

Officer Decision Record - New Digital Storage Solution for Barnsley Museums and Archives

Record of Decision of the David Shepherd taken in consultation with Matthew Gladstone, Executive Director of Place

Where the delegation is subject to consultation with a Cabinet Spokesperson or other officer, the position of the Spokesperson or officer should be inserted above and they should be asked to sign below. Where no consultation is required, delete these references.

Subject

- In recent years Barnsley Museums and Archives have created and received huge amounts of digital material. That material includes thousands of digital photographs, film footage, animations and sound recordings. We also hold digitised copies of every edition of the Barnsley Chronicle from 1858 to present day, which were commissioned as part of a funded project.
- The drive to collect digital material started in the period 2010-2013 when the Experience Barnsley Museum was being created and a HLF funded Sound and Film project between 2016-2018 further added to the collections. In response to the influx of digital material, Barnsley Museums created a digital plan to cover the next four years to 2022. In line with the National Archives Digital Strategy and best practice we want to be more innovative with our rich collections; we want to make our collections more accessible; we want to engage with our audiences.
- First and foremost, our immediate priority was and is to ensure that our digital collections are safely stored and future-proofed. At present, our digital material is stored on a series of external hard disc drives. These are not appropriate for long term storage and the likelihood of these drives becoming corrupt and inaccessible is high. This could potentially mean losing data that has cost many thousands of pounds to create – digitising the historic Barnsley Chronicles alone cost in the region of £10k.
- Needing a solution to the digital storage problem, museum officers considered various cloud-based digital storage options in conjunction with Barnsley MBC IT between 2018 and 2020. Several options were considered but most of these options involved a sizeable outlay in the region of £20k plus per annum. There were also concerns about the lack of immediate access and the potential extra costs involved in retrieving files.
- We then approached Axiell Group, with who we currently have a contract for the management of information relating to our museum and archive collections. In addition, Axiell host our online collections database (available at www.explorebarnsleycollections.com). Currently we pay a total of £6,277 per annum for Axiell's Calm Collections Management Software and associated hosting costs. The current contract runs until the end of March 2020, and as we have invested a great deal of staff time and

money in developing our Calm database and browser, we wish to renew the contract. Axiell have proposed a new 5-year contract to run from April 2020 at the slightly lower rate of £6,112 a year for our current set-up. In addition, to provide a solution to our digital storage problems, they have quoted an extra cost of £600 per 1TB of storage space each year. We currently have about 5TB of digital data, so this equates to an extra £3,000 per year. This is likely to increase to about £4,500 per year during the course of the 5-year contract, based on the likely acquisition of more digital collections. This still represents value for money, and is about a quarter of the cost quoted to us by other digital storage companies. All other options were investigated and analysed thoroughly, and Axiell's solution was found to be the only cost effective option. It is expected that this extra annual cost will be paid for as part of the digital first project, and then reviewed at the end of the five year period, at which time we should have a clear picture of the rate at which the digital collections are growing. The Axiell option will ensure that our digital files remain fully secure, safe, immediately accessible, and downloadable at no extra cost.

Authority

Authority provided as per the BMBC Scheme of Delegation to Executive Officers.

Decision Taken

Extend contract with Axiell for provision of Calm Database from April 2020 for a period of five years and include provision for additional storage as outlined in the body of the report.

Date of Decision

27 February 2020



Signature

David Shepherd

Director Regeneration and Culture



Signature

David Robinson

*Director Customer Information and
Digital Services*

N/A

Signature

*Cabinet Spokesperson
(if required)*

Scan / email the completed form and appendices to the Council Governance Unit and keep the original on the project file