

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2013

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh
Mrs D Gihawi

Broadland District Council

Mr J Bracey
Mr D Buck (non voting)

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

Mrs E Nockolds

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Norwich City Council

Ms D Carlo
Mr D Bradford

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C J Kemp

Breckland Council

Mr R Kybird

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Member

Mr M Begley
Professor C Rawcliffe
Professor R Wilson

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Revd C Read

1. Apologies for Absence

- 3.1 Apologies for absence were received from, Mrs A Claussen–Reynolds, Ms V Thomas, Mr R Jewson, Dr V Morgan, Mrs K Robinson-Payne and Mr P Smyth.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters of Urgent Business

- 3.1 The Chairman noted that Professor Hassell Smith had sadly died in September 2013. Professor Smith had been instrumental in the construction of the Norfolk Records Committee and had sat on it for forty years.

4. Members to Declare any Interests

- 4.1 No interests were raised.

5. Norfolk Record Office Performance Report 1 April – 30 September 2013.

- 5.1 The Performance Report 1 April – 30 September 2013 (item 5) by the County Archivist was received. This provided information on the progress towards targets

which had been set in the 2013/14 service plan.

5.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-

- Over 3600 members of the public had attended various public engagement activities.
- The number of written and telephone enquiries received by the Archive Centre and the King's Lynn Borough Archive (KLBA) varied massively between centres. It was likely that calls which were originally meant for the KLBA would have been taken by the Archive Centre as the KLBA only opened one day per week.
- There had been a noticeable increase in the number of gifts and deposits made (232, with 182 being received in the equivalent period in 2012). There was no particular reason for this as the number often fluctuated. The increased number of deposits did mean an increased workload for staff but this work was prioritised accordingly. Accessions which were of high public interest were worked on first, in order to make them accessible, whilst closed records would be left until a later date. The County Archivist intended to look at the method of prioritisation. A brief description of new accessions was always created for the website as the first task when anything was received.
- Despite the tough financial climate generous donations of records were still being received.
- In September an archivist had commenced work on a project to reorganise and properly catalogue the Norwich City collection.
- Racking in the strongrooms was now moved on a weekly basis in order to prevent gasses from building up. This task took less than ten minutes.
- Electricity consumption had fallen in the Archive Centre over the past five years but there was scope for further economies. The majority of energy consumption was used by the strong room and ways of improving this were always being sought. For example allowances would now be made for seasonal weather variations rather than the temperature in the room being kept at the same set point all year.
- Gas consumption figures were part of the overall County Hall campus figures and could not be obtained separately. A 25% reduction in the carbon footprint had already been made and it was hoped that the building works on County Hall would further improve this.
- Work was being carried out around how staff and volunteers were organised. Closer links had also been developed with the Museum Service.

RESOLVED

- 5.3
- That the report be noted
 - That the performance be considered against the service plan.

6. Norfolk Records Office Finance and Risk Report 2013/14

6.1 The Finance and Risk report 2013/14 report (item 6) by the County Archivist was received. This provided information on performance, budget and risk for 2013/14 for the Norfolk Record Office.

6.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-

- At the end of September 2013 the Norfolk Record Office had predicted a

break-even revenue budget outturn, which was the same position as at the previous meeting.

- Three risks had been identified; loss of or reduction of funding; a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities; and long term staff shortage. The staff shortage risk was a reputational threat and was rated as amber as it could happen at any time.

RESOLVED

- 6.3
- That performance against the 2013/14 service plans be noted.
 - That performance against the revenue budget and reserves and provisions for 2013/14 be noted.
 - That the new entries on the risk register be noted.

7. Service and Budget Planning 2014-17 for Norfolk Record Office

- 7.1 The Service and Budget Planning 2014-17 for the Norfolk Record Office report (item 7) by the County Archivist was received. The paper set out the financial and planning context for the authority and gave an early indication of what this would mean for Community Services and the Norfolk Record Office.

- 7.2 During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:-

- Proposed budget changes in 2014-15 would reduce the budget by £170k, which was 12.2% of the total budget. Recommendations were listed within Appendix A of the report as to how the budget reductions could be met.
- A public consultation was currently being carried out around all of the County Council's proposed budget cuts and final decisions could not be made until this process concluded in December 2013.

