

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Director of Environment, Communities & Culture
Relevant Executive Member:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture
Submitted to:	Joint Archives Committee
Date:	4 March 2026
Title:	Future Delivery Report
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	No
Why:	Not a key decision

Proposed decision(s)

We ask that the Joint Archives Committee approves the following recommendations:

- 1) The extension of the Joint Archives Service Level Agreement (SLA) for a further three years to enable the continued operation of the service.
- 2) For Lead Officers to propose a revision of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) through the appropriate channels to allow for delegated decision making and improved governance.
- 3) The extension of the existing contract with Restore for a further three years to enable the continued storage of the Archives collection.
- 4) The purchase of the digital preservation system, Preservica, on a minimum three-year contract.
- 5) A modest enhancement to the current staffing structure of the Archives team to provide essential capacity to manage digital preservation.

We ask that the Joint Archives Committee notes:

- 6) The amended collecting policy for Teesside Archives incorporating our approach to collecting digital records.

Executive summary

The Archives Service has been in a holding position for several years. Financial pressures on partner authorities, temporary accommodation at the Dorman Museum, delays to the completion of a Tees Valley Heritage Feasibility Study and a lack of consensus on a future development plan for the service has resulted in a 'standstill' position. This is unsustainable as it risks our ability to undertake our statutory responsibilities of collecting, preserving and facilitating public access to archival records, which consequently risks National Archives Accreditation of the Service.

This report proposes an operational plan for the next three years to enable the Archives Service to undertake its statutory responsibilities in a way which requires minimal investment, whilst we continue to develop a long-term plan for the service which seeks to maximise the value of the Archives Service to all partners and their residents.

By approving the recommendations above, for a period of three years, the Archives Service will be able to honour its responsibilities for public records (physical and digital), ensure safe storage of the Teesside collection, improve its governance to support decision-making around its longer-term future, and maintain National Archives Accreditation.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 To propose an operational framework which enables Teesside Archives to deliver its statutory responsibilities over the next three years:

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions, and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of our public organisations. • Holding organisations and individuals to account. • Promoting pride through learning about past achievements. • Recording and conserving the history of our people and places for future generations. • Creating employment opportunities through proposed changes to the staffing structure.
A healthy Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access to the Archives for all. • Supporting the recollection & sharing of memories. • Promoting a culture of knowledge and learning.
Safe and resilient communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people discover more about their lives; past and present. • Giving value to people and events who have shaped our lives today. • Helping us to understand who we are. • Inspiring creativity and collaboration. • Reflecting the rich diversity of our communities.
Delivering best value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making records available to support effective decision-making and good governance. • Creating maximum value from the modest additional investment required.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee approves the following recommendations:

2.1.1 The extension of the Joint Archives Service Level Agreement (SLA) for a further three years to enable the continued operation of the service.

2.1.2 For Lead Officers to propose a revision of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) through the appropriate channels to allow for delegated decision making and improved governance.

2.1.3 The extension of the existing contract with Restore for a further three years to enable the continued off-site storage of the Archives collection.

2.1.4 The purchase of the digital preservation system, Preservica, on a minimum three-year contract.

2.1.5 A modest enhancement to the current staffing structure of the Archives team to provide essential capacity to manage digital preservation.

2.2 That the committee notes the following:

2.2.1 The amended collecting policy for Teesside Archives incorporating our approach to collecting digital records.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 SLA Extension:

For the last couple of years, the SLA has been rolled forward on a year-to-year basis. This provides very little security for the service, demonstrates a lack of commitment to external partners such as The National Archives, and wastes administration time. We propose that it is extended for a three-year period to align with the wider operational plan detailed in this report.

3.2 SLA Revision:

The current SLA agreement does not allow for delegated decision-making outside of the two meetings per year. Additionally, the frequent changes to membership and a rotating chair every year doesn't support a long-term, strategic approach to the Service. It is proposed that, through the appropriate channels, the Lead Officers seek a revision to the SLA which allows for a level of delegated decision-making and supports more robust and strategic governance overall.

3.3 Restore Contract Extension:

The current 5-year contract with Restore for off-site storage terminates in July 2026. With the Service continuing to be housed within the Dorman Museum for the foreseeable future, and based on our satisfaction with the off-site storage service provided by Restore, we are proposing to extend the contract for a further three years, to align with the wider operational plan detailed in this report.

3.4 Purchase of Preservica:

Despite the rapid acceleration in the volume of Public Records and other Archive material now being generated in 'born digital' format, Teesside Archives does not have an effective system for managing such records. Relying on hard drives not only presents difficulties in cataloguing and searching files, but more importantly risks digital formats becoming outdated and unreadable in the future. Having researched the digital preservation market,

and hosted a live demo for partners, the proposal is to purchase Preservica which is used extensively by the Archives sector including by other Local Authorities. This would enable the Service to collect, preserve and make publicly available both 'born digital' and digitised records. This is also important as The National Archives has updated its Accreditation requirements to include the management of digital material as a fundamental requirement for Accreditation.

