

Joint Archives Advisory Board

30 March 2022

JAS Service Plan (2021-26) Monitoring Report

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr L Miller, Customer and Community Services
Cllr B Dunlop, Cabinet member for Culture and Vibrant Places, BCP Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Sam Johnston
Title: Service Manager for Archives
Tel: 01305-228929
Email: sam.johnston@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Endorses the implementation of the 2021-2026 service plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality and value for money provided by the JAS;
- (ii) Notes the range of positive and innovative collections, learning and engagement-related work undertaken by the JAS;
- (iii) Supports the JAS's ongoing role with Records Management colleagues in identifying, transferring and preserving the paper and digital records of the 9 predecessor authorities and the two new unitary councils.
- (iv) Supports the JAS moving forward with a newly shaped capital project
- (v) Agrees that the JAS can draw down £20,000 from reserves in order to fund a consultant to work on a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Reason for Recommendation:

Effective oversight of the regular service delivery element of the service plan by the Joint Archives Advisory Board is required under the terms of the Joint Archives Agreement, 1997.

1. Executive Summary

This report updates the Joint Archives Advisory Board on the current and future work of the Joint Archives Service (JAS). The Service Plan appended to this report carries detailed information on the service's activities and the report will highlight work undertaken against the JAS's key objectives. The service has:

- Delivered public access to collections and information throughout the Covid-19 pandemic
- Achieved re-accreditation from The National Archives
- Continued to expand the range and type of digital preservation activities
- Secured the award of a £15,000 conservation grant
- Acquired important new council and community-generated collections.
- Started to develop plans for a revised capital project to address its long-standing accommodation challenges.

The JAS priorities for 2021-26 are:

- Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve, conserve and promote access to them to optimum effect
- Design and deliver digital preservation services across both authority areas
- Provide efficient, innovative and quality digital and place-based services which deliver rewarding experiences for all JAS customers and value for money for the two funding authorities
- Engage a wide variety of audiences with digital and physical resources and events, recognising barriers to involvement and working actively to dismantle these
- Encourage and sustain on-site and remote volunteering so adding value through delivering targeted programmes of work
- Develop and maintain partnerships with a range of organisations both public and private and to pursue project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties
- Manage and enhance the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff.

2. Financial Implications

All activities described in this report are covered by either the JAS revenue budget or an externally-sourced grant.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

The JAS contributes to wellbeing outcomes for both councils and improving the quality of life for residents of BCP and Dorset Council areas and attracting visitors to the county lie at the heart of its work.

4. Climate implications

DHC has significantly improved its energy performance through a major project to reduce consumption whilst ensuring the maintenance of high-quality environmental controls. This, combined with the generation of solar energy through PV panels on roof elevations has rendered the building highly energy-efficient.

5. Other Implications

None

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

A revised risk register can be found at the rear of the service plan. Risks are presented in descending order of severity, the principal two being:

- i) The risk of further local government funding cuts during the financial year 2022/23 and beyond.
- ii) Failure to develop preferred option to provide additional space for physical collections held at DHC.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

The JAS has completed a full EQIA. Areas for further consideration include working with younger people and with black and ethnic minority groups and religious minorities. Improved digital provision will also assist in providing greater access to collections for people living at some distance from Dorchester.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Joint Archives Service Plan 2021-26

Appendix 2: Joint Archives Service Strategic Risk Register

9. Background Papers

- Public Service Quality Group statistics 2020
- JAS accession records, service statistics and records.
- Accreditation data, 2021
- Archives Unlocked, The National Archives, 2020
- JAS policies, revised 2020
- Previous reports to the JAAB

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Joint Archives Service (JAS) is Accredited by [The National Archives](#) and holds the corporate archives of its funding councils and their predecessor bodies as well as thousands of individual collections dating from 965AD which collectively make up the written heritage and memory of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole. In addition, DHC holds Public Records on behalf of HM Government.

The JAS provides services to the public in three principal ways:

- On-site - public access at Dorset History Centre (DHC);
 - Off-site - learning and community engagement;
 - Online – a large and growing market for web-based resources, particularly given the JAS’s relationship with Ancestry.co.uk, its new catalogue and digital engagement work.
- 1.2 Often a blend of one or more of these elements may be involved and JAS service provision is fundamentally a balance between collections-related preservation work and access to information and resources in a variety of formats and media. Twice-annual consultations on the service plan, its goals and priorities are held with colleagues from within the JAS and from BCP Council. Close communication with the Museums Advisor for BCP and Dorset Councils means that opportunities for collaboration between museums and archives can be identified at an early stage.

2. Context and challenges

- 2.1 Following the [consultancy report](#) (published in March 2021) into the JAS by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan and Associates and its acceptance by the JAAB at its April 2021 meeting, a new five year (2021-26) has been written. This draws upon some of the key findings of the consultants’ report, particularly in relation to the efficient acquisition of corporate records and the growth of digital services. The service plan has also adopted and integrated the key messages of the national strategy for archives developed by The National Archives (TNA) *Archives Unlocked* (2020), namely Trust, Enrichment and Openness.¹
- 2.3 The JAS, in common with wider society, has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in significant periods where the service was formally closed to the public. However, staff were on-site throughout the period working on collections and answering a wide range of enquiries from the public, mainly via email. The JAS was consistently one of the first archive services to re-open its doors to the public once government regulations changed. The experience gained doing this and in turn understanding public preferences and demand for access has informed future plans for public opening.
- 2.4 The two most pressing challenges for the service remain (as at the last JAAB meeting):
- The continuing search for an affordable and long-term solution for the future additional collections storage required by the service. Opened in 1991, DHC is now approaching full capacity with 3,000 empty box spaces (of a total 56,000).

