

<b>Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 6 February 2020**

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### **Predicted Performance Outturn 2019-2020**

#### **Recommendation(s)**

1. That the Committee note the predicted performance outturn for the service.

#### **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. The Joint Archive Service has worked to a three year planning cycle since its inception in 1997. The scope of the seventh plan was extended to ten years as it will transform the service and will take more than three years to deliver some of these changes. The ten-year Plan was reviewed and updated in 2018 and approved by the Joint Archive Committee on 3 April 2018.

3. The Forward Plan and Annual Service Delivery Plan covers the Joint Archive Service and the Museum Service for the County Council. Together the services are known as 'Archives and Heritage'.

4. A summary of progress for 2019-2020 is given below with a fuller report on each element of the plan at Appendix 2. Progress since September 2019 has been boosted by the successful outcome of the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Round 1 bid for £3.9m funding for the Staffordshire History Centre project. Delivery depends on the round 2 bid due in 2020 being successful.

#### **Developing an Active Partnership approach**

5. The partnership between the Archives and Heritage Service and William Salt Library Trust is continuing as it assesses alternative proposals for the Staffordshire History Centre project (SHC). Stakeholder meetings were revived to support the development of the round 1 application to NLHF and consultation with partners has commenced.

6. Work has re-commenced to establish a Development Trust to continue fundraising for the SHC after the NLHF funding had ceased. This has now reached the stage of drafting the constitution and appointment of the first trustees to register with the Charity Commission.

7. Work to develop new partnerships and specialist interest groups has continued very successfully. Two university partner projects are ongoing, and work continues with the Michelin and Lancasters volunteers.

8. Volunteers have continued to be recruited to support the delivery of two externally funded projects and a new exhibition research group has been established. Preservation volunteers are diverting their work to assist with repackaging work at the William Salt Library.

9. The service completed consultation on revision to the opening hours at Staffordshire Record Office which were implemented in July 2020. The number of volunteer hours is estimated to be around 6,500 for the end of March. This is a 3% increase compared to the previous year of 6,308 for the end of March. This has improved as new volunteer groups have been established.

### **Resilience and sustainability**

10. The service successfully achieved a round 1 pass from NLHF with a £36,000 development grant for the SHC project. Work has commenced on the new development phase. Additional funding has been secured through a new National Archives Testbed fund to support digital drop-in sessions across the county. £35,000 of funding has been secured through a section 106 agreement for the Rugeley Power Station. This will support transfer of the archive and creation of an exhibition in partnership with the Museum of Cannock Chase.

11. A cross service exhibition team was established with the delivery of the Distinctive Staffordshire Exhibition in the summer at Staffordshire Record Office. Additional smaller displays delivered at Staffordshire Record Office and History Access Point on the themes of Queen Victoria, D-Day, Moon landings, Civil War, Christmas, and new accessions received during the year.

12. The service also continued its annual work programme focussed on collections. This includes the conservation programme, cataloguing new collections and improving descriptions of existing collections. The Doulton Described project to catalogue more records from the Minton Archive was completed supported by funding from a National Archives Cataloguing Grant. The Bawdy Courts and Asylum projects have continued with data being extracted to enrich the catalogue and improve discoverability of collections for users.

### **Reaching and engaging new audiences**

13. The majority of work in this area has focussed on establishing an exhibition team and an exhibition volunteer research group. Distinctive Staffordshire was the first exhibition delivered by the new team. The volunteer group will support their first exhibition, Pushing up Daisies, to be launched in March.

14. The service continued to attend community events and supported two local communities at Chebsey and Colton to deliver their own projects. Approximately 1,034 have attended events and talks. Twenty-eight talks have been delivered by the service so far.

15. Learning activities have been provided through the Staffordshire History Day and two partnership study days. The service has continued supporting school, university and college placements.

16. Delivery of a more formal learning programme is entirely dependent on external funding to establish it. The service is currently advertising for a learning consultant.

### **Sharing knowledge across the sector**

17. The Archive and Heritage Service contributes to the wider sector working with a number of different organisations. It is an active member of Archives West Midlands with two county council staff as trustees including Chair of AWM. The head of service presented at the Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference in November on behalf of Archives West Midlands. Other staff presented at the West Midlands Museum Development event, Society of Bookbinders conference and Rural Museums conference. Case studies have been provided for the LGA on Archive Service transformation, and the Collections Trust.

18. Partners, users and volunteers continue to contribute to project blogs with two new ones launched for the Bawdy Courts and Asylum projects. Project staff attended an academic conference to promote the Asylum project.

19. The service continues to work closely with local history groups and museums to share knowledge and support work in local communities. It supported five groups around their archives and preservation and collections care.

### **Online presence and remote access**

21. Work has begun to review the Digital Plan developed for the SHC. This involves consultation with key partners such as the City's Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and the County's Historic Environment team.

22. Online content has increased with the addition of three new name indexes to the Staffordshire Name Indexes site and addition of 1,511 images to Staffordshire Past Track website. Visits to online content remain high at 1,625,299 to date, a 30% increase.

23. Work on digital preservation has made progress with staff attending training made available through membership of Archives West Midlands.

24. 282 Staffordshire Tithe Maps have been digitised supported by £13,500 of funding raised by Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service. A solution to enable online access is being tested with Staffordshire ICT.

### **Conclusion and the year ahead**

25. It has been a more successful year for the service with a second round 1 pass from NLHF for the SHC in September 2019. The service is commencing the second

development phase with a view to strengthening the proposals to secure a round 2 pass this time.

26. The service has taken forward several externally funded projects which would have been match funding for the SHC project. The Bawdy Courts and Asylum projects are delivering fascinating insights into these collections via two very active project blogs.

28. The service has consolidated work with local groups and organisations and has built volunteering hours back up from the decrease seen in the previous year. New roles have been developed for volunteers at the History Access Point and the exhibition group.

29. Online access has continued to grow through the service online catalogue and social media as well as commercial access through Find My Past.

30. The service still has to implement a new structure to enable delivery of its MTFs savings. Work has commenced on proposals to be consulted on with staff later in 2020.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Equalities implications:**

The service plan includes initiatives to widen access to a wider range of users.

### **Legal implications:**

The work of the Archive Service is governed by the Joint Agreement and other legislation to enable 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:**

The SHC project depends on a successful round 2 application. Alternative plans have also been developed.

### **Climate Change implications:**

The work of the service balances online access and physical access to services and collections to offer options for remote use and not necessarily travel to multiple locations.

### **Health Impact Assessment screening:**

The service 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.

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### **List of Background Papers**

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
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Appendix 2: Summary of Predicted Performance Outturn 2020