The Committee AGREED to consider item 8 at this point, as it impacted on the recommendations for this item.

8 Changes to the Norfolk Record Office Opening Hours

- 8.1 The Changes to the Norfolk Record Office Opening Hours report (item 8) by the County Archivist was received. This provided information on the options available to reduce budget costs by changing the hours of the Norfolk Record Office. As with item 7, a final decision could not be made by Members until after the conclusion of the public consultation.

- 8.2 Four options were available to Members; to remain open from 9am to midday every Saturday at a cost of £12,271 per annum; to close on Saturdays at no cost; to open one Saturday per month at a cost of £5754.87; or to open one evening per week at a cost of £1221 per annum.

- 8.3 During the discussion the following points were made:-

- A suggestion was made that the Norfolk Record Office could open each Saturday and close on a Monday instead. The response was given that this would increase costs as unsociable hours payments would have to be made to staff.
- If any option other than closing each Saturday was opted for, the associated savings would have to be found elsewhere in the budget.

- It would be difficult to run a trial of any of the options without the reduced budget being impacted.
- The average dwell time within the Norfolk Record Office was 3.5 hours, so current Saturday opening hours, or the suggestion to open late one evening per week, did not meet this need. On average 4.7 members of the public used the Norfolk Record Office each Saturday.
- Members agreed that opening one Saturday morning per month would be too confusing for members of the public.
- Saturday closing had been discussed in the past and the decision had been made at the time to remain open to be convenient for those who worked full time. However closure would be supported now due to the low number of visitors on a Saturday.
- Staff had been spoken to and all were comfortable with the suggestion of closing on a Saturday.
- Members noted that they were not bound by the public consultation but did have to have regard to it.

8.4 It was proposed and agreed that the County Archivist do further work around option 4 – opening late one evening per week – and bring information on this back to the next meeting. This would include identifying other savings to counteract the £1221 per annum that this would cost.

8.5 **RESOLVED (in respect of item 7):-**

- That the revised service and financial planning context and assumptions be noted
- That the revised spending pressures and savings for the Norfolk Record Office be noted.

8.6 **RESOLVED (in respect of item 8):-**

- That further consideration be given to closing the Norfolk Record Office every Saturday at the next meeting of the Committee.
- That further consideration be given to opening the Norfolk Record Office one evening per week at the next meeting of the Committee.
- That the remaining two options be discounted.
- That the County Archivist identify additional savings in the sum of £1221.

9 **Norfolk Record Office Branding**

9.1 The Norfolk Record Office Branding report (item 9) by the County Archivist was received. This provided information on a proposed re-branding strategy for the Norfolk Record Office, including adopting the current logo of the Archive Centre as the logo for the Norfolk Record Office, in order to create a clear identity.

9.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-

- Consideration was given to re-naming the service as Norfolk Archives, Norfolk Records or Norfolk Records Service. It was agreed though, after lengthy discussion, that Norfolk Record Office had a good reputation and a new name was not required.
- The existing logo did not identify what the service did. The suggested new logo was already designed and in use around the building so re-branding

costs would be minimal. Items featuring the logo, such as stationery, would be ordered when required so existing stocks would not be wasted.

- The change would be the first step in promoting the service and making it accessible to all.

9.3 **RESOLVED**

- That the proposed re-branding be broadly agreed and that a clearer, more refined logo be brought to the next meeting.
- That the Norfolk Record Office be retained as the name of the service.

10. **Any Other Business**

The Chairman announced that this would be the last meeting of the Norfolk Records Committee for the Principal Archivist, Susan Maddock, who would be retiring at the end of the year after 38 years. The Committee passed its thanks to Ms Maddock who had provided excellent guidance and support to members past and present.

11. **Exclusion of the Public**

- 11.1 The Committee was asked to consider excluding the public from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the item below, on the grounds it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED

- 12.2 That the public be excluded from the following item.

12. **Exempt Minutes**

The exempt minute (item 11 on the agenda) was discussed and agreed.

13. **Future Meetings**

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 3 January 2014	10.30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Monday 28 April 2014	10.30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Friday 27 June 2014	10.30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Friday 28 November 2014	10.30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre

The meeting concluded at 12:35pm.

Dr C. J. Kemp, Chairman of the Committee



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