¹ <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/strategic-vision-for-archives/strategic-priorities/>

- BCP and Dorset Council records – the JAS is keen to ensure that the corporate memories of both new unitary councils plus those of the nine predecessor councils are safeguarded through the orderly and managed transfer of hard copy and digital records. This is a significant and on-going piece of work and extends to both hard copy and digital records.

3. Service Structure and Capacity

- 3.1 The service's core Archives capacity is 11.67 fte posts which is unchanged from the previous report. An externally-funded (via TNA) digital preservation trainee will complete their 15-month placement at the end of March 2022.
- 3.2 Since the last meeting of the JAAB, due to structural changes within Dorset Council, two additional service areas have come under the management of the Service Manager for Archives and Records and now form part of the wider Archives and Records Service. These are:
 - Dorset Council's Records Management Service comprising of 2.6 fte staff
 - The Historic Environment Record provided via 1 fte Senior Archaeologist

Both of these services bring skills and knowledge which complement those of the JAS and offer opportunities which extend to both councils in terms of corporate records management and the historic environment (which is provided to BCP Council via an SLA). In addition, the Finds Liaison Officer (Portable Antiquities Scheme) who is hosted by, but not employed by Dorset Council will also operate from DHC.

4. Public Service

- 4.1 Whilst the JAS's public service had to work through an extended lockdown in the early part of 2021, and then continue to work with a booking-only system once it reopened in April, it has still been a very busy year. The service received 2,618 written enquiries from customers, an increase of 34% on 2020; and 395 reprographic orders (34% increase on 2020) during the year, a change that possibly reflects a longer-term trend as to how customers now prefer to operate. These reprographic orders have generated over £9,800. We have also undertaken 36 specific research requests in the year (£1,777 worth of requests), meaning that the public services team has brought in over £11,500 during the course of 2021.
- 4.2 Due to Covid we have welcomed a total of 617 visitors through the course of the year but have seen a decrease in the number of documents viewed on-site as a consequence of the reduced footfall. Certain collections have proven to be very popular for researchers in 2021 – notably the recently catalogued Herrison Hospital and Dame Elisabeth Frink collections which have had regular use now that they are more visible and searchable through the online catalogue; as well as recently acquired (but uncatalogued) Thomas Hardy and Sylvia Townsend Warner collections.
- 4.3 In spite of the Covid restrictions, the JAS has benefitted from over 700 hours of volunteer time. In addition, over 70 blogs and 275 tweets covering a wide range of subjects have been published. Over 2 million pages of Ancestry material were viewed and 15 newsletters received by over 11,200 subscribers.

5. Accreditation

- 5.1 The JAS was successfully re-accredited by The National Archives. First accredited in 2018, this was a mid-point 'light touch' review examining organisational health, collections management and stakeholder engagement.
- 5.2 Feedback from the panel reviewing the JAS submission was positive stating that it *“recognised the strong leadership of the archive service and noted potential for future service development since taking on the responsibility for Records Management. The Panel were also impressed by the considerable achievements of the service relative to budget and staffing capacity, and awaited positive developments following the governance review.”*
- 5.3 The service's next (full) accreditation review will take place in 2024.

6. Museums Advisor for BCP and Dorset Councils

- 6.1 The Museums advisor for BCP and Dorset Councils is based at DHC. The role is not part of the JAS although is managed within the same service unit and work between the two areas is closely aligned. 2021 proved to be another challenging year for the 28 Accredited museums across BCP and Dorset as organisations continued to adapt to the ongoing challenges of Covid The Museum Advisory Service has supported and collaborated on some of the following highlights:
 - In response to local demand and interest, Portland Museum secured Art Fund *Respond and Reimagine* funding to create an immersive virtual visit to the physically inaccessible 11th century Rufus Castle. Hot on the heels of this, they have secured a £60k grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Digital Skills for Heritage initiative, to support the documentation of maritime archaeology. One of just 17 projects to be funded nationwide.
 - Sturminster Heritage Trust partnered with local arts company Emerald Ant to work with hundreds of local schoolchildren in the Spring, to provide learning and creative opportunities linked to the fascinating history of Sturminster Mill and produce site specific artworks for everyone to enjoy. They also carried out vital repairs to the historic fabric with the support of an Historic England Heritage at Risk grant.
 - Many museums are now actively participating in a Spirit of 2012-funded project focused on increasing the number of volunteers with disabilities working across Dorset museums and ensuring accessibility is improved and enhanced.
 - Swanage Railway secured their first ever National Lottery Heritage grant and the museum volunteer team are now busy improving their interpretation offer and the overall visitor experience. New displays will be open to the public for the 2022 Summer season.
 - April 2021 also saw the commencement of Dorset Council's new Organisational Revenue Support Programme for cultural organisations with twelve museums now in receipt of regular revenue funding from the local authority, including museums in Weymouth and Portland and North Dorset, which have never previously received regular grants. This investment is already making a tangible difference to capacity and leverage and is scheduled to continue until 2024.

