



Joint Archives Advisory Board

Minutes of the meeting held at on
Friday, 1 March 2019
at Upton House, Poole BH17 7BJ

Present:

Patrick Oakley (Chairman)
Hilary Cox and Marion Pope

Officer Attending: Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), Sam Johnston (County Archivist), Paul Leivers (Assistant Director - Commissioning, Community Services, Partnerships and Quality), Kevin McErlane (Head of Community Culture and Learning), Michael Spender (Museum and Arts Manager) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Notes: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. This is the last planned meeting of this Committee before the start of the new Dorset Council on 1 April 2019. The minutes will therefore be confirmed and signed by the Chairman prior to 31 March 2019.)

Apologies for Absence

- 1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Richard Biggs, John Challinor, Toni Coombs and William Trite.

Code of Conduct

- 2 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2018 were confirmed and signed.

Joint Archives Service - Service Plan (2018-21) Monitoring Report

- 4 The Board considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme, Dorset County Council, which provided an update on the Joint Archives' Service (JAS) Plan since the last meeting on 6 June 2018.

The County Archivist presented the report drawing attention to: the current and future accommodation position; the need for the new local authorities to acknowledge the risk of losing archive and corporate memory and address this; the delay to building improvements to repositories; the need for additional resource to manage the collection of archives materials from current District, Borough, County and Bournemouth and Poole Councils; progress with the digital consortium; the need for the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to consider the management of its records and their possible digitisation; the accreditation of Investors in Volunteers status; the opening of the Archive of the Bankes Family of Kingston Lacey; and the Herrison asylum archive. It was hoped that the latter archive would be used by social workers to reflect on past experience of mental health to inform future thinking in their training and practice.

With regard to the Action Plan, attention was drawn to areas with "Red" and "Amber" ratings. The red ratings related to Local Government Reorganisation and corporate memory. Members noted that Wiltshire Council had provided additional resource to identify and transfer records at risk during their transition to unitary. The need for additional resources was being promoted within the new Dorset Council and this information could be shared with Poole and Bournemouth officers so that this could

be promoted within the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. By way of comparison, it was stated that Wiltshire Council created two posts to assist with this work when LGR took place there.

Members were concerned about the possible loss of archive material and it was suggested that Kate Adie, journalist and author, be invited to speak on the importance of preserving archives at member induction for the two new councils.

The red rating for the capital project (extension of the Dorset History Centre building) was maintained at amber and an update would be provided later in the meeting. However, if the extension did not proceed, either the Service would need to stop collecting records or there would be revenue budget implications for external storage space.

Members were concerned about the possible loss of records and archive material, including digital records, during the transition period to the two new Unitary Councils and in recognition of the additional resources needed to address this.

Resolved

1. That the implementation of the 2018-21 service plan appended to the report be supported as demonstrating the quality and value for money provided by the JAS.
2. That the range of positive and innovative collections, learning and engagement-related work undertaken by the JAS be noted.
3. That it be noted that the relatively small size of the JAS staffing structure means that any future budget reductions will have a direct and clear impact on the service's ability to deliver the service plan.
4. That the JAS's role in LGR in identifying, collecting and preserving the records of the nine current authorities be supported.

Recommended

That the two new Councils provide resources to support the identification, transfer of records and archives, and the corporate memory of the current nine councils across Dorset.

Joint Archives Service: Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19 and Budget 2019/20

- 5 The Board considered a joint report by the Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme, Dorset County Council, and the Chief Financial Officer, Dorset County Council, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Joint Archives Service, the current budget position including reserves, and a provisional budget for 2019/20.

The County Archivist presented the report highlighting the need for capital improvements in order to reduce energy costs and keep the collection in the best condition, the general reserve contribution to capital project costs and that the proposed budget for 2019/20 was based on reconfigured contributions from the two new unitary councils.

Resolved

1. That the Joint Archives Service current financial position be noted.
2. That the efforts made by the Joint Archives Service to reduce costs and to manage its finances to deliver the best outcomes for both funders and users of the service be noted.
3. That the budget for the financial year 2019/20 be approved.

Dorset History Centre - Capital Project Update

6 The Board considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme, Dorset County Council, which provided an update on the Dorset History Centre capital project. It also provided indicative revenue costs for external storage space, should the capital project not proceed.

The County Archivist presented the report highlighting the key points within the report and provided an update where the reported situation had changed.

Members noted that although it was reported that there was sufficient space for archive expansion for the next 2-3 years, the addition of the Bournemouth Echo archives would mean that additional space would be needed within 12 months. This highlighted the urgent need for the capital project to go ahead.

The feasibility report on the Capital Project had been completed and the current estimated cost was £3.1m with a funding gap of £919k. However, since the reorganisation of the regional structure of National Lottery Heritage Funding, the amount of potential available funding had increased, with the potential for the funding gap to reduce to £620k. Discussions with members of the Shadow Dorset Council were ongoing as to whether the capital project should proceed on this basis.

It was explained that Poole Museum were also likely to re-submit an application for National Lottery Heritage Funding. Members were told that it was unlikely that two bids from the same area would be successful should bids be submitted at the same time. Officers were to discuss the timing of submissions and the best way forward.

With regard to future capital project funding, it was noted that although Dorset Council had included an allocation in the budget for the next financial year, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council had not indicated any future allocation. County Council officers were to meet with leading Shadow Dorset Council members the following week to discuss capital funding before taking any further action.

Members recognised the need for action to be taken whether this was in support of the capital project or to find other means of storage. They were concerned at the possible loss of records during the transition period and that space would need to be found to store these. They recognised the limited time available to address these issues and the urgent need to secure support for the capital project from both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils.

With regard to the options set out in the report, officers recommended the support of Option 1 - the submission of a second application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in first half of 2019 rather than seeking commercial out-storage (Option 2).

Given the concern expressed by members it was:-

Resolved

That Option 1 be supported as the best value, long-term solution for the Joint Archives Service storage requirements.

Recommended

That as a matter of urgency after 1 April 2019, an approach be made to both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Dorset Councils' Executives for their support for this capital project, bearing in mind the urgent need for additional space.

Farewell

- 7 This was the last meeting of the Board prior to the two new unitary councils coming into operation on 1 April 2019. Some members would not be standing for election and thanked other members and officers for their good working relationships and the support provided for the Service.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 10.50 am