

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives
Committee Meeting held on 2 August 2023**

Present:

| Attendance | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mark Sutton | David Williams (Substitute) |
| Victoria Wilson | |

Note – Reference in these minutes to ‘Lead Officers’ relates to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills (Staffordshire County Council), the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services (Staffordshire County Council) and the Director for Strategy and Resources (Stoke-on-Trent City Council).

Apologies: Alastair Watson

Part One

25. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Resolved – That County Councillor Victoria Wilson be appointed Chairman of the Committee until the 2024 Annual meeting (Vice-Chairmanship to be taken by the City Council representative).

26. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

27. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

28. Staffordshire History Centre update

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Officers on the progress of the development of the Staffordshire History Centre which would bring together the Staffordshire Records Office and the County Council’s Archives Service.

Activities continued to be delivered with highlights being the successful ‘Case for the Ordinary’ touring exhibition on the patients’ experience in the County’s three asylums, and the new Rugeley Power Station exhibition at the Cannock Chase Museum.

Volunteers continued to play a vital role in delivering services and supporting the development of the new Centre with 69 volunteers donating £80,490 worth of resource which contributed to the match funding arrangements for the project.

Construction works were on schedule with additional work which had been identified being funded from contingency budgets and not expected to cause any overall delay.

A full procurement process was underway for the new website for the Centre, in the meantime a microsite had been launched to ensure continuity of service information to the public and to promote public interest in the development works.

Concluding, the Lead Officers reported on funding claims submitted in relation to the £520,000 spend to date, commenting on the positive feedback received from the Heritage Fund on both the standard of funding claims and the work being undertaken with young people.

The Chairman made particular reference to the pleasing progress of the construction works, welcoming the introduction of a timelapse camera to promote public engagement.

Resolved – That the Update report be noted.

29. Joint Archive Service - Final Outturn 2022/23 & Predicted Outturn 2023/24

Lead Officers reported on the Joint Archive Service's final outturn for 2022/23 and predicted outturn for 2023/24.

For 2022/23 details were given of each Council's core services and site and public services budgets and the transfers between the two Councils which had resulted in an overall breakeven position for the £0.843m revenue budget.

2022/23 Reserves totalled £0.438m spread between the General Reserve, Archive Acquisition Reserve and a specific reserve fund for the Minton Collection.

From spend to date it was predicted that for 2023/24 a breakeven position would again be achieved. If necessary, transfers from Reserves would be made to meet the agreed budget of £0.878m which was an increase of £0.035m on the previous year's allocation.

Resolved – That the Final outturn for 2022/23 and predicted outturn for 2023/24 be noted.

30. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee - Annual Report

Members received a detailed presentation on the 2022/23 Annual Report for the Joint Archives Service.

The report portrayed the positivity which existed throughout the service in terms of the development of, and preparations for transition to, the new History Centre, increased public engagement (back to pre-COVID pandemic levels), and improved support for volunteers. On the latter, reference was made to the success of work on developing the offer to volunteers and introduction of a volunteers' event programme.

The report incorporated the Risk Register, updates to which included reference to lone working procedures and changes to reflect the new storage arrangements in place at City Archives to mitigate flood risk.

Responding to a member query regarding the source of benchmarking information and Performance Indicators, it was explained that the previous benchmarking exercise by CIPFA had ceased and recently replaced by a National Archives Organisation survey, the results of which would be analysed and reported to a future Joint Committee meeting.

Resolved– That the Annual Report be noted and a report be submitted to a future meeting on up to date comparator information.

(Note by Clerk- Following the meeting comparative figures of engagement were provided:

| Year | No. of Participants |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 2019/20 | 659 |
| 2022/23 | 1,868 |

An increase of 183%)

31. Joint Archive Service - Appraisal and Disposal Policy and Collections Information Policy

In line with best practice a 5 yearly review had been carried out of both the Appraisal and Disposal Policy and the Collections Information Policy.

Revised draft policies were submitted:

Appraisal and Disposal Policy – Possessing an up to date policy contributed to the accreditation process. This key document serves to support Archivists in determining long term value/relevance of documents and provides a criteria for deciding whether offers should be accepted.

Collections Information Policy – Requires the holding of information on each item in the collection including proof of ownership, its location and movement control.

Resolved – That the updated Appraisal and Disposal Policy and Collections Information Policy be approved.

32. Date of next meeting

Monday 20 November 2023 – 10.30am.
Venue – County Buildings, Stafford

33. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

34. Relocation of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives (exemption paragraphs 2 and 4)

The Chairman requested the submission of an open, written report to the next Joint Committee meeting on the progress on the relocation of the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives Service.

For the City Council, Councillor Williams agreed to arrange for a report to be submitted.

Resolved – that an update report be submitted for inclusion in the open section of the agenda for the next Joint Committee meeting.

Chair