

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee – 16 July 2015

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Progress report on Staffordshire History Centre and Consultation

Recommendation(s)

- 1a. That the progress report is noted for information.
- 1b. That the Joint Archive Committee approves use of the Archive Service reserve to fund support for the analysis of consultation results.

Report of Acting Director for Place (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Directorate (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The Archive Service Project Team and consultants have delivered the two stakeholder workshops during May with recommendations on the preferred options from nine that were originally identified.
3. Consultation on four of the nine options recommended by the Project Board and based on the stakeholders views will start on 19th June.

Background

The Archives and Heritage Vision was approved at the Joint Archive Committee on 26th March 2015. The William Salt Library Vision was approved by the Trust at their Annual General Meeting on 11th May 2015. Both bodies agreed the next stages of developing delivery options and consulting formally in the summer.

5. On the 9th March a stakeholder workshop was held to identify options for the delivery of the Vision. Nine options were identified and subsequently written up and developed to be appraised by a wider group of stakeholders in May. The consultants have now analysed the results of the workshops and supplied a report (see Appendix 2) with recommendations on which options to consult on.

Stakeholder workshops

6. Two stakeholder workshops were held on 15th May and 18th May. The first was in Stafford and the second was in Lichfield. At both workshops the invitation list was widened to include representatives from more groups and from a wider area in the county. The format and delivery of the workshops was identical for both groups although naturally different questions and issues arose.

7. The nine options were created by the stakeholder group in their March meeting and were designed to deliver the vision taking into consideration:

- 40% cuts in operation budgets due from this year;
- To achieve professional 'accreditation standards' it needs to show that its storage is up to national standard and that has space to store future collections;
- Staffing and resources are currently based around serving people in record office and not towards developing the online offer which has significantly higher usage;
- To secure funding, support and to deliver a professional service, it needs to attract MORE users and NEW types of users, in addition to retaining current users.

8. The nine options were:

1. Staffordshire History Centre project with external funding • With Activity programme*	2. New Lichfield Record Office, new storage at Stafford Record Office & close WSL building. • With Activity Programme	3. Staffordshire History Centre project via HLF with offsite storage (i.e. option 1 with off-site storage) • With Activity programme
4. Staffordshire History Centre - Without HLF funding • no activity programme	5. Staffordshire History Centre plus museum storage & exhibition, with external funding. (i.e. Option 1 plus Museum) • With Activity programme	6. Replace Lichfield Record Office with an access point. Reductions across remaining. No external funding bid • No activity programme
7. Retain all sites & achieve savings by heavy cuts in staffing and opening hours. • No activity programme	8. Replace Lichfield Record Office with an access point & close WSL building. Store collections in Salt mine. • No activity programme	9. Staffordshire History Centre Project on a new site. Replace Stafford and Lichfield Record Office with access points • With Activity programme

* Activity Programme: delivery of projects with groups and partners, community engagement, exhibitions, events.

After the initial presentation to attendees and description of the nine options people were split into three groups. Each group appraised the options in batches of three at a time using selection criteria (again identified in March see Appendix 2) until each group had looked at all nine. Each option was scored by the group and reported back at the end of the session.

Results of the workshops

<i>Option</i>	<i>Option no.</i>	<i>Stafford workshop score</i>	<i>Stafford workshop ranking</i>	<i>Lichfield workshop score</i>	<i>Lichfield workshop ranking</i>	<i>total score</i>	<i>ranking by total score</i>
Staffs History Centre + funding bid	1	92	1	83	1	175	1
New Lichfield RO, new storage Stafford RO¹, close WSL²	2	30.5	9	34	8	64.5	9
Staffs History Centre + funding bid + offsite storage	3	76.5	3	63	4	139.5	3
Staffs History Centre without funding bid	4	38	6	31	9	69	8
Staffs History Centre + Museum	5	80.5	2	70.5	2	151	2
Lichfield RO closed, reductions across others, no funding bid	6	41	5	40.5	7	81.5	6
Retain all sites, heavy cuts to achieve savings	7	37.5	7	43	6	80.5	7
Lichfield RO closed, WSL Building closed, storage in Salt Mines	8	37	8	45	5	82	5
Staffs History Centre on new site, access points Stafford & Lichfield	9	59	4	66	3	125	4

10. The Stafford workshop ranked the options in the following order, high to low – 1,5,3,9,6,4,7,8,2

The Lichfield workshop ranked the options in the following order, high to low – 1,5,9,3,8,7,6,2,4

With the scores added together, the overall order of ranking is – 1,5,3,9,8,6,7,4,2.

