

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 11 November 2021

Staffordshire History Centre Project timeline and key decisions

Recommendation(s)

1. That the committee notes the timeline for Staffordshire History Centre project and approves the following key decisions:
 - a) The temporary closure of Staffordshire Record Office from March 2022 for approximately 18 months due to construction work to create the Staffordshire History Centre.
 - b) Delegate agreement for the actual closure date to the Cabinet Member for Communities.
 - c) Use of the new Staffordshire History Centre branding is adopted by the Joint Archive Service and Heritage Service.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Strategy and Resources (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. On the 16 June 2021 the National Lottery Heritage Fund: England, Midlands and East committee awarded a grant for £3.9m towards the Staffordshire History Centre project. The award was announced on 2 July and the paperwork for permission to start has now been submitted to the Heritage Fund.

Governance

3. The application for the project included a detailed programme for the delivery phase and governance structure for the management of the project. The Joint Archives Committee will play an important role in approval of key decisions for the project to progress and ensure delivery is within the terms of the Joint Agreement between the two local authorities.
4. There are four workstreams:
 - Operational change and business plan
 - Activity and Interpretation Plans
 - Fundraising
 - New building

These workstreams are led by the Head of Archives and Heritage and management team, Strategic Property Project Manager with the chair and vice chair of the William Salt Library Trust. The workstreams feed into the Operational and New Build Boards for operational decisions to be approved.

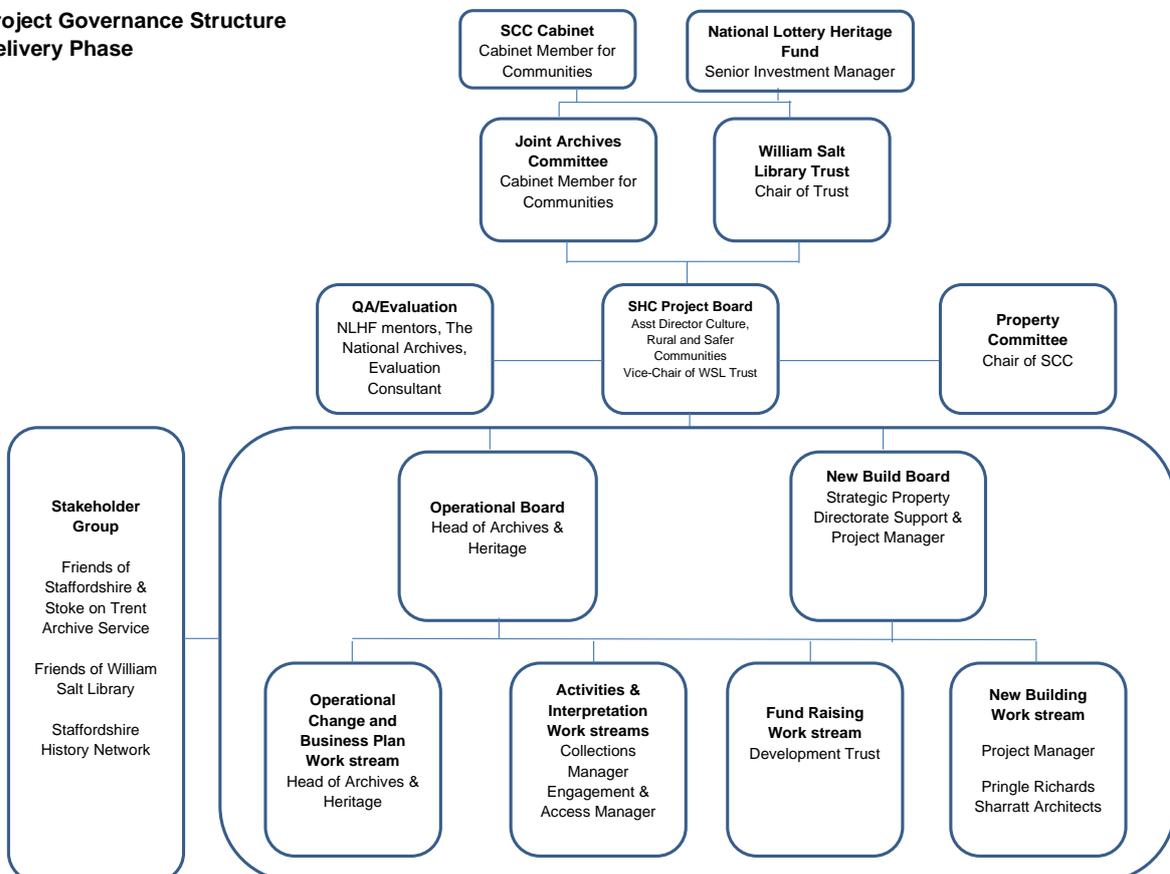
5. Progress reports from the workstreams will be presented to the Staffordshire History Centre Project Board which will make decisions on the delivery of the project and escalate as appropriate to the Joint Archives Committee and William Salt Library Trust. In addition, members of the Project Board will meet quarterly with Heritage Fund mentors to ensure that the project is delivered within the approved purposes and terms and conditions of the grant. Staffordshire County Council’s Property Committee will take decisions on changes to those parts of the site which are owned by the County Council.

