

GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES JOINT COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor Carol Andrews (Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)
Councillors Robson, Shimmin, John, Colbran, Jones, Stephens
and Winstanley

17 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Norma Mackie, Wendy Lewis, Keith Jones, Margaret Lewis, Bob Harris, Julian Simmonds and Rhiannon Birch

18 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

19 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2023 were accepted as a true record with the inclusion of Cllr Shimmin's apologies.

20 : REPORT OF THE GLAMORGAN ARCHIVIST FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER TO 30 NOVEMBER 2023

Members were provided with a comprehensive update on the work of the service for the period 1 September 2023 to 30 November 2023 all categorised against the outcomes of the Annual Plan.

In summary the Archivist explained that it had been another busy quarter for the Archives, especially with the move of Cardiff Register Office staff into the building and a large number of group and school visits. A number of projects had continued and concluded, with planning underway for more projects to come. The Archivist thanked the team who continued to deliver to a high standard.

The Archivist drew members' attention to the highlights of the report including:

- Epexio, the new collection management system and public catalogue which had been successfully launched in September following team training;
- Contributing to the pan-Wales social media project led by People's Collection Wales;
- The national 'Explore Your Archive' focus week (November 2023). The Archives contributed content on the daily social media tags;
- The premiere of six new audio dramas based on photographs held at Glamorgan Archives of people from Cardiff's Docklands community, taken during the 1910s and 1920s;

- Building relationships with local media outlets to tell stories of local interest from across Glamorgan;
- The project to create a Research Guide to Sources for the Study of Minority Ethnic History. The paid researchers had attended the office to progress their research into aspects of the collection, including estate records and records of the coal industry. Funded by Welsh Government, the project was on track for completion in early 2024;
- The Archives had engaged with a large number of projects with different community organisations;
- Another successful open door event took place on 23 November;
- Phase 1 of the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust Project was complete and the application for Phase 2 had been submitted which would commence in January 2024;
- Cardiff Registry Office staff had moved into the Archives in October 2023 and taken over spare office space and space in repository. Space was being rented to Cardiff Museum and Registry generating income and was reflected in planning for the budget;
- The Archives continued to have a large number of volunteers (36 over the quarter). The Corporate Trainee position would cease;
- Distance Enquiry Survey – circulation of survey forms to individuals with a distance enquiry. The Archivist would feedback the results for next quarter report;
- Digital volunteering – Crowd Cymru Project – funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. More funding had been received from the National Library Wales to continue until May 2024.

Member's attention was drawn to the appendices:

- Appendix 1 - new accessions.
- Appendix 2 – the number of visits, remote enquiries and interesting enquiries.
- Appendix 3 – Events, Education, Social and Family History Groups, Social Media. Members noted the launch of audio plays attracting over 100 people.
- Appendix 4 – Bench work being carried out by the Archives.

The Chairperson thanked the Archivist for her report and invited questions and comments from Members:

Members asked if the Archives would be engaging in events to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Miners' Strike. The Archivist responded that there were a number of opportunities to work with people and engage with the social media. The Archivist would feedback to the Committee with details, when available.

A Member asked if there was an update in relation to a tour around the Archive for members of the Committee. The Archivist responded that arrangements were being made for the New Year and would be in touch with the Committee with a proposed date.

RESOLVED: To note the report

21 : PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

The Archivist provided a comprehensive outline of the report and key issues.

Members noted that over the last few years charges had been increased which had meant that Glamorgan Archives' fees and charges had reached a good level and were in line with other Archives. However, for 2024/25 it was proposed that there be only a few increases with a larger number of charges remaining the same. Members noted the following proposed changes:

- Postage charges increases (page 35)
- Box charges increases as a result of the increase in box making and card costs (page 37/38)
- Repository charges increases (page 40)
- Room hire costs increases (page 41)

The Chairperson invited questions, observations and comments from Joint Committee Members:

- Members enquired regarding the usage of rooms at the Archives by other organisations. The Archivist responded that the Archives used to generate a large amount of income from letting out rooms prior to the Pandemic. Post pandemic office space had been let to Cardiff Registry Office which was represented in the budget as income but not as income from letting out as a meeting room. There was also a meeting room at the back of the Archives which was let occasionally.
- Members asked about charges to students using the Archives. The Archivist responded that there were no charges to students who were able to use the facilities for free and take photographs etc. If they wanted a high quality reprographic there would be a fee but this would be a very low fee. In the case of licensing there would be charges in cases where there were requests from TV companies or a big commercial print run of a book. There was an option to waive charges for Not for Profit organisations.

RESOLVED: to agree the proposed scale of Fees and Charges for 2024/25

22 : 2023/24 MONTH 7 MONITORING REPORT

Members were provided with details of actual expenditure and income as at the 30th September 2023 (Month 7), against the approved 2023/24 Budget and projections for the full year outturn position.

Members were advised that the position at month 7 indicated a projected gross expenditure of £1,112,457 for the year. This was £60,327 more than budget and was

offset by higher than anticipated income. The overall position would be balanced through a drawdown reserve funding which was less than originally budgeted.

