

Transforming local archive services

A new collection
of 13 case studies

Forewords

Archives are integral to the history of our nation. We believe that they should be for everyone across all communities to discover and use. Together, The National Archives and the Local Government Association want to make this ambition a reality by working in partnership with archives services across the country.

Local authorities make up the backbone of the country's network of archives - more than 125 local authorities run an archive service. At the heart of their collections are the records generated by the local authority itself – providing an essential resource to support councils to manage their business effectively, and supporting citizens' engagement with the democratic process.

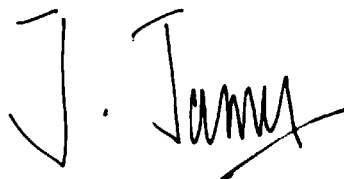
They are a source of local history and expertise through which they tell the story of the development of their local communities. Over the last few years archives have become more popular. They have made more widely available digital sources to support family history research and programmes like 'Who do You Think You Are?' have inspired many more people to visit local record offices across the country. Alongside this archives are very involved in marking anniversaries and commemorations, particularly those for the First World War, for which they are bringing to wider public attention the human stories found in letters, photographs and memoirs.

Locally archives have a role as an essential part of a transparent democracy. They hold records of the evidence and deliberations informing decisions and actions. Accessible archives help people understand how policy is developed and they can empower people to take a more active role in the decisions that affect their own lives.

The records preserved by local archives can be invaluable in the pursuit of justice – recent examples include the use of coroners' records by the Hillsborough Independent Panel and NHS records informing the investigation of allegations of historical abuse on NHS premises.

The landscape of archives across the country is changing, as is the way in which they deliver their services. Throughout the UK archives are finding innovative solutions in response to the need to find savings. In many instances they are part of joint services which operate across a range of heritage and cultural services and geographical areas. They are often funded across multiple authorities while delivering statutory responsibilities in relation to storage, preservation and access. Increasingly, new service delivery models are being explored including outsourcing, shared services and 'spin-outs'.

Against this background The National Archives and the Local Government Association will continue to work together to ensure archives and local government continue to work collaboratively in support of their local communities.



Jeff James

Keeper and Chief Executive
The National Archives

This is an exciting time for local archive services. History is a booming industry that dominates our TV and radio schedules, book and film best-seller lists. Visitor numbers to historic attractions and museums are at a record high and family history is one of the nation's most popular hobbies.

Councils have long recognised the potential of local archives to reach out and engage people, helping to develop understanding of the past and present, promoting transparency and contributing towards a range of wider community outcomes.

From engaging residents in understanding our civic and democratic heritage, to attracting visitors and driving economic growth, pioneering digital engagement and supporting older people, this publication is full of innovative examples about how local archive services are making a real difference to people's lives.

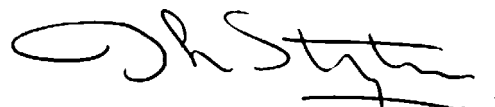
Against the backdrop of continued austerity, we also share how local archive services are working differently and increasingly in partnership with other council services and partners, adopting new delivery models and sharing services and expertise with their neighbours.

The digital revolution continues to have a profound impact upon local archive services. Making more information available online, through mobile phone apps and other digital platforms, has transformed how people – especially young people – interact with local archive services.

It is vital that we support local archives to keep pace with future digital opportunities, so that we continue to widen access as much as possible.

A continued priority for the LGA will be to support councils to involve communities in commemorating the First World War and marking the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, with local archives central to local plans.

I am delighted that the Local Government Association and The National Archives have such a strong national partnership and I look forward to us continuing to seek out, support and share the best locally-led innovation.



