

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 15 June 2017

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Report on Staffordshire History Centre Project

Recommendation(s)

- 1 a. That the Committee approve proposals to develop the operating model for the Staffordshire History Centre.
- b. Implement transitional arrangements for the County Archive Service from April 2018 prior to a further re-organisation when the new History Centre opens in 2020/21.
- c. Note progress of the project.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Director (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

Background

2. During 2015 the Archive and Heritage Service carried out extensive consultation to develop a ten year vision for the service. Four options for delivering the vision were consulted on and a final option to develop the Staffordshire History Centre was approved by the Joint Archive Committee on 22 October 2015. The proposed model included the removal of archives from the Lichfield Record Office to Stafford and the move of collections from the William Salt Library to the new History Centre.
3. A bid to create The Staffordshire History Centre was considered by the Heritage Lottery Fund Board and awarded a stage one pass on 24 May 2016. A development grant of £333,400 to develop the proposals to a stage 2 bid to HLF for a further £3.9m.
4. The plans include the remodelling of the Archive and Heritage Service operated by Staffordshire County Council to deliver the new History Centre. The proposals also deliver MTFs savings of £260,000 which were part of the Staffordshire History Centre project approved by Cabinet in February 2016.
5. The Project Board and Project Team have made significant progress confirming appointments of a range of consultants to develop the activity programme, appointment of project staff and selection of the design team.

Previous consultation

6. In March 2015 the Joint Archive Committee approved the new vision for the Archive and Heritage Service (Joint Archive Service and the Heritage Service in the County). Nine options for delivering the vision were developed with stakeholders and then shortlisted to four deliverable options. They included:

- **Option A** – Create the Staffordshire History Centre Project with HLF funding.
- **Option B** – Create the Staffordshire History Centre plus museum storage/exhibition with external funding.
- **Option C** - Staffordshire Archives and Heritage – retain all sites & achieve budget savings required.
- **Option D** - Staffordshire History Centre with HLF funding on a new site.

All options included delivery of savings to meet the County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. Consultation on the four options was carried out from June – August 2015 with

- 539 responses to the survey
- 450 people spoke to staff at drop in sessions
- 21 depositors attend a forum in Lichfield to discuss affecting their collections.

8. The response to the consultation showed overwhelming support for Option A and a high degree of rejection / opposition for Option C. When asked to rank each option in order of preference Option A had more support than the other three options put together (53%). Option B came next with 23% followed by Option D (15%) and finally Option C (9%). At the Joint Archive Committee on 22 October 2015 members approved the development of option A as the preferred proposal. This formed the basis of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in February 2016 but included some elements of option B such as transfer of Heritage Service photographic and paper based collections to the Centre and provision of an exhibition space.

9. The proposals for the History Centre also included future remodelling of the County's Archive and Heritage Service to enable it to realign resources to deliver the Service for the future.

Progress of the project

10. The procurement process to appoint consultants to deliver the activity plan, learning plan, active partnership framework, conservation management plan, business plan, interpretation and design, and fundraising support has completed with all roles filled. Two project staff have been appointed to fixed term contracts to the role of Community History Development Officer and Project Support Officer. They will support staff and consultants to develop the plans and the stage 2 HLF application.

11. The Fundraising Consultants will write and submit bids to secure £150,000 matched funding by the time the stage 2 bid is being considered by the HLF Board in 2018. They will also support the Friends of Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service and Friends of the William Salt Library to raise £50,000 matched funding through a crowdfunding campaign.

12. The design team have been appointed following a process of competitive dialogue with suppliers. Fifteen companies submitted an initial tender with five shortlisted for the next stage. Site visits were offered to the suppliers and a dialogue meeting held with four bidders (the fifth did not take part) to discuss their proposals for the project. Four suppliers submitted final tenders that were evaluated by a panel comprising Archive & Heritage staff, County Council staff, representatives from the planning authority Safford Borough Council, and representatives from the William Salt Library Trust and friends group. The panel recommended the selection of Pringle Richards Sharratt and this was approved by the Project Board, William Salt Library Trust, and Heritage Lottery Fund, subject to agreeing the contract.

13. The consultants and Project Team are working on:

- Conservation Management Plan
- Activity Plan
- Active Partnership
- Learning Plan
- Business Plan
- Fundraising
- Targeted consultation
- Design, interpretation and branding for the project.

14. The next key milestone for the project will be the mid stage review with HLF. This is a formal review by HLF to ensure that the project has made sufficient good quality progress towards achieving the approved purposes of the development grant. This is currently scheduled for September-October. Assuming the mid stage review is successful, the stage 2 HLF application is intended to be submitted in March 2018 with a decision made by the board in June.

15. Work is underway to plan and prepare for the relocation of the Lichfield Record Office collections to Staffordshire Record Office and the archive outstore in Stafford. The Heritage Service is also preparing to move from the County Museum to new stores also in Stafford. The Lichfield Record Office will be decommissioned by April 2018 and a new history access point established at the redeveloped St Mary's Heritage Centre. This formed part of the proposals consulted on in 2015 outlined in paragraph 6 above.