Members were provided with a comprehensive outline of the report and all its key headings as follows:

- Employee Budget: (£545,886 budget, £32,664 overspend)
- Premises Related Budget: (£440,474 budget, £35,386 underspend)
- Transport Budget: (£240 budget, balanced budget projected)
- Supplies & Services Budget: (£33,339 budget, £60,935 overspend)
- Support Services Budget: (£32,192 budget, £2,115 overspend)
- Income Budget: (£87,858 budget, £161,063 projected income)

Based on the projected outturn for 2023/24 as detailed in the report, the Local Authority contributions to fund the Service would be in line with the budgeted contributions as previously notified to the Committee. Invoices for 2023/24 were raised in October. Members were directed to Appendix 1 for details. The projected income and expenditure for 2023/24 had indicated that a reduced reserve drawdown compared to the budget (£65,000 budget, £52,122 projected) would be necessary at the years outturn.

RESOLVED: to note the projected full year outturn position for 2023/24 as detailed in the report.

23 : 2024/25 BUDGET REPORT

Members were advised that the report provided the Committee with details of the proposed revenue budget for 2023/24.

Officers outlined the key points of information from the report and provided the following summary of information:

The current General Reserve balance as at 31 March 2023 was £132,708 with a projected drawdown of £52,122 in 2023/24. The proposed budget for the 2024/25 financial year reflected a net budget totalling £910,000, which was a 1.1% increase on the net budget for 2023/24. As per the revised Medium Term Financial Plan, there would be a projected reserve drawdown of £1,000 in 2024/25. Members' attention was drawn to Table 1 (page 52) of which summarised the proposed budget for 2024/25 and were advised that a more detailed analysis could be found in Appendix 2 of the report (page 57)

Members were made aware of the following headlines from the report:

- Employee Budget: Increase of £10,032
- Premises Budget: Decrease of £60,468
- Transport Budget: No Change
- Supplies & Services Budget: Increase of £7,666
- Support Services Budget: Increase of £7,644

- Income Budget: Increase of £18,146
- General Reserve: Drawdown of £1,000
- Local Authority Contributions - A 1.1% increase had been proposed to address the budget gap and to ensure that Reserves were not depleted in full. Savings had been identified where possible, but energy costs had increased temporarily to a level that could not be managed without an increase in contribution.

In summary, at the end of 2023/24 the reserve balance was projected to be greater than £80,000 providing a mechanism to fund some inflationary pressures in 2024/25. For the Archives to maintain the current level of service and remain financially sustainable, an increase of 1.1% was proposed. It was also proposed that £1,000 be drawn down from the General Reserve to supplement the increased contributions and fund the budget gap.

Members were informed that the General Reserve as at 31st March 2023 stood at £132,708. The budget for 2023/24 determined that £65,000 would be used from reserves to balance the budget. Based on the month 7 position, the General Reserve balance will decrease to £80,586 after a £52,122 drawdown without further mitigations. The General Reserve balance would decrease further to £79,586 in 2024/25 after allowing for a budgeted drawdown of £1,000. Any additional spend required would need to be funded from a further drawdown.

The Chairperson invited questions, observations and comments from Joint Committee Members:

Members thanked the officer for the report and a discussion ensued on the 1.1% increase in local authority contributions. The Committee agreed that the percentage should not be increased further than 1.1% due to the current financial climate with local authority budgets.

RESOLVED: to recommend the draft budget proposals for 2024/25, be agreed, as presented in paragraphs 5 to 27 of this report.

24 : MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 - 2027/28

Members were advised that the report provided details of the Medium Term Financial Plan for the next four years from 2024/25 – 2027/28.

Members were informed that until 2021/22 an incremental budget was set each year, using the previous year's budget as the basis for building the next. Expenditure and income were reviewed each year and adjusted accordingly to account for any expected changes such as inflation, pay awards and future commitments. In 2022/23 a zero based budget was introduced alongside a four-year MTFP, which considered the sustainability of utilising general reserve drawdowns to fund a deficit position every year and proposed a realistic budget with incremental changes to the Local Authority contributions. That Medium Term Financial Plan was the starting point for subsequent annual budgets, alongside outturn projections, and it was now being updated to capture the next 4 years from 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Members were provided with a comprehensive outline of the report and all its key headings including the Employee Budget, Premises Related Budget, Transport Budget, Supplies and Services Budget, Support Services Budget, Income Budget.

Members were directed to Table 1 on page 54 which illustrated the proposed local authority contributions for 2023/24 to 2027/28 for Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil Rhondda Cynon Taff, Caerphilly and Vale of Glamorgan.

Officers advised that there was a recognition that further use of reserves should be minimal, and contributions must be increased to meet the rising costs of expenditure and to enable the Archives service to continue. It was proposed that contributions increased by 1.1% in 2024/25 and then by a further 0%, 1.6% and 1.6% in 25/26, 26/27 and 27/28. In parallel to this, it was proposed that £1,000 would be drawn down from Reserves in 2024/25 to supplement the increase and a further £4,000 in 2025/26, £3,000 in 2026/27 and £10,500 in 2027/28. This would reduce the balance to £62,086 if the 2023/24 projection was realised.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) Note the current position of the General Reserve balance and the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (b) Note that a potential annual or in year increase to Local Authority contributions may be required moving forward upon approval from S151 Officers.

25 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22 March 2023 at 2.00 pm via Microsoft Teams

The meeting terminated at 4.10 pm