

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 4th March 2016

Report on Progress of a Strategy for Commemoration of Great War Centennial in Staffordshire

Recommendation/s

1. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee scrutinises progress against the Strategy of Commemoration of Great War Centennial in Staffordshire.
2. The Committee scrutinises and endorses the programme of work going forward to 2019.

Report of Cllr Ben Adams, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

3. To consider the work delivered against the Centennial Strategy since it was agreed by Informal Cabinet in 2013 and review the progress against the aims of the Strategy.
4. To consider the work planned for the period 2016 – 2019, comment on it, and endorse the programme going forward.

Report

Background

5. In 2012 the Archives and Heritage Service received £80,000 funding from Arts Council England to develop plans for Staffordshire to commemorate the Great War Centennial. A steering group was formed to manage the project comprising representatives across teams in Culture and Physical Activity and the Rural County. Staffordshire was one of the first local authorities to attract significant funding for the Centennial.
6. One of the outcomes from this funding was the development of a Strategy for the Commemoration of the Great War in Staffordshire (Appendix A) which was approved by Informal Cabinet in 2013.
7. The Strategy set the direction and identified key areas of work to develop a strong programme of Commemoration which would reach many communities within Staffordshire and beyond.
8. Since then a series of projects, events, websites, and activities have been delivered across the county in partnership with a range of organisations. Almost £500,000 funding

for World War One projects has been awarded to Staffordshire from the Heritage Lottery Fund (source: HLF West Midlands). Other sources of external funding have also supported a number of activities and events with some delivered by the County Council and many more delivered by local communities themselves.

9. This report highlights the work delivered in the first two years of the Centennial and looks forward to the remaining three years of work.

Work delivered 2013 – 2015

10. From 2013 - 2015 over sixty projects, events, exhibitions and activities have been delivered in Staffordshire. Of these events twenty were delivered directly by the County Council and the remainder by other organisations; often with support from the Council.
11. The projects have been very varied and included:
 - a. Dig to reveal the terrain model of Messines on Cannock Chase in 2013.
 - b. Numerous projects and events using the Chase and its previous role as the training camps in WW1 including, more opening of the hut, play performed, bid to record and interpret the camps on the chase.
 - c. Staffordshire Appeals which began in 2014; a project to digitise and index Military Appeal Tribunal Records held by the Archive Service.
 - d. A major exhibition of paintings and drawings by Midlands based artist Robert Perry, commissioned by SCC and exhibited last September. Now on tour around Staffordshire museums.
 - e. A Digital War Memorial Project led by the Library & Arts Service working with two schools and forming part of a national project.
 - f. Christmas Truce events and reveal of letter by Archive Service.
 - g. Resonance; a project led by Museum Service with Staffordshire Museum Consortium funded by Arts Council. This has involved working with Stephen Dixon, a Ceramics artist, and film maker Johnny Magee who produced an exhibition based on museum collections in Staffordshire. Currently at Gladstone Pottery Museum, Longton.
 - h. Tom Wyre, Staffs Poet Laureate commissioned to write poetry – 14, now a film.
12. The projects have been delivered mainly through external funding or use of existing resources within the County Council. The period 2013-2014 was undoubtedly the busiest for the volume of events and projects starting. A great many local groups enthusiastically arranged their own projects, some with funding and some without:
 - a. Tracks to Trenches Apedale Valley Light Railway event
 - b. Eccleshall History Society research into war memorials
 - c. Berkswich Local History Society walk and exhibition

- d. Kings Bromley exhibition
 - e. Staffordshire Regiment Museum's new WW1 trench
 - f. Ingestre & Tixall HLF project and Field Hospital
 - g. Bid for funding by Haywood Society for Tolkien project
 - h. Numerous books, guides and web resources published and shared.
13. A Great War Project Officer post was funded by Arts Council England (ACE) in 2013 to help the Council prepare and research its own commemoration programme. This post also helped to field the number of enquiries for advice and support which came in from community groups and other organisations. The ACE funding was also used to establish a Great War website which has acted as the focus for news about events, projects, funding, and resources connected to the Commemoration. The branding for Staffordshire Great War Commemoration is available to download and use freely to promote events by local groups and organisations. The audience research carried out has been used to inform the projects that have been developed and helped secure additional grant funding.
14. Funding to retain the Project Officer post, albeit on a smaller scale, was secured internally by reorganising existing budgets. The Project Officer works one day per week with key tasks being:
- a. Maintaining the Staffordshire Great War website and social media to promote events and share news from projects.
 - b. Organising two partner conferences per year to highlight funding available for local organisations and showcase successful projects.
 - c. Offer support and advice to groups and individuals wanting to develop a new project.
 - d. Organising the Council's Great War Steering Group meetings.
 - e. Seeking out funding and further opportunities for new Great War projects.
15. The post has been invaluable in helping to ensure the projects are promoted and to raise awareness of other opportunities available for Great War projects.

