

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 18 February 2016

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Annual Service Plan 2015/2016: Predicted Outturn Performance

Recommendation(s)

1. That this report informing the Committee on the predicted outturn against the targets set in Joint Archive Service's Annual Service Plan is received and noted.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Director (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The Archive Service has made very good progress against its targets this year and a more detailed summary is set out at Appendix 2 to this report. The predicted performance indicators to 31 March 2016 are recorded in Appendix 3.

Background

3. The Service Plan sets the annual targets for the performance of Joint Archive Service. These targets work towards the overall achievement of the Archive Service's current three year service objectives, which are set out in its Forward Plan, 2015-2025, approved by the Joint Archives Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2015. The key achievements for the year were:

- Acquisition of the Minton Archive and first phase of access achieved.
- Strengthened partnerships with William Salt Library Trust and Keele University.
- Development of the Staffordshire History Centre project and submission of stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid.
- Partnership with Find My Past has delivered 90% of the material online.
- 92% of archive collections have a description in the online catalogue.
- Staffordshire Pasttrack website re-platformed and launched.

Areas for concern during the year have been:

- Focus on the Staffordshire History Centre project has resulted in fewer events being delivered and has delayed work on achieving Archive Accreditation.
- Usages are lower than the previous year as physical visits continued to decline and virtual visits were affected by the Pasttrack website work.
- Only 82% of collections are stored in the correct conditions.
- Approaches for new collections have remained static.

A summary of performance is given below under each service demand.

The 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.

4. The work this year has focussed on reviewing existing partnerships, exploring and establishing new ones, and finding new ways to involve stakeholders in the development of the Service.

5. The partnership agreement between the County Council and Keele University to deliver the Victoria County History was renewed. The funding has reduced but there were discussions about alternative funding models for the future. Further discussions were held about Keele's involvement in the Staffordshire History Centre project (SHC).

6. Discussions have taken place between the William Salt Library Trust and the County Council regarding the SHC project and a Heads of Term outlining the principles for the basis of a new partnership was agreed at the end of January. This agreement has been submitted as part of the SHC bid.

To develop a vision and options for delivery of the SHC a Project Board, Project Team and wider stakeholder group has been established. These groups were involved in the development of delivery options in May, followed by extensive consultation during the summer. The project team and board have developed the preferred option into the HLF bid submitted in February 2016.

7. Stoke on Trent City Archives has developed new partnerships in connection with the acquisition of two significant collections for the City. The first was the Michelin Company archives. As part of the negotiations for the deposit the Service agreed a cataloguing project working with current and former employees as part of their social responsibility programme.

8. The acquisition of the Minton Archive in March 2015 was the start of a partnership between Wedgwood Waterford Royal Doulton, Wedgwood Museum and the Art Fund. The first phase of the Minton Archive Project concluded with a celebration event on 26 November.

9. Volunteer programmes continued to expand as the Staffordshire Appeals project has successfully progressed. This project has helped to increase volunteer hours to an estimated 8,000 hours by the end of March. An increase of 7%.

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.

10. The Service has started work on scoping a new delivery model for the SHC project. This has involved staff, partners, Friends groups and volunteers. The scoping has also fed into the design for the stage 1 HLF bid which was shared with the public in November. The final design for the bid was agreed at the end of November.

11. Work has begun on achieving the Archives Accreditation standard. This has been delayed whilst focus is on the stage 1 HLF bid. It will resume in March with submission due in the summer.

12. The Service has sought grant funding to support cataloguing and care of collections. Out of three cataloguing bids submitted one has been successful with another still under consideration. The successful bid is funded by the Wellcome Trust and will help to improve descriptions of Public Health records. A bid for conservation of the Minton Archive was also successful and is due to start in the spring.

13. Annual conservation and cataloguing programmes have been successfully delivered increasing access to collections. A conservation internship was also delivered with grant funding support.

14. A range of events and activities have been delivered to engage people with the collections and take them out beyond the main buildings. These included:

- Waterloo 200 exhibition touring 12 libraries
- Tamworth Roadshow with 514 attendees
- Treasure Staffordshire Hoard continuing tour
- 6 user sessions for Find My Past and 15 Ancestry sessions delivered in libraries
- 11 drop in sessions for the summer consultation

The History Day is deferred to May to coincide with the launch of Staffordshire Day.