Councillor Ian Stephens

Chair
LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Contents

Democracy: Magna Carta and the formation of the London boroughs	5
Justice: Coroners' Records	6
Supporting economic growth: Renewing Dudley	7
Improving health and wellbeing: Surrey Heritage	8
Connecting communities and business: Fielding and Platt Community Archive	9
First World War commemorations: Staffordshire Community	10
Enabling construction: Unexploded Bomb Maps and Crossrail	11
NHS Records	12
Collaboration across services: Archives+	13
'Feeling Ten Feet Tall': Creating Communities Archives Project	14
Spinning out: New service delivery model in York	15
Volunteering	16
Collaboration and cost-saving: London Archives Partnership	17
Further information and resources	18

Democracy: Magna Carta and the formation of the London boroughs

2015 is the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, which was fundamental to defining individual freedom and the rule of law, and laid the foundations for modern democracy. There will be commemorative events across the country, many of them focusing on the surviving copies of the document.

The City of London Corporation is marking the anniversary with the opening of a new Heritage Gallery, to showcase a selection of treasures it holds in trust for the nation. The opening exhibition will

showcase the 1297 Magna Carta that is held by the London Metropolitan Archive. Geoff Pick, Director of London Metropolitan Archives explained, "The City of London had an active role in the events that led to Magna Carta's creation in 1215: the Lord Mayor was appointed to see, along with the barons, that its provisions were carried out and the City of London is the only place to be specifically mentioned in Magna Carta."

2015 is also the 50th anniversary of the formation of the modern London boroughs. London Metropolitan Archives, along with other borough archives, will also be supporting London Council's commemorative programme to explore the ongoing relevance of the borough structures, and the value of their work for people who live in, work in and visit the capital.

The archives involvement in both these events shows the importance of archives to support democracy.

"Archives look after the evidence and information that underpin our rights and responsibilities", Geoff said. "It will be fascinating to commemorate both these landmarks in democracy within one year and to demonstrate the relevance of archives to every citizen"

Magna Carta Recto, London Metropolitan Archives



Justice: Coroners' Records

There are approximately 108 coroners in England and Wales¹. Coroners are independent judicial officers who are closely linked to local authorities. Most historic coroners' records are held by County Record Offices. They carry out a vital role in determining questions relating to deaths in certain circumstances and in supporting the bereaved. The records of coroners' inquests are a critical element in demonstrating transparency and accountability in decision-making and ensuring that justice is delivered.

Nowhere can this be seen more dramatically than in the case of the Hillsborough stadium disaster. Coroners' records were a critical element informing the Hillsborough Independent Panel's investigation, report and recommendations which have led to the opening of new inquests for the 96 victims.

Coroners' records can also provide an important source of evidence for research in numerous issues, including suicide prevention. They were used to support a review of coproxamol, a drug which was implicated in 300-400 deaths from overdose a year.²

Research showed that coproxamol was a factor in almost one fifth of drug related suicides in the UK. In response, the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)/Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) considered all the available data for coproxamol and advised that it should be withdrawn from the market.

In another example research was conducted using Coroners' records held at Bristol Record Office to obtain information on suicides occurring in the Bristol area before and after the installation of barriers at the Clifton suspension bridge. The research concluded that the number of deaths by jumping from the bridge halved (from 41 to 20) in the five years after the implementation of the barriers.³

Coroners' records have also been used to support decisions by local councils to implement 20mph speed limits to support the prevention of road traffic fatalities due to collisions.

1 Portable Antiquities Scheme, database: <http://finds.org.uk/contacts/coroners>

2 PS Dwyer and IS Jones, Fatal Self-poisoning in the UK and the Paracetamol/Dextropropoxyphene Combination, http://het.sagepub.com/content/3/1_suppl/145s.abstract and MHRA: <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/NewsCentre/CON2025739>

3 British Journal of Psychology, Effect of barriers on the Clifton suspension bridge, England, on local patterns of suicide: implications for prevention (<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/190/3/266.full>)

Supporting economic growth: Renewing Dudley

The new Archive and Local History Centre is a £6 million project by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, which was part funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The development was embedded within the borough's Economic Development Strategy, which aimed to improve the town's assets, optimise the opportunities for local people and encourage business and job opportunities. The new archive is sited within the Tipton Road development area – designed to transform an industrial zone with new housing and retail and to provide an enhanced cultural and visitor offer to link the town centre, Dudley Zoo and Castle and the Black Country Living Museum. The archive plays a vital part in the local heritage tourism strategy – helping tell the unique story of Dudley and the Black Country, to foster local pride and attract tourists.

