

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee
meeting held on 26 March 2015**

Present: Ben Adams (Vice-Chairman) and Olwen Hamer (Chairman)

Apologies for absence: Ian Parry and Mike Davies

PART ONE

18. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

No declarations at this meeting.

19. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

20. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Annual Service Plan 2014/15: Predicted Outturn Performance

The Committee considered a joint report (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes) informing them of the predicted outturn performance against targets set in the Joint Archive Service's Annual Service Plan.

The Service Plan sets the annual targets for the performance of the Joint Archive Service. These targets work towards the overall achievement of the Archive Service's current three-year service objectives, which were set out in its Forward Plan, 2012-2015, approved by the Joint Archives Committee at its meeting on 23 February 2012. The key achievements included: (i) integrated onsite and online customer experience; (ii) innovative online presence which showcases Staffordshire's archives; (iii) engagement with Staffordshire's communities to strengthen their identity and place; (iv) celebrate and discover Staffordshire's history; (v) a sustainable high performing service which provides leadership for the Archives and Heritage sector; (vi) improving and promoting user access to Staffordshire's archive collections; (vii) delivering high quality care of Staffordshire's archive collections; and (viii) extend volunteer working to provide new opportunities for people to increase their skills and increase access to collections.

The Committee commended the detail in the Appendices and the Vice-Chairman asked that a table showing where particular events were held and attendance numbers form part of the performance report. He also suggested that the title of the "rural roadshow" be reviewed and the Head of Archives would look into it. The Committee noted that the Joint Archive Service had done very well for grant funding for archiving and conservation work recently.

RESOLVED - That the report on the predicted outturn against the targets set in the Joint Archive Service's Annual Service Plan be received and noted.

21. Joint Archive Service - Predicted Outturn 2014/15

The Committee considered a joint report detailing the current predicted outturn for 2014/15 for the Joint Archive Service and to consider the revenue budget position for 2015/16 (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

Members noted that the latest revenue outturn forecast showed an anticipated underspend of £13,686 at the end of the financial year which would be transferred to the general reserve at the end of the financial year. The current balance on the General Reserve was £95,148. The Archive Acquisition Reserve had a balance of £62,342, of which £4,800 had been used to purchase the Geoffrey Godden Collection, as agreed at the November 2014 meeting.

Members noted that the proposed revenue budget for 2015/16 was £702,168, an increase of 2.9% on the current year, and noted that under the Joint Archive Agreement the total cost of the service was currently apportioned between the two authorities at 77.4% (County) and 22.6% (City), based on the latest available population estimates. The proposed revenue budget had been apportioned on this basis and the County's proposed share of the costs was £543,478 and the City's £158,690. Both authorities had sufficient budgetary provision to meet these costs.

RESOLVED – (a) that the current predicted outturn for 2014/15 be noted;

(b) that the revenue budget proposed for 2015/16 be approved.

22. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service: Forward Plan Vision for Service 2015

The Committee considered a joint report detailing the Forward Plan and Vision for Services 2015 (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes). The Joint Archive Service had worked to a three year planning cycle since its inception in 1997. The scope of this seventh plan had been extended to ten years as it would transform the service and would take more than three years to deliver some of the proposed changes.

The Vision covered the Joint Archive Service and the Museum Service for the County Council, known as 'Archives and Heritage'. It had also informed the creation of a vision for the William Salt Library Trust, which would be complementary and was due to be considered by the Trust at their annual meeting in May 2015.

As the Committee were aware the Archives Service consulted on a project to centralise its public sites in the county in 2014. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was submitted to secure funding for this project but it was rejected in July 2014. Part of the feedback stated that the Service needed a clearer vision for the project. The Service was coming to the end of its current Forward Plan 2012-2015 so the timing to comprehensively review its activities and refocus was appropriate. A Project Board and Project Team were formed in August 2014 to advise and assist with decision making and consultants were appointed to help the project team to develop and submit a new bid to HLF in 2015.

The Committee received a powerpoint presentation detailing the Vision for 2015-2025. They discussed and noted details of the proposals set out in the report including: the development of the vision; results of the conversation; the amended vision and the conclusion and next steps. Minor changes would be made to the vision following that discussion. They also noted that this was a working document and the Archive and Heritage Service would review and update the document annually and a full review would be undertaken in 2018.

RESOLVED: (a) that Vision for the Service for the next ten years be approved, subject to minor changes to the document.

