim.

The Accreditation Panel which made the award:

*"...recognised the challenges and uncertainty faced by the archive service in recent years and noted the move to new temporary premises and that the archive collections were held temporarily offsite in commercial storage. The Panel also noted that at the time of accreditation the archive service was awaiting the recommendations following a feasibility study regarding wider heritage provision in the Tees Valley and the decisions that would affect the future of the service, including premises and governance structures as a result of this."*

We are required to provide further updates on the heritage feasibility study and future development plans for the TA to National Archives in February 2025. Within the two-year term of the provisional award, we can complete the formal application to move to a full award.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://preservica.com>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/360902/constitutionsandethics/constitutionalarrangements/guidanceproper/>

## 6. Case Studies

During the Feasibility Study, examples of good practice and innovation within the Archives sector have been identified and discussed with stakeholders. More detailed information, specifically in relation to specific outcomes e.g. visitor numbers, is likely to be available later in January, but here are some examples gathered to date from which positive outcomes have been identified.

### a) The Story, Durham



The Story, located in Durham, is a cultural heritage attraction that opened to the public in June 2024 at a cost of £23m. Situated in the restored Grade II listed Mount Oswald manor house, with a new build extension, it combines historical architecture with modern facilities to celebrate the past, present, and future of County Durham. The Story houses County Durham Archives, Historic Environment Record, Durham Light Infantry Collection, Local Studies and Historic Registration.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/31599/The-Story-begins-as-new-attraction-opens-to-public> <https://www.thestorydurham.org/about/> <https://www.ryderarchitecture.com/project/the-story/>

### Digital Access and Engagement

The Story serves as a model for integrating digital access and interactive experiences in archival settings. The Story enhances accessibility to its extensive collections through several digital initiatives:

- **Search and Discover Space:** Equipped with interactive screens and 16 computer terminals, this area allows visitors to access digital content, including the Historic Environment Record (HER), collections databases, and popular records such as church registers and newspapers.
- **Online Collections Search:** A state-of-the-art online platform enables users to explore The Story's treasures remotely, featuring artificial intelligence capabilities to enhance the search experience.
- **Digitisation Studio:** A specialist studio dedicated to expanding the range of collections available digitally, ensuring broader access for researchers and the public.



## Visitor Experience

To make historical records more engaging, The Story offers:

- **Interactive Exhibitions:** Free, interactive exhibition spaces that bring to life the stories within the collections, providing an immersive experience for visitors.
- **Educational Workshops:** Designed to educate and inspire, these workshops draw on the combined collections and their fascinating treasures.
- **Events and Activities:** A diverse programme, including storytelling sessions, kids' takeover days, behind-the-scenes tours, and community projects, aimed at engaging a wide audience.

## Facilities

The Story provides purpose-built facilities to support its mission:

- **Collections Room:** A secure research area for viewing collection items from the strong rooms, available by appointment.
- **Café and Grounds:** A café offering a place to relax, with views over the historic manor house grounds, enhancing the visitor experience.

## b) Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre



## Overview

The Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre (HARC), located in Hereford, is a pioneering facility in the UK for the storage and preservation of archival materials. Completed in 2015, it was the first archive building in the UK to achieve Passivhaus certification – a quality assurance process for buildings that are designed and constructed to be energy efficient, setting a new standard for energy efficiency and sustainability in archival storage.

## Design and Construction

Designed by Architype, HARC was constructed with a focus on sustainability and cost-effectiveness. The building comprises two distinct sections: a thermally isolated repository for archival storage and an administration area that includes public research rooms, an education room, restoration lab, council offices, and exhibition space. The repository was built using monolithic concrete to ensure optimal thermal mass and airtightness, while the administration area features a timber frame construction, providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

## Sustainability Features

HARC's design adheres to the rigorous Passivhaus standard, which significantly reduces energy consumption. The building maintains stable internal temperatures and humidity levels, crucial for the preservation of archival materials, without relying on conventional heating and cooling systems. This results in operational savings of approximately 80% compared to similar facilities built to standard UK Building Regulations.