The construction process contributed to the local economy, by using local suppliers and contractors whenever possible. Locally based GF Tomlinson was the main contractor and materials were supplied by local Dudley firms Ketley Brick and Angle Ring steel. Both these firms expressed their pride in being associated with a project that would protect local heritage – as they had been based in Dudley for generations, and are keen to deposit their own records in the archive.

The council also offered eight week work placements to unemployed young construction workers, in need of site experience. The building design was also informed by the Economic Development Strategy's theme of sustainable development.

Dudley Libraries and Archives have shown an innovative approach to developing services within the centre and promoting these to new

audiences by the co-location of services and external partners. The centre offers multi use opportunities for local people. The opening hours of the service have increased to 41.5 hours over five days and this has enabled the Adult and Community Learning service to deliver complementary courses as well as courses which attract non-traditional users of the archives service.

The Home Library Service is also based in the building; Dudley deliver the service to Wolverhampton borough as well as Dudley borough. The ICT team who scan and digitise council business is shortly to be moving there too, whilst the local black country newspaper "The Black Country Bugle" - a weekly paper which concentrates on the history, culture and memories of the people in and around the Black Country area as well as some current items of local interest – is in the process of relocating to the building. This paper is famous in the area with a great following and has great synergy with the service and will help the Centre to provide a one stop shop for archives and local history in the region.

The new building was officially opened on 23 April 2014 by Mayor Cllr Alan Finch and Dudley born comedian Lenny Henry. Lenny Henry said: "It's been lovely to walk around this centre and look at this fantastic facility. This is a wonderful facility and I hope all of Dudley is going to take it on with pride and use it for research."⁴

"It's serving the whole community and is part of the rejuvenation of Dudley which I really applaud; I want to see Dudley back with a marvelous market place and the zoo being used for its full capacity."

⁴ Worcester News, 23/04/2014 www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/regional/west_midlands/11166409.Lenny_on_hand_to_officially_launch_the_new_archives_centre_in_Dudley/

Improving health and wellbeing: Surrey Heritage

Surrey History Centre has developed a wide programme of work to support mental health service users, by opening up the archives of Surrey's former asylums. There were more psychiatric hospitals in Surrey than most English counties, and when they closed in the 1990s, their archives came to Surrey History Centre. A highlight of the archives is the large numbers of photographs, giving a powerful insight into daily life on the wards.

Surrey History Centre established a partnership with Mind to work with former patients, using the archives for reminiscence and oral history projects. The aim was to inform an understanding of life within the hospitals – capturing the memories and voices of patients, whose experiences may otherwise not appear in the official records.

Handling the archives and sharing their memories of institutional life had a powerful and positive impact on the participants. It helped people to discover the importance and relevance of their personal histories. It also increased their self-confidence, and enabled them to participate in further projects with the History Centre.

In addition to the work with Mind, the History Centre also participated in projects involving the wider community and attitudes to mental health. They worked with Peer Productions, a youth theatre company to research and write a play about the stigma so often associated with mental illness, which was performed in 33 schools across the county. They have also participated in local mental health weeks, and supported the production of a resource for schools about mental health.

Image depicting the annual carnival which was a highlight of the Brookwood social calendar. Brookwood Hospital was one of the psychiatric hospitals in Surrey.



Connecting communities and business: Fielding and Platt Community Archive

Gloucestershire Archives in partnership with Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership (GCCCCP, a resident-led voluntary organisation) took on an ambitious project to tell the story of the world famous Gloucester engineering firm, Fielding and Platt. This included using empty shop fronts to showcase the archive.

The project which ran from July 2012 to September 2013 gathered, preserved and shared the heritage of the engineering firm. It encouraged people to share their memories and other records of Fielding and Platt and the Quays, bringing back to life the firm's story for the wider community.