3.5 Staffing Structure:

There has been no investment in the staff resource for the Archives Service for several years. A benchmarking exercise undertaken by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan as part of the Tees Valley Heritage Feasibility Study highlighted that the resourcing of Teesside Archives is low compared to other shared Local Authority archives services and recommended that consideration be given to specific areas of risk, such as digital preservation, to agree what resource is required. It is not possible for the Service to progress with digital preservation without making a modest investment in the staffing structure. The proposal adds 0.51 FTE to the staffing establishment to create capacity for managing digital preservation alongside other archivist responsibilities. In reality, the Service requests a greater investment in staffing to properly fulfil its responsibilities, but due to the financial constraints of the partners, the proposal is a compromise to ensure we meet our minimum statutory requirements and those required to maintain Accreditation.

3.6 Collecting Policy:

The Archives Collecting Policy has been updated to incorporate born digital records. The policy recognises that the accessioning of records in digital formats should follow the same approach as physical records as there is still a cost to the Service of managing, storing and making these documents available to the public.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 SLA Extension:

A copy of the current SLA is attached as **Appendix 1**. Please refer to section 3.1 for further background information.

4.2 SLA Revision:

A copy of the current SLA is attached as **Appendix 1**. Please refer to section 3.1 for further background information.

4.3 Restore Contract Extension:

The current contract with Restore for off-site storage ends in July 2026. Middlesbrough Council's Legal Team have advised that under the framework used to procure the initial 3-year contract with Restore, we are able to extend this for up to five years. The proposal is to extend for three years to align with the wider operational plan detailed in this report.

Restore have provided a Contract Change Notice, attached as **Appendix 2**. Restore have proposed a CPI increase of 3.8% will be applied from 01/08/2026 to the charges under the existing contract. This adjustment reflects the most recently published CPI by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and supports the continued sustainability of records management services considering ongoing cost pressures. It is noted that a further CPI increase will be applicable from 2027 and 2028 and will be determined using the most recently published CPI at the relevant time.

4.4 Purchase of Preservica:

The proper safe keeping of born digital records is a statutory function of the Archives Service. Teesside Archives does not currently have a suitable system to hold and preserve digital records. Through research, Preservica has been identified as the most suitable digital preservation system of our purposes. An opportunity for Local Authority Partners (Lead Officers, Record Managers and ICT Teams) to view the functionality of Preservica and raise questions was arranged and positive feedback was received. The proposal is to purchase the standard version of the system – ‘Preservica Professional’ - which has the following functionality/terms.

Preservica Professional
Hosted on AWS EU Dublin or UK London
Gov Apps - additional fee
For smaller organisations
Managed hosting, backup, recovery and upgrades in a shared infrastructure, multi-tenant cloud
Flexible & fast ingest tools up to 30Tb and up to 1 million digital files
Live Web based training
Unlimited Support
Ingest Outlook, Gmail, PastPerfect, CONTENTdm, DSpace, Disk images and BagIt
Automated Website archiving
OAI-PMH and CMIS content query API
Catalogue integration for Adlib, CALM, Axiell Collections or ArchivesSpace: £3,240 one-off/£1,100 annual
Epexio: licensing for usage of the Preservica API £3,240 annual (note: integration services provided by Metadatis)
Optional IIIF Viewer additional £3,000pa
Preservica Contract Terms
Preservica do not accept any amendments to our Professional contracts as we're providing a standard service used by a large number of existing customers in a multi-tenancy AWS environment under the same terms and competitive pricing.
Future storage at the following rates: £1,210 per annum per Tb of S3 £460 per annum per Tb of Glacier
Extras: Multiple UA Portals: £1,100 (one-off)/£1,100 annual Custom Universal Access URL (one-off): £2,160 Accelerated Success Service packs (5-days): £12,500

From a storage perspective, 1TB of data will be sufficient for the Service at the outset. Teesside Archives currently holds 248.12GB of born digital data plus 166GB of digitised archives. The Archives Manager has requested that Collections Officers advise how much material they have in digital format to inform costs going forward. The priority for the Service will be to ingest the digital records currently held. The Archives Manager recommends delaying the integration of Preservica with our catalogue as the current system is approaching end of life within two years and will need to be replaced. It's therefore more cost effective to do the integration at this point.

It is proposed to purchase Preservica on the minimum three-year contact. The costs are summarised in the table below:

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	TOTAL
Annual Subscription includes 1Tb AWS S3 SaaS Subscription	15,250	15,250	15,250	45,750
Axiell Collections Integration (Preservica side) £3,240 one-off/£1,100 annual	-	4,340	1,100	5,440
Additional storage when required Data Storage 1TB (S3) per Tb per annum	-	-	1,210	1,210
Additional storage when required Data Storage 1TB (Glacier) per Tb per annum	-	-	460	460
Axiell Collections Integration (Axiell side) Estimate for one off cost of integration/API	-	2,000	-	2,000
Total	15,250	21,590	18,020	54,860

The above costs are based on 1TB of data being sufficient for two years, and the integration with our catalogue system coming in year 2. The full cost of Preservica for years 1-3 can be funded in full by New Burden's funding, which has a current balance of £115,991. The ongoing annual cost from year 4 onwards will be a minimum of £18,020 a year, but could increase in longer term based on data storage requirements.