7. Community Outreach and Public Engagement

- 7.1 Covid-19 continued to severely disrupt the delivery of community engagement activities, both 'business as usual' and project-based. However, there has been some notable and successful community engagement work over the course of 2021. These include:
- The delivery of 6 bespoke workshops for adults with learning disabilities.
 - The creation of three heritage films aimed at people in care homes for use by third parties.
 - Work with older prisoners at HMP The Verne.
 - Workshops for 420 school children in Poole in conjunction with artists.
 - Work via the Cultural Hub entitled 'Post from the Past' using historic correspondence for inspiration.
 - Significant support for the Gypsy, Romany, Traveller cultural group Kushti Bok as they build capacity and skills for a (now-submitted) Lottery application.
 - Support for and supervision of nearly 20 volunteers, some with additional needs.
 - Training for a range of groups around heritage skills, particularly oral history.
 - Project support for Valise Noire theatre company.
- 7.2 In spite of the challenges of working under pandemic conditions, it is pleasing to note that the demand for heritage-related information and engagement remains undimmed.

8. Records of Dorset Council and BCP Council

- 8.1 Following the establishment of the two new unitary authorities in April 2019, there remains a great deal to be done in terms of identifying the key records of the nine predecessor councils – those that need to be retained for legal, evidential or cultural reasons and transferring them to DHC for permanent preservation. The pandemic has continued to disrupt and slow down the transfer of material as staff have largely stayed away from office accommodation leading to backlogs.
- 8.2 Within BCP, the move from three to one primary council building (Bournemouth Town Hall) is leading necessarily to the displacement of large quantities of paper records. DHC has received one substantial transfer of material (electoral registers) and is in discussion about the transfer of a range of other records currently still held across the council's estate. It is hoped that this process will lead to a closer relationship in terms of corporate records with regular transfers. The JAS is also keen to work with BCP Council on the transfer of digital records, something that has not yet started.
- 8.3 Dorset Council is similarly engaged in a major programme of work to reduce and re-purpose its estate. With the recent transfer of the Records Management Service to sit alongside Archives, there is now greater scope to identify and intercept records that require permanent preservation. The JAS has received significant quantities of records from Legal and Planning and is in discussion with a number of others as space within corporate spaces becomes unavailable for storage and transfer becomes necessary.

- 8.4 An obvious corollary of the transfer of large quantities of records to DHC from both councils is that the already limited storage space remaining within the service will diminish further.

9. Digital Preservation

- 9.1 There has been excellent progress made in the digital preservation element of the JAS's work during 2021:

- The service uploaded over 27,572 files to our digital preservation system, Preservica. A large amount of this was transfers from fragile, degrading or obsolete media such as film and acetate negatives. We are now preserving over 5.5 terabytes of Dorset's digital documentary memory.
- The JAS's Bridging the Digital Gap trainee (funded by The National Archives) has been with us since January and made a valuable contribution to the team, including transferring archive material from vulnerable CD-Rs into the digital repository, writing blogs and supporting a range of activity around the service.
- The Digital Archivist established a network of archivists working with Preservica in other local authorities to share best practice.
- We successfully transitioned to a new archive cataloguing system which will allow us to manage the information about our archive collections more efficiently and more dynamically.
- We supported the completion of a Lottery-funded project to ensure the long-term preservation of unique film and video from the Windrose Rural Media Trust collection. Over 200 hours of footage and audio recordings are now being preserved in our digital repository.

- 9.2 The JAS's efforts in relation to digital preservation were noted in TNA's accreditation review which praised the service:

"The archive service can demonstrate continuing development and progress in this area regarding both staffing capacity and access to digital archives. The archive continues to provide leadership and to participate in local and national initiatives, sharing their knowledge and experience in this area. The archive service is working proactively with funding councils to advocate for born digital records."

- 9.3 Work to transfer electronic records created by Dorset Council departments into Preservica is ongoing, notably with Democratic Services (committee meeting records) and Children's Services (adoption and fostering records). BCP Council is strongly encouraged to engage with digital preservation which due to our dependency upon digital technology plays an ever more important role in the council's resilience against information loss or destruction.

- 9.4 The JAS (via Dorset Council) leads a consortium of 9 local authorities all of which benefit from cost savings in their use of Preservica digital preservation software. Due to procurement rules, the service is currently tendering for a new 5-year consortium contract which would come into force on 1 June 2022. There is significant interest in this work from other local authorities, at least 10 of which joined a recent call to understand how they might join the consortium.