Over 130 people contributed memories, photographs and documents and over 20 volunteers were involved in arranging and conducting oral history interviews, editing recordings, website editing, archive list compiling, and event co-ordination.

At least 750 people attended events for Heritage Open Week in July 2012. The project supported local tourism and the Gloucestershire Quays Management business aim to provide attractions for its visitors, through a semi-permanent interpretative display. The project produced a children's game, which was nominated for the prestigious Mobile Entertainments Awards.

It was supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and donations from Friends of Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucestershire City Centre Community Partnership and Gloucester Quays Retail Outlet. The firm's business archive is now held at Gloucestershire Archives and an online catalogue has been produced as part of the project.

First World War commemorations: Staffordshire Community

Staffordshire County is home to The National Memorial Arboretum, an internationally recognised centre of commemoration and Cannock Chase which hosts both Allied and German war cemeteries. Material in the archive tells personal stories of the soldiers which holds the power to connect with people today with the events of the First World War.

As the Centenary of the First World War was approaching, a cross service steering group was established across the Council to explore key ways to mark the event and increase access to the heritage assets across the county. Staffordshire Archives and Heritage were successful in securing Arts Council England funding to explore how the county's resources might be exploited to create an accessible range of centennial events. In particular, they wanted to explore the material relating to the home front and its potential to engage new audiences by providing greater opportunities for individuals to research their own community's experience of the war.

Through the funding a scoping exercise was carried out to identify the strengths of the collections, how they could be used to engage new audiences and what tools could be used to raise awareness of the centenary in Staffordshire. The diaries, letters and

personal stories held in the archives were identified as key elements to enabling greater public engagement and inspiring creative events.

A 'Staffordshire Great War' website was created to offer information and support to partners and individuals in Staffordshire or for those who wish to visit the county as part of the commemorations. Alongside this a range of resources were developed including: 'Cannock Chase Great War Camps' book.

As result of this initial work the Archive and Heritage Service was successful in obtaining further funding from HLF to digitise and index rare military tribunal appeals records. The initial publicity for the Staffordshire Appeals project has led to nearly 100 people volunteering to be part of the project. It shows the real level of interest in archives if the right project targets those communities.



An image from the Appeal Tribunal records from the tribunal in Leek. The owner of the bakery appealed against the conscription of George Astles, one of her workers (second right). Across this photograph of the pre-war workers she has written in red 'Gone', meaning called to the colours.

Enabling construction: Unexploded bomb maps and Crossrail

Although the second world war ended nearly 70 years ago, unexploded bombs still lie under the surface, posing serious risks to major construction projects. It is estimated that about 17,000 tonnes of bombs were dropped on London during the Second World War and that about 10 per cent failed to explode.

The bombs are mostly harmless while lying untouched underground, but may detonate if disturbed by excavations or even violent vibrations caused by piling or tunnelling. This was a key risk identified in the planning for Crossrail – one of the largest construction projects in London since the end of the Second World War. A significant area of focus for the project was East London which had been at the centre of the Blitz.

Specialist risk management consultants 6 Alpha Associates carried out a complete survey for the whole line before construction was able to begin. Simon Cooke, 6 Alpha's Managing Director explained "we have spent a decade collating a wide variety of records concerning Second World War bombing activities as well as other sources of munitions contamination for example, from military training activities. We have built a geo referenced relational database which has enabled us to quickly and accurately forecast the prospective levels of UXO risk, and to design pragmatic solutions to ameliorate it. We are fortunate that the civil authorities in London kept incredibly detailed records, which we were able to access".

6 Alpha has undertaken a great deal of research across London including accessing those records held at the London Metropolitan Archives, which has preserved the records of ARP Wardens, Fire Watchers, the Observer Corps as well as civilian volunteers who plotted where bombs fell.

They recorded explosions, unexploded bombs and subsequent disposal activities. These records helped 6 Alpha to identify where unexploded bombs may still pose a risk. More detailed geophysical ground surveys were then focused in those areas. Fortunately, no unexploded bombs were found, and construction work could be undertaken safely.

