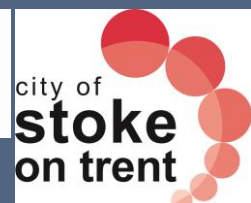




Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive and Heritage Service Vision

A Vision for the Service 2015 - 2025



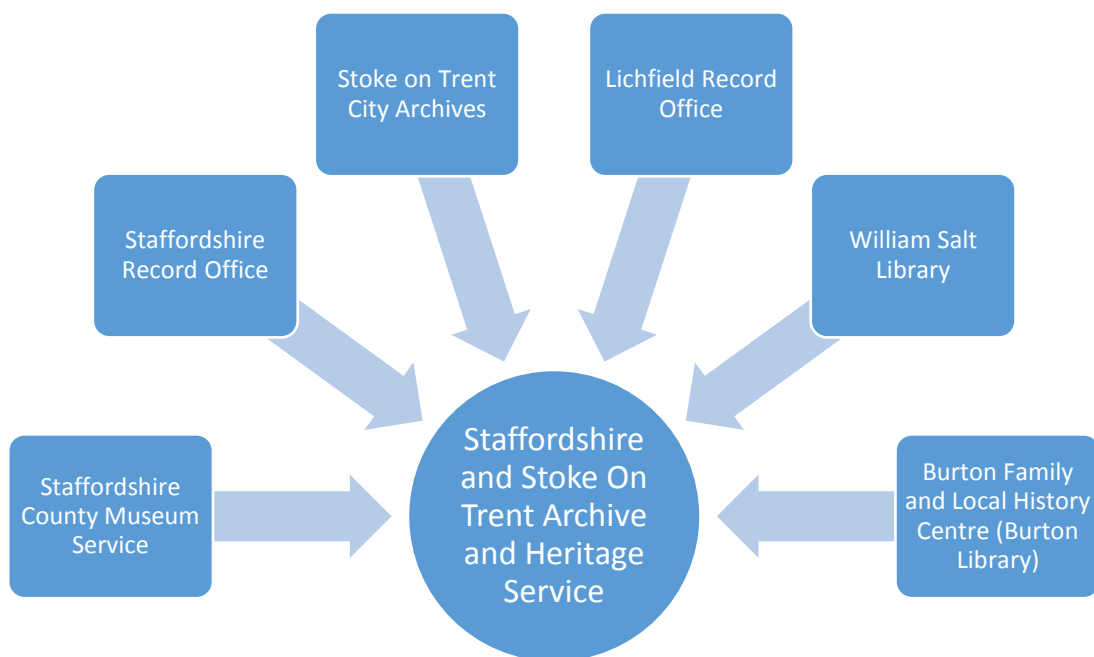
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service Vision 2015:

Introduction

This vision for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service in 10 years' time is the result of our conversations with the users, staff and stakeholders of the service. It aims to bring together and develop the ideas, hopes and requirements these groups have discussed with us. It will be the basis of further consultation and discussion. It is not yet a fully funded vision, but aims to reflect the likely future financial environment. The service will be redesigned and refocused to deliver some of these outcomes and will seek additional funding to fully deliver this vision.

This vision is necessarily general and will inform detailed future plans such as annual plans and funding applications. It will also inform the work of partner organisations such as the William Salt Library Trust. The Trust has developed its own vision to give clear direction for the Library.

Who we are



The Archive Service is jointly funded and managed by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council. Staffordshire County Museum is funded and managed by Staffordshire County Council and is part of the Archives and Heritage section within the Council. The William Salt Library is a charitable library owned and managed by the William Salt Library Trust. The County Council delivers the service and maintains the library building on behalf of the Trust. Together we care for the historic collections of the county and city.

Context Headlines

Collections

- 5 Miles of historic records from 10th to 21st centuries
- Nationally Outstanding Designated Archives
- Unique Special Collections of books in the grade 2* William Salt Library
- Archive storage rooms are full and we need more to continue collecting.
- Some archive collections are not stored in the necessary environmental conditions
- 27,000 objects relating to Staffordshire's history over the past 250 years.
- 43,000 photographs
- 1,800 works of fine and decorative art.
- Our museum development programme provides support and advice for the County's 40+ museums.
- Museum Stores are at capacity. Not all storage areas provide the necessary conditions for museum collections.

In our buildings

- 100% of users say they are satisfied with the Archive Service.
- The Archive and Heritage Service has the Customer Service Excellence Award.
- Visitor facilities at record offices are in need of improvement e.g. limited toilets, poor break area, lack of space for volunteers.
- 47% of Archive Service staffing resources are used to run public reading rooms.
- Fewer people are using the reading rooms as more use online services.
- People can see exhibitions about Staffordshire life and servants' lives at the County Museum and Park Farm on the Shugborough Estate.
- 91,622 people visited the Museum in 2013-14, including 10,336 pupils in organised school groups.
- The Staffordshire County Museum and Shire Hall Gallery are fully Accredited museums.
- The Archive Service has yet to achieve Accreditation for archives as the scheme was only launched in 2013.