Development of new staffing model

16. A review of the current staffing structure for the County Archive and Heritage Service has been completed. The current model is site specific with roles focused on delivering public services at Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office, William Salt Library and the County Museum.

17. There are currently 25.4fte in the County's Archive and Heritage Service (including externally funded posts). Of this total 19.7fte staff deliver the County's Archive Service and 5.7fte deliver the Heritage Service. Stoke on Trent City Archives has 5fte staff and is not part of this review.

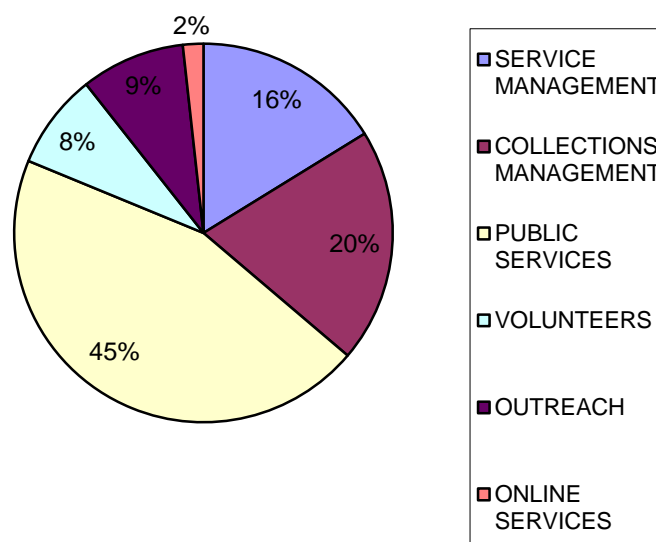
18. By April 2018 the Lichfield Record Office will have closed and the archive collections will move to Stafford to be held at the County Record Office and Unit QB outstore. It is planned that only the ground floor of the William Salt Library will be retained as part of the Staffordshire History Centre. This means a reduction from four public access points to two by 2018 and a further reduction to one by 2019/20.

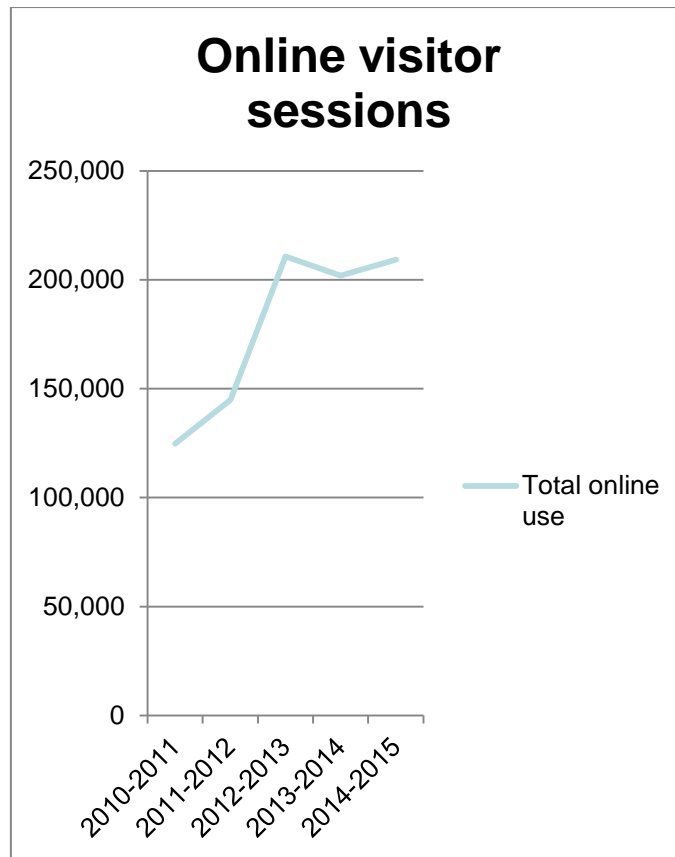
19. The Heritage Service will be moving its collection from the County Museum, Shugborough to new outstores in Stafford. This is part of the agreement between the County Council and the National Trust to return the Shugborough estate to management by the Trust which took place in November 2016. The County Museum has a three year lease of the offices at Shugborough and is making progress on its plans to relocate the collections and offices as part of the arrangements with the National Trust. Relocation costs were included as part of the financial arrangements for the transfer back to the Trust.

20. Based on the CIPFA statistics for Archive Services in 2015/2016 Staffordshire is in the upper section of non-metropolitan services for staffing levels. The highest number of staff is 26 (at Surrey) and the lowest is 2.8 (Bath and North East Somerset). Cumbria, which currently operates a multi-site service, has 21.4 staff. The average number of staff is for archive services is 13.6fte.