## Cost Efficiency

An analysis comparing a BREEAM Excellent design to a Passivhaus design revealed that the Passivhaus option was not only more energy-efficient but also more cost-effective, with a 4% capital cost saving. This demonstrates that sustainable building practices can align with budgetary constraints, offering long-term financial benefits through reduced operational costs.

## c) The Box, Plymouth



## Overview

The Box, located in Plymouth, is a pioneering cultural institution that houses five heritage services including archives, museum and art gallery into a single site. Opened in 2020, at a cost

of £40m, it serves as a central hub for Plymouth's heritage collections, contemporary arts, and archives, offering a dynamic space for exhibitions, research, and community engagement. The Box serves as an exemplary model for integrating multiple cultural services within repurposed historic buildings while embracing digital innovation.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Box,\\_Plymouth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Box,_Plymouth) <https://www.theboxplymouth.com/about-the-box>

### Repurposed Building

The Box was created by transforming several historic structures, including the Grade II listed former City Museum and Art Gallery, Central Library buildings, and St Luke's Church. These historic buildings were sensitively integrated with contemporary extensions to create a cohesive, modern facility that respects and preserves Plymouth's architectural heritage.

### Digital Excellence

The Box demonstrates a strong commitment to digital innovation through several key initiatives:

- **Digital Preservation:** It has implemented robust strategies to ensure the longevity and accessibility of digital records, developing preservation policies and employing advanced technologies to safeguard its collections.
- **Online Access:** The institution offers extensive online access to digitised records, enabling researchers and the public to explore its collections remotely via a comprehensive online catalogue.
- **Digital Engagement:** Through virtual exhibitions, educational resources, and social media, The Box makes its archives more engaging and accessible to diverse audiences.

### d) The Hold, Suffolk



Opened in 2020 at a cost of £17m, The Hold is located on Ipswich's Waterfront (part of the University of Suffolk campus) and is home to the Suffolk Archives and the John Blatchly Local

Studies Library, as well as an exhibition gallery, shop, café, auditorium (seating 200) and seminar/learning/teaching spaces shared by the University of Suffolk. Many of its spaces are available for third party hire.

The Hold is a partnership between Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Archives and the University of Suffolk. It has received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, other national organisations, and local Suffolk heritage groups.

<https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/about-suffolk-archives/the-hold/>.

<http://www.prsarchitects.com/projects/arts-civic-education/hold-suffolk-archives>

Ends.

## Joint Archives Committee, 14 January 2025

### Interim Arrangements

#### 1. Service Level Agreement

The current Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the Teesside Archives Service was extended earlier this year, with the agreement of the JAC, to 31 March 2025. A one-year agreement was deemed to be appropriate at that time, on the basis that we were expecting to have the outcomes from the heritage feasibility work in October/November 2024 to inform what the governance structure needs to look like going forward. This work is however delayed and not expected until January 2025 so is likely to be presented to the JAC in full in March 2025.

Therefore, we are proposing that the committee agree a further one-year extension to the existing Service Level Agreement to 31 March 2026 to allow time for proposals around the future governance of the service to be properly considered. If in agreement, this will be done by a Deed of Variation exactly as before with the new date incorporated and signed by all four authorities.

We have previously discussed making changes to the existing SLA including around decision-making authority, however, as the JAC is an executive function of the council, a change of this nature would require an approval process beyond the authority of the Executive Members on JAC. It therefore seems reasonable to hold off making any fundamental changes until we know what's required to support a new vision and operating model for Teesside Archives.

Please see **Appendix 1** (Governance of Teesside Archives Memo 201224) for further detail from MBC's Legal Department on the current governance arrangements for Teesside Archives and how any changes to the SLA would need to be made.

#### 2. Budget Setting 25/26

It was agreed that there would be a discussion at JAC on 14 January about the Archives budget for 2025/26 on the basis that each authority would have a clearer idea of their respective budget situations at this point.

