



Tasglann nan Eilean

Archive



Forward Plan 2017 to 2020



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Document History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comments</i>
V1.0	September 2017	Approved 27 September 2017

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Archive Service Forward Plan 2017-2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Tasglann nan Eilean Forward Plan is one of a suite of documents governing the management of the archive service submitted for approval to the Comhairle in compliance with best practice.

2. PURPOSE OF ARCHIVE SERVICE

Tasglann nan Eilean is part of the Heritage Service of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, which in turn is part of Economic Development department, reporting to the Sustainable Development Committee.

The Heritage Service is a gateway to the collective heritage of the Outer Hebrides – a dispersed resource comprising local museums and heritage groups, collections and archives. The Service is responsible for two museums in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, and Lionacleit, Isle of Benbecula, as well as the archive and archaeology services.

The purpose of Tasglann nan Eilean, as the archive service of the Comhairle, is to identify, collect and preserve the records of the Comhairle and its predecessor bodies which need to be kept permanently for legal or historical reasons, as well as the archives of organisations, businesses, estates or individuals connected to the Outer Hebrides which have been gifted or deposited, and to make these available to the widest extent possible for research, education or enjoyment.

Responsibility for maintaining the Comhairle's archives and those of any demitting authorities is a function of the Policy and Resources Committee, as defined by the local authority's Scheme of Administration.

3. ARCHIVE SERVICE ACCREDITATION STANDARD

The service aims to attain Archive Service Accreditation in 2018. Planning for Accreditation and compliance with relevant legislation have been the principal drivers in determining the service's strategic aims as outlined in this Forward Plan.

The strategic aims align with three of the Comhairle's strategic priorities in particular, viz. 'To maximise benefits from the Outer Hebrides' natural, cultural, environmental and historical resources', 'To deliver the Lews Castle project and ensure the benefits of the project are dispersed across the Outer Hebrides', and, 'To provide good quality and efficient services to meet the needs of the community.'

4. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS FORWARD PLAN

As the service is relatively new there is no previous Forward Plan. The archive service began in 2010 with the launch of the three-year Tasglann nan Eilean Siar (Hebridean Archives) project which was funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Comunn na Gàidhlig. The project was staffed by a professional archivist (the Comhairle's first) and two full-time project assistants. A summary of the Project's outputs can be found at Appendix 1.

At the end of the project the archivist became part of the Comhairle's Heritage Service. The project assistant posts were not continued. The priority at that point was to deliver the Lews

Castle Museum and Archive project as defined by the project's Business and Activity Plans. It should be noted that the archive service was unstaffed for a period of 14 months following the departure of the first archivist in September 2014.

Since November 2015, when the present archivist began in post the priorities have been to establish a sound basis for the service in terms of procedures for collections management, documentation and collections care, and to prepare for the public opening, as well as to deliver the service. The archivist's objectives were agreed as part of the Comhairle's usual business planning process to align with the strategic priorities of Development Department and the Heritage Service.

It is intended that the achievements of the Tasglann nan Eilean Siar project in terms of mapping archives, maintaining access to collections information on a bilingual website and supporting the network of historical societies in caring for their archives should be consolidated into the ongoing service.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Tasglann nan Eilean is located in a new purpose-built extension, constructed to BS 5454 Standards adjoining the restored Lews Castle in Stornoway. The museum and castle opened to the public in July 2016 whilst the archive service began operating in December 2015. As the archive service is located alongside a new high-profile Gaelic-led museum there has been strong interest in what the service can offer to researchers, visitors, depositors and community organisations.

There is a strong desire within the community itself to preserve the history and culture of the islands. The community's strong cultural identity is related to the physical environment and geography of the islands, the crofting system of land tenure, the Gaelic language, and its associated oral traditions. The desire of local people to preserve their history and culture is evidenced by the Comainn Eachdraidh movement. Since 1977, more than 20 historical societies have emerged, which aim to preserve the culture of their communities by collecting genealogies, croft histories, photographs, oral histories, artefacts and archives. This local knowledge is an important and valuable part of the cultural landscape of the islands.

Tasglann nan Eilean, along with colleagues in the Heritage Service, aims to support and work in partnership with the Comainn Eachdraidh by providing advice and training, mapping their collections, facilitating partnerships and learning amongst the various societies and signposting researchers or visitors to community resources and local expertise as appropriate.