Options 4 and 8 are the main anomalies between the 2 groups (option 4 ranked 6th in Stafford and 9th in Lichfield; option 8 ranked 8th in Stafford and 5th in Lichfield).

The 2 groups picked out the same top 4 options (with just places 3 & 4 in a different order). Option 2 with a new Lichfield Record Office was in the bottom 2 for both groups.

11. A couple of variations were suggested. One was to look at a revenue-based bid to start digitisation of the collections before any capital works to ensure public access was prioritised before any collections are moved. Another was to consider no capital development other than moving all storage off-site to address the conditions and long-term space. This variation would concentrate on external revenue funding for an activity and digitisation programme.

Options for formal consultation

¹ RO Record Office

² WSL William Salt Library

12. Based on the outcome of the Stakeholder Workshops and recommendation from the Project Board the options selected to consult on during the summer are:

- Option 1– Create the Staffordshire History Centre Project with external funding. This was the preferred option of both groups.
- Option 5 – Staffordshire History Centre plus museum storage/exhibition & Lottery funding (i.e. Option1 plus Museum). This ranked second from both groups.
- Option 7 – Staffordshire Archives and Heritage – retain all sites & achieve budget savings required. This represents the no change option but still implements the savings required.
- Option 9 – Staffordshire History Centre with HLF funding on a new site. This ranked fourth overall.

13. The above options are described in detail in appendix two to this report. Both the Project Board and Archive Service project team felt that consulting on six options would be too much information for non-users and service users to comment on. This was also the view of the Corporate Engagement team. Therefore option three was removed as it was similar to option one but provided storage offsite. Option six was removed as it was also similar to option seven but seven best represented the no change option.

Consultation

14. Our consultants have developed the survey questions and the methodology for delivering drop in sessions and focus groups. The focus will be on the activities first rather than the buildings and on targeting non-users.

15. The online survey will be hosted on the County Council consultation web page. A paper survey will also be provided which will be available from Archive and Heritage Service sites and main district libraries. Eight drop in sessions will be held at other venues and events around the county. A depositors' forum and a focus group with parents at a library during the summer reading challenge will also be delivered.

16. The consultation will start on 19th June immediately after the Joint Archive Committee. A press release has already been issued to inform people about the new vision and that consultation is due to start in the summer. Members and Chief Officers from the County Council, District Councils, and MPs will be informed in writing about the start of the consultation.

17. Information about the consultation is being added to the Vision page on the Archive Service website and continues to be updated as new information is available for members of the public.

Next steps

18. The results of the consultation will be collated and analysed during the remainder of August. The Insight team are currently at capacity and unable to assist with the analysis of the results. The Project Board recommended requesting funding from the Joint Archive Service General Reserve to ask the consultants to complete the analysis and feedback the results to the Project Board, stakeholders and partners. This additional work would cost an estimated £3,000 to cover approximately 6-7 days of work.

19. The preferred option will be identified and the design brief developed. The brief will then be issued as part of a competitive design process to identify a preferred design before submission of the bid in December.

20. Final sign off from the Joint Archive Committee and the Strategic Property Board will be obtained during October/November. The legal issues concerning the William Salt Library Trust and the lease of the building to the County Council will also be progressed to ensure a workable solution is identified before the bid is submitted.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The consultation will be widely advertised and promoted across the county with drop in sessions and events to attract participation. Paper and online versions will be available.

Legal implications:

Discussions have started between the County Council and William Salt Library Trust regarding the lease and the potential for a new agreement between the two bodies.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The Vision and development of delivery options will be used to help restructure and transform the Archive and Heritage Service to ensure that it has the right roles and skills for delivery and sustainability in the future. It will enable delivery of savings identified in the MTFs of £155,000 and take into account future anticipated savings. Staff and trade union representatives will continue to be engaged in the development of this work and consultation will be entered into as appropriate

Risk implications:

The vision is not fully funded and depends on securing external funding, income generation and other fundraising. All of the delivery options include making the savings required. There are options for implementation without external funding.

Climate Change implications:

The Vision balances online access and physical access to services and collections to offer options for remote use and not necessarily travel to multiple locations. Any new buildings will be compliant with modern standards for energy efficiency and minimise impacts on climate change.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

The Vision offers opportunities for volunteers to get involved and add value to the service with support and accredited training programmes from staff. Volunteering provides many social benefits for individuals which can impact positively on health.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
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Appendix 2: Results of stakeholder workshops and list of options.