Budget setting for the Teesside Archives will start in January 2025 and we are not expecting any significant increases from 24/25. We will make an allowance for a pay award increase of 3% in salary costs. Restore costs should remain relatively steady as they have agreed to maintain their current/contracted fees and we are unlikely to be doing any major acquisition to incur significant additional storage costs.

We propose to meet with each of the Lead Officers to review the budget in January/February, in advance of bringing the final budget to JAC to approve in March 2025.

#### 3. Staffing Arrangements

##### a) Current Arrangements

The current staffing provision for Teesside Archives Service is shown in the table below.

Position	FTE
Archives Manager (qualified archivist)	1
Archivist	1

Conservator	1
Community Engagement Officer	0.5
Archive Supervisor	0.7
Archive Assistant	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.7 FTE</b>

*Current staffing levels equate to 1.2 FTE per local authority.*

#### **b) Archivist Maternity Leave**

In March 2025, Lara Moon (Archivist) will be taking maternity leave. In order to minimise additional costs during this period, we are proposing to employ a flexible arrangement to increase the hours of the Archive Assistant and Community Engagement Officer as and when required to provide support for the service. Where this incurs additional costs, over and above the agreed salary budget, we will utilise the New Burdens funding to cover those costs. This will limit any development work within the service and may require the service to carefully manage its acquisition policy in order not to overwhelm the team.

#### **c) Future staffing**

Future staffing arrangements should be considered in the context of the new operational model to be agreed by JAC further to the Heritage Feasibility report. Some initial work has been done on staffing provision for different options as part of the feasibility.

However, it is also clear from the benchmarking exercise undertaken by Elizabeth Oxborough-Cowan that resourcing of Teesside Archives is low compared to other shared local authority archives services and consideration should be given to specific areas of the service identified as a risk, such as digital preservation, to agree how we should progress and what resource this requires.

In addition to the existing staffing establishment, we are likely to require a full-time Digital Engagement/Archivist post (circa Grade J, £35,235 – 37,035) to work on bringing born digital records into the archives, as well as managing the public-facing digital platforms including the procurement of a new cataloguing system (our current system is being withdrawn in 4 years' time). This could be a fixed term post with very specific objectives whilst the longer-term plans are developed in detail. We would suggest approaching TVCA for support in this area and/or utilising New Burdens funding (current balance of £116,000). If we're in a position to put this in place in 25/26 it will also help to cover for the Archivist maternity leave.

#### **d) Storage**

The current 5-year Restore contract for storing the Teesside Archives collection ends in July 2026. There is provision in the contract to extend the contract up to a maximum of 5 x 12-month periods, however the procurement framework only allows a maximum length contract of 7 years in total i.e. to July 2028. There is no obligation for Restore to agree to an extension (although they are unlikely to refuse) and at that point they will be in a position to vary the fees. As they have already attempted to do that mid-contract it's almost certain that this will be proposed. So, it may be worth looking into reprocurring it as there may be better value in a new agreement or provider, since there is plenty of time until it expires.

On the assumption that we're unlikely to have secured a new Archive facility with on-site storage by July 2026, we have begun to explore storage options for an interim period. Unfortunately, it's a relatively small market in terms of companies that provide storage conditions to the National Archives Standard e.g. Deepstore and Upper Hayford.

Conversations have begun with other partners locally to assess if there's a desire for shared storage space, but the challenge will be about finding space that can meet the high standards required. We'll continue to explore options and aim to bring detailed proposals to the JAC in October.

**e) Funding**

Once we have a direction of travel for the Archives Service, we will be in a position to speak to prospective funders (e.g. TVCA, National Lottery Heritage Fund) about any support in the short, medium and long-term. Having a clear action/activity plan which will move us towards our agreed vision for the service will be imperative to securing investment.