A current issue for the archive service is a lack of awareness of the legal requirements in relation to the records of the Comhairle itself. Records management has never existed as a distinct function within the Comhairle. The Archivist's remit includes advising the Comhairle on record-keeping legislation and the implementation of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 in conjunction with Legal Services and the Chief Executive's Office. It is likely that the creation of the Records Management Plan and associated procedures, as required by PRSA, will begin to address this, and thereby ensure that Comhairle records of archival value are identified and transferred to the archive in a planned manner.

A weakness is the sustainability and resilience of the service in terms of staffing levels (see Resources).

The high profile of the Lews Castle project means there has been a strong demand for assistance and information, as reflected in the level of enquiries dealt with by the archive service. This is challenging, given the service staffing levels, but also presents valuable opportunities to engage the community with the archives, and highlight their value.

There is an opportunity to develop the collections, including Gaelic-language material, given the high profile the Tasglann now has, thus ensuring their preservation for future generations. There could as a consequence be ongoing opportunities for applications to be made for cataloguing project posts.

The limited funding available to sustain local authority services generally in the current political and economic environment is a major threat to service delivery. Furthermore, the ongoing programme of cuts and uncertainties around funding streams due to the EU Referendum result suggests the funding environment is likely to worsen in the next three years, which could affect the ability of the service to deliver the strategic aims outlined in this Forward Plan. This challenge can perhaps be addressed by finding alternative income streams and forming strategic working partnerships with others who share the vision and ambitions of the service.

6. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

As the service is relatively new, there has not been an opportunity to consult widely on the archives service to date. Regular evaluation of activities, to establish whether the service is meeting stakeholder needs, will be included in the service's objectives going forward.

7. STRATEGIC AIMS

The following three strategic aims have been identified which will establish the service on a sound basis, ensure it is delivering its core purpose, and improve the quality of service for the community:

1) Attain archive service accreditation

Achieving this would demonstrate that we are meeting, or striving towards, national standards for the sector. This in turn would enable us to apply to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland for the transfer of archives pertaining to the Outer Hebrides, currently held by the National Records of Scotland, to Tasglann nan Eilean. It would also help us to attract grants for specific projects to open up the archives more widely and improve the quality of service.

2) Extend the archive service to the Uists in order to preserve, and provide improved access to, pertinent archives

Tasglann nan Eilean has a remit for the whole of the Outer Hebrides. As there is no archive facility in the Uists at present, it is difficult to deliver an equitable service.

3) Develop digital preservation capability (as part of wider digital records management programme)

This is an essential requirement to enable us to permanently preserve archives which are in digital format, in order to comply with legal obligations and provide wider access.

8. OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

Strategic Aim 1: Attain archive service accreditation

Objective	Actions
1.1 Work with Legal Services and Chief Executive's Office on implementation of PRSA and the creation of a RMP by January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in meetings of Officer Working Group • Assist with production of Records Management Policy and Plan by providing advice on archival elements
1.2 Create or update the required policies to cover all aspects of the Archive Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Policy on Collections Management which covers Collections Development, Collections Care, and Collections Information • Update policy on Access and Engagement • Get policies formally approved by September 2017
1.3 Implement all necessary Procedures and Plans as per Collections policies, to ensure permanent preservation of archive collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review procedures to ensure they cover all aspects of collections care, and ensure they are adhered to • Implement plans as necessary to improve collections care • Ensure Emergency Plans and procedures in place to cover locations where archive material is stored (in consultation with Conservation Officer) • Undertake preservation projects or programmes as necessary • Apply for conservation grants to deal with items requiring treatment by archive conservator
1.4 Implement all necessary Procedures and Plans as per Collections policies, to ensure information about the archives is maintained to appropriate standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create specification for archive elements of website to ensure information about collections is available to researchers or potential researchers; • Update Procedures for Accessioning and Cataloguing, to ensure documentation is done consistently to relevant professional standards; • Produce Collections Information Plan, and prioritise tasks to address cataloguing backlog, with the aim of having 75% of collections catalogued on online database at least to collection level • Produce Guides for Family History sources to enable participation in Ancestral Welcome Scheme/ Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology • Plan, supervise and ensure delivery of Harris Tweed Archive cataloguing project, as per project plan • Run a pilot volunteer project to index or digitise key sources, thus enhancing source descriptions for archive users.
1.5 Provide excellent standard of service to archive users or potential users by implementing Procedures and Plans as per Access and Engagement Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries fully and accurately responded to, within 20 working days, in compliance with Freedom of Information Scotland Act; • Researchers able to access archives as per advertised opening times, in line with relevant legislation and best professional practice; • Support databases maintained and developed by collections assistant to build knowledge base, enabling efficient response; • Support development of SFF archives trainee, and other members of archives and heritage team by providing training on archive sources etc • Undertake projects to improve service in response to user

