

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	17th December, 2013
3.	Title:	Archives and Local Studies Service - annual closure
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Heritage Services requests permission to close the Archives and Local Studies searchroom to the public for five days at the end of January, to carry out essential work on its collections.

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member approves the closure to the public of the Archives and Local Studies searchroom for five days to carry out essential work on its collections.

7. Proposals and Details

The Archives and Local Studies Service has an annual closure week. During this time, staff undertake work on its historic collections which cannot be completed at any other time as it requires all staff to be available and the use of the space in the public searchroom. This closure week is also critical since the relocation of the service and its collections as only a quarter of the collections now reside onsite. This is also normal practice within Archive Services nationally to allow necessary collections work to be undertaken.

This year we would like to close to the public the week beginning Monday 27th January until Saturday 1st February inclusive; the searchroom is normally open from Monday afternoon – Thursday and Saturday. January is one of the quietest months thereby causing the least disruption to our users. If this closure is approved, this will be publicised well in advance to our users, including on our webpages, in the searchroom and through a press release.

This closure is important in ensuring that the work required to keep RMBC's historic collections and documents in excellent order for public access. This year staff will partly re-arrange the collections within the two strongrooms (one on site at Clifton Park Museum and one offsite) to bring the newly catalogued York and Lancaster Regimental archive collection to Clifton Park Museum aiding ease of access by members of the public. Information regarding this collection will be made available through the Archives and Local Studies online searchable database early in 2014

and members of the public will be able to come in and look at the originals in the searchroom at Clifton Park Museum. This cataloguing project would not have been possible without a grant from The National Archives and it essential that this collection is opened up to the public.

8. Finance

In order to transport the collections between sites, the service will require van hire for two days at a cost of £75 which can be accommodated within the Service's current budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

No complaints have been received about previous closure weeks and without this annual closure the integrity of the collections will be more difficult to ensure. This may also affect our ability to continue to successfully bid for external funding.

Enquiries received by post, email and telephone will still be logged and monitored during this week.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This piece of work contributes to the corporate target of Helping to Create Healthy and Safer Communities with particular reference to the outcome "People enjoy parks, green spaces, sport, leisure and cultural activities".

Being able to undertake essential preservation and documentation work on the Service's historic collections is also aligned with the Council's priorities for performance management and excellence in service delivery.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None.

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