

Derbyshire County Council

Meeting with Cabinet Member – Health & Communities

3 December 2013

Report of the Strategic Director, Cultural and Community Services

NATIONAL DIGITISATION CONSORTIUM

1 Purpose of the report:

To seek permission from the Cabinet Member – Health & Communities for Derbyshire Record Office to become a partner in the National Digitisation Consortium for the digitisation of school records.

2 Information and analysis:

- 2.1. In 2009, the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (ACALG) proposed that a consortium be set up to allow local authority archive services to co-operate in order to offer school admission registers for commercial digitisation. By offering the records together, a better royalty return would be achieved than by negotiating individually.
- 2.2. A National Digitisation Consortium Working Group, supported by The National Archives, was convened to explore the idea. ACALG subsequently became one of the merger partners which founded the Archives and Records Association (ARA). In 2011, the ARA board agreed to continue with the project, and a tender was put out; Brightsolid, who own the Findmypast and Genesreunited websites, was the preferred bidder. The process of negotiating the contracts has taken longer than anticipated because this type of complex project had not been attempted before. Contracts were finally agreed and signed on 1 August 2013.
- 2.3. The material to be digitised comprises school records, which largely consist of admission registers, but may also include other relevant material, such as punishment registers, or log books. To ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, all records selected for digitisation will be over 100 years old, and therefore will not contain information relating to living individuals. The material will be digitised and indexed by Brightsolid, at no cost to the Record Office.
- 2.4. The contracts run for ten years from 1 August 2013, and the material will be made available to customers on a pay-per-view

basis through the Findmypast website. The royalty rate received by partners is 14%, which means that Derbyshire Record Office will receive 14% of the income for every Derbyshire pay-per-view page image that is accessed. Royalties will be paid every six months.

- 2.5. As a partner, the Record Office will also be able to offer customers free access to Derbyshire's digitised school registers at the Record Office. Free access will also be made available in a limited number of libraries, so that local people can benefit nearer to their home.
- 2.6. The National Digitisation Consortium is concerned purely with school registers. Because the consortium took so long to establish, many archive services have since negotiated separate deals with commercial partners to digitise other family history resources. The Record Office is currently procuring a concession to digitise parish registers with a commercial partner. Once parish registers and school registers have been digitised, the Record Office will consider other suitable material for digitisation, and negotiate these separately.
- 2.7. The National Digitisation Consortium will contribute towards the Council priority of 'a local Derbyshire' by:
 - Giving local people improved access to school records, for family and local history
 - Exploiting the commercial potential of Record Office holdings to bringing in a new revenue stream

3 Financial considerations:

As outlined in the body of the report.

4 Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

5 Background papers:

None

6 Key Decision:

No

7 Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?

No

8 Strategic Director's recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member – Health and Communities:

Agrees to the Record Office entering into partnership with the National Digitisation Consortium for the digitisation of school records.

Martin Molloy
Strategic Director
Cultural and Community Services