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

## **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 25 February 2021**

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### **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service: Tamworth Castle Archive**

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

1. That the committee notes the update on Tamworth Castle Archive.

#### **Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Housing and Community Services (Stoke on Trent City Council)**

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

##### **Summary**

2. In November 2020 members of Tamworth Borough Council approached the Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture to discuss the Tamworth Castle Archive.
3. It was agreed that officers from Tamworth Borough Council Museum Service and Staffordshire County Council's Archive and Heritage Service will work together to identify an appropriate solution for the future care and access to the collection.

##### **Background**

4. The archive at Tamworth Castle comprises of several locally and regionally significant collections relating to the history of the town. The key collections are local authority and predecessor bodies, quarter sessions, family and estate records, local schools, highways, charities, a large photographic collection and local studies material.
5. Advice and guidance was provided to the Borough Council Museum Service in 2000 by the Archive Service. This resulted in a considerable amount of work by the Museum Service to repackage the collection and improve storage conditions. Some inventories have also been completed for the collection.
6. Prior to COVID-19 access to the collection was restricted by the availability of the Collections Officer to accommodate appointments for visitors. Volunteer support has been lost due to COVID-19 which assisted the staff in research and responding to enquiries.
7. There is just one member of staff responsible for the collection who also has responsibilities for the collections on display at the Castle and stores, key holding responsibilities, curatorial responsibilities, COSHH (Control of Substances

Hazardous to Health), responding to written and in-person enquiries as well as providing access to the archives.

8. The discussion between members and officers from the two authorities has resulted in an agreement to work together to assess the collection and its future location. An application for external funding from The National Archives COVID-19 emergency fund to support this work has been submitted by the Archive and Heritage Service. The outcome will be known later in February and if successful would provide funding for additional staff resources to work on existing inventories to enable a thorough appraisal of the collection.

9. Future plans for the archive collection have not been confirmed however both authorities are committed to improving access and this could potentially mean the collection is deposited at Staffordshire Record Office. If the collection is relocated the Archive and Heritage Service would work with Tamworth Castle Museum to ensure the collection is accessible through, for example, exhibition loans, digitisation and a comprehensive catalogue on the online catalogue.

10. A further update will be brought to the Joint Archives Committee once a plan has been agreed for Tamworth Castle Archive.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Equalities implications:**

None applicable.

### **Legal implications:**

If the collection is transferred, in consultation with Tamworth Borough Council, it will be under the Terms of Deposit approved by the Joint Archives Committee.

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

External funding has been applied for from The National Archives COVID-19 emergency fund to support this work.

### **Risk implications:**

If external funding is not achieved work to assess the collection will take longer to identify a suitable solution for future access.

### **Climate Change implications:**

None applicable

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

None applicable

### **Report author:**

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**List of Background Papers**

Papers

Contact/Directorate/ext number