10. Collection Management

- 10.1 The JAS continues to receive regular, significant accessions of hard copy archives, alongside a growing number of digital records (see above). The service is careful about which records it accepts and wherever possible appraises material before it comes to DHC. At the current rate of accession there remains less than three years' expansion space (or around 6% of the total space remaining). It is already the case that the transfer of at least one large collection (Bournemouth and Dorset Echo newspapers) has had to be deferred to the inability of the DHC repositories to accommodate it.
- 10.2 Since Feb 2021 – DHC has taken in over 200 new accessions covering a wide range of subject matter and formats. Some of the larger accessions include:
- 90 years of electoral registers for Bournemouth,
 - historic deeds from the 17th-20th centuries for Poole Borough
 - Tree Preservation Orders for East Dorset,
 - Records of the Dorset County farms
 - The historic Wessex Water archive,
 - The archive of [Reynolds Stone](#), celebrated wood engraver
- 10.3 The JAS has continued to purchase significant items at auction with grant aid and with the support of the Dorset Archives Trust. Notable purchases totalling over £8,000 in 2021 included:
- Several items by or about author Thomas Hardy, including rare photographs.
 - A proof copy of 'The Three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar' along with associated correspondence.
 - Manuscript music by William Knapp of Poole
 - Important documents relating to Corfe, Shaftesbury and Dorchester.
- 10.4 Additionally, changes in legislation for the registration of marriages has meant that marriage registers are no longer used to record details, so we received over 250 marriage registers in total from churches all over Dorset. We also migrated over 400,000 catalogue and accession entries over to the JAS's new cataloguing system Epexio. The platform is much more user friendly than its predecessor CALM with the means to make records available online, have digital images linked to our catalogues and online exhibitions.
- 10.5 Work on the externally-funded Frink archive project has been badly disrupted by Covid. However, throughout most of 2021 the service was able to support the funding of a part-time Collections Assistant who has liaised with the external project mentor. Momentum has been restored and it is anticipated that the full [catalogue](#) will be completed by the end of March 2022 with the residue of the project funds being used to employ a part-time archivist.
- 10.6 In 2022, attempts will be made to secure external funding to catalogue the internationally-significant archives of Thomas Hardy. This will require at least £60,000.

11. Conservation

- 11.1 The JAS's conservation service continues to generate approximately 40% of its costs through external work and grant applications. The conservator was on-

site throughout the year to be able to continue their work. There has been much activity during 2021.

- 11.2 External work; clients this year include the Louvre (for an exhibition in 2022 relating to Egyptian exploration), the National Trust, Portland Museum, Nothe Fort and Bournemouth University, as well as numerous private clients. In addition the JAS has been gifted nearly **£15,000** from a private donor to conserve and digitise a large portion of our collection of Dorset railway plans over the coming year.
- 11.3 In November the service was successfully awarded **£14,850** from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust to conserve the archives of Thomas Hardy, William Barnes and Sylvia Townsend Warner. Much of the Hardy-related material will appear in a major exhibition programme across Dorset (Dorchester and Poole) and Wiltshire (Devizes and Salisbury) during 2022.
- 11.4 The JAS hosted a student, an MSc student in Conservation Practice at Cardiff University spent her eight-week placement in the conservation lab, learning theory, chemistry and practical skills in the conservation of paper, parchment, glass plate negatives and wax seals. She wrote a blog which can be viewed [here](#).

12. JAS and Higher Education

- 12.1 The JAS has continued to develop positive relations with various Higher Education institutions including Bournemouth University, Arts University Bournemouth and the University of Exeter. Students have been inducted in how to access archives and the JAS is engaged in project work at BU. Exeter academics are supporting the JAS's work on the Hardy archive and there are ongoing discussions the AUB about how its students can access the artistic-focussed collections held at DHC.

13. Capital Project

- 13.1 Constructed in 1991 and after 30 years of collection growth, DHC is approaching full capacity as an archive storage facility. Following the delivery of the consultants' report in February 2021, consideration has again been given to the service's archive storage requirements. At its April meeting the JAAB recommended 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." The 2017 capital project (application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund - NLHF) has been revisited and reviewed and the service is currently sense-checking the key elements to ensure that they are fit for purpose or whether changes need to be made. To summarise the elements of the project:

- An extension to the DHC repository block on two floors to provide at least 25 years' additional archive accommodation.
- Refurbishment of the public spaces with a view to making them as flexible as possible for community use.
- A wide-ranging public engagement project to work with audiences and collections and raise the profile of Dorset's archives.

- 13.2 A 'light touch' review by Dorset Property of the options available has taken place and has concluded that an extension to the existing Dorset History Centre remains the best value option available. Costs for the extension have been updated. The steep inflation in construction prices means that the overall funding required to deliver the project has risen. There has been recent dialogue with the National Heritage Lottery Fund which has indicated that this would be a good time to bring forward an Expression of Interest (EoI) as a precursor to a full application. It is of course imperative that capital match funding from the funding council(s) is agreed and made available for any bid to be able to go ahead.
- 13.3 It is hoped that following an EoI the service will be able to progress with a full stage one application to the NLHF which would have to be submitted within a 12-month timeframe. In order to assist with the application, should it proceed, it is requested that the Board approve expenditure of up to £20,000 on a suitable heritage consultant so providing additional capacity to work with the service to shape and refine the application to ensure that it is the best it can be.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The JAS has reviewed and refined its strategic priorities in its new service plan. The service continues to work hard to deliver the service plan priorities and to balance its commitments and aspirations against the available resources. It will always attempt to lever external funds in order to add value to its core activities; safeguarding our corporate memory and promoting our cultural heritage. It makes collections available to audiences and encourages the use of archives as an important factor across business, education and leisure.
- 14.2 The service is acutely aware of the challenging funding environment in which the two councils are operating. However, a prompt decision on how its future storage needs are to be addressed would be of great benefit as the ability of the JAS to manage incoming collections becomes more challenging over the next 24-36 months.

Sam Johnston
Service Manager for Archives and Records

January 2022

Joint Archives Service

Service Development Plan

2021-2026

DORSET
HISTORY CENTRE

CONTENTS

1	Service Description	2
2	Vision, Mission and Goals	3
3	Key Priorities	4
4	Action Plan	5
5	Service Structure	15
6	Risk Management	16

1

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Joint Archives Service (JAS), based at Dorset History Centre (DHC), is operated on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. Partnership between the two authorities as delivered through the joint service sits at the heart of JAS activities and underwrites all aspects of its operation as detailed in the service plan.

