

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	22 November 2023
Executive Member:	Councillor Vimal Choksi (Towns and Communities)
Reporting Officer:	Emma Varnam (Assistant Director, Operations & Neighbourhoods)
Subject:	LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVES FORWARD PLAN 2024-2028
Report Summary:	<p>Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre is located in a purpose-built environmentally controlled building adjacent to the former Ashton Library on Old Street.</p> <p>The National Archives (TNA) is the National body with ministerial governance in place that oversees Archives across the UK. TNA act as the professional body for Archive Services and set the standards for best collections care and best practice public access to records through their Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre is an approved Place of Deposit, meaning the Service holds certain public records of local interest such as the Council's records. Holding Accredited status (which the Service obtained in 2018) is required to maintain Places of Deposit status.</p> <p>As TNA's Accreditation scheme is re-iterative, it means the Service will be going through its full accreditation process again in 2024. A strong forward plan is important in helping it maintain its high standards. It is also essential in demonstrating to the Accreditation Panel how the Service will achieve its aims and ambitions and is required for submitting an accreditation application.</p> <p>This report sets out the key priorities of the proposed Forward Plan 2024-2028 and seeks formal approval of the plan.</p>
Recommendations:	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the contents of the report are noted and 2. the Local Studies and Archives Forward Plan covering 2024-2028 is formally approved.
Corporate Plan:	Tameside Local Studies and Archives firmly adds to the borough's communities' shared sense of pride, our place and shared heritage. The centre supports the very best start in life through its school programme, it increases aspiration and hope through life-learning, and are seen as a safe space which welcomes all residents a place to learn, share and develop skills. The centre has a long track-record for providing volunteer opportunities often acting as social prescription for its participants.
Policy Implications:	It is essential that any proposals demonstrate value for money and make a clear contribution to Council priorities.

**Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the
statutory Section 151
Officer & Chief Finance
Officer)**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report which sets out the requirement of Accreditation and seek approval for the Forward Plan to comply with The National Archives Accreditation guidelines. There are no additional cost implications for achieving Accreditation, over and above the Service's core budget. For context, the current financial position of the service is shown in the table below:

	23/24 Budget £m	23/24 Forecast £m	23/24 Variation £m
Expenditure	0.125	0.129	0.004
Income	(0.002)	(0.001)	0.001
Net	0.123	0.128	0.005

The forecast overspend is as a result of a slight expected shortfall in income and only part delivery of the vacancy factor, offset by reductions in spend.

The service should continue to explore and pursue external funding opportunities to support the operating costs.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)
Risk Management:**

The main body of the report sets out the benefits of achieving accreditation and the forward plan is an integral part of retaining that accreditation.

Failure of the Service to meet Archive Accreditation standards could mean a failed re-Accreditation. As such the Service risks having its Place of Deposit status revoked. This would mean that public records currently held by the service such as Electoral Rolls would need to be sited out of borough and with this comes reputational damage. Having a forward plan in place as set out in the report mitigates this risk.

**Access to Information:
Background Information:**

Not Confidential

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Marie Holland, Arts, Engagement and Archives Manager for Cultural and Customer Services, Operations and Neighbourhoods.



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre was established in 1976 after the local government reorganisation in 1974. It is located in a purpose-built environmentally controlled building adjacent to the former Ashton Library on Old Street and was awarded full Archive Accreditation status in 2018 as one of the first Greater Manchester Archives.
- 1.2 The Service makes a strong contribution to the priorities of the Council by supporting a cultural offer that is relevant and important to Tameside residents; it improves the wellbeing of residents, increases skills development and offers a welcoming place in which to learn, share, and participate in heritage. The Service ensures access to records where legally possible and together with staff and volunteers undertake research and ensure that our past and present is preserved and accessible now and for future generations.
- 1.3 The National Archives (TNA) is the National body with ministerial governance in place that oversees Archives across the UK. TNA act as the professional body for Archive Services and set out its accreditation process in 2013, and which is required for Archive Services to act as Places of Deposit.
- 1.4 Tameside Local Studies and Archives is an approved Place of Deposit, meaning the Service is permitted to hold public records of local interest on behalf of TNA. These records include amongst others Council's records such as electoral rolls and minutes to Court records and other governmental bodies' records.
- 1.5 In order to remain a Place of Deposit the Service must comply with TNA's Accreditation Scheme. This also means the Service is eligible for national funding administered by TNA and can fully participate in bids to national grant organisations and through the Greater Manchester Local Studies and Archives Partnership (GMALSP). Crucial for the Service to be accredited is the forward plan.
- 1.6 This report sets out the requirement of Accreditation and seek approval for the Forward Plan to comply with TNA's Accreditation guidelines.

