NORFOLK RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report title:	**Service Plan 2019-2020**
Date of meeting:	**5 April 2019**
Responsible Officer:	**Steve Miller, Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage**

Strategic Impact

The Norfolk Record Office aims to be a trusted place of record which ensures that archival evidence essential to citizenship and heritage is collected, preserved and widely accessible. In achieving this the Record Office makes a significant contribution to many aspects of Norfolk's culture, heritage, citizenship and community growth.

The role of the Record Office as a central part of the county's information infrastructure continues to increase. Its role as an appointed Place of Deposit has been accentuated by changes in the Public Records Act which have reduced the date of record transfer from 30 to 20 years and the NRO's new role as the source of official copy birth, death and marriage certificates.

The NRO continues to provide excellent resources for education and skills for people of all ages. As well as enabling people to develop skills for exploring its rich Collection, the NRO also provides opportunities for people to develop their digital and information skills through extensive volunteering opportunities.

The Record Office is also working with many local communities to help them capture, save and learn from their past. Its work with the Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation (NORAH) is helping extend its community reach.

And underlying all of this is the unique, massive, and rich store of archives which make up the NRO Collection. This key cultural and information asset continues to grow with the addition of both analogue and digital archives. The NRO continues to innovate to take advantages of the new opportunities and challenges created by the digital age.

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) Service Plan for April 2019 to March 2020.

Recommendation:

The Norfolk Records Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Service Plan, and to approve its adoption for the coming year

1   Introduction

1.1   This Service Plan outlines the work planned for the Norfolk Record Office during the year April 2019 to March 2020. It is based on the Norfolk Record Office's mission, and can be divided into three broad areas of activity:

1.2   i.   Preserving and conserving of archives
       ii. Collecting archives
       iii. Providing and facilitating access to archives

1.3   The NRO has a number of long-term goals that are progressed through actions within this Plan. These were present to the January 2018 meeting of the Norfolk Records Committee and, as they are an intrinsic part of annual planning, they have been updated for inclusion in the annual plan. Despite recent service cuts, the overarching long-term goals remain unchanged.

NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE

SERVICE PLAN

2019-2020

LONG-TERM GOALS

1.1   The first section of the Service Plan deals with a set of long-term goals; the second section deals with actions over the next year that will help achieve these goals.
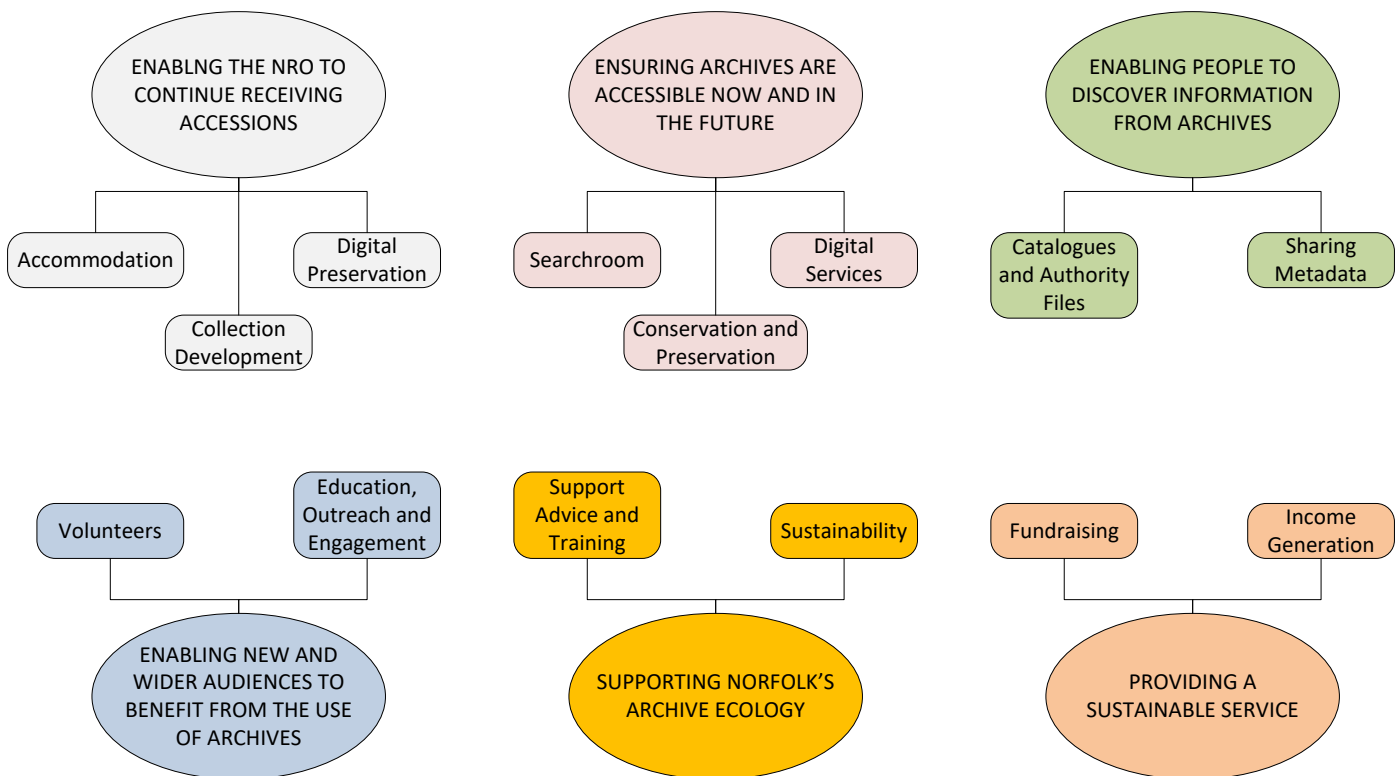

