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| Members Interest |
| N/A |

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 28 June 2018

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Annual Report

Recommendation(s)

1. That this report informing the Committee about the annual report on the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (Joint) Archive Service for the period April 2017 to March 2018 is received and approved.
2. That the Risk Register for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (Joint) Archive Service is reviewed and agreed.

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

3. The accompanying Annual Report provides an account and review of the work and performance of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service for the financial year, April 2016 to March 2017. The internal audit carried out on the Joint Archive Committee recommended that the Committee review the Risk Register for the service.

Background

4. The terms of the Joint Agreement for Archive Services between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council requires an annual report on the work of the Joint Archive Service to be brought to the Annual Meeting in June. The Annual Report also provides the means by which the Committee can be presented with a full overview of the range of activities, progress and performance of the Service.

5. The year 2017-2018 was the third in the current three-year planning cycle for the Joint Archive Service. This year's Annual Report shows some significant achievements towards meeting the overall strategic objectives of the Archive Service within the current Forward Plan, 2015-2018. These objectives are:

- Developing an active partnership approach.
- Delivering resilience and sustainability.
- Reaching and engaging with a wide range of people and building new audiences.
- Sharing knowledge across the UK.
- Increasing our online presence and remote access.

6. The Annual Report demonstrates a very productive year for the Joint Archive Service in terms of its performance, achievements and associated activity. The most notable successes have been the development of Heritage Lottery Funded Staffordshire History Centre, achievement of Archive Accreditation, and continued work on funded cataloguing projects especially at Stoke on Trent City Archives.

7. The closure of Lichfield Record Office in December also saw a lot of change and transition for the service as collections from Lichfield were moved to Stafford. Such a significant move of collections whilst also developing a major capital project has impacted on the work of the service. Whilst most targets were maintained there were dips in some as staff concentrated on other priorities.

8. The Staffordshire History Centre continued to dominate the work of the Service. During the development stage of the project fourteen events and activities were delivered across the county to consult with people about the project. The service attended rural events, village fetes and hosted its own drop in events to ensure wide cross-section of people were consulted. The feedback shaped the Activity Plan and the Active Partnership work in which a network of groups and societies will work together to deliver the project. A Conservation Management Plan sets out how the collections will be better managed, interpreted, explained and conserved through the project. It makes recommendations about policies for the collections and target areas for collecting. Designs for the Centre were developed to RIBA stage 3 and the Interpretation Plan demonstrates what the exhibition space will look like. 550 square metres of fully accessible space will be created. New PD5454 storage will provide space for 20 years of future collecting. An ambitious programme of activity will reach 120,000 per year and 8,000 young people will be involved in learning sessions for schools. The work was not without difficulties and after extensive feedback from HLF mentors the stage 2 application was submitted in June 2018.

9. The Service was delighted to achieve Archive Accreditation in July 2017. At the presentation of the award in November Dr Val Johnson of The National Archives said 'only 3.5% of services have attained this award'. The successful achievement was as a result of the whole management team working together on the submission and reflected many years of good practice within the service.

10. Whilst the service was busy attending events for its consultation on the History Centre it was unable to deliver as many of its own events. This resulted in a 44% drop in attendees to the service events. The service continued to work in partnership with the County Museum and Library and Arts Service to promote the Great War Centennial. This included the War Bride project, J.R.R Tolkien exhibition, Great War Conferences, and the Kitchen Goes to War.

11. Volunteers continued to work on a number of projects across the service contributing 8,571 hours. This is only a slight drop on the previous year and covers all aspects of the work of the service. The work at Stafford and Stoke was highlighted as best practice in guidance on using volunteers to support cataloguing. The project at Stoke working on the 16th5th Lancers Regiment has been successful

drawing on veteran's knowledge of the collection to add detail to the catalogue. Volunteers also took part in consultation on the History Centre. Their feedback was invaluable for the design of the building, activities and development of a training programme for the project for staff and volunteers.

12. Onsite services changed significantly with the move of the Lichfield Collections to Stafford. The Collections Management Archivist led the move ably supported by other archivists, the staff at Lichfield Record Office and volunteers. The move was successful and collections were accessible from May 2018. Staff training was provided across the service and the Lichfield staff are supporting the service at Stafford as well as preparing for the Access Hub in Lichfield Library. Personal visits fell by 19% in line with previous years.

13. Online services maintained high levels of use as the main way people interact with the collections. Visits to the service website increased whilst use of the online catalogue was almost the same as the previous year. The number of Facebook likes and Twitter followers increased by 18% and 21% respectively. Use of Staffordshire resources on Find My Past remained high.

14. Accessions and approaches for new collections was down to 159 for the year. In part this is due to the closure of Lichfield Record Office and reduction in space available to take new deposits. Despite these challenges good progress was made in cataloguing new collections and those which form part of the backlog. This was partly due to the success of the service in attracting external funding. Stoke on Trent City Archives succeeded in obtaining a National Cataloguing Grant from the National Archives to catalogue the Archive of Royal Doulton (part of the Minton Archive). Following on from the success of a project to catalogue Public Health Records the Service has attracted a second grant from the Wellcome Trust. The grant of £167,519 will enable the service to catalogue mental health care patient records 1818-1960. An exhibition and outreach activities will also form part of the project.

15. The conservation programme also received support from external funding with a National Manuscripts Conservation Trust grant to conserve parts of the Minton Archive at Stoke on Trent. The conservators also completed annual programmes, bound medieval volumes for Shropshire Archives, and supported Walsall and Sandwell Archives.

16. The Joint Archive Service produced good performance results against its local targets for public service delivery and achieved a 99% customer satisfaction rating in local survey of users across the service.

17. The year has seen major projects developed and completed. The achievement of Archive Accreditation recognised the work of the service and its ambitions for the future. It has a strong record of working with volunteers and using external funding to deliver key priorities.

Risk Register

18. Staffordshire County Council Internal Audit team completed an audit of the Joint Archive Committee in May 2017. This audit looked at financial management and

processes and risk management. A service risk register has been completed each year but has not been reviewed by the Joint Committee. The single finding from the audit was to recommend the Risk Register is reviewed by the Committee. The register sets out the main risks to the service covering:

- Physical risks to collections
- Risks to digital collections
- Risks to staff, members of the public and volunteers within the service
- Risks to operation of the public service
- Risks to forward planning for the service

The Risk Register at Appendix 3 sets out the impacts and mitigating actions giving a total risk rating out of 25. The highest risk item is to digital preservation of collections. This is a priority for the service which it is addressing through collaborative working with Archives West Midlands.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the personnel and equal opportunities' policies of the County Council and the City Council.

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 delivers a range of work which is measured in a number of ways and detailed in the appendices of the Annual Report.

Risk implications:

Risk register for the service has been completed.

Climate Change implications:

None applicable

Health Impact Assessment screening:

None applicable

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers

Contact/Directorate/ext number

Annual Report 2016-2017

Joanna Terry/Families & Communities
x278370

Archive Service Risk Register 2018

Joanna Terry/Families & Communities
x278370