

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES SERVICE OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Committee with an introduction to the Nottinghamshire Archives service.

Information

Context

2. The County Council has statutory responsibilities under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and the Local Government Act 1972 to make proper provision for records. It is also recognised as a place of deposit for public records under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 and as the Diocesan Record Office for the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 as amended 1992.
3. The County Council has delivered the service through its contractual arrangements with Inspire (Culture, Learning and Libraries) since April 2016.
4. The service collects, preserves and provides public access to the archives of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. The service is provided within a reciprocal agreement with Nottingham City Council.
5. The National Archives provides national leadership and coordination for places of deposit for public records and administers the archives accreditation scheme. Nottinghamshire Archives is an accredited archive service.
6. The archives service is based in a purpose-built building that meets international standards for places of deposit ensuring safety and preservation of original documents and manuscripts. The oldest document dates from 1155.
7. In addition to the range of documents, maps, photographs, plans, letters and diaries, the service also has a growing digital archive of documents that have been 'born digitally' and have never been in a physical format. Recent investment in the picture archive and sophisticated digital management software, Preservica, allow the service to preserve and access digital content now and in the future.
8. The service aims to collect and provide access to the historical record of life from across Nottinghamshire from that of public institutions to individuals.
9. The service has been managed alongside the library service since 1969 and uses the library network to promote and provide access to archives including provision courses, talks and exhibitions. The Great Nottinghamshire Local History Fair held in May each year

in Mansfield Central Library brings together many heritage organisations from across the county.

10. Current projects include the upgrading of the archives online catalogue, the development of the Inspire Picture Archive, and the digitisation of parish registers.
11. As a result of Covid lockdowns, the onsite services were closed to the public for several months. The service continued to offer an online enquiry, reprographics and research service. When permitted to do so by government regulations, services were offered via an appointment system to allow for social distancing and to provide a Covid safe environment. Remote volunteers continued their work on the retro conversion of the pre-digital catalogues publishing online over 30,000 new entries.

Performance

12. The most recent sector benchmarking report is from the 2018 Archives and Record Association National Surveys Group which concerned onsite visitors to UK Archives. The 2020 survey was cancelled due to the Covid lockdown. 95% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the welcome to the building with the attitude of staff scoring a mean of 9.7 out of 10 (national average is 9.8), and the quality and appropriateness of staff advice gaining 9.7 (national average is 9.7). 96% of respondents were “inspired to find out more” with the national average being 99%. The archive service overall scored a mean of 9.3 out of ten, which was the national average.
13. In 2016 Nottinghamshire Archives successfully gained the status of Accredited Archive Service as assessed by The National Archives. The service is due to be reassessed before March 2023.

Other Options Considered

14. No other options were considered.

Reason for Recommendations

15. To enable the Committee to exercise its delegated responsibility.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

17. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To inform the Committee of the statutory archive responsibilities of the County Council.
- 2) To note the comparative performance of the Archive Service.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Place and Communities

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Peter Gaw, Chief Executive Officer
– Culture, Learning and Libraries– Inspire, T: 0115 977 420, E:
peter.gaw@inspireculture.org.uk

Constitutional Comments (EKH 09/11/2021)

18. This report is appropriate to be considered by Communities Committee and they have the power to make any resolution resultant upon the recommendation.

Financial Comments (SES 09/11/2021)

19. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Development Plan, Nottinghamshire Archives and Records Management Service for the 21st Century. Nottinghamshire County Council. 2012.
- Archives and Central Library memorandum of understanding and statement of services. Nottinghamshire County Council Culture Committee 2 July 2013.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.