The project created the impetus for the first industry-wide guidance for how to manage the risk of unexploded bombs (UXO – A Guide for the Construction Industry) which was first published by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), in 2009. 6 Alpha acted as co-authors for that guide and the company has been recently engaged again, by CIRIA, this time with project partners Royal Haskoning DHV, to develop a similar guide for managing offshore UXO risks. That guide is expected to be published in early 2015.

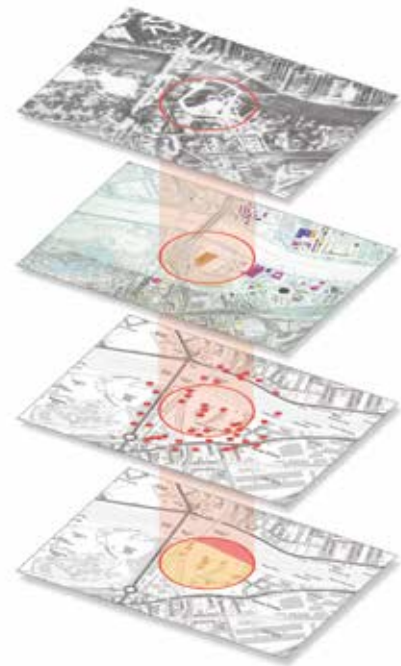


Image credit: 6 Alpha Associates

NHS records

Local NHS organisations have a duty under the Public Records Act to transfer older records which should be permanently preserved to 'places of deposit', as approved by The National Archives. Places of deposit hold certain classes of public records which are not held at The National Archives. About 80 of these are public archive services provided by local authorities.

While these records are primarily used by individual members of the public for a variety of personal and historical research, they also support the long-term accountability of the health service and enable greater transparency.

A recent example is the 27 investigations of alleged incidents relating to Jimmy Savile on NHS premises, ten of which made significant use of NHS records held by local authority archive services⁵. With some allegations dating back to 1954, historical records have enabled investigators to verify witness statements, trace possible additional witnesses, date events, and to obtain background on contemporary procedures and processes or layout of premises.

In some cases, archive staff carried out searches of material on behalf of the investigation teams, and two (Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire) were specifically thanked for their assistance.

⁵ NHS and Department of Health investigations into Jimmy Savile; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-and-department-of-health-investigations-into-jimmy-savile>
Published 26 June 2014

Collaboration across services: Archives+

Archives+ brings partners together for the first time at the newly refurbished Central Library in Manchester. The project involves both the development of new public, back-office and storage accommodation and the creation of state-of-the art interpretation in a new public exhibition. The main partners in Archives+ are:

- Greater Manchester County Record Office (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities)
- Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives (Manchester City Council)
- North West Film Archive (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre & Education Trust (University of Manchester)
- Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society
- BFI Mediatheque
- Manchester Registration Service (Historic Registers)

The £48 million Library and Civic Complex transformation is funded largely by Manchester City Council with support from Wolfson Foundation. Archives+ has received a £1.6million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In addition, an independent charity and trading subsidiary – Central Library Development Trust – has been established to enhance elements of the capital project and to help develop new income streams to support future activity.

The elements of Archives+ funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund will raise awareness of and provide easy access to Manchester's histories for the broadest possible audiences - both existing and new.

The project makes archives more accessible by creating exciting interpretive exhibition spaces to provide new ways for more people to discover the richness and relevance of archives, share their own stories and have a personalised experience of the City Region's history. Heritage tourists, young people, teachers, families, place based neighbourhoods and black and ethnic minority communities are being targeted to develop the audience for archives.

Central Library has received over 300,000 visitors in its first three months of opening. It has also been awarded £100,000 from the Arts Council to fund a year-long cultural inspired programme. This includes a musical residential involving Everything Everything and a number of well-known artists who will also be going out to neighbourhood libraries to work with residents and culminating in a celebration showcase in Central Library.