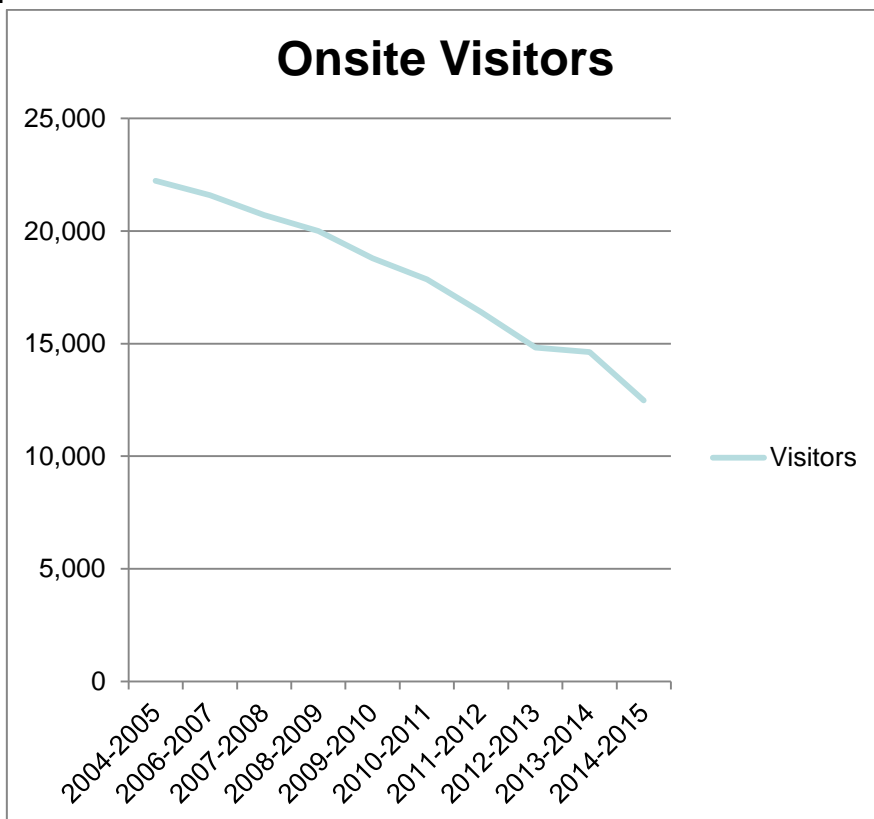
21. An analysis of the staff time spent on functions in 2015 revealed that a significant amount of time is spent on service and site based operations. The lowest amount of time is spent on online services despite this being the primary means of access. See figures below:

Staffing resources





Total online visitor sessions increased from 124,766 in 2010/11 to 209,252 in 2014/2015.



As part of a national trend onsite visitors have fallen from a high of 22,231 in 2004/5 to 12,481 in 2014/15. The falls in use compare to other similar archive services.

22. It is proposed to create a new operating model for the History Centre which:

- Re-balances staff time and resources to reduce time spent on site and service management.
- The development of flexible roles across archives and heritage.
- Roles aligned to delivering the vision for the service with more focus on online services, outreach and volunteers.
- Roles to operate one public access site and support the county wide activity programme.
- Key roles to ensure the service meets its accreditation standards and manages collections efficiently.
- Fundraising to be included in key roles to offer sustainability after HLF funding ceases for the History Centre.
- Delivery of £260,000 savings for the Service.

23. This transformation of the County Archive and Heritage Service means that all current roles will be reviewed to ensure the operating model delivers the objective identified above.

Proposed process and next steps

24. The Archive and Heritage Service structures will be reviewed and in accordance with SCC formal processes, an appropriate collective consultation exercise will take place with staff and recognised Trade Unions regarding the resultant proposal and its potential impact.

25. Staff will be appropriately engaged with to undertake meaningful consultation that mitigates risk of redundancy wherever possible in accordance with business needs.

26. It is intended that the new structure will be in place by 1 April 2018 to enable delivery of £130,000 savings for 2018/2019 and realisation of a further £130,000 in 2019/2020.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The National Archives, stakeholders, partners and staff have been involved in development of the project. Further consultation is planned in the development stage.

Legal implications:

The Staffordshire History Centre will deliver archive services under the terms of the Joint Agreement which is reviewed and amended as required by both authorities.

Resource and Value for money implications:

The delivery of the Staffordshire History Centre will enable the Archive and Heritage Service to achieve its MTFS savings and a sustainable model for the future.

Risk implications:

The project has secured a stage 1 pass and development stage funding. To proceed to the delivery phase the partnership will need to secure stage two funding, and raise £150,000 of matched funding.

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.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

The project offers opportunities for volunteers to get involved and add value to the service with support and accredited training programmes from staff. Volunteering provides many social benefits for individuals which can impact positively on health.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Staffordshire History Centre Project Board and Project Team meeting notes	
Stage 1 HLF Application February 2016	
CIPFA statistics for Archive Services 2015-2016.	
Visitor figures for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service 2010-2015	
Staff time analysis 2015.	
Staffordshire History Centre Consultation and Findings 22 October 2015	