**ENDS**

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# Memo

## Teesside Archives Governance

**20 December 2024**

**Author:** Clare Pattinson

**Subject:** Options for future governance of the Teesside Archives

### **Matter for Consideration:**

1. The Teesside Archives are currently managed through a joint committee of the four Teesside authorities with MBC as the lead authority. The Committee has limited impact upon the Archives operations and the current governance structure is considered to inhibit efficient and effective management of the archives.

### **Background Information**

2. Appendix 1 sets out a chronology of the Teesside Archives.
3. The JAC is a formally constituted joint committee comprising one executive member nominated by each member authority:
  - Stockton on Tees Borough Council
  - Hartlepool Borough Council
  - Middlesbrough Borough Council
  - Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
4. It has not been possible as yet to identify the resolution of MBC agreeing to the creation of the JAC or the acceptance of the lead authority role, however the same has been consistently identified as a joint committee within the Councils constitution at each review of the same. The Mayor has consistently appointed individuals to represent the Council on the JAC as this is an executive function of the Council.
5. The terms of reference of the JAC are to discharge the functions of the constituent authorities in respect of the maintenance of archives for the area. However, this presents challenges in respect of the size of the

archive, the lack of public engagement with it due to the majority of the archive being stored off site and the financial pressures on the constituent authorities.

6. As a result, enquiries have been made as to what, if any, assistance the Tees Valley Combined Authority ('TVCA') could provide. TVCA is currently undertaking a Heritage Feasibility Study and the future of the archives is to be considered as part of that project. Unfortunately however, it has not been possible to identify any reports in relation to that project on the TVCA website to date.

## **Key Issues**

7. The requirement to maintain archives is set out at section 224 of the Local Government Act 1972:

***224. Arrangements by principal councils for custody of documents.***

*(1) Without prejudice to the powers of the custos rotulorum to give directions as to the documents of any county, a principal council shall make proper arrangements with respect to any documents which belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of their officers.*

*(2) This section applies to a joint authority [ , economic prosperity board ]2[ or combined authority ]3[, combined authority or combined county authority]4[... ]5 as it applies to a principal council.*

8. The designation of the maintenance of archives as an executive function stems from the Local Authority (Functions and Responsibilities ) Order 2000/2853, which provides that functions are presumed to be executive in nature unless specified otherwise.
9. Section 6.15.1 of the Constitution gives the Mayor the ability to delegate executive functions, including to joint arrangements. These arrangements should be reported to Council on an annual basis, updated as necessary thereafter, in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.
10. To alter the existing Joint Archive Committee arrangements it would be necessary for the following steps to be completed:
  - a. Officers prepare an options appraisal taking into account the views of the JAC plus officers and the executives of each constituent authority;

- b. The options appraisal be presented to the JAC for consideration;
- c. JAC recommend a preferred way forward to the constituent council executives for consideration;
- d. Constituent council executives consider the recommendation and approve or reject it.
- e. In the event that it is proposed that TVCA joins the JAC, this will need to be approved by the TVCA but careful consideration should be given to the consequences of TVCA nominating any individual other than the Mayor to the executive, given that the TVCA executive comprises the leaders of each of the constituent authority.
- f. In the event that an authority withdraws from the JAC (upon service of not less than 12 months notice expiring on 31<sup>st</sup> March), the joint arrangements shall terminate and the provisions in respect of termination (costs, staffing, materials etc) shall take effect.
- g. The remaining authorities (plus the TVCA) may enter into a newly constituted agreement for the provision of archive services, which agreement shall be approved by the executive of each constituent council.
- h. The constitution of each constituent council will need to be updated to reflect the new arrangements, as will any schemes of delegation.

**Potential Legal and Financial Implications:**

The financial provisions surrounding termination of the existing JAC arrangements are set out within the JAC service level agreement.

**Recommendations and / or issues on which guidance is being sought:**

Given that notice must be given by 31 March 2025 to expire on 31 March 2026 in the event of withdrawal of an authority, it is recommended that consideration is given to this matter as a matter of urgency.

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