FIGURE 1: LONG TERM GOALS OF THE NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE

2. **A - ENABLING NEW AUDIENCES TO BENEFIT FROM THE USE OF ARCHIVES**

Education, Outreach and Engagement

2.1   The NRO has a successful record of accomplishment in education work and this has continued to develop over recent years. Alongside this, the Record Office continues to attract new users to archives through its outreach and engagement activities. These include workshops, lectures and exhibitions.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

2.2   Whilst continuing with existing successful programmes the NRO needs to expand on ways in which it can work with priority groups within the County to deliver wellbeing benefits.

Volunteers

2.3   The NRO volunteer programme has been developed over the past four years.   Currently the NRO benefits from over 2000 volunteer hours per year.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

2.4   The NRO will continue to work with volunteers both for the benefit of the service and of the volunteers. The priority area for increased volunteer work will be assisting with transactional level cataloguing. This will help meet the long-term objective of Enabling People to Discover Information from Archives.

3. **B - ENSURING ARCHIVES ARE ACCESSIBLE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE**

Searchroom Access

3.1   Although there has been a shift to other forms of access, the searchroom remains an essential element in making archives accessible.   Digital access to archives is important, but it is highly unlikely that any more than 5% of the Collection will be available online within the next ten years. Public use of the searchroom reflects this: there has been a significant decline in the number of visitors using microfilms but very little change in the level of use of original documents. When combined with the massive increase in online access to digitized materials and the number of people using digital cameras in the searchroom, it is clear use of the Collection is higher than it has ever been.

A significant change in the NRO searchroom has been the construction of a Glass Box at the rear of the searchroom. This provides both a breakout space for groups in the Green Room; and teaching and project space operating under searchroom rules. Since this plan was approved mobile racking has been installed to accommodate the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society Library and a new layout for the whole room introduced.

Long-term Plans / Strategy

3.2   Whilst there will continue to be minor changes to the use of space as the new searchroom layout is assessed, in the longer- term changes are likely to be around public ICT.

Conservation and Preservation

3.3 Preserving the physical integrity of its Collection will always remain an important aspect of the NRO's work. A work prioritization system has improved the efficiency of this aspect of the service

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

3.4 Conservation and preservation to continue to play an important role in preserving the NRO Collection.

3.5 The conservation section will play an important role in supporting meeting the long-term objective of Supporting Norfolk's Archive Ecology (see below)

4. C - ENABLING THE NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE TO CONTINUE RECEIVING ACCESSIONS

Accommodation

4.1 The Norwich home of the NRO, the Archive Centre, opened in 2003 with fifteen years of expansion space in its strongrooms available for new accessions. In addition to the accessions which have been received every year since then, in 2015 the NRO took on the function of providing copy birth, death and marriage certificates. This resulted in an additional 46m^3 of records being accessioned (the equivalent of around two years accessions).

4.2 Annual service plans since 2014 have included work to create 30m^3 of space per year in existing strongrooms. This has been achieved through bespoke packaging, additional shelving and collection management. This is becoming increasing difficult and the NRO is likely to receive additional accessions on-top of its normal accumulation rate in 2019/20 which will further decrease accumulation space.