Costs and funding

16. Five of the projects delivered by the County Council (SCC) were externally funded, with a total of £192,600 being secured. The largest amount was from ACE in 2012-2013 for £80,000 and this undoubtedly helped to lay the foundations of the programme.
17. The remaining programme of events delivered by (SCC) was done so within existing resources. This has been achieved by using the Great War theme for existing events. For example annual exhibitions at the Shire Hall Gallery in September and themed events for Local and Community History month organised by the Library and Arts Service.

Reach and impact

18. The Great War Commemoration has reached almost every community within Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The majority of these events have been developed and delivered by the local community and been successful in highlighting the home front during the Great War. Some have sought external funding whilst others have used their own resources.
19. The County Council's role has been to support advise, and enable these groups. The role of the conferences delivered by the SCC has been important to encourage people/ organisations to develop their ideas, network with other people and talk to funders. They and other events have been well supported. Below are some example visitor figures from County Council organised events where they are available:

Physical visitor numbers

Date	Event	Attendance
April 2013	Staffordshire Great War Conference held at Kingston Centre	76
December 2014 – October 2015	Digital War Memorial tour of 11 libraries	125, 413
April 2015 – January 2016	Resonance touring exhibition (7 out of 8 venues) 50 young people have taken part in workshops accompanying the exhibition.	50,000
September 2014	Local and Community History Month (171 events)	10,011
September 2015	Local and Community History Month (98 events)	7,098
Oct 2014, Feb 2015, Oct 2015	Community Conferences at County Buildings	96
September 2014	How Staffordshire Went to War: Study Day held at Staffordshire Record Office	26

Online and social media

20. The Staffordshire Great War website has been a focus for news and updates about events and projects in the county and city. Many communities have used the site to promote their projects and appeal for support. The website is supported by a twitter and Facebook account. The twitter account has grown the fastest out of social media with a strong following. Some examples of the use are shown below:

Format	Visitors/Followers
Website: www.staffordshiregreatwar.com	43,335 since launch in April 2014 12,218 April 2015 – January 2016 160 registered users

Twitter: staffsgreatwar@staffsgreatwar	1,181 followers 917 tweets
Facebook: Staffs Great War	215 likes
Christmas Truce letter launch December 2014: Twitter Facebook	7,884 impressions; 162 Engagement 1,519 reach; 112 likes/shares

Future work

21. Future work includes several more events to be delivered by communities and SCC. A key event for this summer will be the screening of the Somme 100 film at the Shire Hall Gallery. The 74 minute film is being made available by the Imperial War Museum to commemorate one hundred years since the Battle of the Somme commenced. The film was originally shown in 1916 and over half the UK adult population saw it at the time.
22. The Rural County, in partnership with Historic England, has submitted a bid for £100,000 to Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Chase Through Time'. This project will carry out Lidar scanning of Cannock Chase, supplemented with documentary research. An exhibition and online content will be delivered revealing more about the Chase and its unique role during the Great War.
23. In autumn 2016 Archives and Heritage are planning to bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Our Heritage' Fund for a project based around the Archive Service collections relating to the county's asylums, and the County Museum's collections from St. Edward's Hospital, Cheddleton and other medical objects. This project will look at the impact of war on the mental health of combatants and how treatment developed in the post-war period. It will also aim to raise awareness of mental health issues, then and now.
24. The Great War Project Officer post will continue to support local groups in seeking funding and ensure that the Council itself can make use of opportunities such as screening the Somme film. The Council is registered with the Imperial War Museum partnership and able to monitor upcoming events.
25. The next Great War conference is on 5 March at the National Memorial Arboretum. This key venue for the county has obviously played a significant role in the commemorations. The new Learning and Remembrance Centre currently being constructed will offer more opportunities for residents and communities in Staffordshire to commemorate the Great War and other conflicts.

Conclusion

26. The Great War Strategy has given direction for the County Council's programme of events to commemorate the centennial. The focus on Cannock Chase, the home front, artistic interpretation and the military legacy has been successful in attracting funding to support the delivery of well attended events.
27. In all parts of the county a local group or community has marked the centennial. Many have been successful in attracting funding. The community capacity to deliver more events is strong and they welcome support from SCC in advising on and promotion of their projects.

28. The message from HLF is that they wish to support more projects from their dedicated World War One fund. Therefore our aim is to submit further bids to support projects focusing on the later stages of the war and the legacy of the war.

Link to Strategic Plan – *Enjoying Life: Manage and deliver a programme of events within community settings which commemorate the Centennial of WW1*

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Appendices/Background papers

Appendix A - Staffordshire Great War Centennial: A Strategy for Commemoration 2014 – 2019

Appendix B – Staffordshire Great War Commemorative Activities Timeline