6. The Joint Archives Committee and William Salt Library Trust will take key decisions upon changes to service delivery or scope of the project which affects the constitutions of the two bodies. The Committee will also approve any variation on the funding contributed from the Joint Archive Reserve. Regular progress reports will be received by Committee and the Trust.

7. Key funding decisions will sit with Staffordshire County Council’s Cabinet and the National Lottery Heritage fund as the main project funders. Major changes in programme or funding gaps will be escalated for approval at this level.

The governance structure is shown below:

**Project Governance Structure
Delivery Phase**



Timeline of key decisions

8. A summary of the programme and key decisions is shown at appendix two to this report. These decisions will be taken by the Joint Archives Committee, William Salt Library Trust, Staffordshire County Council's Property Committee, Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The decisions cover:

- Service operation
- Legal agreements
- Marketing and promotion
- Finance
- Policies and plans
- Evaluation

9. Some decisions will be taken by more than one body within the governance structure for the project. An annual review of funding changes has been added in June to coincide with the annual report for the Joint Archives Committee and closure of accounts for both local authorities. Urgent decisions will be taken between committee meetings in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Archives Committee and reported at the next meeting. This is in line with the terms of the Joint Agreement. An annual review of the Joint Agreement has been included in February to take account of changes to service delivery and as recommended by the legal teams for both authorities.

Temporary closure of Staffordshire Record Office

10. Staffordshire Record Office will have to temporarily close its onsite public service to enable preparatory surveys to take place prior to the construction programme. It is planned to close the Record Office in March 2022. The final date of closure is dependent on the date permission to start is granted. The indicative date will be advertised on the service website, communicated through the service newsletter, social media, and through key stakeholders such as Friends groups. It is proposed that the final date will be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Communities and made public as soon as possible.

11. The staff team and volunteers will relocate to a temporary base during the construction period. Access to the collections at Staffordshire Record Office will be limited during the construction period. In addition to the online service a remote service will be provided including copying/digital images from collections, answering enquiries about the collection and a limited research service.

12. The volunteer programme will continue at the temporary base focused on delivering key priorities from the project Activity Plan. Remote volunteering will also continue. The hours provided by volunteers count as matched funding towards the project totalling 4,803 days over the four-year project with a value of £721,050.

Staffordshire History Centre branding

13. During the first development phase from 2016-2017 a new brand for the Staffordshire History Centre was developed. The branding was developed to reflect the three collections coming together in the History Centre including the Joint Archives, County Museum, and William Salt Library. The branding is shown at appendix 3.

14. The three colours chosen for the capital S reflect the branding of the partners: red for the Joint Archive Service, yellow for the County Museum, and green for the William Salt Library. The branding will be adopted for the History Centre and it could also be adopted across the Joint Archives and Heritage Service to refresh the identity for the service as a whole. The current archive service logo dates back to the establishment of the Joint Archive Service in 1997. The wording under the S logo could be changed to reflect each partner, for example Stoke on Trent City Archives.

15. As appropriate the logos of the key funders for the service would be included: Staffordshire County Council, Stoke on Trent City Council, William Salt Library Trust and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is a requirement of the Heritage Fund that their logo is used for the History Centre project to reflect their investment.

16. The Staffordshire History Centre branding would also be used with the new 'We Are Staffordshire' branding to promote the county as a visitor destination. This has been identified as an opportunity in the Marketing Strategy for the History Centre project. The Service newsletter and social media will be refreshed to reflect the new brand in January 2022. The branding will also be used to re-design the service website.

Next steps

17. Subject to approval of the recommendations the next steps include:

- Communication and advertising the intention to close Staffordshire Record Office
- Adopting the Staffordshire History Centre brand to promote the project and service from January 2022.
- Refreshing the timeline of key decisions as the project progresses.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The National Archives, stakeholders, partners, and staff have been involved in the development of the project.

Legal implications:

The key decisions are identified in line with the governance and legal agreements in place between the project partners.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The delivery of the Staffordshire History Centre will enable the Archive and Heritage Service and William Salt Library Trust to achieve a sustainable model for future delivery.

Risk implications:

A risk register has been completed for the Staffordshire History Centre project and at present there are no red risks identified. Of the amber risks the key ones relate to programme delays in construction, cost changes, disruption to public services, changes in key staff, and damage to collections. All the risks have mitigations in place and an identified risk owner.

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. Opportunities to attract additional funding to increase energy efficiency will be pursued. The project includes elements to improve the outcomes for wildlife and the environment.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

The project will offer opportunities for volunteers and add value to the service with support and training programmes delivered by 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
Staffordshire History Centre project programme	
Staffordshire History Centre branding	
Project execution plan	