

**Derbyshire County Council**

**Meeting with Cabinet Member – Health & Communities**

**10 September 2013**

**Report of the Strategic Director Cultural and Community Services**

**DERBYSHIRE RECORD OFFICE COLLABORATIVE PHD**

**1 Purpose of the report**

To inform the Cabinet Member – Health & Communities about a forthcoming collaborative PhD between Derbyshire Record Office and Lancaster University.

**2 Information and analysis**

2.1. Lancaster University has achieved funding from the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for a collaborative PhD with Derbyshire Record Office, entitled *Re-interpreting the Industrial Revolution: the Derbyshire lead industry c.1750-1850 and the conservation of its heritage and records*. The PhD will run for three years, beginning in October 2013.

2.2. The purpose of a collaborative PhD is to enable a university to work in partnership with a non-academic organisation, to mutual benefit. This also enables the PhD student to gain valuable work experience, which improves their future employment prospects. The PhD student will carry out unpaid work at the Record Office to improve access to the records, by:

- cataloguing unlisted material relating to lead mining, or improving existing catalogues
- transcribing and / or digitising key records to make them available on the web
- producing resources, such as guides, web pages and an education pack to explain Derbyshire's lead mining heritage and its records to a variety of audiences, including Derbyshire schools
- training Record Office staff to enable them to better understand and interpret lead mining history and records for customers
- working with the HLF funded *Collections in the Landscape* project team, based at Buxton Museum, to explore how Derbyshire's lead mining history can be reflected in their project

2.3. Lead mining is an important part of Derbyshire's rich history. Dating back to the Roman occupation, the industry stretched from North East Derbyshire and the High Peak, to Wirksworth and beyond. Unique to Derbyshire are the Barmote courts through which the lead miners established their own customs and settled disputes. The Record Office has a wealth of archives for the industry, but Record Office staff currently lack the specialist knowledge to understand and interpret this history and its records for others.

2.4. The partnership with Lancaster University was established following work undertaken for an undergraduate dissertation, investigating the reckoning book of Gregory Mine, Derbyshire, from 1760 to 1820. This dissertation has thrown new light on processes of industrialisation and capital investment in the region, including unexpected levels of investment by men of 'the middling sort' and minor gentry, and related and little-researched processes of industrial diversification and decline. The aim of the PhD is to investigate more fully the rich collection of reckoning books held in DRO, which so far have been very little studied, as well as related sources (some of which are un-catalogued or partially catalogued), to examine industrialisation and capital investment in the county at the local level during the crucial period of the 18th century.

2.5. The benefits of the Collaborative PhD to Derbyshire are:

- A local Derbyshire

With skilled staff, user-friendly guides and online resources, local communities will have greatly improved access to their lead mining heritage

- A Derbyshire that works – skills and opportunities

The new history curriculum has a strong emphasis on local study. The Record Office will be able to produce curriculum based resources for local schools to allow them to explore their local lead mining history.

- A Derbyshire that works – building a strong economy

Working with the *Collections in the Landscape* team, the PhD student will explore ways in which to use Derbyshire's lead mining history to encourage ancestral and heritage tourism

### **3. Other considerations:**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, human resources, legal, prevention of crime and

disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

**4. Background papers**

None

**5. Key Decision:**

No

**6. Call-in:**

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

No

**7. Strategic Director's recommendation:**

That the Cabinet Member – Health and Communities notes the report.

**Martin Molloy**  
**Strategic Director**  
**Cultural and Community Services**