4.5 Staffing Structure:

The current staffing structure does not provide capacity to support digital preservation and the work required to set up, populate and run Preservica. A minimum investment in staffing resource is proposed.

The current staffing model is as follows:

Post	Grade	FTE
Archives Manager	M	1
Archivist	H	1
Conservator	H	1
Community Engagement Officer	G	0.57
Archives Supervisor	H	0.75
Archives Assistant	D	0.62
Temp	B	0.07
TOTAL FTE		5.01

The proposed staffing model is as follows:

Post	Grade	FTE
Archives Manager	M	1
Archivist	H	0.6
Archivist	H	0.6
Conservator	H	1
Community Engagement Officer	G	0.57
Archives Supervisor	H	0.75
Archives Assistant	D	1
TOTAL FTE		5.52

As shown by the comparisons to other Archives Services in the Tees Valley Heritage Feasibility, keeping the status quo is not sustainable. There is already a reliance on volunteers for core aspects of the service and no capacity to manage digital preservation including proactively engaging with partners to identify records to bring into the system and uploading existing digital records. The proposed revision to the structure creates an additional 0.51 FTE through a modest increase in capacity to the Archivist and Archives Assistant functions only.

4.6 Collecting Policy:

An updated version of the Teesside Archives Collecting Policy is included as **Appendix 3**.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

N/A

6. Potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 SLA Extension: An extension of less than three-years creates uncertainty around the future of the Archives Service, demonstrates a lack of commitment to The National Archives and creates unnecessary administrative costs.

6.2 SLA Revision: The precise details of the revision are yet to be agreed, but as this is the main governance document for Teesside Archives it is the only mechanism we have to improve governance arrangements.

6.3 Restore Contract Extension: A shorter contract duration would not provide the certainty of off-site storage whilst the Service remains in its 'temporary' home in the Dorman Museum. A longer-term duration would potentially over-commit the Service beyond its

requirements if new accommodation for Teesside Archives enables records to be held on site.

6.4 Purchase of Preservica: There is a limited market for digital preservation systems. Preservica was considered to be the most appropriate option for Teesside Archives based on its functionality and proven record with a range of users, including other Local Authorities. A minimum three-year contract is stipulated by Preservica.

6.5 Staffing Structure: An alternative staffing structure was developed (as shown below) based on the required level of resource needed to improve the service including a focus on collecting core records, addressing gaps in holdings, working on new material acquired and progressing digital preservation. It would also improve the front of house service to customers and increase the capacity of the Community Engagement Officer to work across the boroughs.

Post	Grade	FTE
Archives Manager	M	1
Archivist	H	1
Archivist	H	0.6
Conservator	H	1
Communty Engagement Officer	G	1
Archives Supervisor	H	1
Archives Assistant	D	1
Archives Assistant	D	0.57
		7.17

This option has been costed and is presented as one of the budget options for 2026/27, however, based on feedback from partners, we don't think it's viable due to financial pressures. Maintaining the staffing structure as it is, is also not considered a viable option as it does not enable the Service to meet its statutory responsibilities around digital preservation.

6.6 Collecting Policy: N/A.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	Annual increase in Restore costs in line with CPI index (3.8% from 01/08/26). Annual cost of Preservica from 2029/30 onwards. Staff costs associated with additional 0.63 FTE from 2026/27 onwards. Depletion of New Burdens funding which, when required, has been used to subsidise the service.

Legal	Meeting the statutory duty of the four Local Authorities to collect, preserve and make available public records. Three-year extension to existing contract with Restore. New three-year contract to be put in place with Preservica.
Risk	Risks of doing nothing: Loss of local authority records / failure to meet statutory duty re the retention of public records. Key information is lost that could negatively impact on the councils in the future e.g. their ability to prove key decisions were taken, due process followed, etc. Failure to meet the National Archives Accreditation standard / loss of Accreditation. Wider risks: Failure to secure the additional investment required to manage digital Preservation beyond the initial 3-year contract.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	N/A
Reducing Poverty	N/A
Climate Change / Environmental	N/A
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	N/A
Data Protection	N/A

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Secure approval for SLA amendments within each Local Authority	Lead Officers	30 April 2026
Extend the SLA to 31 March 2029	Head of Culture	30 April 2026
Legal Instruction for three-year Restore contract extension	Archives Manager	31 March 2026
Signed contract extension in place with Restore	Archives Manager	30 April 2026
Procurement Exemption for Preservica	Archives Manager	16 March 2026
Contract in place with Preservica	Archives Manager	31 March 2026

Vacancy Control approval for additional staff posts	Archives Manager	31 March 2026
Recruitment underway for additional staff posts	Archives Manager	30 April 2026

Appendices

1	Teesside Archives Service Level Agreement
2	Restore Contract Change Notice 2 February 2026
3	Teesside Archives Collecting Policy

Background papers

N/A

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