Long-term Plans / Strategy

4.3 i. Continue to target freeing space in the strongrooms as part of the annual service plan.

ii. In 2019, the NRO will carry out a detailed assessment of its storage needs and an options appraisal. The results of this will steer further planning.

Digital Archives

4.4 For the NRO to continue in its role of providing a home for trusted, relevant information, it is essential that it is capable of preserving and providing access to digital records.

Long-term Plans / Strategy

4.5 i. The NRO will implement a full digital preservation workflow. This will enable it to accept a wide range of digital files and carry out the processes required to ensure their accessibility.

ii. The NRO will continue to work collaboratively to support digital preservation.

Collection Development

4.6 The NRO continues to receive a wide range of archives from across the county, helped by the fact that accessions can also be received at the King's Lynn Borough Archives. It has also had some success in fundraising when purchases of archives are necessary. However, its resources for active collection development are likely to be limited over the coming years.

Long-term Plans / Strategy

4.7   The NRO will continue to receive accessions and react to situations where it becomes aware of important archives being available. An increasingly important area for collection development will be work with community archives and other local groups.

5.   D - ENABLING PEOPLE TO DISCOVER INFORMATION FROM ARCHIVES

Cataloguing and Authority Files

5.1   It is difficult to understate the importance of descriptive metadata (the information contained in finding aids which enables users to locate and interpret documents). Since the start of the century the NRO has been entering data into a collection management system which has enabled it to publish an online catalogue; retro-conversion is now compete.

Sharing Metadata

5.2   Information about archives needs to be accessible through numerous channels. It is essential that the NRO's data is in a form that enables it to benefit from continuing developments in AI and Linked Open Data.

In 2018 the Records Committee approved a plan for work on the NRO collection data and its migration to a new system. It has also been piloting projects which look at new ways of generating this data to enrich its catalogues. These include a collaborative PhD., a project with MA students at UEA, crowdsourced data and a number of volunteer projects.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

5.3   i.   Continued additions to and enhancement of archive descriptions through internal, partnership and volunteer work

      ii.   Replacement and improvement of catalogue systems

      iii.   Use of authority files based on sources that will enhance the potential of NRO data for use on the semantic web.

      iv.   Ensuring data is in a format that can be shared across platforms and services.

      v.   Working with local and national partners to improve the interoperability of data.

6.   E - SUPPORTING NORFOLK'S ARCHIVE ECOLOGY

Support, Training and Advice

6.1   Throughout Norfolk, many people and organizations, both formal and informal, are engaged in researching, collecting and preserving the County's archival heritage – this can be described as Norfolk's Archive Ecology. The NRO is the most significant organization within this ecology. By supporting this widespread activity, the NRO can ensure that a wider range of archival material is easily accessible to the public and available for future generations to use.

Sustainability

6.2   Whilst some community- based groups will continue to renew their membership and secure a long-term future for their work, others will have a shorter lifespan. By working with such groups, the NRO can ensure that the archives they have collected, the digital records they have generated and the descriptions they have written remain useful for generations to come.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

6.3   Develop programmes to support community based work with archives. These will include support for good practice and skills development in many areas including digitization, cataloguing, archive management, preservation, interpretation and research.

The NRO, when necessary and within the terms of its Collecting Policy, will offer a long-term home for archives collected in this way.

7.   F - PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE SERVICE

Income Generation

7.1   The NRO has increased its income generation by around 400% since 2014. This has been achieved by providing rented accommodation; selling boxes; issuing copy birth, death and marriage certificates; providing reprographic and digitization services; charging for exhibition work; and licencing images to commercial website.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

7.2   The rate of increase in income generation will not continue, however, the NRO will continue to increase income generation where possible though additional digital licencing, professional services and digitization. The latter will be assisted by improving and increasing the amount of descriptive metadata as described above.

Fundraising

7.3   In 2016 the NRO established the Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation (NORAH). This charity is now fully operational and is developing its fundraising capacity whilst issuing a series of small grants.

Long-term Plans/ Strategy

7.4   The NRO will continue to support the development and administration of NORAH. In turn, this will help support a number of the NRO's other long-term objectives.

