

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 17 November 2016**

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### **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Review of Fees and Charges 2017-2018**

#### **Recommendation(s)**

1. That the fees and charges proposed in Appendix two to this report be approved for introduction by the Joint Archive Service from April 2017.
2. **Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Directorate (Stoke on Trent City Council)**

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

3. The Archive Service fees and charges have been reviewed on an annual basis for a number of years to allow the Service to adapt its services according to demand and cost of provision. The proposed fees and charges are recommended for approval as they represent a fair and reasonable increase.

#### **Background**

4. The standard sources for income generation for the Archive Service are: a range of copying services; the sale of photographic permits; research, transcription and certification services; sales of publications; donations; and fees for talks by and group visits to the Archive Service. In addition from 2014 the Archive Service has benefitted from income from its partnership with a commercial provider to make key archive collections available online. Each year the Service reviews its fees and charges based on:

- Staff time to deliver the service
- Cost of equipment and associated maintenance
- Postage costs
- Economic climate
- Changing technology
- Availability of resources online
- User demand

5. The review is intended to be a balanced approach which encourages use of services whilst still ensuring that income is generated to support the running of such services. Since the publication of parish registers, wills and marriage

bonds online with Find My Past the Archive Service has seen a fall in its traditional income from photocopying and research. Royalties from the online service are paid to the Service however this has not offset falls in traditional income.

6. This year the main change to the fees and charges has been an increase of the copying fees as these have not been reviewed since 2012. In addition commercial reproduction charges have also been assessed again.

The fees reviewed include:

- Photocopy charges for items ordered in reading rooms
- Photocopies ordered by post
- Microform printouts
- Camera permits
- Publication fees

7. The charges for photocopies requested through our reading rooms has not been reviewed since 2012. As far as possible photocopies are produced during a user's visit as this enables them to identify the correct items to be copied and reduces administration time in posting the order out. All copying is carried out by staff to ensure the secure handling and preservation of archive material. The charge is increased to reflect the changes in costs of the equipment, materials and staff time.

8. Where users are unable to visit the service in person but can identify the items they wish to have copies of, a postal service is offered. If users cannot identify documents a research fee is charged for staff to do this for them. Staff produce the relevant documents, copy or scan them as appropriate and send them to the customer either by post or electronically. The service aims to complete orders within 8 working days and meets the target on average 97% of the time. The charges have been increased to reflect increased costs in equipment, materials and staff time.

9. Printouts from microfiche and microfilm are offered on a self-service basis for users in the search rooms. The charges are set in line with those for photocopies and were last increased in 2010. Whilst it is a self-service system many users require assistance from staff to produce a legible copy. The charges have been increased to reflect increased costs in equipment, materials and staff time. A discount is offered for users bulk buying the tokens required to gain a copy from the printing machine.

10. The Archive Service allows visitors to use their own cameras in our searchrooms to take photographs of documents following correct handling guidelines. The benefits of this service to users are mainly in allowing them to copy bound volumes, maps and large or fragile items which cannot otherwise be photocopied. A camera stand is provided at each office to enable users to attach their camera to it and get a good image of the document. A permit is issued for the day alternatively an annual permit can be purchased valid for a year. The fees were last reviewed in 2012 and it is proposed to increase the charge for the daily permit only.

11. The publication fees have also been reviewed and increased again this year. Requests to reproduce items from collections can be time consuming involving clearing permissions with document owners and often responding at short notice. The fees charged for commercial use have been increased to take account of these factors. The community publication fees have been held to continue to support local groups who use our collections to promote awareness and understanding of the history of the county.

12. The review has been carried out following a benchmarking exercise of fees and charges of neighbouring archive services. Frontline staff and public service managers have also been consulted.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Equalities implications:**

In reviewing its fees the Archive Service has continued to maintain its lower research fee for people with disabilities.

### **Legal implications:**

The content of this report complies with the joint agreement governing the work of the Joint Archive Service.

### **Resource and Value for money implications:**

Overall the Joint Archive Service has income targets of £48,320 which breaks down to £6,300 for the City service and £42,020 for the County service.

### **Risk implications:**

At this point in the year income is under target for research and photocopying. Officers are managing spend within budgets to offset under recovery of income.

### **Climate Change implications:**

No significant implications.

### **Health Impact Assessment screening:**

No significant implications.

## **Appendix Two**

### **Review of Fees and Charges 2016-2017 – attached to report**

**Report author:**

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

### **List of Background Papers**

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Joint Archive Service Scale of Fees and Charges, 2015/2016 Orders and income ledgers, 2015/2016	Joanna Terry/Place/ x278370