15. Work on delivering more resources and services online has continued with increased digitised collections available online through the partnership with Find My Past. A new interim web interface is being implemented for the online catalogue. Supporting this work internal training for staff and volunteers has been delivered on collections and our cataloguing software. 92% of archive collections have at least a collection level description online and 82% are stored in the correct conditions.

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.

16. The results of the consultation have informed the development of an Activity Plan for the HLF bid for the SHC. Similarly work has been carried out to plan exhibitions and service promotion. The Resonance WW1 touring exhibition has been delivered with 50,000 visitors so far.

17. Learning work has continued with support for local schools by offering placements. Five classes of students from Keele University have been hosted at Staffordshire Record Office. Two partnership study days have been held and two new communities have been supported to raise awareness of their history. 48 talks have been delivered and exhibitions have visited 21 venues. Fewer events have been offered this year as the Service focused on consulting with users over changes to the service.

The Archives and Heritage Service shares knowledge on new ways of working with other services.

18. During the year two members of staff have presented papers on conservation and digital engagement at national conferences. Our conservation internee also presented a paper about her experience as part of the project.

19. Work has continued with partners around the development of the SHC project. Keele University has also worked closely with the Staffordshire Appeals volunteers to support their learning and development. A book on Staffordshire in the Great War will be produced in 2016/17. The Museum Service has continued to deliver support and advice for local organisations. 59 services have been supported so far.

20. The annual fees and charges review was carried out involving frontline staff. The Joint Archive Service will appear as a case study in some new guidance due to be produced by the National Archives.

Archives and Heritage Service has increased its activity online and is delivering more services online.

21. The Staffordshire Pasttrack website was re-platformed and redeveloped as part of an essential upgrade for access and maintenance. This has enabled the site to be linked to social media, added a shopping basket facility, enabled GPS location detection to display images of your current location. The target for adding new images was exceeded with 1,208 uploaded.

22. The Staffordshire Name indexes website was also extended with additions to existing databases. Work is under way to incorporate changes to copyright legislation meaning the ordering process can be quicker and easier.

23. Social media use has continued to grow and it is used to promote all aspects of the Service, from new online collections to involvement with consultation. Targets for writing posts have been exceeded.

25. The programme of digitisation with Find My Past has continued with 90% of parish registers up to 1900 available online. The marriage bonds collection was also added and part of the wills collection went live just before Christmas. From April – December 2015 almost 60,000 users have viewed 928,343 images.

Local Performance Indicators

24. The targets for the performance indicators were presented at the Joint Archive Committee on 18 June 2015. The figure for usages of the Service is predicted to be 328,000, 2.5% above the target of 320,000 but about 2% below the outturn for 2014/15. Part of this is affected by personal visits and part by virtual visits. The re-platforming of the Pasttrack website has meant that the content is organised differently. This means that the analysis software counts it differently and so the figures do not compare with last years.

25. Fewer events have been delivered this year as the Service has concentrated on consultation and engagement activities to develop the new model for the SHC. This means attendances are estimated to be down by about 28%.

26. Volunteer hours is set to exceed the previous year's figure by about 7%. Continued work by volunteers on the Staffordshire Appeals project has increased levels by about 2,000 hours. Use of volunteers in other aspects of the Service's work has also continued to grow.

27. The annual customer survey is due to start on 15 February 2016. This survey will enable the service to measure customer satisfaction and feedback on the service overall. Based on previous results it is likely to be around 99%.

28. The target for approaches to acquire new archive collections is predicted to be just under 220 at 212. This is a similar figure to previous years.

Conclusion

29. Overall the performance of the Archive Service has remained consistent with three out of five performance indicators likely to exceed target. The Service has invested a lot of time consulting with stakeholders about new models for the delivery of the Staffordshire History Centre. This level of work has impacted on other work, it has, however, enabled the Service to gather evidence to support the HLF bid and inform further changes for the future.

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 within existing resources and utilised grant funding to help improve access to collections.

Risk implications:

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

Climate Change implications:

The growth of online services has resulted in more remote use compared to physical visits.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

Author's Name: Joanna Terry, Head of Archives
Telephone No: (01785) 278370
Room No: Staffordshire Record Office

List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Annual Service plan bi-monthly reports 2015-2016	Joanna Terry/Place/ x278370
Appendix 2 Summary of Performance to Service Delivery Plan	
Appendix 3 Local Performance Indicators	