The JAS is the county's only accredited archive service as designated by The National Archives. Records Management and Local Studies Library services are operated on behalf of Dorset Council via separate budgets.

PURPOSE

The Service Development Plan will:

- Articulate the JAS's ambition to excel in its role as custodian of the county's archives and records
- Clarify the core functions or 'business as usual' activities of the JAS
- Describe planned projects and/or workstreams over the period 2021-26
- Demonstrate how the service contributes towards the corporate outcomes of the two funding authorities
- Provide key information about the service to enable evaluation and analysis of its performance
- Build on the analysis and recommendations of consultancy report A [*Review of the Dorset Joint Archives Service*](#) by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan and Associates (February 2021)
- Be regularly updated to reflect the current status of particular activities.

2

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

OUR VISION

The archival heritage and authentic record of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole will be preserved by the Joint Archives Service and used to inform, educate and inspire our communities through collaboration and innovation.



OUR MISSION

To acquire, preserve and make accessible the archives of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and so promote cultural, economic, educational and social well-being; to act as the corporate memory for the two funding bodies.



OUR GOALS

We will:

- Be an open and innovative organisation, known and trusted by all
- Lead in developing systems and services which enhance the management and care of archives, records and local studies materials
- Increase the use of and access to archives and other heritage assets through a wide range of digital and public engagement activities
- Constantly improve what we do through partnership and collaboration
- Actively promote equality of access to services and the diversity of collections held by the JAS.



3

KEY PRIORITIES

The key priorities of the JAS are to:

- 1** Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve, conserve and promote access to them to optimum effect
- 2** Design and deliver digital preservation services across both authority areas
- 3** Provide efficient, innovative and quality digital and place-based services which deliver rewarding experiences for all JAS customers and value for money for the two funding authorities
- 4** Engage a wide variety of audiences with digital and physical resources and events, recognising barriers to involvement and working actively to dismantle these
- 5** Encourage and sustain on-site and remote volunteering so adding value through delivering targeted programmes of work
- 6** Develop and maintain partnerships with a range of organisations both public and private and to pursue project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties
- 7** Manage and enhance the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff

Selected corporate priorities of the funding authorities to whose outcomes the JAS contributes:

BCP Council – Corporate Strategy (2021):

- Sustainable environment
- Dynamic places
- Connected communities
- Brighter futures

Dorset Council – Council Plan (2020-24):

- Unique environment
- Strong, healthy communities
- Staying safe and well
- Economic development



4

ACTION PLAN

Red Amber Green (RAG) Summary

The total number of workstreams within the current review period of the Service Development Plan is:

Red	1
Amber	2
Green	17
Total	20

For ease of comprehension the JAS's **business as usual** activities are listed adjacent to the workstream with which they have the most affinity.

KEY

<i>Symbols used:</i>	
✓	Completed
G	On track
A	Some minor slippage
R	Delays/ Serious Problems/ Not being Achieved
DF	Deferred



<i>Officers involved in specific workstreams:</i>	
SJ	Sam Johnston, Service Manager for Archives
JH	Jacqui Halewood, Principal Archivist
OS	Owen Simons, Archivist (Collections)
CP	Cassandra Pickavance, Archivist (Digital Preservation)
JB	Jenny Barnard, Archive Conservation Officer
LD	Luke Dady, Archivist (Public Services)
MG	Maria Gayton, Community Engagement Officer



Service Development Plan: workstreams and projects

Priority 1: Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve and conserve them to optimum effect;

Business as usual activities:

- Acquisition, appraisal, accessioning, and limited cataloguing of community-generated archival material, both hard copy and digital
- Proactive acquisition of Public Records
- Preservation management of collections within passively managed and [environmentally controlled repositories](#)
- Repair and conservation of documents from DHC's own collections as well as via private commissions
-




	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome/Target	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
1.1	Targeted acquisition of archives especially from a range of sources identified through gap analysis.	SJ/ OS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up the collection in areas of identified weakness within the DHC holdings. • To better reflect the communities of Dorset and BCP council area. • Adding to the publicly accessible cultural heritage of the county for research on the heritage of the county. • Particular focus on business and artistic archives. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with Exeter University regarding a gap analysis of the DHC current holdings. • Likely to require extra staff capacity or Community Engagement projects to successfully acquire collections from some communities. • Depositors strongly encouraged to help fund costs of storage. 	
1.2	Selected purchase of documents (auction etc) using the DAT purchase fund	SJ	Acquiring for public ownership items that would otherwise be sold privately.	Ongoing steady stream of material acquired.	Steady stream of purchases. Major success in raising £50k in late 2020 to purchase a collection of Thomas Hardy's papers in association with Dorset Archives Trust.	

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome/Target	Timeframe	• Current progress	Rag Status
1.3	Externally funded document preservation and conservation.	JB	Rendering damaged/unusable documents available for digitisation and public access via projects.	Ongoing – as and when opportunities arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer programme of cleaning, repackaging and re-boxing. • Healthy body of project funding and external clients through to autumn 2021. • Successful application to NMCT (£15k grant to work on Dorset Authors). • £21k grant to work on railway plans. 	
1.4	Transfer archival content on obsolete and at-risk audio-visual formats and removable digital media to digital preservation system	CP	At risk archives are preserved and remain accessible	By December 2022	Work underway to transfer removable digital media. Significant portion of audio-visual formats have digital surrogates already. Likely to require resource to transfer remaining audio-visual formats.	

