

**STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CULTURE AND LIBRARIES DIVISION**

POLICY FOR LOCAL STUDIES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Local Studies encompasses any materials which help people to understand the character of their community. It includes history, natural history, geography, archaeology, topography, geology, biography, the Arts, demography and the social sciences. The significance of local studies collections lies in their potential to inspire and maintain interest in a range of local topics at all levels and for all sections of the community and its use as a gateway to other activities and learning opportunities.
- 1.2 The purpose of a local studies collection is therefore to provide accessible sources of information for locally focused interests within a defined community. The purpose of a local studies service is to encourage the widespread use and interpretation of these collections.
- 1.3 In Staffordshire the principal means of local studies service provision and delivery is through the Library and Information Service. This is complemented by the services provided by the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, the William Salt Library and the Staffordshire Arts and Museums Service.
- 1.4 A policy for the better co-ordination and cross-sectoral development of local studies provision was first created in 2001. The policy was worked up against a background of change arising from a number of factors at that time: increased interest in the past as a result of the Millennium factor; the recent establishment of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the first national strategic body of its kind for three sectors; and the re-structuring of the Library and Information Service following a comprehensive best value review. Principally, however, it was seen as a way of bringing together the three services which had a distinct responsibility for aspects of the county's heritage in order to deliver a more co-ordinated approach to local studies.
- 1.5 The policy therefore set out clear aims for the more co-ordinated development of local studies across the County. These aims have resulted in achievements such as the local studies audit, the local studies toolkit, co-ordinated programmes for Local and Community History Month and the delivery of successful externally funded projects, as well as consistent policies on acquisition and copyright.

- 1.6 This present policy is a revision of the original Local Studies Policy approved in 2002. In particular the policy is well placed to support Staffordshire County Council's corporate aims of Safer and Stronger Communities and Healthier Communities and Older People.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 The following items may form part of local studies collections: local books and pamphlets; local history journals; directories (street and trade), local trade year books; District / Parish Council publications, including year books, printed accounts; registers of electors; illustrations: copies of archive photographs, postcards, duplicate prints and engravings; printed maps and plans, including Ordnance Survey maps; printed parish registers and/or microfiche copies of local parish registers; printed transcripts of parish registers; local parish register indexes; the International Genealogical Index; census returns, 1841-1911; local census indexes; local newspapers, preferably in copy form; transcripts of oral history interviews; official reports on local subjects e.g. public enquiry reports; theses or dissertations on local topics; commercially produced videos or CD ROMs on local subjects; works of local authors, with or without local content
- 2.2 Local Studies collections should not contain original archives or manuscripts or museum objects, which are the proper responsibility of the Archive Service and Arts and Museums Service or other related museums respectively.
- 2.3 The Collecting Policy for Local Studies sets out the parameters for developing and managing the content of Local Studies collections.

3. POLICY AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure the provision and delivery of a co-ordinated, consistent and high quality local studies service for Staffordshire
- To ensure regular communication and the sharing of information on local studies issues
- To develop and preserve local studies collections in ways which are convenient for users and appropriate for the long term preservation of collections
- To promote the use and enjoyment of local studies collections by all sections of the community
- To foster good relationships and communication with other institutions and organisations holding local studies, archive or museum collections within the County

4. STRATEGIC POLICY OBJECTIVES, 2009-2012

The Local Studies Policy is delivered through the Local Studies Steering Group. In order to achieve the aims of the policy, the following strategic objectives have been identified for the next three years:

1. To engage with and enthuse people to find out more about their local community

Key outcomes:

- The delivery of an annual programme of events and activities for Local and Community History Month and at other times of the year as appropriate
- The delivery of activities to support the County's Cultural Olympiad programme
- The regular hosting of exhibitions about community and local history
- The development and delivery of projects to explore aspects of the past and their continuing relevance to the present
- The maintenance of strong links with local groups and societies.

2. To improve information for the public about the availability and content of local studies collections

Key outcomes:

- The addition of catalogue information about local studies collections to Gateway to the Past, the online catalogue for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's Cultural Collections
- Maintaining the currency of local studies information online
- Contributing archive images to Staffordshire Pasttrack
- Establishing links to other heritage resources

3. To ensure consistency of local studies service provision in Staffordshire's libraries

Key outcomes:

- The review of audit information to identify gaps and duplication
- The identification of potential funding for cataloguing collections
- Mapping of collections, their range & content including special collections

4. To aim for higher standards of preservation for local studies collections

Key outcomes:

- Ensuring consistent practice in security
- Producing guidelines for staff
- The identification of potential funded preservation projects

5. To improve the knowledge of library, archive and museum staff about local studies and related collections

Key outcomes:

- The development of an annual, standard local studies training programme available to Culture and Libraries staff

6. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by 2012.

Reviewed April 2009

APPENDIX

Other Related Provision: *William Salt Library Stafford*

The William Salt Library will continue to act as the main local studies library for Staffordshire. Although a private (i.e. non County Council) library, it is managed by and run in conjunction with the Archive Service and staffed by Archive Service staff.

The Library's collections consist principally of Staffordshire-based manuscripts, printed books and graphic items. Its collections cover the whole of the present administrative county of Staffordshire as well as the historic county (i.e. the Black Country and the City of Stoke on Trent). The collections for the Stafford area are particularly comprehensive. The Library also collects printed books relating to adjoining counties and has a very wide range of standard reference works. The Library no longer actively collects archive or manuscript material.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service

The role of the Archive Service is to locate, collect, preserve and make widely available unique and irreplaceable archive collections relating to past and present life and activity in the County of Staffordshire and the Diocese of Lichfield. The Archive Service collections cover a very wide range of aspects of past and present life and activity in the historic and the current administrative County and City. The Service is operated through its three access points at the Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office and Stoke on Trent City Archives. The service has an extensive learning and outreach programme.

Staffordshire Arts and Museums Service

One of the key aims of the Arts and Museum Service is to develop the County Museum collection as a key cultural resource and asset for Staffordshire's present and future generations and to enhance access to the collection. The Service is based at the County Museum, Shugborough, and at the Shire Hall Gallery in Stafford. Collections held by the service include objects, ephemera, photographs, maps and works of art (topographical and abstract/contemporary) covering approximately 200 years of Staffordshire's social, local and agricultural history.

Other Museums and Heritage Centres

There are a number of other museums and heritage centres in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, which hold collections of objects, archive photographs, and other archive material relating to their collecting area and within the terms of their respective collecting policies. The Staffordshire Museums Network,

operated by the Arts and Museums Service, acts as the communications co-ordinator for museums in the county.

University of Keele

The University of Keele Library holds some specific archive collections, notably the Sneyd Papers. In addition it also holds a number of large photographic collections. The University also holds the Air Photo Library, a large collection of aerial photographs.

Staffordshire Film Archive

The Staffordshire Film Archive is the local archive for the moving image and collects film and video recordings relating to Staffordshire's history. It is administered by Staffordshire University.

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Staffordshire University holds the Design Study Collection as well as specialist collections relating to mining, the Arts and war widows.

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