‘Feeling Ten Feet Tall’: Creating Communities Archives Project

In the spring of 2010 Durham County Record Office took part in ‘Creating Community Archives’, an innovative education project with young offenders. The project was led by The Museums Libraries and Archives Council and Safe Ground in Deerbolt Young Offenders Institution in Barnard Castle.

Fourteen young male offenders between the ages of 18 and 21 were selected to take part in the four-week long project. The overarching historical theme was the Second World War and it involved older members of the community sharing their life experience and memories from wartime Britain.

It explored how a local library and archive can bring local history to life and be used to explore local historical events that shaped their communities. The archive and library material acted as the stimulus that allowed participants to explore their own stories and experiences.

The project included drama and improvisation where the young offenders were supported through the handling of archive documents, research using the prison library and reminiscence work with older people. The work combined to form an exhibition and live presentation of poetry, music and dance. The exhibition was shown at Palace Green library at Durham University where it was viewed by students, staff and library users.

The evaluation of the project highlighted that through the project the young offenders increased their confidence, self-esteem, positive self-imagery, and empathy. It also raised their aspirations, improvisation skills and deepened knowledge and understanding of the Second World War. This project acted as the pilot for a larger scale project which Safe Ground is now undertaking, entitled Common Ground.

Spinning out: New service delivery model in York

Explore York is an Industrial Provident Society with charitable status. It is the first staff-led mutual libraries and archive service in the country to spin out from a local authority. The mutual is one third owned by staff and two-thirds owned by community members. It went 'live' on 1 May 2014.

City of York Council became an early member of the Cooperative Councils movement following a change of political control in 2011. Libraries and archives staff had already been challenged at their annual conference by the new chief executive to think about how it could deliver its service differently. She had already used the archive service to research the history of local government so had a positive view of its benefits. The Explore vision has been very successful and staff felt it was not possible to develop it further within the council. They wanted to have much more involvement with planning and strategy.

Explore York includes libraries, archives and local studies. The organisation has 67 staff (full time equivalent) and turnover in year one is projected at £2.4 million.

It has a five year contract with the council. Concurrent with the spin-out process, Explore York has been delivering a major capital redevelopment of its flagship building funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. As an independent organisation, Explore has more flexibility to deal with a minor delay to the re-opening through negotiation with the council and the contractors. Fiona Williams, Chief Executive of Explore York, says 'Already being a separate organisation enables you to be more creative.' The re-opening of the flagship building in January 2015 will be a major milestone.

Fiona Williams said 'You're setting up a business and the numbers have got to add up. You can't see the business plan as 'another of these documents we have to prepare' in order to spin out, or write it and put it away in a cupboard. It needs to be under continuous review, as the assumptions will change.'

Volunteering

A new approach to volunteering has been established across Hull City Council following the success of an award winning pilot project led by Hull History Centre. The project which was supported by over 80 volunteers aimed to increase public access to Hull's Second World War records.

The Second World War affected virtually every family in the Hull area, with 93 per cent of houses damaged or destroyed. The records of the City Council's departments provide a unique insight into the City at this time. However, these unique and historically rich records were not catalogued and therefore not easily accessible to the public. With support of a grant from the National Cataloguing Grants Programme administered by The National Archives, Hull History Centre employed a project archivist and recruited a team of volunteers to take on the cataloguing project.

There was a huge response to a call for volunteers and placements were offered to 80 volunteers on a rolling programme of work. Under supervision, the volunteers cleaned documents, numbered Warden Cards and inputted data. Alongside this eight volunteers were also identified to work with children on a new memories project with a local school. Through the project thousands of records were made available online. People can now search through civil defence personnel cards, records of air raid shelters, gallantry awards and victory celebrations. They also contain many personal stories of citizens of Hull defending their city.

Carol Tanner, Access & Collections Manager, who led the project from Hull History Centre says: 'Not only has it enabled us to make accessible records which are arguably some of the most important in the City's history, it also gave us an opportunity to engage with the community and develop a volunteer programme which has transformed the way we now approach volunteering, not just at the History Centre but across the City Council.'

