

Local Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 7 December 2011

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service Restructure

Recommendation(s)

1. That the new staffing structure to be implemented from 1 April 2012 is noted.
2. That the savings achieved detailed in Appendix Two are also noted.

Report of Director for Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Place (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Archive Service staffing structure has been in place with few changes since 2003. The Service reviewed the senior management structure of its Staffordshire sites last December and realised significant savings and efficiencies. The purpose of this current restructure is to implement the results of a review of the structure and functions below this level. Changing patterns of public usage and demand have created an opportunity for the Archive Service to deliver further savings in addition to those identified in the MTFS by streamlining delivery of services and changing opening hours. It has also allowed the Service to remove duplications across services and identify synergies between Staffordshire Arts and Heritage and Staffordshire Library and Information Services.

Background

4. The Archive Service restructure falls into two parts: a review of staffing related to the opening hours reductions and a review of functions across the service to identify savings and implement new working practices to continue to deliver services to meet user demand.

5. The reduction in opening hours at Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office and the William Salt Library was agreed by the Innovation and Efficiency Board in December 2010. This was based on analysis of visitor figures which have shown a fall in personal visitors as people are increasingly accessing family and local history resources online. The Archive Service is responding to this by delivering name indexes to archive sources online using volunteers to carry out this work with staff supervision. The service has also been working on a proposal to digitise key family history resources by identifying a commercial partner to help deliver this.

6. Work has continued to identify the days which the service will close by analysing the patterns of use across the service points. This has shown that

certain days are quieter and therefore from April 2012 the following closures will be implemented:

- Staffordshire Record Office will close on Mondays
- Lichfield Record Office will close on Fridays
- William Salt Library will close on Fridays and Saturdays and shorten its opening hours Tuesday – Thursday

7. The reduction in opening hours means that frontline staffing can be reduced proportionately at all three service points. It will also free up professional time on the closed days to concentrate on other activities:

- Cataloguing of collections to provide access to archive material
- Engagement and outreach activities on closed days to raise awareness of archives within local communities
- Support volunteering work and enable the outcomes from this work to be managed and deliver name indexes to archive material. It will also free up professional time to progress digitisation of key family history resources.

8. During December 2010 a review of senior management of the Joint Archive Service was carried out resulting in the deletion of one senior post (0.8 FTE) and the creation of the Principal Archivist post managing onsite public services across both Staffordshire and Lichfield Record Offices. This has streamlined management and enabled the service to ensure consistency of public service delivery. The Head of Archives post retains overall management and accountability for the service.

9. A review of functions across Culture, Tourism and Leisure identified learning and engagement as a cross cutting function. Therefore a new post of Participation and Engagement officer has been created to deliver this work across the Joint Archive Service and Arts and Heritage Service. This will realise savings of 1FTE post across the two services from April 2012.

10. There were also reviews of the other professional functions: cataloguing and conservation. The reduction in opening hours will allow cataloguing and accessioning archivists time on the closed day to devote to this work and therefore one part time archivist post will be deleted from the structure from April. This has already been achieved through the resignation of a part time archivist (0.5 FTE) in August 2011. Conservation work has been reviewed and by using new methods of creating exhibitions it will be possible to reduce the amount time spent by the conservators on this work. This will allow one conservator post to be reduced from 1FTE to 0.8 FTE.

11. The research service is carried out through two posts based at Staffordshire and Lichfield Record Offices respectively. With the onset of the economic downturn demand for this service fell sharply in 2009 and 2010 resulting in reductions to the hours of both posts. Demand has continued to be quite slow and so it was proposed to reduce the hours of the Stafford research post further.

12. A review of back office functions across the Culture, Tourism and Leisure Division identified savings by reducing the Archive Service Administrative Assistant hours down from 37 to 30 hours. The resignation of the postholder

in February 2011 allowed further reductions to be made to the post bringing it down to 18.5 hours (0.5 FTE).

Consultation process and revisions

13. Consultation with staff across the Archive Service was carried out during October through a series of meetings with individuals and groups. As a result there were some amendments to the Archive Service restructure.

14. The Stafford research assistant requested redundancy which was agreed and the two research posts will be merged with additional hours being added to the Lichfield post to cope with demand. The postholder will also travel to Stafford as required to complete research orders.

15. One of the Stafford archive assistants tendered their resignation and so that vacancy will not be filled. This means that the remaining two assistants will retain their full time hours in April 2012 and change their working pattern to cover Wednesday evening and Saturday opening.

16. The interviews for the Participation and Engagement Officer have been completed with the appointment being made from within the Archive Service. The other candidate has been advised that they are at risk of redundancy.

Finalisation of the new structure

17. The changes to the structure will be communicated in December with letters sent out to staff to confirm the changes to their posts or advise them that they are at risk of redundancy.

18. To summarise the following changes are being made across the structure:

- Six posts (three FTE) are being deleted
- Eight posts are being reduced in hours down from 5.12 to 4.06 FTE
- A new post (one FTE) of Participation and Engagement Officer is being created to work across Archives and Heritage and Arts
- The two research assistant posts are being merged to create one post working across Staffordshire and Lichfield Record Offices. This is a reduction of 0.72 to 0.4 FTE.

19. The Archive Service has already advertised the new opening hours to its users both onsite and on its website. It has also ensured that comments and feedback have been sought through its customer survey in November and through inviting written comments to the Head of Archives.

20. The changes will have an affect on the way the Archive Service delivers its public services and will reduce its flexibility to respond to user demands. It will also affect the Service's ability to deal with cataloguing backlogs and conservation backlogs across the offices. The Service will aim to offset this by continuing to use volunteers where appropriate to assist with this work and attract grant funding to continue to open up access to collections.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The process of consulting with staff about the restructure has been done in accordance with County Council policies HR 92 Staffing Protocol and HR 37 Redeployment Policy. The unions were also consulted and were involved at the meetings where appropriate and requested. All staff were fully aware of the process and the timetable.

Legal implications:

There should be no legal implications as the correct processes have been followed during the restructure.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The restructure has enabled the Archive Service to meet its original MTFs target of £70,000 for 2012-2013 and has also realised an additional £45,000 saving. The Service will be maintaining its core functions and continuing to deliver value for money and a quality service to its users.

Risk implications:

The Archive Service is on target to implement its new structure in April 2012. Risks of adverse reaction from users of the Service are being mitigated by early advertisement of the new opening hours and an opportunity to comment as part of the customer survey in November and after until March 31st.

Climate Change implications:

No significant implications.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

Author's Name: Joanna Terry, Head of Archives
Telephone No: (01785) 278370
Room No: Staffordshire Record Office

List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Joint Archive Service restructure paperwork and structure charts.	Joanna Terry/Place/ x8370