

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 23 February 2012

Annual Implementation Plan 2011-2012 predicted outturn

Recommendation(s)

1. That this report informing the Committee about predicted performance outturn is received and noted.

Report of Director for Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Place (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The year 2011-2012 has been one of transition and change as new staffing structures and changes to opening hours have been implemented. This has had some affect on the performance outturn as the Service has adapted to these changes. However overall the performance of the Service has been maintained at previous high levels with some targets being exceeded compared to last year's outturn. There have been a number of highlights throughout the year and this report draws attention to the key achievements which are detailed in Appendix Two. There are no national performance indicators and so instead the Archive Service reports against local indicators. The predicted outturn against these is summarised in Appendix Two. This year there has been no National Archives self-assessment as work is now underway to develop a new Archives Accreditation Scheme led by the National Archives.

Background

The Archive Service Implementation Plan has seven outcomes which have set the vision for the Service from 2009 – 2012. Key achievements against each outcome are summarised below.

3. The customer is at the heart of service delivery

This year has seen the target to maintain 2010 compliance against the Customer Service Excellence Standard exceeded as the Archive Service achieved full compliance and cleared two partial compliances. The Service also achieved a 99% customer satisfaction rating overall despite implementing reductions in opening hours at one service point and asking for comments on reductions at the other service points. The microfilming programme has continued with support from the Friends organisation and work has progressed to commission a commercial partner to deliver online access to family history sources. The success of family history surgeries, Family History Club and Ancestry.com support sessions has continued with demand remaining high.

4. An innovative online presence which showcases Staffordshire's archives

There has been a lot of work continuing to develop the online presence of the Service in response to user demand. A new website, International Staffordshire, has been launched to coincide with the Olympics to help celebrate documents within the Archive Service collections. Further additions have been made to the popular Staffordshire Places and Staffordshire Name Indexes websites which bring access to sources for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's residents the rest of the UK and overseas.

5. Engagement with Staffordshire's communities to strengthen their identity and place

This outcome is all about taking the Archive Service out to communities to raise awareness of what is available for them to help discover more about their area. It does this through key events such as the Rural Roadshow which this year was in Gnosall and formed part of the village's G-Fest celebrations. The day offers something for all ages and helps to bring the community together. Requests continue to come in to run this event around the county. A new initiative, Staffordshire Surveys, has been successfully piloted in two communities in the north of the county. This project gives a vehicle for individuals and groups to record information about people, buildings and communities in their locality. Core work has continued with the delivery of talks to local organisations and the second Olympic project, For the Record, which has attracted more deposits from sporting organisations.

6. Engagement with people of all ages in activities which celebrate and discover Staffordshire's history

2011-12 has been a year which really has celebrated Staffordshire's history through a number of high profile well attended events. Out of Darkness was a new type of event for the Archive Service which showed that archives can be appreciated not just for their information but for their beauty and the wonder that 1000 year old documents could survive so well. It tied in with the Staffordshire Hoard exhibition helping to support the visitor economy. The exhibition attracted visitors from beyond the county and raised the profile of the Service. The mounted display then toured to a number of venues around the county raising the profile of the service further. The first Staffordshire History Day in partnership with Keele and Birmingham Universities attracted a huge amount of interest with over 100 people participating and 25 local societies in attendance. Initial feedback showed huge enthusiasm and a desire for it to be repeated. The *Where do you think you are* project for local primary schools was very successful with 800 pupils participating. The Archive Service also supported the Chesterton Youth Group in their time capsule project, *Chesterton My Place*.

7. A well managed and high performing service

The Service performed well achieving Designated Status for its outstanding collections and only the third county archive to achieve this for its entire collection. It

also completed the inspection of the new outstore with the recommendation for its approval awaiting formal sign off. Health and Safety plans were delivered to ensure the Service meets its legal obligations. The profile of the Service has been raised through promotion of Designation and through key events such as Out of Darkness as well as continuing to offer training to Library and Information Services staff on family history sources.

8. Improving and promoting user access to Staffordshire's archive collections

Work has continued steadily to improve the level of information about collections and add more entries to the online catalogue. Most targets have been met but some have been revised since the loss of a part time cataloguing archivist post in August 2011. This area of work does not always show instant outcomes but comments from events such as the Staffordshire History Day when one speaker said that she could not have researched her PhD without the online catalogue show that this it is vital to ensure support for the historians of the future.

9. Delivering high quality care of Staffordshire's archive collections

The Annual Conservation programmes have been successfully delivered with two major exhibitions: Out of Darkness and a Glimpse of Gnosall. The conservators not only mounted these displays but also conserved documents for Out of Darkness and were incredibly inventive in the way these documents were displayed ably assisted by the Record Office Manager. The service also progressed its objectives in the Digital Preservation Policy and has achieved public access to digital archives which will be launched next year.

10. Local Performance Indicators

Performance to local indicators has shown that personal use of the Archive Service has continued to fall (by 8% compared to last year). This is in line with national trends across archive services. However Stoke has seen a sharper fall (35%) which can be partly attributed to the reduction in opening hours. Online use has seen falls in visits to the main website which could be linked to falls in onsite visits as people access the site in connection with a visit.

However visits to other online resources (up 32%) and the online catalogue (up 29%) have seen increases. This seems to indicate that people prefer to access resources giving information about collections and direct access to catalogues. However online statistics are very variable and reasons for increases cannot always be identified. The online catalogue increase coincided with a change to the homepage on the Archive Service website which put the catalogue as a top task.

Performance against the customer satisfaction and approaches targets has been maintained. It had been predicted that satisfaction would fall after reductions in opening hours and but this was not seen.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The service continues to offer choice in the way its services are accessed and has delivered a range of events onsite and offsite to reach a variety of audiences.

Legal implications:

The work of the Archive Service is governed by the Joint Agreement and other legislation to allow both authorities to meet their legal obligations.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The Archive Service has delivered its work on time and within budget whilst also delivering £80,000 of savings in 2011-2012 on the county side. A 40% saving on the Stoke side has also been achieved.

Risk implications:

Risks of not meeting performance targets are partly governed by resources.

Climate Change implications:

The service has ensured that community events have been delivered to avoid unnecessary travel. It has also increased online resources.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Public Service Statistics 2011-12	Joanna Terry/Place/ x8370
Annual Implementation Plan 2011-12	
Local Customer Survey Nov 2011	