

Vision for the Archives Service

This is our vision for the council's archives collections. Within the next 10 years:

- Our archives service will be making an exciting contribution to the life of “a city making history”. Telling the story of the people of York they will be for the people of York, enriching lives in all sorts of ways
- The collections will be a source of learning, interest, inspiration, and fun for all sections of the community
- All citizens will be aware of the archives, what they have on offer for them, and how they can access them if they wish
- They will be used extensively for all kinds of purposes, by:
 - school groups as part of the curriculum
 - individual learners pursuing their own projects
 - people interested in exploring their origins and their family history
 - specialist groups like the Oral History Society and community archives groups
 - local groups wanting to understand the history of their own communities
 - planners and decision makers, understanding the city's heritage
 - people worldwide interested in York
 - academics and researchers
- Far from being the preserve of the few they will be open to all and will proactively encourage new users. Staff will be on hand to help people who are new to using archives
- Materials available will be diverse: Documents, photographs, moving images, sound and oral history recordings – some will be originals, others surrogates of material from other collections. The surroundings will encourage browsing
- At least 22,000 people per annum will use the collections in person (600% more than at present). Virtual visits will be measured in the hundreds of thousands
- The collections will be housed in state of the art premises and the quality and quantity of conservation activity will be greatly increased. The direct handling of documents will gradually decrease as digitisation increases in depth and quality
- There will be an archivist with special responsibility for and knowledge of the city's collections
- They will be available for public use for at least 45 hours per week including at weekends and in the evenings
- Physical access to the collections will be complemented by a virtual “gateway” to the city that showcases our heritage. This gateway will be seamless to the user – what will matter is what they are interested in rather than what institution holds the object or document
- We will take this forward through a partnership of flagship status capable of contributing to the development of national practice, training professionals, and attracting funding. The partnership will draw in key providers such as the Library Service, all the major museums, the University, York St John's College

- The partnership will also work with local history groups to develop the concept of a History Store that will act as a Gateway to York's Past. Based in the Central Library and building on both the local history library and the archive collections it will showcase local and family history resources. The resources will be made accessible through innovative use of ICT and staff's active engagement with users.
- Private depositors will have their collections cared for and documented in the same way as the civic collections.
- In this way virtual access to the archives collections will be possible through a whole host of locations in the city many with staff support on hand
- The archives will play a significant role in show-casing York's achievements, raising York's profile, and encouraging people to visit and to invest in York
- Ultimately the partnership may in effect form a single archive service for the city as far as the public are concerned
- The collections will be supporting the city's key priorities, not just in learning e.g. helping adults to improve basic skills, but in other areas, e.g. providing positive activities for young people
- There will be an Education Officer making the archives a valuable resource for schools and young people generally
- Staff will work in the community to support local groups and communities of interest to access the collections. Community archives and similar groups will be flourishing. Some will base themselves along side the city's collections
- Volunteers will be extensively involved in working with the collections
- The most accessed collections will have been digitised in partnership with other archive institutions in the city (and probably beyond). Paid for access to popular material will subsidise digitisation of the less commercial and will be generating revenue that will be ploughed back into conservation of the collections
- An effective modern records system will manage records destined for the Archive as well as limited-life records with a known future disposal date