

Agenda Item No. 7(u)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**20 September 2016**

Report of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Communities

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO OPENING HOURS AT THE DERBYSHIRE  
RECORD OFFICE (HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek Cabinet approval: to undertake a six week public consultation on options for reduced opening hours at the Derbyshire Record Office. Dependent on the outcome of the consultation and further Cabinet consideration it may be appropriate in due course to consider proposals for a revised staffing structure reflecting any changes in hours that are agreed.

(2) **Information and Analysis** At its meeting on 26 January 2016, Cabinet agreed a range of budget reductions to enable the County Council to meet its overall budget target for 2016-17 (Minute No. 9/16 refers). One of the areas identified for a reduction was a restructure of Libraries and Heritage services to achieve savings of £290,000. In order to achieve part of these savings it is proposed to consult with the public about possible changes to the opening hours at the Derbyshire Record Office (DRO). Once the consultation process has been concluded a further report will be presented to Cabinet to consider the outcome of the consultation and, potentially, to consider proposals for revised opening hours and a proposed staffing structure, which may realise a saving of up to £125,000 from the DRO budget.

The need to make budget savings at the DRO has become more pressing owing to the additional financial pressures facing the service. Currently, the budget for the service is approximately £525,000 of which Derby City Council contributes approximately 20% as part of its long standing joint arrangements with the County Council for the provision of archive services. Derby City Council also needs to make budget savings so wishes to reduce its contribution to the funding of the DRO. In addition, when the refurbishment of the DRO was completed in 2013, the rates bill levied on the building increased from approximately £24,000 to its current level of £69,000 but no additional revenue funding was made available to meet the £45,000 shortfall.

Currently, the DRO is open five and a half days a week for a total of 41 hours and a summary of the services offered is attached as Appendix 1.

Monday	9.30am to 5pm
Tuesday	9.30am to 5pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 5pm
Thursday	9.30am to 5pm
Friday	9.30am to 5pm
Saturday	9.30am to 1pm

It is proposed to undertake a public consultation exercise over a proposed reduction to the normal opening hours at the DRO from 41 to 30 hours a week, a reduction of approximately 27%. In addition to consulting on the proposed overall reduction in opening hours, three alternative proposals will be consulted upon based on current levels of use and these are attached as Appendix 2. Each option will include opening on the last Saturday of each month from 9.30am to 1pm. If alternative opening hours proposals arise as part of the consultation process they will also be considered.

The proposed reduction in opening hours is mitigated by the significant improvements that have been made to providing digital access to material e.g. First World War documents, school admission registers and log books are now online, and negotiations are underway for one of the most popular collections, the parish registers, to be made available online. These actions have increased the accessibility of the collections held in the DRO to a worldwide audience and even when the physical building is closed the digital access remains available 24/7. The DRO aspires to provide an online service that maximises the resources available and has developed a strategy to continue to digitise Derbyshire's archives and make them accessible.

In line with the Council's commitment to transparent decision making and to ensure that all those affected have the opportunity to comment on any proposed change, it is proposed that the Council undertakes a period of consultation to:

- Set out the financial context and challenges within which decisions on future service delivery need to be made.
- Share and explore the opening hours options outlined above.
- Receive feedback on the proposed reduction and the potential impact of the options.

The Council's existing engagement mechanisms will be used to support the process to ensure that input from service users and non-users is secured as far as possible and that all groups are provided with the best opportunities for input. On-line surveys, social media and face to face meetings may also form part of this process.

As a Place of Deposit for Public Records, the County Council is also required to consult with The National Archives over any significant changes to opening

hours and budgets to ensure that they do not impact on the Record Office's accredited status.

The feedback received will then be analysed as to the proposed reduction in hours and as to the three initial options. The consultation, and the impact analysis referred to below, will help to identify affected individuals, stakeholders and communities, to explore issues in more detail, potential impact, scope for refinement, opportunities for mitigation of impact etc. If alternative proposals arise as part of the consultation process they will also be considered as part of the analysis.

An Equality Impact Analysis will be undertaken in parallel with the above engagement process and the conclusions reported to Cabinet alongside the consultation analysis.

An outline timetable for the above process is set out below:

- October 2016 to November 2016 consultation with the public.
- November 2016 to December 2016 evaluation of the results and preparation of options.
- January/February 2017 Cabinet report.