Strategic Objectives and Actions 2018-2019

A		Goal:	Enabling New and Wider Audiences to Benefit from the Use of Archives		
	Strategic Objectives		**Actions**	**Owner**	**Level funded from**
A1	**Develop skills and attract new audiences.** **Realise educational and wellbeing benefits of using archives**		Programme of educational activities delivered for: • Schools • Families • Lifelong Learners • Groups including NORAH funded events and Paston project events Targets: Delivery of 100 activities/events inside and outside of Record Office. Attendance at NRO events of 2,000+ people.	Education and Outreach Officer	Revenue Budget
A2			Develop and submit funding applications for Change Minds UK with the Restoration Trust.	County Archivist	External Funding / Revenue

A3	**Provide opportunities that promote access and preservation and provide volunteers with skills and wellbeing benefits.**	Volunteer programme developed and implemented resulting in 2500 volunteer hours per year. To include: • Volunteer Building Regulation Plan • Parish Poor Law Records • Sound Recordings as part of Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (UOSH) Review existing volunteer programme to identify efficiencies and new opportunities	Senior Archivist (Volunteers) Project Manager (UOSH)	Revenue External
B	Goal:	Ensure Archives are Accessible Now and in the Future		
B1	**Provide public access service on site**	Maintain Search Room service for four days a week at NRO: The Archive Centre Maintain partnership with Norfolk Heritage Centre Provide Search Room service in at Norfolk Record Office: King's Lynn Borough Archives. Review searchroom layout changes and make recommendations on further improvements	Support Services Manager Partnership and Development Manager County Archivist / KLBA Archivist Support Services Manager	Revenue Revenue SLA

B2	Provide alternative means of access to the Collection.	Provide remote:
		   - enquiries service
		   - paid search service
		with all enquiries responded to in line with levels of service
			Support Services Manager	Revenue

		Provide copy birth, death and marriage certificate	Support Services Manager	Revenue / Income
B3	Conserve and preserve the NRO Collection	Conserve documents in line with conservation priority scheme	Senior Conservator	Revenue
		Complete first phase of Such Facts …. Richard Bright Project and apply for Stage 2 funding	Such Facts... Project Manager	Grant Funding
		Strongroom conditions monitored and required environments maintained	Senior Conservator/ Support Services Manager	Revenue
B4	Develop Norfolk's Sound Archives	Complete actions 2019-20 outputs of Unlocking Our Sound Heritage Project	Project Manager (UOSH)	Grant Funding
		Maintain and develop Norfolk Sound Archive collection	Partnership and Development Manager	Revenue

C		Goal:	Enable the Norfolk Record Office to continue receiving accessions.		
C1	**Create additional space in strongrooms to provide storage for new accessions**		Packaging and reorganisation in strong rooms to create additional accrual of space Target: 15m^3	Senor Conservator / Support Services Manager	Revenue and Allocated Reserves
C2	**Plan for future storage needs of the service**		Complete an options appraisal to identify solution to future storage need aimed at delivering the objectives of: - providing future storage which meets relevant international and national standards - maintaining appropriate levels of access to the Collection on demand - achieving service efficiencies - proving a cost effective solution	County Archivist	Revenue
C3	**Ensure that the Collection remains fit for purpose and relevant**		Accessions received and processed in line with NRO standards	County Archivist	Revenue
C4	**Create the infrastructure and develop the skills required to deal with digital archives**		Continue to develop digital preservation infrastructure and work with external partners Host 'Bridging the Digital Gap' placement	Metadata Manager Metadata Manager	Revenue/ Grant Funding / Capital

D	Goal:	Enable the discovery of information from archives		
D1	**Develop, improve and safeguard descriptive and collection management metadata**	Refine data in CALM and import into new Atom system (first 12 months of 18 month project) Manage partnership projects to create descriptive metadata Provide cataloguing and data support to the Paston Project	Metadata Manager County Archivist Senior Archivist (Volunteers and Special Projects) and County Archivist	Capital Revenue Grant
E	Goal:	Support Norfolk's Archive Ecology		
E1	**Develop skills and good practice across the county**	Submit National Lottery Heritage Fund and other applications on behalf of NRO and NORAH	Partnership and Development Manager	Revenue
F	Goal:	Provide a Sustainable Archive Service		
F1	**Increase level of income generation**	Maintain levels of income generation through issue of additional images for licencing, professional services and digitization services.	County Archivist	
F2	**Support fundraising**	Support the continued development of NORAH	Partnership and Development Manager	

7   Financial Implications

7.1   This Service Plan is based on delivery within the budget for 2019-20 set out in the Finance and Risk Report.

8   Issues, risks and innovation

8.1   Officers have considered all the implications of which members should be aware. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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