2. TAMESIDE LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVES SERVICE

- 2.1 Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre form part of the cultural sector both nationally, regionally and locally. The cultural sector has been identified as a significant partner in regeneration linked to areas such as employment, health, social change and neighbourhood renewal. In Tameside the Archives form a central part of the cultural activity within the borough. They support key Council priorities especially in enhancing a sense of civic pride by promoting the local heritage of the area.
- 2.2 The Service care for approximately 3.5 kilometres of shelved items which beyond other local government records include:
 - Tameside Reporter Archive
 - Tameside Oral History Collection
 - Tameside Image Archive
 - The Manchester Regimental Archive
 - School records
 - Hospital records
 - The archives of local churches and religions establishments
 - Archives of important local businesses, groups and individuals.
 - The Stamford Estate
 - Manchester Studies Oral History Collection

- 2.3 In 2022/2023 36,899 people visited the Centre or used the online search facilities provided by the Service.
- 2.4 A key feature of the Service is its strong volunteer base. Volunteers carry out essential tasks such as cleaning maps, digitising records, writing blogs, transcribing hand-written documents and generally support the service through research. During the Covid lockdown the volunteer base for Local Studies grew significantly and the National Lottery Funded Smile! Project enabled 70 remote volunteers at risk of social isolation to continue to digitise and document the Reporter Newspaper's full photographic archive. In 2022/23 the Service benefitted from over 943 in person volunteer hours.
- 2.5 The Service also benefits from the partnership within GMALSP which together apply for external funding to deliver key strategic projects. The most recent of this being a project to ensure that all Greater Manchester Newspaper archives can be digitised and made available for all to see locally.

3. GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVES PARTNERSHIP (GMALSP)

- 3.1 The Service works closely with the other 10 Greater Manchester authorities and formed GMALSP in 2012.
- 3.2 The partnership was formed in order for the archive services to be able to formally work together and create joint policies and share best practices. It was recognised that this would form the best foundation for attracting external funding and the collaborative approach would ensure best value for money and better negotiation power when dealing with TNA and other external funders.
- 3.3 The chair of GMALSP reports directly to GCMA's Cultural Steering group and its Executive Members representing all 10 districts sign off the group's plans and policies. This role was previously performed by the Section 48 AGMA Statutory Functions Committee group.
- 3.4 The policies developed and approved through GMALSP's formal system formed the foundation of the previous successful Accreditation and will be submitted again if and when required by the TNA's UK Archive Service Accreditation Scheme.

4. ACCREDITATION

- 4.1 The Archive Service Accreditation is awarded by the UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee working on behalf of The National Archives. The Scheme also enables the National Archives to fulfil its statutory functions relation to Places of Deposit.
- 4.2 The Places of Deposit is a formal relationship between TNA and its partner organisations, in this case Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre.
- 4.3 Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre is appointed to hold specific public records in agreement with National Archives and TMBC under Section 4 (1) of the Public Records Act (1958).
- 4.4 The Service gained full accreditation on 4 October 2018. This was based on relevant GMALSP policies being submitted as well as the following Tameside specific policies and procedures developed in line with Accreditation standards and expectations:
 - **The Tameside Collections Information Plan.** This sets out the Service's information process for archives; from the point of their deposit at the Centre, through accessioning to

cataloguing (**Appendix 1**).

