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JOINT ARCHIVES ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2021

Present: Cllrs Mohan Iyengar, Richard Biggs, Simon Christopher, Matthew Hall, Jill Haynes, Nigel Hedges and Marion Le Poidevin

Apologies: Cllr Lesley Dedman

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Paul Ackrill (Service Manager (Finance)), Medi Bernard (Library Service Manager, BCP Council), Lisa Cotton (Head of Customer Services, Libraries & Archives), Sam Johnston (Service Manager for Archives), Matti Raudsepp (Corporate Director Customer and Business Delivery, BCP Council) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

19. **Election of Chairman**

Decisions

1. That in accordance with the terms of reference the chairmanship would move from BCP Council to Dorset Council and that the host council for the meeting would take the chair.
2. That Councillor Jill Haynes be elected Chairman for the year 2021.

20. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Decision

That Councillor Mohan Iyengar be appointed Vice-Chairman for the year 2021.

21. **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Lesley Dedman.

22. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

23. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

24. **Public Participation**

There were no submissions from town or parish councils or from members of the public.

25. **Consultancy Review of Dorset Joint Archive Service**

The Board considered a report which followed a consultant led review of the Joint Archives Service's (JAS) functions.

Members of the Board also received a presentation which is attached as an annexure to these minutes.

Areas of discussion following the presentation

Felt the service was not sufficiently recognised.

The challenge was to make what the archives services does relevant to the working lives of a large number of people.

How to make the service more relevant to more people.

If the service was made indispensable to more there would be less need to worry about the budget.

Making records more accessible to users and staff, possible digital portal.

The value of connection between the History Centre and Exeter and Bournemouth Universities.

Increase knowledge of the services to increase income.

Not focus too heavily on one side of the business to the detriment of another area of the business.

Constant issue of capacity highlighted.

Opportunity for interns to be used by the History Centre who want wider experience within the Archives world.

The amount of management time needed for volunteer staff.

Ideal scenario for the Archives service to work best would be to have it all in one place.

See how much work was actually duplicated and how much could be saved by doing things differently. This would be a good initial area to explore.

The need to highlight the importance of the Archives Service to both councils.

The Board thanked the consultants for their work on putting this review together.

The Service Manager for Archives highlighted the main points of the report to members. He also stressed the importance of both councils supporting efficient records management as a related element (with archives) of an effective information management system, ideally allowing for consistency of approach across BCP and Dorset Councils.

Members discussed a timeline for the next meeting with the possibility of holding more regular meetings and perhaps initially an informal meeting.

Following a request from members the Service Manager for Archives undertook to arrange visits to the History Centre for members when appropriate.

Decisions

1. That the findings and recommendations of the consultants' report and the proposal that the recommendations form the basis for the future JAS Service Development Plan be supported.

2. That a clear direction of travel for the JAS in relation to the report's recommendations, the service's likely focus of attention (section 5 of this report) and is mindful of the resource implications of any new workstreams be agreed.
3. That the future governance of the JAS in the light of the consultants' recommendations and delegates responsibility to Legal Services staff of BCP and DC Councils to generate one or more options for consideration be supported.
4. That consideration of the JAS's dearth of archive storage and the production of a revised options appraisal to consider how best to resolve this issue be supported.

Reason for Decisions

To meet the reporting and decision-making requirements of the Joint Archives Agreement, 1997

26. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

27. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.15 pm

Chairman

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The Joint Archive Service: A firm foundation

Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan
Consultant Archivist

Heidi Bellamy, Business Consultant

What are archives?

The documentary by-product of the activity of individuals and organisations retained for their long-term value.

A contemporaneous record

Evidence & Information

Authenticity – it is what it claims to be

Reliability - accurately represents event from a point of view

Integrity - sufficient to give a coherent picture

Usable



What is digital preservation?

Digital Preservation is the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary

An organisational as well as a technical challenge



An exemplar service

- Rich collections
- Diverse engagement – inc universities, Romany, Jewish and LGBT communities
- Early adopter - Leader in digital preservation
- Good relationships- 'agile, responsive, easy to work with, innovative'
- Energetic networker – Archives First
- Strong income generation – nearly matching Councils' individual contributions



Unfulfilled potential

- Internal business support – managing records, digital preservation, FOI and GDPR, accessing & using records
- Audiences across the County
- Supporting health, well-being and community agendas
- Contributing to cultural tourism
- Being an intellectual hub



Governance issues

- ! Meeting once a year
- ! Budget focused
- ! Need for more active role in:
 - Strategic development
 - Internal advocacy
 - Brokering relationships
- ! Conduit for communication between the JAS and BCP only via Library Service
- ! JAS not recognised as a crucial business service



