

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 3 April 2018

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Staffordshire History Centre Project Update

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Committee note progress of the project.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Housing and Community Services (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

Background

2. In June 2016 Staffordshire County Council and the William Salt Library Trust were awarded a stage 1 pass by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop the Staffordshire History Centre Project. A development grant of £333,400 was awarded to enable the project team to commission work to develop the project to the second stage. A grant of almost £4m is earmarked for the second stage subject to a successful application in 2018.

3. The project is a partnership between Staffordshire County Council (Archives & Heritage Service) and the William Salt Library Trust. It will see the redevelopment and extension of the Staffordshire Record Office and William Salt Library in Eastgate Street to provide a new History Centre. In addition there will be a four year activity programme to provide exhibitions, outreach, learning, and digitisation to promote the historic collections and significantly widen engagement across the county.

4. Permission to start was confirmed by HLF in October 2016. From October 2016 – June 2017 several pieces of work were commissioned which are required for the stage 2 application. These include:

- Conservation Management Plan
- Activity Plan (including learning and active partnership)
- Design team
- Business Plan
- Interpretation and branding
- Maintenance and Management Plan
- Fundraising
- Recruitment of staff

The project is managed by a Project Board and a Project Team delivering the work required.

5. The Archive and Heritage Service have reviewed all of the paperwork working with staff and consultants using challenge sessions to scrutinise the plans. On 19 March 2018 the paperwork for the mid-stage review was submitted to HLF for their consideration. They will review the paperwork and confirm whether the project can progress to a stage 2 application. The Service is awaiting feedback from the HLF. This is a pass/fail process.

Paperwork submitted for the HLF Mid Stage Review

6. Project Vision

The vision for the project was reviewed and updated. The agreed vision is:

The Staffordshire History Centre will create imaginative and exciting ways to connect Staffordshire people and their stories

This is now incorporated into the plans for the Staffordshire History Centre and the Archive and Heritage Service Vision.

7. Activity plan and active partnerships

The Activity Plan has been reviewed and it now includes more detailed information about the activities to be delivered and what is unique about Staffordshire. The section on learning has been strengthened drawing on expertise and contacts within the Project Team and Project Board. There are more ambitious targets for engaging school pupils, onsite visitors and visitors to touring exhibitions. Specific projects have been identified to engage hard to reach audiences such as rural and migrant communities. Active Partnership has been discussed with stakeholders and they have been invited to sign up to support the creation of a network. 47 letters of support have been received. The William Salt Library Trust have approved in principle the creation of the Development Trust to support the History Centre.

8. Interpretation plan

A clear brief was agreed with the consultants who have developed new proposals for the interpretation in the History Centre. This includes a new welcome feature outside the entrance to the Centre. Using existing museum cases recently purchases by the Museum Service a scalable exhibition scheme has been created including temporary display space and a curated wall display for more permanent display. Touring exhibition proposals complement the scheme for onsite exhibitions and are portable and flexible for use at different venues. New branding proposals have been agreed for the Centre by the Project Board. The William Salt Library space will retain a historic library feel with duplicate books on display as recommended in the Conservation Plan. The plan is within budget.

9. Architectural designs

The options for the design were reviewed and all costs were carefully assessed. A single option has been identified which provides spaces to deliver activities and

learning, temporary and more permanent display space, research facilities, break out area and additional collection workspace for volunteers supported by staff.

Storage requirements were reassessed in light of additional storage gained at the Stafford Outstore to accommodate the Lichfield Record Office collections. The proposals for the building are now affordable, deliverable and meet the needs of the project as well as the needs for the Service for the future.

10. Business Plan and Maintenance and Management Plan

The revised Business Plan includes financial data and forecasts over five years for the Archive and Heritage Service and William Salt Library Trust. The plan includes a viability statement and explicit links to the Activity Plan. It also references the Development Trust.

The Maintenance and Management Plan has approximately 80% of the data required. It sets out maintenance costs for all aspects of the project over the next 10 years to be funded by the County Council, Archive and Heritage Service and William Salt Library Trust.

11. Conservation Management Plan

The Conservation Management Plan is complete and has been published on the Archive Service website.

12. Project costs

All project costs have been reviewed for both the building, activity, and interpretation plans. The costs have been compared to the round 1 bid and the project is affordable and deliverable assuming the bids for matched funding are successful.

13. Fundraising

A total of £614,000 of cash matched funding has been secured. This is made up of a combination of local authority and Archive Service reserve funding, partnership funding from William Salt Library Trust and Diocese, private donations and grants from trusts and depositors, successful grant funded applications, and Friends fundraising.

A further £336,000 is being sought through grant funding applications and Friends fundraising. If all of the bids are successful this would provide a surplus of £105,000 for the project. Any shortfall in funding would be met from within service and local authority contributions.

14. Legal work

Initial discussions have started regarding the land transfer and new lease between the County Council and William Salt Library Trust.

15. Next steps

The Project Board and Team are awaiting the outcome of the mid stage review. If the review is successful a stage 2 bid will be submitted in June 2018.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The National Archives, stakeholders, partners and staff have been involved in development of the project. Further consultation is planned in the development stage.

Legal implications:

The Staffordshire History Centre will deliver archive services under the terms of the Joint Agreement which is reviewed and amended as required by both authorities.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The delivery of the Staffordshire History Centre will enable the Archive and Heritage Service to achieve its MTFs savings and a sustainable model for the future.

Risk implications:

The project has secured a stage 1 pass and development stage funding. To proceed to the delivery phase the partnership will need to secure stage two funding, and raise £230,000 of matched funding.

Climate Change implications:

The project 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 project 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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HLF Mid Stage Review submission March 2019.	
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