

MINUTES

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee Meeting – 22 November 2010

Present: Ben Adams, Ross Irving, Mike Maryon and Kath Perry

Apologies for absence: Hazel Lyth and Ian Parry

PART ONE

Vice-Chairman in the Chair

9. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16.5

No declarations at this meeting.

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2010

The Committee were updated on the progress of the application for the designation of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council Archive Service Holdings.

RESOLVED – (a) As agreed at the meeting on 16 March 2010 the City Council nominated Ross Irving as a substitute member to represent the City Council in the event that Ms. Lyth was unavailable. Ross Irving was welcomed to the meeting.

(b) That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

11. Proposed Revision to the Joint Agreement for Archives

The Committee considered a joint report of the Interim Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Communities (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes) detailing proposed changes to the Joint Agreement for Archive Services.

The Committee noted that the Joint Agreement for Archive Services, between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, was last updated in 2003. A review of the content of the Joint Agreement was therefore long overdue. They noted that there had been recent changes to the constitution of the Stoke-on-Trent City Council. In addition new proposals have been made in relation to the future definition of the revenue budget for the Joint Archives Committee. The Head of Archive Services detailed the amendments to the agreement including the revenue budget changes. The representative from PricewaterhouseCoopers confirmed that the proposed amendments to the Joint Agreement had the agreement of the external auditors.

The Joint Agreement for Archive Services between the County Council and the City Council had been re-drafted to reflect these changes and proposals. As part of this work the opportunity had been taken to update and to clarify other clauses of the Agreement where necessary.

Subject to the approval of the Joint Archives Committee, officers would make the necessary arrangements for signing and sealing of the revised Joint Agreement by both authorities, so that it was in place before the budgets were set for the next financial year, 2011/12.

The Head of Archive Services expressed her thanks to Michelle Rowe and Kristina Taylor, Legal Services officers from both Authorities, for their help in revising the agreement.

RESOLVED – That the proposed changes to the Joint Agreement for Archive Services, as set out in Appendix 1 of Schedule 1 to the signed minutes, be approved.

[The Chairman agreed to change the order of the meeting and took the Final Accounts Report (2009/10) as the next item]

12. Final Accounts Report (2009/10)

The Committee considered a joint report of the County Council's Director of Finance and the City Director of Finance presenting: the Annual Governance Statement; the Statement of Accounts and the final outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2009/10 (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

The draft 2009/10 Statement of Accounts was approved by this Committee on 17 June 2010 and the audit commenced on 16 August 2010. The accounts were available for inspection from 28 June to 23 July.

When the audit commenced on 16 August the auditors found that working papers were not of the standard they would expect and that improvements were required. The financial statements were re-worked and the final version of the accounts is available on the Archives' website. The revised financial statements were passed to the auditors.

The audit has now been completed and the report of the auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), is elsewhere on this agenda. As part of normal year end processes the Director of Finance and Resources was required to make a written representation to the auditors expressing an opinion as to whether the accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council in accordance with the appropriate rules and regulations letter. The Committee noted the contents and were asked to approve the letter.

The Director of Finance and Resources (SCC) expressed his thanks to both PwC and the staff of both authorities for their hard work and professionalism in undertaking the final accounts process.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the letter of representation be approved.

13. Report to those charged with Governance

The Committee received a report of PricewaterhouseCoopers, Auditors to the Joint Committee summarising the results of their audit of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes). It set out those matters arising from the audit of the financial statement, and the audit fees.

The Committee noted that the initial draft financial statement and working papers were found not to be an adequate standard and the financial team revisited both the accounts and the working papers and resubmitted them. The audit of the revised draft of the financial statements did not identify any errors which required amendment.

RESOLVED – (a) That in future years measures were put in place to ensure that both draft accounts and the supporting, working papers provided to audit were of an adequate standard.

(b) That the report be noted.

14. Predicted Outturn 2010/11

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Finance and Resources and the City Director of Finance detailing the current predicted outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2010/11 (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

Members noted that the latest revenue outturn forecast showed a predicted underspend of £17,121, which would be transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year. The current balance on the General Reserve was £113,344 of which £82,000 had already been earmarked. In total the Committee were asked to agree earmarking of up to £82,000 towards the following:

Alterations/Environmental Controls at Stoke	£30,000
Microfilming Staffordshire electoral registers	£2,000
Adaptations for new Outstore	£50,000

The Archive Acquisition Reserve had a balance of £65,859. towards the purchase of new collections.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the sum of £82,000 be earmarked from the General Reserves for; alterations / environmental controls at Stoke; the continuation of the microfilming programme for Staffordshire electoral registers; and adaptations for the new Outstore.

15. Review of Fees and Charges 2011 - 12

The Committee considered a joint report of the Interim Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Communities (Schedule 5 to the signed minutes) for the proposed amendments to the scale of fees and charges to be applied by the Joint Archive Service with effect from 1 April 2011.

The Committee noted that the Archive Service was free at the point of personal use by members of the public visiting its reading rooms. Fees and charges were levied for a variety of additional services which customers choose to use or to buy. The Service uses the income to support its budget and, where possible, any surplus income was re-invested in service improvements. A full review of the current scale of fees and charges for 2010-2011 had been carried out to determine appropriate levels of fees and charges for 2011-2012. Factors which had been taken into account included increases to VAT from 4 January 2011 and re-assessments of the staff time involved in the provision of some services. The impact of the current financial climate on the demand for some paid services had also been considered. The Committee noted details of the proposed scale of new fees and charges to apply from 1 April 2011 detailed in the report.

RESOLVED – That the fees and charges detailed in Appendix 1 of Schedule 5 to the signed minutes be approved for introduction by the Joint Archive Service for 1 April 2011.

16. Date of next meeting - 24 February 2011

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee be held on Thursday 24 February 2010 at 10.30 am, at the Stoke-on-Trent Civic Centre.

Items for Information

New Outstore for Archive Services

The Committee noted that work was ongoing at the new Outstore - a specifically modified archive storage unit, and it was hoped that the Archive Service would move in at the end of March. The new Outstore would support the Services' ten years storage strategy.

Repatriation of Historic Archive Document

The Joint Archive Service had received an historic document from Dunedin Public Library, New Zealand. This was the Churchwardens' account book for Harlaston, near Tamworth, from 1773 to 1850. How the document had found its way to New Zealand originally is unclear but it did require an export licence to enable it to be returned to Staffordshire, as it is a protected item. The document will be displayed at St Matthews Church, Harlaston, Tamworth, at a special publicity event on 13th December 2010 before being placed in the Staffordshire Record Office with the other Harlaston parish records. The Head of Archive Service expressed her thanks to Anthony Tedeschi, the Rare Books Librarian at Dunedin Public Library for all his help in this matter. Members then had the opportunity to view the document.

Chairman

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.