

# Future Development of Teesside Archives

## Introduction:

**Teesside Archives** was created in 1974 under Cleveland County to collect, catalogue, preserve and make accessible records and documents relating to the areas of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, and Redcar & Cleveland. The Archives mission is to celebrate and protect the area's rich heritage by using our collections to engage with local, national and international audiences.

Middlesbrough Council acts as the lead authority, employing the archive staff, whilst administration and finances are managed jointly between the four authorities via the Joint Archives Committee.

Records held in Teesside Archives relate a wide variety of subjects including:

- businesses and companies - including British Steel, ICI, Head Wrightson, Furness Shipbuilding etc., as well as many smaller firms
- churches, parishes, and other religious groups
- courts
- estate records - including the Pennyman Family of Ormesby Hall
- hospitals
- land ownership and deeds - including owners of the Middlesbrough Estate
- local councils and their predecessors – e.g. Cleveland County Council
- local organisations including charities, sports clubs, political parties, entertainment, etc.
- schools
- shipping

The collection comprises a range of record types including:

- correspondence files
- deeds
- financial records
- maps
- minutes
- oral histories
- photographs and negatives
- plans
- publications

The earliest record in the archive dates from the 12th century, but the bulk of the records date from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The archive continues to collect records up to the modern day.

In 2022, the archive moved out of its former premises in Exchange House, Middlesbrough, to a new home at the [Dorman Museum](#) just outside the town centre. Due to the limited space available in the museum, the bulk of the archive collection is temporarily held off-site by a third party ([Restore](#)) and recalled on demand. The current arrangement is only intended to run for five years (ending FY 2026/27), and therefore a longer-term plan for the future of Teesside Archives is required.

Teesside Archives will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024.

