

JOINT ARCHIVES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Cllrs Laura Beddow, Richard Biggs, Simon Christopher, Lesley Dedman, Beverley Dunlop and Marion Le Poidevin

Apologies: Cllrs

Also present: Carola Campbell (Chairman Dorset Archives Trust)

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

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

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Appointment of Chairman

Proposed by Cllr Dunlop and seconded by Cllr Biggs.

Decision:

That Cllr Beddow be appointed as Chairman.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Proposed by Cllr Beddow and seconded by Cllr Dedman.

Decision:

That Cllr Dunlop be appointed as Vice-Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

5. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

6. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors.

7. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

8. JAS Service Plan (2021-26) Monitoring Report

Members received a presentation from the Service Manager for Archives and Records regarding the monitoring report for the JAS Service Plan (2021-26). This report was the first update to the Joint Archives Board on the current and future work of the Joint Archives Service.

The service manager went through the key points from the report and presented them to the board, noting the particular successes of the Joint Archives Service. The service manager highlighted the large increase in public engagement with the service, both in person and through remote inquiries. Members attention was also drawn to the effectiveness of the use of social media and the newsletter to distribute information to the public. The increased community engagement was noted, specifically the success of the Kushti Bok application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the wide-reaching impact of the service, despite its small team of staff.

Members were made aware of the progress made around the use of digital preservation and the transfer of digital records from BCP Council into the Joint Archive Service's Preservica system, as well as the challenges of working across two different councils.

The service manager also highlighted the importance of the Dorset Archives Trust, which has allowed the service to purchase certain collections and improve the range of the archives.

A councillor raised concerns about whether the level of public engagement justified the costs of the service to the council.

In response to a question regarding concerns about the cost of the JAS, the service manager for archives and records reassured members that the cost of the service was becoming less strenuous as the service moved away from paper records and towards digital records, with the ultimate ambition to automate the service and therefore reduce the cost of staff considerably.

The service manager also responded to a question from a councillor about the different record keeping systems used by Dorset and BCP councils.

Proposed by Cllr Biggs and seconded by Cllr Dedman.

Decision:

That:

- a) The implementation of the 2021-2026 plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality and value for money provided by the JAS, be endorsed;
- b) The range of positive and innovative work undertaken by the JAS be noted;
- c) The Board supported the JAS's ongoing work to ensure the safe and effective transfer of appropriate physical and digital records from both the BCP and Dorset Councils to ensure the preservation of the corporate memory and to deliver council efficiencies.

9. **Capital Project Update**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records delivered an oral presentation to members regarding an update on the capital project, consisting of the application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, in order to expand the capacity of the Joint Archives Service following an unsuccessful application in 2017.

Members were made aware of the benefits of receiving lottery funding for the Joint Archives Service and the importance of expanding the services capacity to store more records, as well as the work being done regarding public engagement, which is needed in order to be eligible for the grant.

The service manager clarified for members that the project being undertaken is to extend the current site, rather than building a new site for storage.

The board noted the progress made towards developing an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and noted the deployment of the JAS reserves to support work on the Lottery application.

10. **Joint Archives Service: Fees and Charges 2023/24**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records delivered a presentation on the report for fees and charges, which provided a review of fees and charges in regard to new products and re-pricing together with recommendations for changes in Joint Archives Services fees and charges to take effect on 1 April 2023.

The service manager went through the key points from the report, outlining the 5% increase in line with Dorset Councils recommendation, however noted that the service wished to serve customers in an affordable manner, while still being able to fund the service sufficiently.

Members raised concerns about the rise in charges and the fact that some charges had increased more than 5% hoping this would not decrease public engagement with the service, however, were aware that due to financial pressures from inflation this was a necessary response. Members were also informed that increased charges had only been implemented, where there were inflationary pressures, or the service had been improved.

One member questioned what benchmarking the service had done to come to a final decision on the fees and charges and was informed that the service had used fees from Dorset Museum and other South West archive services as benchmarks for deciding on fees and charges for 2023/24.

Proposed by Cllr Biggs and seconded by Cllr Dedman

Decision:

That the implementation of the fees and charges 2023/24 (set out in appendices 1-2) be recommended to executive bodies of the two funding councils.

11. **Exempt Business**

Proposed by Cllr Biggs and seconded by Cllr Dedman.

Decision:

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The Chairman closed the public part of the meeting and the live stream of the meeting ended.

12. **Budget Monitoring 2022/23 and Provisional Budget 2023/24**

The board received and considered a report of the Service Manager for Archives and Records regarding the 2022/23 budget and the provisional budget for 2023/24.

Members asked questions of the officers and made comments on the report.

Proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr LePoidevin.

Decision:

That:

- (a) The draft budget for 2023/24 be approved.
- (b) The budget pressures for 2023/24 and the options detailed in the report be acknowledged.
- (c) Option 1 be the preferred option of the Board.
- (d) The Board receives a further update and final budget in January 2023.
- (e) The Board notes the reserves budget and requests further options to be brought forward in the January budget report for retaining reserve amounts and options for returning a remainder amount to each council.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.29 pm

Chairman

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