Priority 2: Design and deliver digital preservation services across both authority areas

Business as usual activities:




- Raising awareness of digital preservation, and offering advice and support to stakeholders generating and transferring digital archives.
- Proactive acquisition of council-generated hard copy and digital records in close collaboration with records management colleagues in both funding councils

	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
2.1	<p>Fully resourced JAS digital preservation strategy resulting in robust digital continuity for JAS and its clients:</p> <p>http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/understanding-digital-continuity.pdf</p> <p><i>See consultancy report chapter 3</i></p>	CP/SJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the accessibility of digital content now and in the future. • Reduction in risk and guarantor of the councils' corporate memories • Collaborative opportunities with other local authorities. • Work with IT and records management colleagues over electronic records management and systems integration. 	Ongoing dialogue with BCP over the adoption of Preservica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longstanding use of Preservica software, now integrated with Epexio re: public access. • Significant ingest of Dorset Council records • Encouraging BCP Council to adopt Preservica. • Growing skills base within JAS team. • Resourcing challenges as workload in this area grows. 	
2.2	Development of Bridging the Digital Gap Trainee (externally funded)	CP	Preparing young person for work in the digital preservation profession.	Present-March 2022	Trainee inducted and pursuing programme of training and work-based learning.	
2.3	Local authority consortium using Preservica software. Led by DHC, now includes 9 members	SJ/CP	To deliver cheapest possible price for access to preservation software and to share skills and knowledge.	April 2019-present. Re-procurement of service in 2022	Consortium contract will expire in June 2022 and will require re-procurement beforehand.	

Priority 3: Provide efficient, innovative and quality digital and place-based services which deliver rewarding experiences for all JAS customers and value for money for the two funding authorities;

Business as usual activities:

- High quality provision of access to original archives and local studies material on-site at DHC
- Processing of enquiries from members of the public relating to a wide variety of subject matter
- Selective digitisation of archival material to enhance access to DHC-held collections and by private commission




	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current Progress	RAG status
3.1	Participation in Public Services Quality surveys of archive services Participation in CIPFA statistical returns for archive services	LD	Score of at least 90% 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' To appear in top quartile of services using value for money criteria	2021 (biennial) Annual	There was no survey in 2020 due the Covid-19 pandemic. 2021 survey is a remote enquiries survey Dorset Council no longer subscribes to CIPFA.	
3.2	Archive Accreditation	SJ/AI I	Meet the standard set by The National Archives covering wide range of service activities and functions	2024	Service successfully accredited in 2018. Service successfully re-accredited in Oct 2021 following 'light touch review' with a full re-submission in 2024.	
3.3	Continue to develop Epexio archive catalogue and its links to Preservica together with public front end. <i>See consultancy report chapter 4</i>	JH/ LD/C P/OS	To increase the quality and varied means of access to a greater quantity of DHC-collections online. More publicly available collections-related data, including access to digital material through Preservica. (See also Priority 2)	Implementation complete by end March 2022	Further functionality development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide paid for access to digital archives • Document ordering • Geolocation of collections to facilitate map based searching • Remote Volunteering to improve quality of customer access to collections and volunteering experiences. Continue on-site volunteering to enhance catalogue – Covid permitting	

3.4	<p>Further investigate development of online mapping resource such as Know Your Place or similar working with Historic Environment Service (now integrated into the Archives and Records Service).</p> <p><i>See consultancy report chapter 4</i></p>	JH/ LD	<p>Enhanced access to collections. Potential to link to other SW resources</p>	Within 3 years.	<p>Potential to form part of NLHF-funded capital project public engagement programme or to be actioned as a standalone project for which external funding could be sought.</p>	A
-----	---	-----------	--	-----------------	--	---



Priority 4: Work with a wide variety of audiences and through public engagement and advocacy to raise the profile of DHC, to encourage access to and appreciation of the archival resource;

Business as usual activities:




- Delivery of outreach services including talks, project design, workshops, tours and engagement with stakeholders, educational institutions and community groups
- Provision of digital services including the online catalogue, website, social media, blogs and material hosted by Ancestry.co.uk

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
4.1	Continue to work with the Cultural Hub and the Cultural Education Partnership	JH/ MG	To identify opportunities to work with BCP schools, other cultural providers and creatives to develop stimulating resources for engagement with archives in educational settings.	Ongoing until 2022 and review	Innovative mixed media resource developed and delivered 2021. Contributions to schools' 'artist in residence projects' 2021	
4.2	Community engagement - support and facilitation for a range of externally-resourced groups and projects to enhance access to and enjoyment of archival heritage.	MG	Positive engagement with a range of groups and subject matter. Value of archives as source material for a wide span of uses.	Ongoing – ad hoc Ongoing – ad hoc and subject to individual project schedules	Groups include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Creative Life • Telephone Friendship Group • Valise Noir • Gypsy, Romany, Traveller (Kushti Bok) 	
4.3	Digital promotion, advocacy and outreach, through a range of social media platforms and DHC presence on DC & BCP corporate websites and intranets– Digital Development Group <i>See consultancy report chapters 3 & 4</i>	LD/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of DHC to customers and stakeholders • Provide detailed information on DHC and first point of contact • Attract new audiences • Help to sell services and generate income. • A Digital Development Strategy 	Ongoing – Digital Development Strategy by the end of 2021	New DHC Digital Development Group is actively enhancing the social media and outreach presence of the service, including developing engagement with BCP and DC Communications services.	