## What is the Purpose and Value of Archives Today?

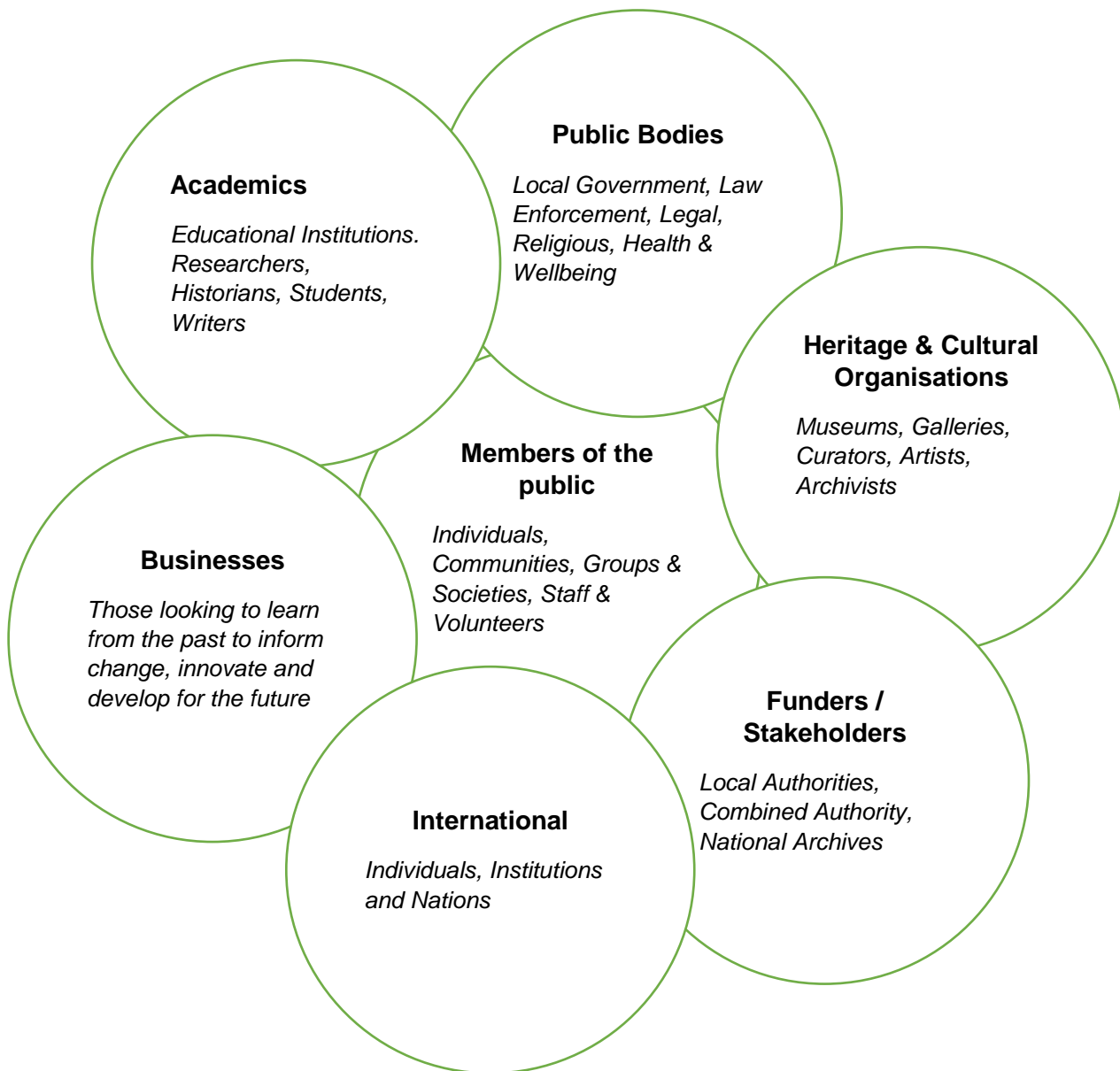
**Why are Archives important?**

*“Archives aren’t just about things already past; they will capture the histories of the present and the future.” National Archives*

<p><b>Archives encourage a sense of identity, place and community by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting the recollection &amp; sharing of memories</li><li>• Helping people discover more about their lives; past and present</li><li>• Promoting pride through learning about past achievements</li><li>• Giving value to people and events who have shaped our lives today</li><li>• Helping us to understand who we are</li><li>• Inspiring creativity and collaboration</li></ul>	<p><b>Archives preserve the past for current and future generations so that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Records can be called upon to research, learn, make decisions, answer questions and settle disputes</li><li>• Unique records are not lost</li><li>• People can access them</li><li>• The history of people and places is recorded and conserved</li><li>• We can engage with the past to inform our future</li></ul>
<p><b>Archives strengthen democracy and legal accountability by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing a true record of what’s gone before</li><li>• Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of our public organisations</li><li>• Holding organisations and individuals to account</li><li>•</li></ul>	<p><b>Archives create opportunities for learning by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering new ways to learn about the world around us</li><li>• Promoting a culture of knowledge</li><li>• Enabling research which supports change, innovation and efficiency</li><li>• Reflecting the rich diversity of society</li><li>• Creating excellent user-experiences</li><li>• Signposting to other opportunities for learning &amp; discovery</li></ul>

**Who are Archives important to?**

*'Archives provide evidence of activities which occurred in the past, they tell stories, document people and identity and are valuable sources of information for research.'* National Archives



### What impact do Archives have?

*'Archives have the power to change people's lives.'* National Archives

<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>THE ECONOMY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are more understanding of each other</li><li>• Have a greater sense of identity, community, pride and place</li><li>• Live enriched lives by discovering subjects of interest</li><li>• Feel more connected</li><li>• Positively change perceptions</li><li>• Are inspired to question, learn and create</li><li>• Gain valuable knowledge</li><li>• Experience improved wellbeing</li><li>• Feel a sense of justice</li><li>• Have trust in institutions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make better / evidential decisions</li><li>• Are more resilient</li><li>• Rely on true records</li><li>• Provide justice and/or reconciliation</li><li>• Harness heritage to: better connect with local communities;</li><li>• raise their profile; and develop products &amp; services</li><li>• Are more accountable</li><li>• Have improved governance systems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is boosted by an improved visitor offer and positive perceptions of place</li></ul>

