

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	4 October 2011
3.	Title:	The National Archives self-assessment performance measurement programme – overall score. All wards.
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The Archives & Local Studies Service completed the self-assessment for local authorities last year and has received a 3* (out of 4) rating.**

6. Recommendations

Cabinet member agrees to officers working towards the improvements as detailed in this report.

7. Proposals and Details

This programme was designed to provide a measure of overall service quality in the absence of any formal performance indicators for archive services in the Audit Commission's performance indicator set for local government and was designed to supplement the formal, on-site, inspections that TNA undertakes periodically. It will now, however, be superseded by an accreditation scheme, due to be developed during 2011/12 by The National Archives.

The self-assessment programme was based on a comprehensive questionnaire that examined five areas of work: Governance and Staffing; Documentation of Collections; Access Services; Preservation and Conservation; and Buildings, Security and Environment.

Scores for Rotherham Archives and Local Studies are shown below with a comparison drawn against the returns from 2009 and 2007 (shown in brackets). Average scores have also been shown for the region, comparable services, and for England and Wales and for benchmarking purposes a comparison has been drawn against our neighbouring authorities except Sheffield (which is recognised as a larger Archive Service).

	Score for your service	Average score in Yorkshire region	Average score of comparable services	Average score in the UK	Barnsley Archives and Local Studies	Doncaster Archives and Local Studies
Section 1: governance and staffing	67.5% (70%, 74.5%)	60.5% (60.5%, 62.5%)	59.5% (53.5%, 58.5%)	66% (62%, 64%)	54.5% (43.5%, 53%)	27.5% (36.5%, 55.5%)
Section 2: documentation of collections	60% (59.5%, 57%)	57% (56%, 57%)	59% (51.5%, 46.5%)	64% (59%, 57%)	62.5% (50.5%, 48%)	48% (50.5%, 58%)
Section 3: access services	60% (58.5%, 60%)	56.5% (53.5%, 51.5%)	61.5% (50.5%, 46%)	62.5% (57%, 52.5%)	54% (47.5%, 49%)	44% (48%, 39.5%)
Section 4: preservation and conservation	75.5% (72.5%, 63.5%)	68% (67%, 61%)	61% (57.5%, 53.5%)	69% (65%, 62%)	64% (62.5%, 46%)	65.5% (62%, 61%)
Section 5: buildings, security and	64.5% (62.5%, 60.58%)	62% (59.5%, 56.5%)	65.5% (61%, 56%)	68.5% (64.5%, 60.5%)	55% (56.5%, 54%)	59% (53%, 53%)

environment						
Overall score	63.5% (63%, 62.5%)	60% (58%, 56.5%)	62% (54.5%, 51.5%)	65.5% (61, 58%)	56.5% (2**) (51%, 50.5%)	48% (1*) (49%, 51%)

Each authority received a percentage score on each of the five areas, and an overall percentage score. The scores on the five areas of activity were then performance banded, with approximately the top ten per cent of services securing four stars; approximately the bottom ten per cent scoring one star; and the remaining 80% being divided equally into two-star and three-star categories.

Analysis of the 2010 results has shown that Rotherham is one of five 3*** or 4**** services in the region, the others being three major, long-established County Record Offices, Sheffield Archives (a larger Archive Service) and Hull City Archives. Three services scored lower than 3*** with one no return.

It will generally be possible to maintain the Service's current performance with some small improvements whilst taking into account the current financial situation and the Service's relocation from the Central Library and Arts Centre to Bailey House in 2012. These challenges may adversely impact upon impact upon section 1 (governance), which focuses upon budgets and staffing levels, section 2 (documentation of collections) and section 5 (buildings, security and environment).

There are, however, some small improvements that can still be made during 2011/13, which will include:

- the revision of some key policies and procedures (acquisitions, access, preservation and volunteers);
- the development of a retroconversion strategy (retrospective cataloguing of existing typescript catalogues into searchable electronic format available online);
- public consultation about the searchroom's opening hours following the move into Bailey House;
- development of a stronger, more targeted education and outreach programme following the service's merger with the Museums, Galleries and Heritage Service and
- improvement of the service's webpages.

Some of the areas for improvement are dependant upon securing additional funding as detailed below..

8. Finance

Additional external funding will need to be sought to address areas of under performance highlighted in section 2 (documentation of collections) of the assessment. A funding bid is currently being prepared to catalogue the regimental archive through The National Archives' cataloguing grants programme.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

A poor performance or risk of deterioration in the assessment would effectively mean that the service will no longer be recognised as meeting national standards. This would damage the reputation of the Service and Council and could open up the possibility that donors/lenders will request that their deposited materials are returned to them.

The financial implications could also be particularly severe. Organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund would have a legitimate reason to demand the return of any grants awarded, including the £196,100 awarded by the HLF in 2005 for the Rolling out the Archives project. The Service would also be debarred from bidding for further grants from a number of funding bodies.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Continuing to achieve a good score in the assessment is fundamental to the work that the Service does to deliver the corporate and directorate priorities and outcomes and in particular:

- ensuring quality education for all and
- helping to create safe and healthy communities, as well as,
- more people come to the Town Centre for work, shopping and for things to do and see;
- support and promote a range of activities to attract people to the town centre;
- continue to increase participation in and satisfaction with cultural activities;
- people enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure and cultural activities and
- talking and listening to all our customers and treating everyone fairly and with respect.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Further details about TNA's self assessment performance measurement programme, alongside the results from 2007, 2008 and 2010 can be found at

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/self-assessment-results.htm>

This report has been approved by Paul Woodcock, Director of Planning and Regeneration

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