

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES -
22 JUNE 2015**

**OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE FORWARD PLAN 2015 – 2018 AND
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

Report by Head of Law and Culture

INTRODUCTION

1. The Oxfordshire History Centre provides an archive and local studies service which acts as the corporate and social memory of the county of Oxfordshire, ensuring a legacy for future generations. It is currently applying for accreditation under The National Archives Accreditation Scheme which is the UK standard for archives. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. In order to gain Accreditation, the Service's Forward Plan, and its policies for Collections Management & Development; Collection Care & Conservation; and Access must be approved by its governing body. This report seeks that approval.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN

2. There is a clear set of eligibility criteria that archive services must meet to be eligible for participation in the Accreditation scheme. It is a requirement that a service must plan effectively for sustainable, long-term achievement of its mission. The forward plan is concerned with execution and delivery. It links the mission of the service to the practical management of the service. Although no standard format is issued for forward plans, the guidance does specify the areas to be covered. In content and approach the Oxfordshire History Centre Forward Plan 2015-18 follows the approach recommended in the detailed guidance issued by The National Archives in June 2014.
3. The Draft Forward Plan 2015-18 (Annex 1) provides a review of the Forward Plan 2014-15 and the current service provision, including the scope of the collections in its care, the nature and extent of services it provides and sets the direction for the Oxfordshire History Centre for the period 2015 -18. It describes the aims and objectives of the Service during this period set against areas of government policy, together with initiatives in the public library, museum and archives sector which impact on the Centre's service.
4. It reaffirms the aim of the service as being to protect, promote, celebrate and make accessible the written and pictorial heritage of Oxfordshire for researchers worldwide.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE SERVICE 2015-18

5. The key objectives for the Oxfordshire History Centre service, as set out in the Forward Plan, are to
 - Build and maintain collections of archives and local studies material
 - House and conserve collections of archives and local studies material
 - Provide a customer focused research facility
 - Provide opportunities for remote customers
 - Encourage wider use and understanding of Local and Family History sources held by the service
 - Provide financial, administrative and staffing stability for the service
6. By implementing the Oxfordshire History Centre Forward Plan 2015-18 the service will be better able to ensure relevant collections are acquired and made accessible; that collections are preserved and conserved for access now and for future generations; selected services are made accessible off-site; electronic and online facilities are exploited for faster interactive transactions; the service is widely known, used and respected; productive relationships are forged with partners; and the service is administered efficiently and effectively.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICIES

7. The Accreditation process looks at the systems that are in place to continuously improve: collections development, collections information and collections care and conservation and access. The service needs to demonstrate its policy approach to these core areas of collections management activity. The draft policies (Annexes 2 – 10) state the guiding principles and the practice of these activities within the Oxfordshire History Centre and have been drafted in accordance with the guidelines provided by The National Archives.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

8. The Oxfordshire History Centre's application for Accreditation will be submitted in early July 2015 for consideration by a National Archives Accreditation Panel on 5 November 2015. We would expect to receive a decision on the award of accredited status in December 2015.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no direct financial or staffing implications arising directly from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) approve the Oxfordshire History Centre's Forward Plan 2015- 2018 at Annex 1;**
- (b) approve Collections Management Policy Documents at Annex 2 – Annex 10.**

PETER CLARK

Head of Law and Culture

Background papers: Nil.

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