Beyond our buildings

- There is a single online catalogue for archive and museum collections called Gateway to the Past used by 132,230 visitors in 2013/14
- 2.8 million names and images from parish registers between 1538-1900 are available on the Find my Past family history website to explore. More are on the way.
- 23,068 people used the Staffordshire Name Indexes website to research their family history. More names are added each year.
- In 2013/14 the archive service was used 282,991 times, 88% of this usage was outside the archive office buildings, mainly via the internet.

- Museum on the Move, a museum on a bus visited 5,249 people in 2013-14 including schools, youth groups, care homes, dementia groups and prisons.
- 197,860 people browsed Staffordshire history at www.staffspasttrack.org.uk
- Community exhibitions tour across the county.
- 29,921 people have explored the First World War on www.staffordshiregreatwar.com website in 2014/15.
- People can learn about how the Staffordshire Hoard was found and saved through a touring exhibition, 'Treasure: Discovering the Staffordshire Hoard'
- The service reaches more people outside its sites, via online services and activities in the community.

Volunteering and Partnership

- 82 volunteers provided 6,266 hours of support in 2013/14
- Our last call for volunteers was oversubscribed and was limited by the space available to seat people.
- The service works in partnership with the Trustees and Friends of the William Salt Library and the Friends of the Archive Service.
- The service works with other museums and organisations to deliver projects such as Museum on the Move and The Staffordshire Hoard Mercian Trail.
- Local heritage groups work with us to produce exhibitions and activities.
- We work in partnership with the National Trust on the Shugborough Estate.

Resources

- Like all council services, the archive and heritage service has had to make financial savings over the last few years. The service expects to be required to make additional savings in subsequent years.
- The service has enhanced its resources by attracting £418,902 grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and other grant giving bodies during 2012-2015.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service Vision

Our vision:

Connecting people to the collected stories and heritage of Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent and beyond.

Our mission:

To connect people to the memories of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, by engaging them with the collections we develop and preserve for current and future generations.

The service in 10 years' time will be a model archive and heritage service in terms of:

1. An Active Partnership Approach.
2. Resilience and Sustainability.
3. Reaching and engaging with a wide range of people and building new audiences.
4. Sharing knowledge across the UK.
5. Online presence and remote access.

We have developed five headline outcomes that we are looking to achieve in that period:

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service is developed by an Active Partnership between Councils, users, depositors, partners, volunteers in all areas of the service including: funding, management and delivery.

Our planned activity includes:

- Valuing and respecting the involvement of our partners in our service and actively crediting their participation and identity
- Developing and strengthening existing partnerships with the Trustees of the William Salt Library, the Friends of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service and the Friends of the William Salt Library
- Developing new partnerships with enthusiast and specialist interest groups in both the county and the city
- Empowering users and stakeholders to regularly contribute to the development of our policies and plans
- Creating a range of regular consultation activities such as teachers or user panels, which influence the service. Users feel they are involved in developing the service.
- Developing a training and support programme for stakeholder fundraisers
- Developing accredited volunteering programmes in partnership with other providers
- Expanding the volunteer programme in terms of numbers and roles undertaken, to add value to the service alongside the professional staff team

By 2025 :

- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Councils will see the service as having an important role to play in the county and city. There will be increased political understanding of, and support for, the service.
- The work of the service will be viewed as relevant to a wide range of organisations and individuals through joint delivery and commissioning of projects
- Fundraising by stakeholders has increased (significantly)

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service has been re-shaped and redesigned to encourage resilience, new ways of working and refocusing its delivery to the needs of users.

Our planned activity includes:

- Ensuring that the service is financially solvent and stable, and/by increasing its mix of external funding
- Examining and developing new areas of income generation to support the service, together with stakeholders
- Ensuring the long-term security of collections through housing all collections in PD5454 compliant storage, housing collections in the best possible conditions, and having space to continue to collect for the next 25 years.
- Examining our collections development policies and taking a more strategic active approach to collections development, including deaccessioning and disposal
- Reviewing and improving our collections information to be more efficient and user-focused with an improved collections interface which allows people to contribute information. Volunteers playing an integral role, working with staff, to develop collections information. Online resources have strong indexes and catalogues to maximize access.
- Being more active in attracting new users and providing them with different opportunities to engage with collections
- Redesigning/developing buildings to allow us to provide the types of services required in a more cost-effective, sustainable way
- Providing a new means of engagement for users through a new exhibition space. Some exhibitions are co-created by users and stakeholder groups building on the existing work developed by the Museum Service.
- Delivering an outreach programme to take collections and resources out to communities beyond its main buildings.
- Strengthening our presence around the county by working with Active Partners, such as libraries and heritage groups, to deliver access points in existing community spaces, reaching more people
- There is a new focus on providing online resources and a rejuvenated online presence to reach more people, balanced with a programme to engage more people with the original documents
- We acknowledge that these new ways of working will need staff resources and training and will build on the expertise we have developed in our existing programmes to deliver a more joined-up, cross-disciplinary service.