Governance recommendations

Enable an active, engaged body that supports & promotes JAS to enable it to serve both Councils across all departments

- New terms of reference
- Broader membership & Observers - Portfolio holders, officers, DAT
- More regular meetings
- More informed – presentations, guests, ebulletin
- Strategic engagement with JAS



Audience development recommendations

Limited capacity so consciously choose and grow, harnessing digital technologies

- *Grow* – localities, DC, health, museums, libraries
- *Maintain* – Individual researchers, those who naturally engage locally
- *Seed* – tourism, young adults, diverse communities, BCP Council

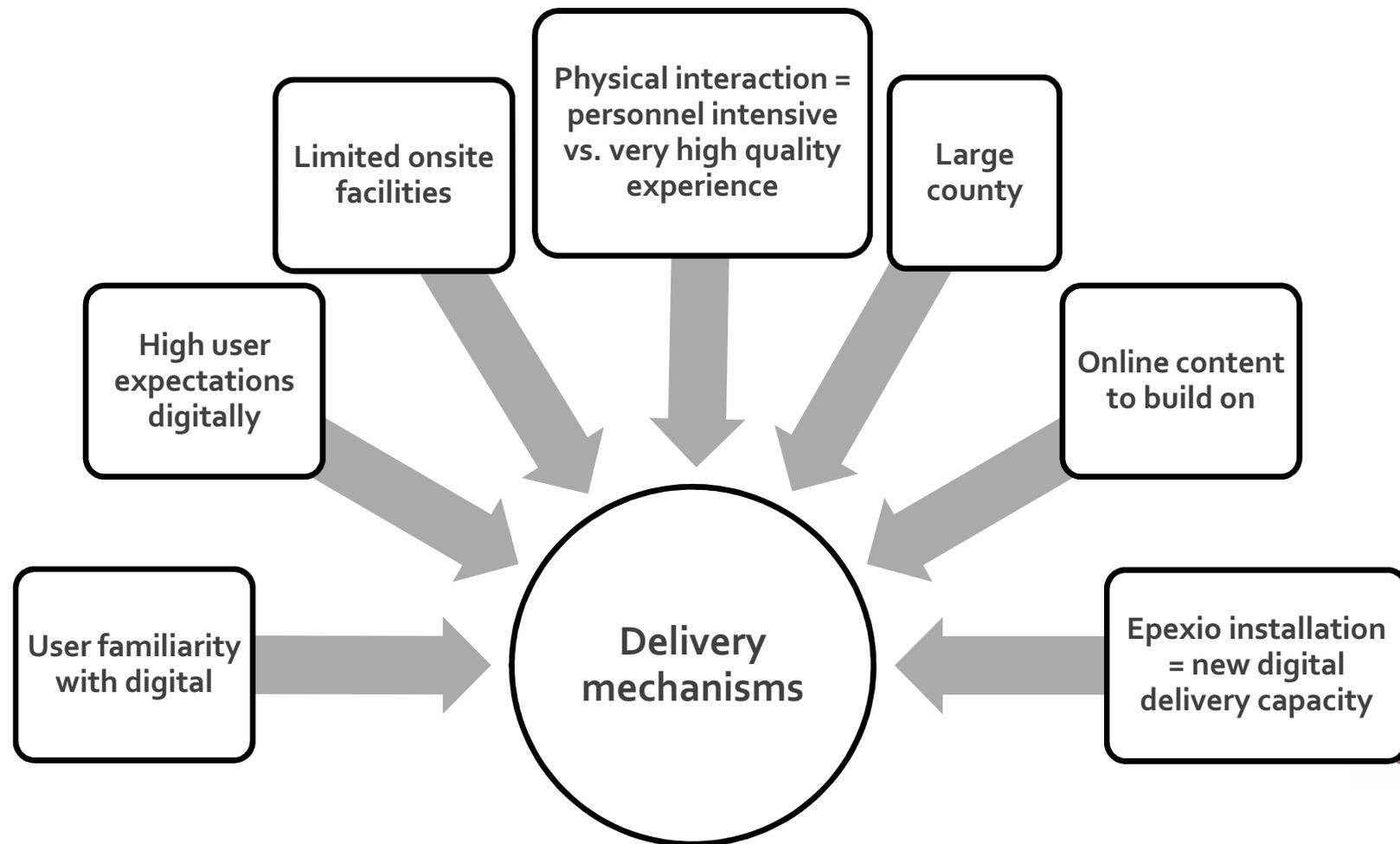
Work in partnerships

Expert adviser

Not schools



Balancing digital and place-based services - context



Service delivery recommendations

Digital becomes the primary delivery channel

- Clearly signposted internal service of digital preservation, digitisation and records access (DC Children's Services)
- Image bank, curated content, digitize whole collections selectively
- Local content for local communities – 'Know your place'
- Two-way user engagement
- Guides & skills development
- Linked into related providers – cultural & health



