

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 February 2021 at 10.30 am as a Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh (Chair)

Cllr P Duigan

Cllr D Rowntree

Norwich City Council

Cllr S Button

Cllr D Carlo

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

South Norfolk District Council

Cllr Libby Glover (substitute)

Broadland District Council

Cllr G Nurden

Breckland Council

Cllr R Kybird (elected Vice-Chair)

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Member

Mr M Begley

Prof. Carole Rawcliffe

Mr A Steynor

Representative of the Norfolk Records Society

Dr G A Metters

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Virginia Gay, Cllr t Wainwright, Cllr A Waters, Dr V Morgan and Lady Dannatt.

2 Minutes

- 2.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1** The Chairman declared an "other interest" at a trustee of NORAH (Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation).

4 Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1** There was no urgent business.

5 Finance and Risk

- 5.1** The Committee received the report outlining the Norwich Record Office revenue

budget for 2020/21, capital programme and reserves and provisions and an update on the service risk register.

5.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Record Office was currently forecasting an overspend of £60,084 for 2020/21.
- The unprecedented nature of the budgetary pressures facing the Service were being managed at a wider CES departmental level.
- Emergency grant funding had been sought from the Government to help meet the predicted loss of income for the Service during the extended period of closure and reduction in normal activity due to Covid-19.
- The grant funding would enable the Service to produce a balanced budget at the end of the current financial year.
- The staff savings at the Norfolk Record Office were to be achieved by making changes in project funded work and staff redundancies had been avoided.
- The Record Office capital budget currently included two projects. These were the Metadata Migration Management project (which included an extensive new catalogue that had gone live at the end of December 2020) and work on Storage and Additional Mobile Racking in the Strong room (for which a supplier was recently appointed).
- The new capital funding was shown in the table at paragraph 1.2.4 of the report. This included the development of a Norfolk Record Office 2050 Vision which would be addressed as part of the next item on the agenda.
- It was pointed out that only minor adjustments had been made in the risk register since this matter was last reported to the Committee in October 2020.

5.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on:

1. Forecast position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.
2. Management of risk for 2020/21.

6 Long term planning for the Norfolk Record Office

6.1 The Committee received a report that provided information on the Record Office's progress towards achieving its long-term aims. The report set out where these aims required some modification to existing policy and where priorities should lie over the next three years. The report also marked a first stage in the process of forming a new long-term plan that included consultation with staff, the public, community groups, local authorities and other stakeholders.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Norfolk Record Office 2050 Vision did not propose a radical change of approach, but it did mark the first stage in the process of forming a new long-term plan for the Norfolk Record Office that including taking appropriate steps to address the long-term storage needs of the Service. This issue needed to be addressed well before the situation reached a critical stage, estimated to be in no later than 2027.
- Interim solutions might have to be found in the meantime, particularly if large collections were donated to the Norfolk Record Office following the

pandemic.

- The report laid out six important strategic aims that would enable the Norfolk Record Office to enhance its long-term work on educational activities, volunteer work, collection development, and public access.
- The report recognised the importance of developing wellbeing projects including Change Minds, and leadership of the national History Begins at Home and Archives for Wellbeing Network.
- Another of the strategic aims was to provide accommodation for services which had synergies with the NRO: registrars, Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society Library, Historic Environment Service.
- It was pointed out that there were many community archives and local history groups throughout Norfolk that had continued to be supported throughout the pandemic and would be able to participate in the new vision for the service.
- The Norfolk Record Office aimed to provide the skills that enabled community archives to collect their own archives.
- All six of the aims set out in the report contributed to providing a financially and environmentally sustainable Service that reflected Norfolk County Council's aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This would, in part, be achieved by continuing to increase the amount and spread of catalogue metadata available to the public, thereby enabling the public to order more digitized images.
- The migration of catalogue and collection metadata to a standards compliant system was essential in enabling access to the underlying data. Expectations regarding remote access, largely governed by metadata, had continued to rise as a result of the pandemic.
- The pandemic could change the way in which people looked to access archives in the future, but access in the searchroom would always be an essential part of the service.
- The long-term plan would provide for the expansion of digital records and for their storage. The Norfolk Record Office had not yet experienced requests for large deposits of material born in a digital form but going forward this issue would need to be addressed.
- The Records Office maintained a list of records agents and this provided the Service with a small income.
- The Record Office also had its own charging policy in place for undertaking searches.
- The pandemic had resulted in an increase in income from family history material contained family history websites to which the NRO had licenced images.
- Income from accessing such websites was expected to increase in future years particularly after the release of the results of the 1921 census.
- The pandemic had resulted in increased attendance at outreach activities which had been well attended and which would not have been so easily possible in the limited space of the NRO Green Room. The use of virtual meetings could be expected to continue.
- The position in relation to the storage of the pre-1974 archives of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk would remain unchanged.
- There was a National Archives sales monitoring service for archives that came up at action.
- In December, NORAH held a supporters event showcasing items it had helped the NRO purchase.

6.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on:

1. The long-term aims detailed in this report and on its future development.
2. Approved the start of a programme which will inform long-term planning and address the Record Office's accommodation needs.
3. Approved the change of the sixth long-term aim from 'Providing a Sustainable Service' to 'Providing an Environmentally and Financially Sustainable Service.'
4. Approved the prioritization of the aims of 'Providing an Environmentally and Financially Sustainable Service', and 'Enabling the Norfolk Record Office to continue Receiving Accessions'.
5. The actions taken by the Record Office to provide a service during this period and commented accordingly.

7 Future Meetings

71 The dates of future meetings were noted.

Dates

**26 March 2021 (subject
to cancellation)**

23 July 2021

29 October 2021

28 January 2022

1 April 2022

The meeting concluded at 11.20am.

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh, Chair of the Committee



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.