

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 20 June 2013

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Annual Report 2012-2013

Recommendation(s)

1. That this report informing the Committee about the annual report on the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (Joint) Archive Service for the period April 2012 to March 2013 is received and approved.

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

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The accompanying Annual Report provides an account and review of the work and performance of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service for the financial year, April 2012 to March 2013.

Background

3. The terms of the Joint Agreement for Archive Services between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council requires an annual report on the work of the Joint Archive Service to be brought to the Annual Meeting in June. The Annual Report also provides the means by which the Committee can be presented with a full overview of the range of activities, progress and performance of the Service.

4. The year 2012-2013 was the first in the current three-year planning cycle for the Joint Archive Service. This year's Annual Report shows both positive achievements and steady progress towards meeting the overall strategic objectives of the Archive Service within the current Forward Plan, 2012-2013. These objectives are:

- An integrated onsite and online customer experience
- An innovative online presence which showcases Staffordshire's collections
- Engagement with Staffordshire's communities to strengthen their sense of identity and place
- Celebration and discovery of Staffordshire's history
- A sustainable high performing service which provides leadership for the Archives Heritage Sector
- Improving and promoting user access to Staffordshire's collections

- Delivering high quality care of Staffordshire's collections
- Extended volunteer working in Archives & Heritage providing opportunities for people to increase their skills and help support access to collections

5. The Annual Report demonstrates a productive year for the Joint Archive Service in terms of its performance, achievements and associated activity. The most notable successes have been: achievement compliance plus with the Customer Service Excellence Standard; attracting grant funding for several projects including the Great War Centennial, Bradford Archive and Manorial Documents Register; launching the Service Facebook page, implementing new opening hours and staffing structure; successful preparation for inspection by the National Archives; and making significant progress on the contract to digitise key family history resources.

6. The Service made good progress in the core areas of activity: improving access to collections; the public services; cataloguing; learning; preservation; and conservation. It was a particularly successful year in terms of outreach working with some very positive outcomes for communities with the continuation of the Rural Roadshow and popular Staffordshire History Day.

7. The year was also a challenging one as personal visits continued to fall by 9% overall but showed a slow down compared to 17% the previous year and include reductions to opening hours at the county sites. This is in line with trends in other local archive services as users continue to prefer to access material remotely or photograph sources and carry on their research at home.

8. Online visits were up between 10% and 76% across nearly all of the Service websites. Attendances at events were down slightly as were the number of volunteer hours given to the Service. However this was partly due to not having an archive exhibition in the last year which in 2011 accounted for both increased attendances and volunteer hours. Use of the Service continues to change and we have begun to develop plans to adapt to new demands starting with the digitisation programme of popular sources.

9. The Joint Archive Service produced good performance results against its local targets for public service delivery and achieved a 99% customer satisfaction rating in the national Public Services Quality Group User Survey.

10. Overall it was a successful year for the Service continuing to meet high standards whilst also developing plans to adapt to changing demands.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the personnel and equal opportunities' policies of the County Council and the City Council.

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 delivers a range of work which is measured in a number of ways and detailed in the appendices of the Annual Report.

Risk implications:

None applicable.

Climate Change implications:

None applicable.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Annual Report 2012-2013	Joanna Terry/Place/ x278370