- **The Tameside Preservation and Security Policy.** This outlines how the Service keeps its holdings secure, and ensures that they are not subject to conditions or actions which may harm them. It also outlines the environmental conditions in which the holdings should be stored as well as the Service's preservation procedures (**Appendix 2**).
- **The Tameside Policy and Access Restrictions policy.** This outlines the necessary access restrictions and the legislation behind these. The policy sets out the closure periods, exceptions and the reasons behind them (**Appendix 3**)

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Service undertakes consultation in various ways, all of which have informed the content of the Forward Plan and of the other policies and plans. Feedback is gained through visitor surveys, event evaluations and other online consultation, user comments and from key stakeholders such as TNA and GMALSP.
- 5.2 To contribute to the development of the Forward Plan, the Service worked together with Museums and Galleries to undertake an online public consultation which received 163 responses. People felt the priorities for the Service over the next 3-5 years should be to increase events and activities and to improve marketing of the Service and its associated events and activities. Respondents were keen to take up opportunities to explore the borough's identity, health & wellbeing and their heritage either through visits or through dedicated talks.
- 5.3 The Service was also successful in its application to Heritage Compass and gained access to valuable external consultation to ensure the Service meets its obligations and plays an active role in the diverse communities of Tameside. The advice and training offered to the Service through Heritage Compass and its national training programme has provided the Service with additional insight into ensuring it remains relevant and reflects the borough's culturally, socially and economically diverse communities. This information has also influenced the Forward Plan and its aims.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 The Forward Plan has been developed by staff, informed by the public consultation and stakeholder consultation mentioned above (point 5.1 to point 5.3), service requirements and the requirements of the Accreditation.
- 6.2 The Service aims, set out in the Forward Plan, are as follows:
1. **Access to Services:** Ensure our Services are accessible, expand and reach beyond our current visiting audiences, and maintain the highest possible standards of customer service.
 2. **Access to Learning:** Providing opportunities for education to users of all ages, which are relevant, informative, engaging and inspiring.
 3. **Access to Collections:** Collect, care for, document and develop the borough's archival collections and provide access to them in imaginative, informative and interesting ways.
- 6.3 The full Forward Plan 2024-2028 can be found in **Appendix 4**.

7. FINANCE

- 7.1 There are no additional cost implications for achieving Accreditation, over and above the Service's core budget.

7.2 The Service continues to collaborate closely with GMALSP so that opportunities for future funding and income streams can be identified and maximised by the Service.

8. RISKS

8.1 The risks associated with the Accreditation process are:

- Reputational damage if the Forward Plan is not delivered throughout its life. The Forward Plan will be carefully monitored and managed to ensure its delivery throughout its term.
- The Forward Plan and associated policies are not accepted as sufficient for Accreditation purposes. To mitigate this the policies and Forward Plan have been developed with Accreditation in mind and are of an approved standard and output.
- Not gaining Accreditation risks the service losing its Place of Deposit status. This would mean the Service isn't compliant and its local public records such as electoral rolls, court records, schools records being stored out of borough at a location identified by TNA. The Tameside Policy on Access Restrictions. This outlines necessary access restrictions and the legislation behind them. The policy sets out the closure periods, exceptions and the reasons behind these (**Appendix 3**).

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Tameside Local Studies and Archives Service works closely with GMALSP partners to contribute to the Council's core priorities. It provides access to residents wanting to explore the borough's heritage, found out more about their ancestry, research military records and forms part of the Council's cultural programme. The Service continues to strive for better inclusion and diversity in its collections whilst also adhering to the National Accreditation Standards set out by TNA.

9.2 In 2019 the Service gained full Accreditation awarded by the National Archives Accreditation Scheme. Accreditation ensures that Services designated as Places of Deposit for public records continue to meet appropriate standards as set out by TNA.

9.3 This report has set out the key elements of the Forward Plan and the local Tameside policies required for the continued Accreditation of the Service.

9.4 The Forward Plan has been written in consultation with TNA, GMALSP, staff and members of the public. It reflects the requirements of TNA, the work of its partners and the needs of its users and non-users.

9.5 The risk in the Service not having a fully agreed Forward Plan in place could result in the removal of Accreditation which could ultimately result in the Service having its status as Place of Deposit revoked.

9.6 If the Forward Plan is agreed and formally accepted by the Council and the associated policies noted the Service will remain fully compliant with the Accreditation standards set out by the TNA.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 As set out at the front of the report.