

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 23 February 2012

Forward Plan 2012-2015

Recommendation(s)

1. That this report informing the Committee about the new three year Forward Plan is received.

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. This report recommends that the Archive Service continues to work towards outcomes set over a three year period to support delivery to corporate outcomes and also to meet national accreditation schemes.

Background

3. The Joint Archive Service has worked to a three year planning cycle since its inception in 1997. The scope of this sixth plan has extended to include the Heritage Service (County Museum Service) which became part of Archives and Heritage in December 2011. This report will focus on the Joint Archive Service work although inevitably there is cross over between the two.

Our vision for the next three years is:

To deliver a vibrant archive and heritage offer for Staffordshire's people, places, communities and its visitors.

There are eight outcomes for the new plan and below is a summary of what they intend to achieve. There is more detail in the Forward Plan at appendix two.

4. An integrated onsite and online customer experience

This outcome seeks to build upon previous success in achieving Customer Service Excellence and maintaining customer satisfaction levels. The next three years will see the delivery of online access to key family history sources by commissioning a commercial partner. It is intended that this will widen access and generate income but will also allow the service to focus on the user experience in other ways.

5. An innovative online presence which showcases Staffordshire's collections

Work will continue on successful websites such as Staffordshire Places, Staffordshire Name Indexes and Staffordshire Pasttrack to extend their content. A new website to showcase the Archive Service designated collections will be developed. It is intended that this will increase awareness of the collections, encourage user participation and widen audiences.

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

Within this outcome the Archive Service will continue its work to take the service out into communities delivering events and exhibitions to increase awareness of what is available. It will also continue pilot work in the north of the county to encourage groups and individuals to record information about their place or community supporting the collection policies of the Archive Service.

7. Celebration and discovery of Staffordshire's history

The Staffordshire Hoard and Out of Darkness Exhibitions were pivotal in celebrating Staffordshire's history. This outcome aims to build on this work delivering a wide range of formal and informal learning events to increase participation and promote the county's archival heritage.

8. A sustainable and high performing service which provides leadership for the Archive and Heritage sector

Building on the achievement of Designated Status this outcome will seek to raise the profile of the Service locally, regionally and nationally. It will deliver the objectives in the Marketing Strategy and also perform against current national standards and the new archives accreditation scheme which is being developed. Partnership working and investment in frontline staff are key to delivering this outcome.

9. Improving and promoting user access to Staffordshire's collections

This is core work for the Service and without it access to collections and high performance to standards cannot be achieved. The focus of the work is on increasing the information in the online catalogue so that more collections are accessible this way. It supports ongoing research into Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's history.

10. Delivering high quality care of Staffordshire's collections

The Annual Conservation programmes will continue to improve the level of preservation of collections and enable access. Work will also continue under the Digital Preservation Policy and launch public access to digital archives. Careful management of collections will enable the Service to maximise its storage capacity.

11. Extended volunteer working in Archives & Heritage providing opportunities for people to increase their skills and help support access to collections

The level of volunteering within the Archive Service has increased over the last ten years. The value that volunteers add in enabling access to collections is immense. They also act as advocates for the Service and in turn learn new skills. For this reason a new outcome has been developed as this area of work continues to grow. It will aim to broaden the offer for volunteers, implement the open door scheme and increase the number of volunteer hours given to the Service.

12. Delivery

The Archive Service has seen a reduction in its resources over the last three years and the new Plan takes account of this. However it is still ambitious and clearly partnership working, use of volunteers and investment in current staff will be vital to effective delivery. Working across Archives and Heritage as one service will help to make the best use of available resources. By utilising the new opening hours effectively the Service will be able to build on its work in the community to extend this and deliver a vibrant archive and heritage offer within the county and city.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The new Forward Plan includes work to develop access in both onsite and online services and to develop new 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 will deliver savings of £115,000 in 2012-2013 on the county side and the new plan will also seek to generate income.

Risk implications:

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

Climate Change implications:

The Plan includes several outcomes which will reduce the need to travel around the county and help with climate change.

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 2009-12	Joanna Terry/Place/ x8370
Forward Plan 2012-2015	
Local Customer Survey Nov 2011	
Taking Part Survey 2011	
Archives for the 21 st Century Policy	
Strategic Plans for both Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council	