The January/February 2017 Cabinet report, will further consider any changes to opening hours at the DRO and subject to the outcome of consultation, will also include proposals for a revised staffing structure were any changes to be agreed. The potential staffing implications of any reduction in opening hours would then also be the subject of formal consultations with individual employees and the trade unions in accordance with the Council's policies and statutory requirements.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Changes to opening hours and the anticipated staffing changes are intended to achieve savings of approximately £125,000 but a full year's savings will not be made until 2018-19.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Council has specific duty in relation to the Equality Act 2010 which states the Council should give 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and fostering good relations, in the exercising of its functions. This need for 'due regard' specifically applies to nine protected characteristics set out in the Act, including age and disability. An Equality Impact Analysis will consider these issues and will form part of the final report to Cabinet.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** Staff will be consulted as stakeholders in relation to the provision of services at the DRO and subject to

the outcome of the public consultation any staffing implications will be the subject of separate consultation with the staff and the Trade Unions.

During the consultation process a considerable amount of officer time will be required to manage the process. This can be achieved within existing resources.

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

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Don Gibbs, extension 36572.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet approves that:

- 9.1 A six week public consultation on options for revised opening hours at the Derbyshire Record Office is undertaken.
- 9.2 The results of the consultation and an Equality Impact Analysis are presented to a future meeting of Cabinet prior to any decision being made as to changes to the opening hours at the Derbyshire Record Office.
- 9.2 Subject to the outcome of the consultation and Cabinet's decision proposals for a revised staffing structure at the Derbyshire Record Office are developed and reported to Cabinet for consideration.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Communities**

## Appendix 1

### Derbyshire Record Office

#### Statutory Basis

The principal pieces of legislation relating to archives are:

- Local Government Act 1972: local authorities are required to make 'proper arrangements for their records'.
- Public Records Act 1958: public records must be deposited at a local Place of Deposit (PoD). The Derbyshire Record Office (DRO) is the PoD for Derbyshire.
- Church of England's Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978: DRO acts as the record office for the Diocese of Derby.

#### DRO Functions

DRO collects, conserves, and makes publicly accessible:

- the records of Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Derby City Council,
- the records of other local authorities in the County,
- diocesan and parish records in its capacity as Diocesan Record Office
- public records, such as those of the magistrates courts, hospitals, NHS trusts, prisons and coroners, under the Public Records Act 1967,
- collections of private people, families, organisations and businesses.

These records are used by a wide range of people, including council staff, local residents, community groups, schools, university students and academics. By preserving this material and providing free access, the DRO:

- supports accountability and democracy, by making the County's records easily available to Derbyshire's residents,
- ensures that DCC staff and Police have access to records required for legal purposes (e.g. public inquiries and Police investigations),
- reduces the Council's Freedom of Information burden by making records publicly accessible, and thereby exempt from Freedom of Information requests.

The DRO has been awarded Accredited Archive Service status by The National Archives, which monitors local archive services.

#### DRO's Services

- Taking in archive and local history collections, and cataloguing them. This service is largely free, but commercial organisations and wealthy individuals may be charged.
- Operating a public service in its building, for researchers to be able to access the records.

- Offering a paid-for copying and research service for people who are not able to visit in person.
- Providing information for requests made under the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- Maintaining secure, environmentally monitored stores and conserving documents to ensure that records are preserved forever.
- Carrying out outreach activities, such as talks, exhibitions and workshops to engage the public with Derbyshire's heritage. These services are usually charged for.
- Supporting local community groups to celebrate and care for their heritage, by offering charged for training courses and funding advice.
- Offering charged for education resources and classroom sessions for local schools, to support the local history aspects of the curriculum.
- Providing corporate records management for the Authority, providing policy, procedures and guidance for DCC departments to enable them to manage current records in accordance with legislative requirements.

#### **Use of Service (2015-16)**

- 19,500 physical visits
- 184,190 online page views
- over 3,400 email or postal enquiries

## Appendix 2

**Option 1**

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	9.30am to 5pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 5pm
Thursday	9.30am to 5pm
Friday	9.30am to 5pm
Saturday*	Closed

\*Open the last Saturday of each month 9.30 to 1pm

Total opening hours per week 30

**Option 2**

Monday	9.30am to 5pm
Tuesday	9.30am to 5pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 5pm
Thursday	9.30am to 5pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday*	Closed

\*Open the last Saturday of each month 9.30 to 1pm

Total opening hours per week 30

**Option 3**

Monday	9.30am to 5pm
Tuesday	9.30am to 5pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9.30am to 5pm
Friday	9.30am to 5pm
Saturday*	Closed

\*Open the last Saturday of each month 9.30 to 1pm

Total opening hours per week 30

Alternative opening hours suggested through the consultation process will also be considered.