## National Context

### Statutory Responsibilities

#### ***Local Government Act 1972***

The Local Government Act 1972 is the principal statutory obligation that underpins the archives service. Section 224 of the Act requires that "a principal council shall make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of their officers". Guidance on what constitutes proper arrangements was issued by the then DETR in 1999 and was issued to all local authorities running archive services. The guidance is essentially based on the provisions of:

- PAS198:2012 Specifications for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections
- BS4971:2017 Conservation and Care of archival Collections
- BSEN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage- New sites and Buildings Intended for the Storage and Use of Collections)
- Standards for Record Repositories by the Historical Manuscripts Commission
- Standards set by The National Archives
- A national code of ethics – Institute of Conservation's Professional Standards 2020 is followed in all aspects of collections care and conservation

Since the guidance was issued, the latter two documents have been superseded by the TNA *Standard for Record Repositories* and then by the Accreditation standard. Teesside Archives achieved provisional accreditation in 2018, and this is now due for review.

#### ***Parochial Records and Registers Measure 1978 (as amended)***

Teesside Archives is a Diocesan Record Office. The position is complicated because the service mainly holds parish material for the South Tees area (formerly Yorkshire) with some registers for Yarm and Thornaby. An agreement is in place with Find My Past and Ancestry that is a key income driver for the service.

#### ***The Public Records System***

Under the [Public Records Act 1958](#) (PRA), the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has responsibility for public records and the operation of the overall system. The PRA established the Public Record Office, now **The National Archives**. It sets out the delegated responsibilities of the Keeper of Public Records to safeguard and preserve public records and maintain the utility of the archive.

The PRA places responsibility for the safekeeping, selection and transfer of public records on the body that creates or holds them. It placed a duty on the Keeper to guide, supervise and coordinate the management of public records held by bodies subject to the PRA. In practice, the Keeper issues formal guidance such as the Records Collection Policy and promotes good practice in a variety of ways. The National Archives collects and publishes data on compliance and reports to the Secretary of State.

## ***Access to Public Records***

Until January 2005, access to public records was governed by the [Public Records Act 1958](#), and the [Public Records Act 1967](#). The [Freedom Of Information \(FOI\) Act](#) came fully into force in January 2005 and replaced those parts of the PRA which related to access to records.

Members of the public can ask to see information held by public authorities as soon as it has been created. The FOI Act gave people two new rights of access:

- the right to be told whether the information is held by the public authority
- the right to be provided with the information

## ***Places of Deposit***

Places of Deposit for public records are appointed to hold specific record classes in agreement with their parent authority under Section 4 (1) of the Public Records Act (1958). The most typical reasons for such an appointment are that:

- the records are of strong local interest and are best made available through a local archive service
- or the creating institution is the most appropriate location for ongoing use and access to the records and so they are retained there.

Places of deposit fall into three main categories:

- local record offices (usually borough or county archive services)
- government (e.g. research establishments or national museums)
- specialist (e.g. university or military archives)

In a small number of cases, specialist records (in subject matter or in format) are held within appropriate Places of Deposit.

The National Archives appoints Places of Deposit after inspection to ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the preservation of the records and access to them. We use the [Archive Service Accreditation](#) programme to ensure that Places of Deposit are maintaining standards.

