

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee
meeting held on 21 December 2017**

Present: Mike Davies (Observer), Alan Dutton and Philip White

Apologies for absence: Gill Heath, Mark Winnington, Anthony Munday and Michael Greatorex

PART ONE

31. Appointment of Chairman for the Meeting

RESOLVED – That, owing to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman not being present, Mr. Philip White be elected to the Chair for the meeting.

32. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

34. Predicted Outturn 2017/18

The Committee considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources (Stoke-on-Trent City Council) giving details of the predicted outturn for the Joint Archives Service for 2017/18 (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

Members noted that that the predicted outturn was a spend of £721,614 against an approved budget of £746,500. If realised, this would give an underspend of £24,886 which would be transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year.

Members also noted that the balance in the Archive Acquisition Reserve, which enabled the service to purchase collections for the benefit of residents in the City and County, was £57,542. The balance in the General Reserve was £31,411.

In presenting the report, The Director of Finance clarified the position with regard to the predicted under-recovery of income as referred to in paragraph 5 of the report together with the factors which were likely contribute to the anticipated underspend.

RESOLVED – That the report detailing the predicted outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2017/18, be received and noted.

35. Review of Fees and Charges 2018/19

The Committee considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and the Chief Operating

Officer – Resources Directorate (Stoke-on-Trent City Council) (schedule 2 to the signed minutes) on a review of fees and charges to be implemented from April 2018.

Members noted that the Archive Services' fees and charges had been reviewed on an annual basis for a number of years to adapt to changes in demand and cost of service provision. The level of fees and charges set was based on various considerations including (i) staff time involved in delivering the service; (ii) the cost of equipment and associated maintenance; (iii) postage costs; (iv) the prevailing economic climate; (v) technology and; (vi) the availability of resources on line.

Owing to the Committee having 2016/17 reviewed their charges for (i) copying; (ii) talks; (iii) visits and; (iv) permissions to publish, it was not proposed to increase the level of these charges again for 2018/19. However, another significant source of income was fees from research undertaken for people unable to visit research/reading rooms. The charge made for specialised services eg providing certification from Parish Registers etc were currently aligned to the Research Fee.

For 2018/19 it was proposed to streamline the charging structure by creating a single new Staff Facilitation Fee, for all charges aligned to the current Research Fee. It was considered this would (i) provide flexibility to respond to new and/or exceptional circumstances and; (ii) and enhance transparency. The current research fee, which was fixed in 2016, was £28 per hour. The proposed new fee of £30 per hour represented a 7% increase which was in line with the current rate of inflation and the fees levied by neighbouring Authorities.

The current fee for providing users of the Archive Service with a computer print-out was £0.10 per sheet. However, it was proposed to increase this fee to £0.20 per sheet for 2018/19 which brought into line with the fee charged by the Library Service.

In response to a request for clarification regarding the target level of income from the current Research Fee, the Chief Operating Officer said that whilst the service had not previously set targets for individual income streams, currently the research fee brought in approximately 7% of total income. However, this was expected to decrease in the future owing to the availability of material/resources on-line.

During the discussion which ensued Members expressed their support for implementing the revised schedule of fees and charges as set out in the Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED - (i) That the report be received and noted.

(ii) That the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved for introduction by the Joint Archive Service from 1 April 2018.

36. Staffordshire History Centre Proposed Development Trust

The Committee considered a joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Housing and Customer Services (Stoke-on-Trent City Council) regarding the establishment of a Staffordshire History Centre Development Trust (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes).

A Round 1 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) submission which was made in 2016, sought funding for the development of a Staffordshire History Centre and included proposals to investigate Active Partnership ie a model of working with partners, Friends groups and other stakeholders to deliver the objectives of the project in terms of creating a programme of activity and this included exploring establishment of a development trust..

The financial position now and in the foreseeable future suggested there would be difficulty in sustaining Active Partnership working beyond the end of the HLF project. Therefore, it was considered that the establishment of a Development Trust could provide the means to raise the funds necessary to ensure that engagement with stakeholders could continue beyond 2021.

If established it was envisaged the Trust would be an independent charity with its own trustees who would act in the interest of the charitable organisation in order to fulfil the purposes set out in the Articles of Association. The Trust would raise and disburse funds to support the care of and access to the collections in the Staffordshire History Centre (including the Lichfield Diocesan Records and collections in the William Salt Library) and educational programmes throughout the County.

As a registered Charity, the independent Development Trust would be able to apply to other charitable bodies for funding to support projects and programmes. In addition it would be eligible to claim tax against donations made by UK tax payers under the Gift Aid scheme.

Members noted that under the proposals, the Development Trust would not manage the History Centre, Archive Service or William Salt Library. Each partner would retain their independence but come together to fundraise specific projects and continue the activities after the HLF funding ceased in 2022.

Key partners and stakeholders were to be consulted on the proposals prior to formal agreement on the purposes and governance of the Trust by the County and City Councils.

RESOLVED - (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the proposals for the establishment of a Staffordshire History Centre Development Trust, as set out in the report, be supported.

(c) That the Committee be kept updated on progress with regard to the establishment of a Staffordshire History Centre Development Trust

37. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 8 February 2018 at 10.30 am, County Record Office, Stafford

RESOLVED – That a further meeting of the Committee be held on Thursday 8 February 2018 at 10.30 am, County Record Office, Stafford.

38. Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

PART TWO

39. Staffordshire History Centre Project

The Committee received an exempt joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Housing and Customer Services (Staffordshire County Council) updating them on progress with regard to the Staffordshire History Centre Project.

Chairman