

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee

– Monday 08 August 2022

Staffordshire History Centre Update

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- a. Notes the progress update and the amended timeline for the project.
- b. Approve implementation of the public access model for statutory enquiries
- c. Approves the branding, Joint Archive Service logo and additional work and funding to introduce across the Service

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Strategy and Resources (Stoke on-Trent-City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The Joint Archives Committee was updated on progress of the project at the meeting on 3rd March 2022. This report brings an update on progress, the amended timeline, public access model for access to the collections during the period of the temporary closure, and an update on the branding for the History Centre and application across the service.

Progress update

2. The construction tender was readvertised on 22 February which resulted in five viable bids. These were assessed during April and May and four were selected for the next stage. The 'Invitation To Tender' (ITT) stage went live on 1 June with bids due to be received in late summer and contract award anticipated in early autumn.
3. The design team have updated the plans for heating, a green roof, ICT, photographic storage, and management of environmental conditions in the strongrooms. This work has fed into the completion of the ITT documentation.

4. The archaeology report has been received and a watching brief will be required for excavations for the new strongrooms at the rear of the site. The building recording of the William Salt Library listed building will take place in August 2022. The asbestos surveys have been completed with some material due to be removed in the next two months.
5. The William Salt Library collection has been removed from the listed building to its temporary storage location. A total of 4,600 boxes and crates was moved from February to May 2022 supported by a removal company, staff from Archives, Heritage, Libraries and Arts and with volunteers assisting with packaging the collection.
6. Staff and volunteers also moved from Staffordshire Record Office and William Salt Library to a new temporary base at Eastgate House. Onsite volunteer sessions resumed with a positive reaction as they enjoyed the historic panelled board room to meet and work in.
7. Two hundred Enclosure Award Maps were digitised in March supported by a grant of £5,475 secured by the Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives Service. This collection will be made freely available on the Staffordshire Past Track website.
8. The Staffordshire History Day on 7 May took place online after a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event had over 100 attendees across the online talks and in person tours of the museum collection stores. The event celebrated the start of the project and informed stakeholders of the forthcoming Staffordshire History Network.
9. Two university work placements have commenced. A collaborative PhD student has started work on creative writing inspired by collections relating to black history. The academic partnership with Keele University is being established for delivery of adult learners short courses.
10. Communications about the project are delivered regularly through the service e-Newsletter. In addition, an update was issued to Staffordshire County Council members in March through the members' bulletin. Updates about the relocation of the service, and changes to public access have been added to the service website and through social media.
11. The first progress report and grant claim has been submitted to the Heritage Fund covering the period up to 31 March 2022. Total spend for the first claim was £101,401 with a claim for £63,025.83. The project team continue to identify other external funding to support the History

Centre. A second-round application to the Wolfson Foundation will be submitted later in September.

Amended timeline

12. Restarting the construction tender has delayed the programme by over three months. The recruitment to the Engagement and Access Manager at the end of January has enabled the service to progress procurement of the new website.
13. Recruitment of project staff was delayed ensure posts are filled in line with the construction programme and planned opening of the History Centre. Four project posts: Community History Development Officer, Learning Officer, Collections Interpretation Officer, and Project Cataloguer were advertised on 10 June. It is estimated the project staff will be in post by September.

Public access model during temporary closure

14. At the November meeting of the Joint Archive Committee approval was given to temporarily close Staffordshire Record Office. The Record Office closed on 11 March 2022 to enable preparatory surveys to take place prior to the construction of the Staffordshire History Centre. The access model is attached at appendix two to this report, with Part A of the supporting documents setting out the initial criteria for public access.
15. Staff and volunteers are now based at Eastgate House where physical access will be provided one day a week, for statutory legal requirements if needs cannot be met through copying. Staff will have some limited access to the strongrooms at different stages during the project and will be offering a copying service where possible. Updates will be published on our website and social media channels. The service will continue to respond to enquiries by email and we will promote our remote services and digital resources.

Branding

16. The Staffordshire History Centre branding was agreed by the Project Board in February 2018 and noted at the Joint Archives Committee on 3 April 2018. The three colour "S" logo has been used on all paperwork, funding application, and designs for the project. It is also being used by Staffordshire Archives and Heritage to promote the project. The three colours represent the previous branding used by the Joint Archive Service, County Museum and William Salt Library. The logo was part of the planning application and shown on the outside of the building. The

History Centre is in a conservation area and signage will need to be agreed with Stafford Borough Council planning department.

17. At the meeting of the Joint Archive Committee on 11 November 2021 the branding and use across the Joint Archive Service was discussed. It was raised that the Staffordshire History Centre branding might not meet the needs of the Joint Archive Service, as Stoke-on-Trent City Archives identity and location are not represented. In the discussion which ensued, the representatives of the County Council undertook to liaise further with the City Council regarding any new joint branding required following the above-mentioned relocation so that the existing Partnership branding for the Joint Archive Service as a whole, could be retained, as far as possible.
18. As a result of further discussions, a new proposal for use of the History Centre branding has been brought forward and is set out in Appendix 3. The proposed new joint service logo is based on the existing Staffordshire History Centre "S" logo and colours.
19. Within this proposal, the 'S' can be used flexibly. One option uses the red as this represents archives in the tricolour logo and is used heavily in the existing joint service logo. Another option is the S as a graphic image to display collections images; this is very effective in printed media and would form an important element of future branding guidelines. The single colour logos can be replicated for all elements of the service.
20. The tri colour Staffordshire History Centre logo would remain the primarily used logo, particularly in the County service along with the Staffordshire County Council logo to represent the three collections it will hold. The graphic Examples of mock up logos and their uses can be found in Appendix 3.
21. The Staffordshire History Centre branding will be used alongside the branding of Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council as the main funders of the Joint Archive Service. The National Lottery Heritage Fund logo, and that of other external funders, will also be used to acknowledge funding received for the Centre or other projects delivered by the service.
22. Once the option for the Joint Archive Service is agreed further work will be required with a professional designer to create the logo and branding guidelines will be developed to ensure a consistent approach is taken. The approximate cost of this work would be £500.

Legal Implications

The public access model has been developed in consultation with The National Archives to comply with access for statutory records. Advice has been received from Staffordshire County Council legal services concerning access to statutory records.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

Procurement of goods and services for the project complies with Staffordshire County Council's procurement framework.

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.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 Access during temporary closure of Staffordshire Record Office

Appendix 2 Public access model supporting documents

Appendix 3 Branding guidelines

Contact Details

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