## **Strategic Vision - Archives Unlocked**

Archives Unlocked is the Government's strategic vision for releasing the potential of archives. Our ambition is that archives inspire trust, enrich society and people's lives, and are open to all. Launched in 2017, [the vision document](#) explores what our core values and ambitions of **Trust**, **Enrichment** and **Openness** mean for archives. In summary:

**Trust:** People and institutions trust in the authenticity of archive records, and how they are preserved and presented

- Democracy and society are strengthened by scrutiny of the archival record, holding institutions and individuals to account.
- Archive users have confidence in the integrity and authenticity of records, and in the professionals who support their research.
- Services embrace the opportunities of technological change, ensuring confidence in both digital and physical records

**Enrichment:** Archives enhance and enrich our society intellectually, culturally and economically

- Our culture of knowledge and learning expands through new ways to discover and use archive material.
- Value in businesses grows through the use of archive material to support change, innovation and efficiency.
- People's lives are enhanced through their engagement with archive collections.

**Openness:** Archives cultivate an open approach to knowledge and are accessible to all

- Archives deliver an excellent user experience, enabling people to find, access and interpret archive records, whether digital or physical.
- The rich diversity of society is reflected in our archives' collections, users and workers.
- Archives are networked globally to maintain excellent practice and open new possibilities for institutions and users.

## Regional & Local Context

### **Tees Valley Combined Authority – Framework for Investment in Heritage**

TVCA is currently developing a framework for investment into heritage to drive economic growth within the Tees Valley.

Under the working title of ‘Our Ordinary is Extraordinary’, the framework seeks to support a sub-regional approach to celebrating the shared and connected heritage of our remarkable place, utilising TVCA’s existing investment pillars to develop a heritage offer worthy of national and international recognition.

### *Proposed Investment Framework for Heritage*

		← Priorities →			
Investment Pillars	<b>Sector Growth &amp; Sustainability</b>	Networks, Skills & Pathways	Strengthened business models		
	<b>Destination Product Development</b>	Connected narratives: exhibitions, wayfinding and public realm	Enhanced visitor experience	Contemporary and distinctive offer, enhanced by digital	High quality infrastructure
	<b>Festivals &amp; Events</b>	Celebrated landmark moments	Embedded stories of place		
	<b>Profile Raising</b>	(Inter)nationally relevant offer	Landmark sites / collections	Itineraries & packages	

Within the early iterations of the framework, Teesside Archives is envisioned to be central to a ‘hub and spoke’ model of heritage discovery, with a new and sustainable archives facility sitting at the heart of a re-imagined visitor offer sending people out across the region to discover more.

### **Local Authorities – Funding Pressures**

With increasing budget pressures on the four Local Authorities which currently fund Teesside Archives, without a plan for development, there is a real risk of the archives service standing still or being reduced. Within the current operating model, questions are being asked about the return on investment within each Local Authority area and there’s a real sense that the service will struggle to be supported long-term without some kind of fundamental change.



