

JOINT ARCHIVES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Cllrs Laura Beddow, Richard Biggs, Lesley Dedman and Marion Le Poidevin

Present remotely: Cllrs Simon Christopher and Andy Martin

Also present: Carola Campbell (Dorset Archives Trust)

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

Paul Ackrill (Service Manager (Finance)), Lisa Cotton (Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sam Johnston (Service Manager for Archives and Records), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer) and Matti Raudsepp (Corporate Director Customer and Business Delivery, BCP Council)

21. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

22. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

23. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 January 2023 were confirmed and signed.

24. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

25. **Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from Councillors.

26. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

27. **Joint Archives Service: Budget Monitoring and Budget 2024/25 Report**

The Joint Archives Service Budget for 2024/25 was presented by the Service Manager for Archives and Records. He explained that the current budget of

£613,107 would be retained for 2024/25 and that there would be a requirement to reduce outgoings by £50,000 to adhere to this budget. The cost saving would come primarily from the removal of a job position following the upcoming retirement of the Officer Manager. The duties of the Officer Manager would then be distributed among other areas to cover the work with buildings-related functions largely transferring to DC's Effective Property Management team. The Board were also informed that this was the 8th standstill budget in 10 years.

The Corporate Director Customer and Business Delivery, BCP Council delivered a verbal update on the budgetary position for BCP Council. He noted that it was in a similar position to Dorset Council, with heavy budgetary pressures and that it was necessary to support the standstill budget for the Joint Archives Service.

In response to a question from a member, the Service Manager for Archives and Records stated that, although it would be difficult to manage the workload of the Officer Manager after the post is removed, it would not have a detrimental impact on the services provided or the users of the service.

The board were supportive of the 2024/25 budget proposal and commended the Joint Archives Service for adhering to another standstill budget.

Proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr Biggs.

Decision: That the proposed budget for 2024/25 and savings as detailed in the report be approved.

28. **Capital Project Update**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records provided a verbal update on the Capital Project. Due to the service coming close to reaching its capacity, there is a need for further storage. It was determined that the most cost-effective solution was to extend the History Centre to create more space for storing archives and that an application would be made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to secure partial funding for this project.

It was explained that in order to receive funding from the Lottery, that match funding would have to be approved by Cabinet in their January meeting. If this were unsuccessful then an alternative solution would be required.

Members expressed support for the Capital Project and hoped that funding would be approved by Cabinet in January, so that an application for Lottery funding could be made. This was likely to take the form of a commercial storage provider. A revenue budget would be required in order to fund an expanding quantity of material held off-site.

The board noted the Capital Project update.

29. **Joint Archives Service Development Plan (2021-26) Monitoring Report**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the Development Plan (2021-26) Monitoring Report. He highlighted the key points from the report,

including the need to improve acquiring records from both BCP and Dorset Council.

Several members expressed concern over the current issues the Joint Archives Service was facing in acquiring records and it was determined that an update on this matter would be provided at the next Joint Archives Board meeting.

The Service Manager for Archives and Records also highlighted the proposed period of closure that would take place in January for two weeks, to allow the Service staff to carry out important work that they are unable to do when the History Centre is open to the public.

Members were supportive of the idea of a small closure period to allow the staff to carry out important work, in order to improve the Service and would monitor the success of the closure period.

Proposed by Cllr Le Poidevin and seconded by Cllr Dedman.

Decision: That the Board:

1. Endorsed the implementation of the 2021-2026 service plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality, variety and value for money provided by the JAS;
2. Supported the JAS's ongoing work to ensure the safe and effective transfer of appropriate physical and digital records from both BCP and Dorset Councils to ensure the preservation of the corporate memory and to deliver council efficiencies.
3. Approved a two-week closure period for the JAS in January 2024 to allow for important collections-related work to take place.

30. **Joint Archives Service: Review of Fees and Charges**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the proposed fees and charges for the Joint Archives Service to take effect 1 April 2024. It was explained that the fees and charges were set to increase broadly inline with the Dorset Council recommendation of 5% and some charges had increased more or less, where appropriate.

In response to a question from a member, the Service Manager stated that there had not been public consultation with users of the JAS, however many members of the public were happy to pay for the service.

Proposed by Cllr Beddow and seconded by Cllr Le Poidevin.

Decision: That the revised fees and charges be recommended to the executive bodies of the two funding councils for implementation from 1 April 2024.

31. **Joint Archives Service: Review of Policies**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records provided a verbal update on the review of JAS policies. He explained that the policies had last been reviewed 6 years ago and small changes had been made where necessary. The policies were

designed with keeping them free of too much technical language and were intended to be intuitive.

Several members of the Board commended the use of clear and plain language within the policies and the fact they were easily accessible. The Service Manager also confirmed that the policies had been approved by a Dorset Council Equalities Officer.

The Board endorsed the policies as set out within the report.

32. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 11.30 am - 12.14 pm

Chairman

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