	<p>needs (e.g. image database pilot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly gather feedback from service users to evaluate service, and review annually • Review and research current education and outreach activities in archives across UK to identify best practice examples • Develop use of archives for education resources or activities, or community engagement and outreach, in collaboration with colleagues • Get feedback on plans from education professionals or service users, to inform next steps • Deliver session for Lews Castle College/ UHI history students (from Lews Castle College) on archives available for research projects and volunteering opportunities • Deliver training on archives care and management to Comainn Eachdraidh and heritage network partners as required • Create series of engaging displays featuring archive material to highlight potential of archives to community and encourage deposit of archive material • Produce Marketing and Communication strategy and implement to raise awareness of the collections' potential
1.6 Develop archive collections to address gaps as per Collections Development Policy to help ensure that important historical records are secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer CnES archive material already identified from various Comhairle locations to archive • Pursue archive material as per priorities in Collections Development Policy • Investigate sources of funding for project archivist or collections assistant posts to undertake collections development
1.7 Deliver CALM project (software successfully installed and customised, all relevant data imported and processes set up to enable ongoing development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software installed and set up on server/ relevant PCs (with support of IT) • Database modules, templates and fields customised to suit requirements • Data entry procedures for each module/ process written, to ensure consistency • Various modules piloted to check all functionality and remedial action taken if required • Data imported from various other sources and tested/ checked to ensure completeness and accuracy • Training delivered to colleagues to enable them to undertake data entry for accessions, depositors, library, locations, archive catalogue and image database

Strategic Aim 2: Improve archive service to Uists

Objective	Actions
2.1 Work with colleagues in heritage service to progress plans for new museum and archive building for Uists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure archive service requirements are part of building specifications • Work with MnE colleagues to lobby for new building, promoting the benefits to the community

Strategic Aim 3: Develop digital preservation capability

Objective	Actions
3.1 Produce recommended specifications for digital archive repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct initial research on DP and provide recommendations and specifications for a digital archive repository

9. RESOURCE PLAN

The strategic aims, objectives and actions outlined in this Forward Plan will largely be delivered within the existing budget. The archive service is funded via the Museum service budget, drawing from it for staffing, travel, stationery, preservation supplies, IT licences and building occupation costs. Where additional funding is required to deliver a particular activity or project in the plan, aside from statutory aspects, this would need to be sourced from alternative income streams.

Staffing:

- 1 x FT archivist (on 3-year contract till Nov 18)
- 1 x 0.45 FTE collections assistant
- 1 x Skills for the Future archives trainee (51-week contract till Aug 2017; subsequently extended to Dec 2017), funded via the Scottish Council on Archives
- 1 x project cataloguing archivist (Harris Tweed Authority Archive project, 9-month contract funded by National Cataloguing Programme Grant)
- The archive service can also draw on the advice and support of Museum nan Eilean's Conservation Officer as appropriate.

Financial Plan

Budget for 2016-17

Museum and Tasglann nan Eilean Lews Castle budget

7030/0074 Employee Related Insurances	437
7030/0302 Electricity	37,000
7030/0350 Premises Rents	8,156
7030/0360 Rates	77,520
7030/0370 Water Charges-Metered	2,060
7030/0420 Building Cleaning Contract	19,776
7030/0421 Consumable Cleaning Materials	500
7030/0424 Refuse Collection Charges	931
7030/0480 Property Insurance	3,266
7030/0600 Travel-Employees Mainland	2,000
7030/0601 Travel-Employees Island	500
7030/0611 Car Users Allowance	1,000
7030/0902 Grants to Voluntary Organisations	14,564
7030/0932 Publicity & Promotion	1,500
7030/0940 Miscellaneous Insurances	660