By 2025:

- The service is housed in buildings which are accessible, welcoming and comfortable. The customer experience is warm, welcoming and inspiring. Users are easily able to use and engage with collections and share their knowledge.
- All archive and special collections are housed in PD5454 compliant storage.
- All museum collections are housed in appropriate storage.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service has diversified its users, stakeholders and collections. This has resulted in increased visibility and understanding of the service by the public and increased levels of new users. People are proud of the Staffordshire History Centre

Our planned activity includes:

- Testing, developing and embedding new ways of engaging with people and new ways for them to engage with the collections across a range of subjects and disciplines
- Increasing levels of work with community groups and non-traditional users of the service
- Investing in marketing, promotion and use of social media to reach new users
- Providing ways to browse the collections online and onsite through permanent and temporary exhibitions
- Allowing the browsing of book collections wherever possible
- Developing a strong learning programme in an active relationship, working closely with teachers, tutors and initial teacher training courses to raise awareness of how archives and heritage can deliver the national curriculum
- Developing a set of resources to interpret its collections based on the interests and motivations of a wider audience and using these to engage with new users
- By integrating collections across the Archives and Heritage Service, increasing new audiences' access to and engagement with cross-disciplinary exhibitions

By 2025:

- The service is THE focus for the history and collections of Staffordshire
- Collections have diversified
- The Service has at least retained its current numbers of researchers in the searchroom and promoted the use of original documents, while increasing the number of users attending activities, browsing facilities and using the service online.

- The service has built on its support amongst local communities and increased the membership of Friends organisations and their active involvement with the Service.
- Public awareness of the diverse themes and treasures within the collection has grown, including that of the William Salt Library

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives and Heritage Service shares knowledge on new ways of working with other services

Our planned activity includes:

- Exploring new ways of working and sharing this knowledge with the wider archive sector, gaining further insight in response
- The service has developed a close relationship with voluntary sector organisations and provides the archive sector with support in developing volunteering programmes
- Reviewing and developing its income generation programme.
- Building upon its Museum Development Officer role, supporting and advising heritage groups across the county on their development
- Developing programmes for its users to share their knowledge and experience with each other, and providing experts to share their knowledge with users both on-site and online

By 2025:

- The service acts as a national focus for sector knowledge in active partnerships, including volunteering. This has involved partnerships with the National Archives, Arts Council England and the Archives and Records Association.
- The service supports other museums and organisations which hold objects and archives in their collections to ensure they are secure and accessible.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives Service and Heritage has increased its activity online and is delivering more services online.

Our planned activity includes:

- Developing user participation as a key aim of the service's online offer
- Digital content is seen as a 'way in' for new, non-traditional users.

- There is a new focus on providing online resources, with a rejuvenated online presence to reach more people on platforms that maximise access.
- Balancing online access with a recognition that access to original documents is still important to many users and that online access is not for everyone
- Developing a plan to manage and provide access to born digital archives.
- Developing a Digital Plan that provides access to as many user services as possible, is sustainable, and links virtual visits to physical visits
- Implementing a digitisation programme with priority given to items that cannot be physically accessible
- Providing access to as many user services as possible through a new web service
- Developing active partnerships with key digital heritage access points
- Engage with existing and new users and raising awareness of the relevance of archives through a strong use of social media

By 2025:

- The service has a presence on key sites beyond its own website, delivering regular content to users on the sites they use frequently.
- More services are delivered online and more collections are available online.
- Born digital archives are properly managed and accessible.

Delivering the Vision

We have tested our draft Vision by consulting our stakeholders, partners, Friends groups, and users through a community conversation in February 2015. The feedback we received gave the vision broad support, with some amendments made in response to the conversation findings. The amended vision was approved in March 2015 by the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee.

To deliver the vision by 2025 we will have :

- Developed options for how we will use our buildings to secure our collections
- Sought funding to increase access and engagement with our collections by redesigning buildings and creating activity programmes to attract a broader range of users.
- Used new and existing partnerships to increase funding, expertise and resources for the service to reduce dependency on council funds.
- Evaluated our progress and produced case studies to share our learning, in our aim to become a recognised leader in our sector for Active Partnership.
- Increased the number and types of volunteers who work alongside our professional staff and produced accredited training programmes for them.

- Delivered a strong online presence to engage users, offer services, and generate income for the service.
- Ensured the resilience of the service for the future.

The Archive and Heritage Service will update this Plan annually and undertake a full review in 2018.