Priority 5: Increase and sustain on-site and remote volunteering so adding value through delivering targeted programmes of work;

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
5.1	Developing a strong on-site and remote volunteer programme. <i>See consultancy report chapter 3</i>	OS/JB/MG/LD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering critical ‘added value’ capacity, sorting, repackaging, listing collections and for Community Engagement projects • Involving the community in the life of DHC and its collections. • Includes work experience opportunities for young people. • Wider range of projects for volunteers to engage with (digitisation, research, oral history, conservation, cataloguing, collections indexing). 	Ongoing and review annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epexio offers remote volunteering opportunities, e.g. geo-tagging. • Service is reorganising and re-focussing its volunteering offer and programme post-Covid and in the light of technological change. • Maintain standards gained through Investors in Volunteers 	
5.2	Dorset Archives Trust (DAT) www.dorsetarchivestrust.org	SJ/JH	<p>Mobilising the effective support of DAT for DHC projects through its 3 key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising • Collections development • Advocacy 	Ongoing annual review Annual review prior to AGM	Membership steadily increasing. Events programme based around archive collections. Successful funding bids on behalf of DHC priority projects will be important in terms of fundraising in the event of a capital project.	

Priority 6: Develop and sustain partnerships with a range of organisations both public and private and to pursue project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver mutual benefits;

	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
6.1	Seek external funding for collections related projects including cataloguing, conservation and selective digitisation	SJ/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make large quantities of new material available to the public. • Assist preservation through digital facsimiles; • Increase the JAS's online presence via catalogue and other digital tools. • Complement scarce core resources. 	Ongoing, but subject to available funding opportunities and programmes	<p>Reliant upon opportunities to seek funding through either public or private sources.</p> <p>Collections requiring investment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodden archive • Quarter Sessions • 'Dorset Authors' (Hardy, Barnes, Townsend Warner) • Records of local government and predecessor councils 	
6.2	Archives South West – regional head of repository group working on strategic areas of mutual interest.	SJ/CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge and skills • Promote archival best practice • Partnership fundraising opportunities 	Ongoing – project based activity subject to funding	Following a successful application to The National Archives and a project to analyse the digitisation of historic newsprint, ASW is now seeking to deliver a smaller follow-on project focussing on the acquisition of community-generated digital archives.	
6.3	Investigate partnerships with academic institutions to better exploit DHC-held collections and encourage student and academic interest in archives.	SJ/OS/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong links to regional HE institutions • Possible collaborative projects • Opens up new potential sources of funding through external grants. 	Ongoing; annual review of MoUs and project opportunities via academic departments.	<p>Positive activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Building relationship via MoU with Bournemouth University through the capital scheme and library services. Links with AUB re: Poole Pottery and Frink archives Opportunities emerging with BU and its BA in Public History – work experience and extended project placements. MoU signed in 2020 with University of Exeter. Student travel fund (DAT). 	

Priority 7: Manage and enhance the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff;

	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
7.1	Capital project; extension of DHC building to ensure adequate future space for collections. <i>See consultancy report chapter 6</i>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate storage is available for the next 25-30 years of hard copy archive acquisition. • Ensure that the best value 'full life' solution is agreed. • Wide programme of public and community engagement across the county (if NLHF-funded). • Improve public access to the building 	HLF project rejected Dec 17; 2021 strategy review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Light touch' review of options appraisal (2013) to confirm best solution for additional accommodation (May 2021) • Currently awaiting steer from the two funding councils. 	
7.2	Take part in Dorset Council energy efficiency initiatives and projects. Pursue the improvement of the fabric of the DHC building	SJ/JH	To improve fabric and energy consumption in DHC building – (heat pump and low energy lighting, roof and facias and soffits, lift)	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC has been awarded funding for improved energy efficiency projects. 	