7030/0949 Miscellaneous Expenses	2,000
7030/0996 Purchase of items for Resale	1,048
7030/1018 Welfare Facilities	488
7030/1121 Exhibition Maintenance/Conservation	10,408
7030/1203 Stationery	552
7030/1211 Telephone Rental	1,890
7030/1212 Telephone Charges	600
7030/1280 Advertising-General	0
7030/1322 Employees Subsistence Mainland	700
7030/1323 Employees Subsistence Island	1,048
7030/4010/0010 APT&C Basic Salary/Wage	125,836
7030/4010/0011 APT&C Islands Allowance	12,929
7030/4010/0013 APT&C NI 10,586 2,804	13,390
7030/4010/0014 APT&C Superannuation	26,083
7030/4030/0010 Manual Workers Basic Salary/Wage	0
7030/4030/0011 Manual Workers Islands Allowance	0
7030/4030/0013 Manual Workers NI	0
7030/4030/0014 Manual Workers Superannuation	0
7030/4030/0022 Manual Workers Holiday Pay	0
7030/7300 Premises Ad-hoc Repairs	32,500
7030/2027 Other Income	152,280
7030/2112 Fees and Charges-Other	20,000
7030/2162 Sales	10,000

Future Financial Settlements

The Heritage Service revenue budget will, in common with all local authority budgets, remain under pressure to reduce costs and increase efficiency due to the local authority funding environment.

The museum revenue budget for 2017/18 is not expected to represent a material change on 2016/17. Budgets in the future years covered by this plan are not certain and therefore assumptions cannot responsibly be made.

10. DATE PLAN WILL BE REVIEWED

This Forward Plan will be reviewed in 2020, in preparation for a new Forward Plan to be submitted for approval.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of achievements of Tasglann nan Eilean Siar project 2010-2013

Activity	Details:
Develop policies and procedures for Archive service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archive service established • Procedures for access to archives at Stornoway Library, and relating to collections management established • Search room established • Relationships with stakeholders and archive custodians developed • Integration of archive service into CnES Heritage Service implemented
Identify and collection information on archival collections held throughout the Outer Hebrides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50 businesses, organisations and individuals worked with to identify their archive collections or assist in their management • Online database http://ica-atom.tasglann.org.uk containing details of over 300 archive collections across 30 archive repositories established
Raise awareness of archive collections at a local, national and international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile built with stakeholders across the islands • Regular press releases on archive stories, activities and events issued • Publicity materials prepared and circulated • Contribution to Scottish archive initiatives lead by Scottish Council on Archives • Project website, blog, facebook and twitter receiving international attention with foreign visitors coming to view archives as a result and images being licensed and used in publications • Contributions to external conference and events to raise profile.
Assist partners with projects and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,000 funding obtained from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to fund community groups in documenting history of local schools • Worked with 15 community groups to manage archive collections, undertake exhibitions or plan projects • Training provided to up-skill voluntary sector • Worked with public authorities to help identify archive records
Increase access to archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 329 enquiries answered • 93 research visits documented • 750+ individuals access archives through exhibition, displays and events
Provide advice, guidance and training on archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 127 individuals from businesses, archive custodians, historical societies and community groups in receipt of training • All training materials made available on www.tasglann.org.uk
Identify records pertaining to the Outer Hebrides and their potential transfer to the islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with Police and Fire services to identify island-related records for potential repatriation • Worked with National Records of Scotland, University sector and Highland Archives to identify records which potentially can be repatriated • Identified collections of island significance held elsewhere in Scotland and further afield. Many cannot be repatriated as gifted to current institutions or archives have a wider significance than just the Outer Hebrides • All collections added into the collections database
Arrange partnership exhibitions, talks and conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful joint events with island schools and community groups • Conferences and events held across the islands with external partners include Heritage Service, Historical Societies and community groups

<p>Work with Lews Castle College and education department to development teaching materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education packs developed in consultation with teachers • Archives sessions held with 3 schools and a Beaver Scout colony to develop education packs • Initial discussions held with Lews Castle College
<p>Assist communities to develop projects and funding bids in relation to archives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,000 funding obtained from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to fund community groups to document history of local schools • Assisted Hebridean Connections with LEADER and Scottish Government applications • Assisted West Side Historical Society to obtain LEADER funding for Norman Morrison project • Letters of support and advice provided to Historical Societies for various project funding applications
<p>Offer advice and training to businesses and communities re: ancestral tourism and research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal advice and guidance as part of visits to businesses and heritage groups • Online presence through website, blog, twitter and facebook has seen greater contact from ancestral tourists, many of whom were planning to, and have subsequently, visited the islands
<p>Work with partners to identify infrastructure opportunities for archival collections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged records to be deposited into public domain through Council archive service or Historical Societies • Worked with public authorities to identify their archives • Heritage network conference held to look at opportunities for collaborative working