

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives
Committee Meeting held on 28 February 2023**

Present:

Attendance	
Lorraine Beardmore	Victoria Wilson

Also in attendance: John Francis

Apologies: Mark Sutton

Note – Reference in these minutes to the 'Lead Officers' relates to the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills (Staffordshire County Council) and the Director of Strategy and Resources (Stoke-on-Trent City Council).

Part One

13. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no Declarations of Interest.

14. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

15. Staffordshire History Centre Project - Update

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Officers on the progress of the activities programme, procurement and the timeline for the project. The report also included feedback from Staffordshire County Council's Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its recent consideration of an update report on the project and discussion on various elements including how Green issues were being addressed, security measures to be put in place both for the Centre and its collections and, finally, works on the periphery of the site.

Key points to note from the progress update on activities included the positive response to various initiatives to widen access to the service. Four project staff had been recruited to support the Service team in delivering strands of the activity programme. In addition, four student placements had been completed and there were 66 volunteers donating the equivalent of £56,535 worth of funding.

The construction contract had been awarded to Pave Aways Limited. Procurement of the contract had been affected by the impact of Covid, the rising costs of supplies and increases in energy costs. The interpretation contract was awarded to Imagemakers in August 2022 and they were now engaged with the project team on revising the designs.

Careful financial management had addressed the impact of rising energy costs and inflation in 2022. Taking account of various successful funding bids, the total project cost was now £8,780,239. It was estimated that the construction would be completed in summer 2024 with a planned opening of the site in autumn 2024.

Resolved (i) – that the joint committee note:

- a) The progress update for the project.
- b) The revised costs and income.
- c) The feedback from Staffordshire County Council’s Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(ii)

That the Joint Committees appreciation of the invaluable work of officers of the service in securing and delivering this project be formally recorded.

16. Joint Archive Service - Predicted Outturn 2022/23 and 2023/24 Net Revenue Budget

The committee considered the report by the Lead Officers giving details of the predicted outturn for the Joint Archives Service for 2022/23 and proposed 2023/24 net revenue budget.

Members noted the current net spend was £0.592m, 72% of the current net revenue budget of £0.821m with an overall breakeven position forecast for 2022/2023, details as which were submitted.

It was reported that the Joint Archives Service currently held three reserves totalling £496,000. Comprising General reserve of £428,000, The Archive Acquisition Reserve of £58,000 and the Art Fund Grant (Minton) of £10,000.

The Reserves expected to be available at the end of 2022/23 were approximately £266,000, this amount being £230,000 less than the current balance. Details were submitted of proposed Reserve transfers which would result in this position.

For 2023/24 the Joint Archives Service Revenue budget was reported to be £862,000, made up of £629,000 (73% of total JAC budget) from Staffordshire County Council and £233,000 (27% of the total JAC budget) from Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The differing percentage contributions were reported to be based on the size of the service following a review of the Joint Agreement which had agreed a move away from population based calculations.

Resolved – that:

- (a) The current 2022/23 net revenue outturn budget position be noted.
- (b) A further £40,000 from the Staffordshire County Council's general reserve towards the Staffordshire History Centre Project, taking the total funding to £291,000 be approved.
- (c) A transfer of £46,000 for climate change funding received to Staffordshire County Council's general reserve towards the Staffordshire History Centre Project, to be allocated to the project in 2023/24 be noted.
- (d) The indicative 2023/24 net revenue budget be approved.

17. Joint Archive Service - Review of Fees and Charges 2022/23

The committee considered a report from the Lead Officers on the annual review of Fees and Charges.

Details were submitted of proposed changes to the charges considered appropriate after research into those charges of neighbouring county services.

Income for the service was predicted to be £3,897 at the end of quarter three in the 2023/24 financial year. Both services were still operating restricted access for visitors and income from copying services remains high. There was confidence that this predicted income would be achieved due to changing patterns and behaviour and preferences by users.

Resolved – that the fees and charges for introduction by the Joint Archive Service and the Heritage Service from 1 April 2023 be approved.

18. Joint Archive Service - Preservation and Conservation Policy

The committee considered a report from the Lead Officers on the Preservation and Conservation Policy and Strategy for Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and William Salt Library.

The Preservation and Conservation Policy and Strategy was reviewed to take into account changes in the responsibilities of Staffordshire Archive and Heritage Service, with particular reference to the William Salt Library collection as the Service manages the library collection on behalf of its trustees. Included in the Policy is the Integrated Pest Management Policy, Public guidance for care of documents and how documents are preserved.

Resolved – that the Preservation and Conservation Policy and Strategy for Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and William Salt Library be approved.

19. Joint Archive Service - Digital Engagement Strategy

The committee considered a report from the Lead Officers on the Digital Engagement Strategy.

Key points to note were that the strategy recognised the needs of both areas of the joint service, the current digital climate, the value of digital engagement tools and the need to be mindful of accessibility and inclusion. The strategy also included guidance on how they would monitor their digital performance including an annual review on digital assets and archive those no longer active. The strategy and plan also included best practice guidelines for social media and support for staff, along with guidance for working safely with children and young people in a digital context.

Resolved – that the Digital Engagement Strategy and Plan be approved.

20. Joint Archive Service - Predicted Performance Outturn 2022/23

The committee considered a report from the Lead Officers on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Service: Predicted performance outturn 2022/23.

Details were given of the progress on the predicted outturn with key areas of work under each service demand. There were five service demands consisting of Active Partnership; Sustainability and resilience; Diversified users, stakeholders and collections; Share knowledge across the sector; and increased online activity.

Key performance statistics were provided based on the quarter three figures estimating the year end outturn.

Resolved – that the predicted performance outturn for the service be noted.

21. Date of next meeting

Thursday 22 June 2023 at 10:30 am venue to be confirmed

22. Exclusion of the public

Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated.

The Joint Committee proceeded to consider the following items:

23. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2022

Resolved - that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

24. Relocation of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives

The committee received an oral update on the relocation of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives. The City Archives Service was currently closed to the public while collections were ready for transfer. A blog of the move had been really successful and works at the site were underway. The museum was to be cleared by 10 March 2023 and works would take an estimated 18 weeks to be completed.

Resolved – that the update be noted

Chair