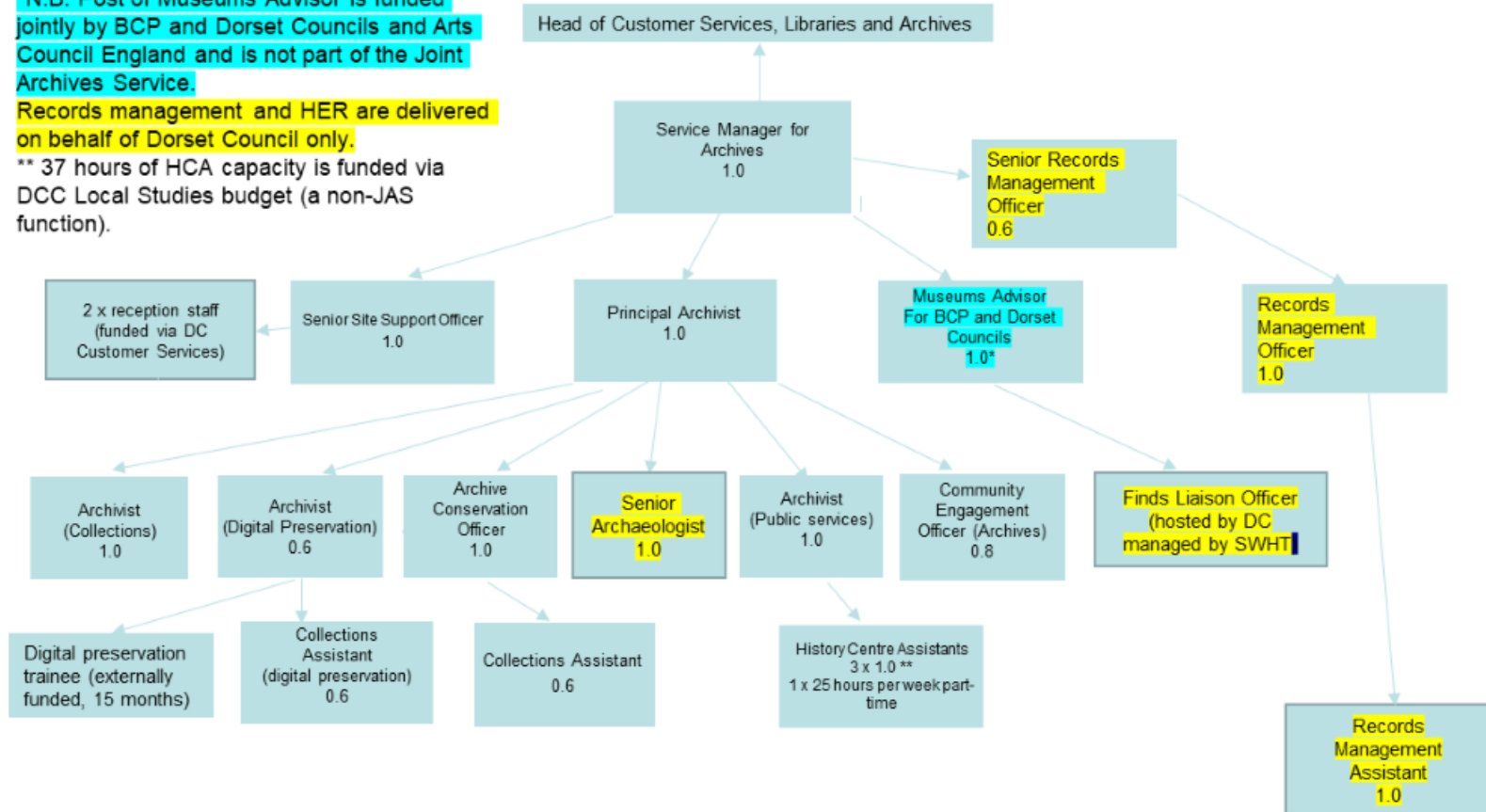
5. Service structure

Joint Archives and RM Service Structure January 2022

*N.B. Post of Museums Advisor is funded jointly by BCP and Dorset Councils and Arts Council England and is not part of the Joint Archives Service.

Records management and HER are delivered on behalf of Dorset Council only.

** 37 hours of HCA capacity is funded via DCC Local Studies budget (a non-JAS function).



5. Risk Register

January 2022
Archives Service Strategic Funding
(Risks have been listed in order of severity)

Risk Scoring		H	6	8	9
L = Low	Impact	M	3	5	7
M = Medium		L	1	2	4
H - High			L	M	H
			Probability		

Risk No.	Risk Description	Likely Impact if Risk Occurs	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Score	Counter Measures	Comment
1	Core Funding: continued risk to local government funding from 2022/23. This will need to be factored into the JAS's ability to maintain current levels of service delivery.	Further reductions in standards, levels and capacity of services offered by JAS - potentially taking it below the minimal effective level through the loss of distinct functions	H	H	9	Consultants' report indicates few obvious additional sources of revenue not already accessed. Ensure understanding of value for money through CIPFA benchmarking and TNA Accreditation. Importance of digital preservation in supporting business continuity and will require increased resourcing in the future.	Standstill budgets in 7 of 8 years. Inflationary pressure specifically from national pay agreement and business rates rise. Important to gauge the views of the two unitary councils on the role and priorities
2	Failure to develop preferred option to provide extra	Finite and diminishing space within repositories. DHC would, in time, have to	H	H	9	Discussions between BCP and DC to establish the terms on which a capital	Project will be pursued once clear trajectory is established.

	space for JAS collections	start refusing material. Failure to preserve corporate memory or Dorset's heritage. Potential revenue cost implication if space has to be rented.			project might be undertaken. Full life cost of DHC extension is the cheapest solution. External storage would be much more expensive in the long term.	
3	Funding for digital preservation is not continued and work concludes without long-term sustainable solution.	Failure to provide digital preservation services for funding authorities and wider community. Information loss and/or data corruption. Potential legal implications.	H	M	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prove the long-term benefits of digital preservation and the risks and consequences of not having such a system. DC finance in place until 2021. Consortium model has halved costs to each member. Need BCP Council to adopt digital preservation via Preservica. The JAS is leading the local authority sector in working on digital preservation. Information loss/corruption is a major risk to the corporate memory of both authorities. Evidence of growing understanding of digital preservation and its benefits.
4	Dorset Archives Trust: failure to sustain Dorset Archives Trust due to lack of external interest and low capacity to support from within DHC.	No revenue impact; loss of support in communities, harm to reputation and loss of potential for special projects and funding to benefit Dorset's archives.	M	L	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate new trustees to strengthen body. Ensure alignment of DHC activities and those of DAT. <p>Body increasing in confidence and understanding. Very positive results in terms of fundraising.</p>