(b) that approval be given for the Service to develop delivery options based on the vision for stakeholders to be consulted formally in the summer of 2015.

23. Archive Accreditation and Customer Service Excellence Standards

The Committee considered a report detailing the Archive Accreditation and Customer Service Excellence Standards (Schedule 4 to the signed minutes). The Archive Accreditation scheme was launched in 2013 after a development and pilot phase. It was the first such scheme for archives and complements the Museum Accreditation standard managed by Arts Council England. The Committee noted that there was no charge for assessment under the scheme and it covered all aspects of the work of an Archive Service and they also noted that it was a requirement for all Places of Deposit to achieve Accreditation by 2017.

The Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard covers public and private sector organisations and focuses on driving up good customer care. It applied to some, but not all, parts of the work of the Archive and Heritage Service and there was an annual charge for re-assessment under the standard. The Committee discussed both standards and noted that CSE was well embedded in the Archive Service and these standards would not be abandoned if CSE was no longer applied for.

They also noted the requirement for the Archive Service to achieve Archive Accreditation as a Place of Deposit and that some of the work towards this had been done in developing the new vision. If approved, the Archive Service would carry out preparatory work in 2015 aiming for submission in 2016, dependant on advice from the National Archives about suitable timing.

RESOLVED – (a) that the recommendation for the Archive Service to work towards Archive Accreditation, be approved.

(b) that approval be given to the redirection of resources to achieve Archive Accreditation from achieving Customer Service Excellence.

24. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service : Digital Engagement Strategy Update and Case Study

The Committee considered a report updating them on the Digital Engagement Strategy and a case study (Schedule 5 to the signed minutes). A Digital Engagement Strategy

was introduced in November 2014 to set a framework for the Service and its use of social media and digital communication.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service had started to implement its Digital Engagement Strategy to ensure that new and existing channels of communication were used together and effectively to reach new audiences. The Strategy assesses the growth of social media and its impact, and also summarises current digital engagement and channels through: the main website; Staffordshire Past Track; Online catalogue; Staffordshire Name Indexes; Find My Past; Facebook; Twitter; and mailing lists.

The current channels had been retained but with a clear focus on their purpose and how they can be used to engage effectively. New objectives were set for using these channels, implementing new ones, and setting up a team to own the Strategy and deliver it. Since the Strategy was approved in November 2014 the Service had begun to embed social media and digital channels as a means of communicating with new audiences and created new performance measures to record this.

RESOLVED – (a) that the update report on the Digital Engagement Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service be received.

(b) that the new performance measures be approved.

25. Date of next meeting - 18 June 2015

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee be held on Thursday 18 June 2015 at 10.30 am in the County Record Office, Eastgate Street, Stafford.

26. Exclusion of the public

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

27. Joint Archive Service: Acquisition of the Minton Archive (Exemption paragraph 3)

The Committee received a joint report updating them on the acquisition of the Minton Archive (Schedule 6 to the signed minutes). They noted that the Minton Archive had an uncertain future since 2009 and the future preservation of the archive was now being secured through acquisition by the Art Fund and subsequent gift to Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

The Minton Archive was a vast collection of papers and drawings which forms the archive of the pottery firm Minton. It spans two centuries (1793-1968) and includes the archive of Minton and Royal Doulton and the many significant ceramic manufacturing companies such as Shelley, Royal Albert, Paragon, Ridgway, Booths and the Lawley Group of potteries which Doulton acquired in the second half of the twentieth century. Some key items included: (i) drawings by Augustus Pugin, Christopher Dresser and Louis Solon; (ii) original pattern books; (iii) business records and other paperwork

relating to the firm; and (iv) similar records from Royal Doulton and other smaller potteries.

The Committee noted that the collection clearly had great significance for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire but it was also a key ceramic firm with national and international relevance. The archive was wide ranging and offers great potential for research by academics, local and family historians and others researching the development of the ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Committee noted the ownership of the collection, the previous history of the Minton Archive, the current offer for sale and the timescales and next steps to complete the purchase by 31 March 2015, together with the proposed subsequent transfer of ownership to the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

As part of the negotiations for the acquisition the Archive Service had discussed a programme of cataloguing the collection to make it freely available for use by a variety of methods. This programme of work would form part of the Archive Service plans for the coming year.

RESOLVED – that the report on the acquisition of the Minton Archive be noted.

Chairman