Service delivery recommendations

Judicious place-based services

- Trial appointments only searchroom & reduce number of seats
- Annual talks programme
- Combined delivery - working with tourism, social care, health, museums & libraries
- Going out to Council staff to explain the JAS offer



Income generation Context

- ✓ Good at income generation – c. 80% of a council's contribution
- ✓ Matches other high performing services
- ✓ 75% fall in electricity costs – Passivhus changes & photovoltaic cells
- ✓ Very good at bidding for grants
- ✓ Has exploited all obvious sources
- ✗ **There is no magic bullet**



Income generation Context

Primary 'generator' is cost savings through better records management & digital preservation internally

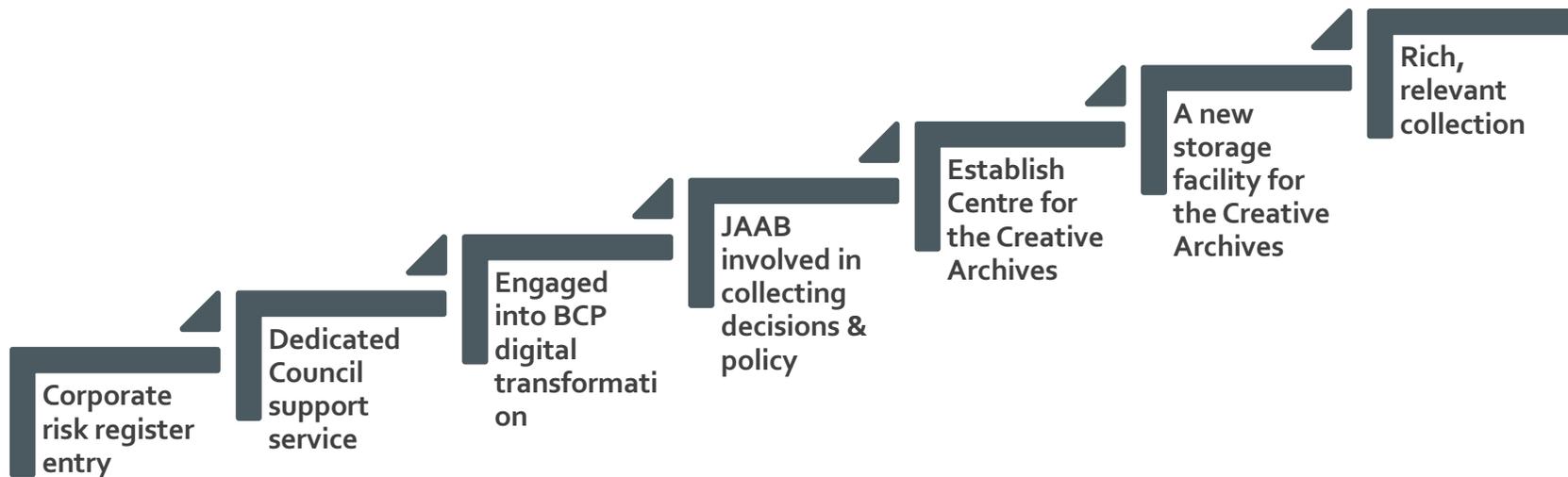
Plus much smaller revenue generating activity:

- Continue existing income activities
- Increase paid-for activities e.g. activities, online content
- Commissioning & self-funders?
- A commercial manager???



Collection management recommendations

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Resultant qualitative value

- Secure civic record
- Robust and accessible cultural asset
- Safe civic space
- Meeting point for diverse community actors
- Enhanced understanding of heritage and sense of place
- Mechanism for engaging vulnerable and harder to reach groups
- Ability to harness the skills and knowledge of volunteers



Resultant value

- Minimize legal non-compliance - Kensington and Chelsea fined £120,000 by ICO for publishing details of empty property owners.
- Lower storage costs and carbon footprint – 30—70% of records in an organization are duplicates?
- An enterprise employing 1,000 knowledge workers wastes \$48,000 per week, or nearly \$2.5M per year, due to an inability to locate and retrieve information (National Association of Productivity and Organising - <https://aclearpath.net/productivity-stats/>)
- Currently BCP commission architects to redraw plans historical plans, as they transferred these across to DHC 20 years ago, but many people don't know what is there or how to accessing that info
- Evaluation of a social prescribing pilot in Rotherham in 2014 concluded that if the full benefits last for five years they could lead to total cost reductions of £1.9 million: a return on investment of 3.38 (i.e. £3.38 for each pound invested)

Conclusion

A high quality asset which has significant potential for further supporting its Councils in business operations and serving residents



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