'I feel privileged to be involved' said one volunteer. 'I would recommend [volunteering] to anybody who wishes to acquire new skills, meet people, or simply get involved with a worthwhile cause'.

Upon the announcement that the History Centre received a National Archive Volunteering award for 2013 from the Archives and Records Association, Alan Johnson, MP for Hull West and Hessle, said; 'This project has revealed an extraordinary story to the world: the story of the people of Hull in the Second World War. I congratulate everyone involved. You have earned the gratitude and respect of all of us who care about Hull and who care about history.'



Image credit: Hull History Centre

Collaboration and cost-saving: London Archives Partnership

The Association of London Chief Librarians (ALCL) and The National Archives commissioned a study in 2013 to explore the potential advantages of archive services in London working more closely and creatively together. The report uncovered a complex landscape for archives and local studies in London in terms of size, range and resources. However it highlighted the shared challenge of ever increasing pressures on budgets and the need to look for alternative ways of funding services.

In response to this The London Archives Partnership (LAP) was formed to coordinate collaboration and projects between local authority archive services that promote the value of archives whilst ensuring an efficient, cost effective approach to service delivery. The partnership recognises that not all local authority archives are equally placed to commit resources, nor are levels of current provision consistent between authorities. For this reason the business model allows members to opt out of some elements of the work programme whilst concentrating on those areas which best fit with their local priorities.

The partnership is open to all of London's local authority archive services and more than 80 per cent of these are already members. The LAP have identified opportunities for collaboration at all levels from the strategic to stand alone projects. In some cases these will deliver financial or operational efficiencies, whilst others will raise the profile of archives within the capital.

The initial focus of the partnership will span a range of areas including a shared image portal, a First World War programme of activities, led by London Metropolitan Archive,

the 50th Anniversary of the London boroughs and closer engagement with the existing AIM 25 shared online catalogue.

In the development of the London Archive shared image portal several boroughs are working with Max Communications. The portal includes an interactive google map and simple search engine to search by title, street, postcode, decade and theme. Following an upfront investment any income generated from the sale of photos is shared between Max Communications and the borough.

'London and the Great War, Stories from London Archives' led by London Metropolitan Archives will draw together online resources, stories and locations relating to the First World War on an interactive map. The project will create digital content and be supported by outreach and educational activities via a roving educator visiting boroughs.

AIM25 is an established consortium which is providing electronic access to the archives collections of over 100 higher education institutions, societies, cultural organisations and livery companies within the greater London area. This is an on-going project where new data is being added regularly. LAP hopes to work closely with AIM25 to promote the value of local authority archival sources in London.

In the future, the partnership will seek to broker further opportunities for cooperation both between individual authorities and with a broader range of partners. LAP is also exploring future projects which could support collaborative approaches to ancestral tourism, educational work, digital capture, procurement, benchmarking and a common approach to fundraising.

Further information and resources

The National Archives offers local authority archives a development and support package that includes training, guidance, fosters partnership development and mutual support networks and also provides tailor made support for archives during service review. We promote an innovative approach to service delivery – including guidance on spin-outs, development of collaborative service networks, funded archive trainee placements, and fundraising and income generation skills through our Giving Value programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Of the 125 local authorities running archive services throughout the UK about 80 are places of deposit holding public records. These designated places hold significant records and are required to meet specific standards of care and access. These are regulated by The National Archives. We also manage the Archive Service Accreditation Standard for archives as a key self-development tool for our sector. We created it in partnership with the sector, and it defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging and supporting development, and has a strong focus on how archives can respond to community needs.

In addition to this we also have a range of training programmes and initiatives which support archive development including; Giving Value, which aims to support fundraising and Transforming Archives which provides traineeships and workforce development opportunities for people looking to work in the sector.

The National Archives is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. As the national archive of the UK Government and for England and Wales, we hold over 1,000 years of the nation's records for everyone to discover and use.

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L15-137