## Teesside Archives SWOT

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>We hold internationally important collections</p> <p>Our collections are nationally accredited</p> <p>Our industrial heritage and building plan collections are a real strength</p> <p>Records are well catalogued</p> <p>Staff are knowledgeable, skilled &amp; passionate</p> <p>Public engagement is an area of growth and is engaging new audiences</p> <p>Our conservation facilities at the Dorman Museum are of a good quality</p> <p>Our conservation and preservation processes safeguard and enable safe access to vulnerable records enabling us to tell the stories of our region</p> <p>We have a dedicate team of volunteers who support the service</p> <p>We benefit from access to the facilities at the Dorman Museum</p> <p>We collaborate with other museums across the Tees Valley</p> <p>Professional development including Cori's HAD in Curating</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>There are gaps in our collections</p> <p>No current system for digital preservation (born digital records)</p> <p>Staff resource has reduced over time and restricts development of the service</p> <p>Historic lack of investment in the service</p> <p>Absence of a fundraising strategy</p> <p>Lack of development plan for the service</p> <p>The value of the service isn't full understood / recognised within the local authorities who fund it</p> <p>We are missing opportunities to engage due to funding constraints</p> <p>The cost of the service is increasing including off-site storage as we continue to add to the collection</p> <p>There is minimal space to hold/store/give access to collections at the Dorman</p> <p>Perceived lack of support from senior management within the local authorities</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Further develop audiences through public engagement, services to business and marketing (including online presence)</p> <p>Generate income from in-house digitisation and e-commerce opportunities</p> <p>Do more in collaboration with the Tees Valley Museums Group</p> <p>Potential to lead of collections management for all TV Museums &amp; Archives</p> <p>Work with more diverse groups</p> <p>Increase our modern collecting</p> <p>Democratise our collections</p> <p>Use 2024 (50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the archives) and 2030 (Middlesbrough bicentenary) as levers to secure funding for development of the service</p> <p>Develop the service in support of the emerging heritage framework</p> <p>Increase advocacy of the service and change people's perceptions about the value of archives</p> <p>Engage Central Library audiences during their capital development</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Budget pressures within Local Authorities and uncertainty over future funding for the service</p> <p>Service not developing due to budget constraints</p> <p>Staff leaving</p> <p>Not having a robust plan for March 2026</p> <p>Increasing costs (including Restore)</p> <p>Risk to collection from storing off-site and transportation when recalled</p> <p>Digital black hold if we don't progress with digital preservation</p> <p>Impact on the Local Authorities / Archives service of local government reorganisation</p> <p>Impact on the Archives of senior management restructure and any Culture Service review in Middlesbrough.</p>

<p>Use of funding from National Archives for Digital Preservation</p> <p>Develop a conservation and preservation outreach programme to support to care of other collections in the region.</p>	
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## Our Vision for Teesside Archives

Thoughts from a visioning session with Teesside Archives Staff, February 2023:

*A hub for heritage in the Tees Valley and home to the **stories of our place**.*

***Everything in one place** (archives, exhibitions, education space, local history library, full equipped conservation studio)*

*A modern, interactive, digital, exciting and inspiring **visitor destination** which engages people and communities with their heritage*

*Individuals, institutions and businesses have access to collections which are truly **representative of the communities we serve**; managed in a modern facility and available in person or remotely*

*A place to understand our past and how it connects with us today; a dynamic, colourful, challenging and enlightening place where **people visit to discover and share stories***

***Radiating stories of our place**, connecting people and their stories and embracing heritage as a means to valuing our sense of identity, community and place*

## Timeline / Roadmap

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY / MILESTONE</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>
2023	Articulate a vision for the Archives Service & secure stakeholder buy-in (including value of archives piece of work).	4 x Local Authorities (JAC & Lead Officers) TVCA National Archives Archives Team Users of the Service Partners e.g. TVMG
	Agree new SLA for the Joint Archives Committee (JAC).	4 x Local Authorities (JAC & Lead Officers)
	Secure commitment and timescale to deliver digital preservation.	4 x Local Authorities (JAC, Lead Officers & governance / ICT teams) TVCA National Archives Archives Team
	Secure investment for feasibility work on the future development of the archives.	4 x Local Authorities (JAC & Lead Officers) TVCA National Archives Archives Team Other 3 <sup>rd</sup> party funders
2024	Complete feasibility work for the future development of the archives	
	Secure further investment for business planning (link to 50 <sup>th</sup> birthday)	
	Develop new business plan	
	Develop fundraising strategy	
	Develop audience development plan	
	Confirmation of preferred location for new Archives	
2025	Digital Preservation system is live	
	Commence fundraising for major development project – linked to 2030	
2026	Agree any extension to Restore contract or plan for alternative arrangements	
2027	Secured necessary investment for the major development project	
	LA access to born-digital records is live	
	Secure all permissions (including planning for new build)	
2028	New build commences	
2029		
2030	Public access to born-digital records	
	Showcase for Middlesbrough Bicentenary	
	Monitoring of new facility	
	Move to new facility	
2031	Public opening of new Archives facility	
	Project Evaluation	