

Joint Archives Service

Service Development Plan

2021-2026

DORSET
HISTORY CENTRE

Reviewed September 2022



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SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Joint Archives Service (JAS), based at Dorset History Centre (DHC), is operated on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. Partnership between the two authorities as delivered through the joint service sits at the heart of JAS activities and underwrites all aspects of its operation as detailed in the service plan.

The JAS is the county's only accredited archive service as designated by The National Archives. Records Management and Local Studies Library services are operated on behalf of Dorset Council via separate budgets.

PURPOSE

The Service Development Plan will:

- Articulate the JAS's ambition to excel in its role as custodian of the county's archives and records
- Clarify the core functions or 'business as usual' activities of the JAS
- Describe planned projects and/or workstreams over the period 2021-26
- Demonstrate how the service contributes towards the corporate outcomes of the two funding authorities
- Provide key information about the service to enable evaluation and analysis of its performance
- Build on the analysis and recommendations of consultancy report A [*Review of the Dorset Joint Archives Service*](#) by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan and Associates (February 2021)
- Be regularly updated to reflect the current status of particular activities.

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VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

OUR VISION

The archival heritage and authentic record of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole will be preserved by the Joint Archives Service and used to inform, educate and inspire our communities through collaboration and innovation.



OUR MISSION

To acquire, preserve and make accessible the archives of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and so promote cultural, economic, educational and social well-being; to act as the corporate memory for the two funding bodies.

OUR GOALS

We will:

- Be an open and innovative organisation, known and trusted by all
- Lead in developing systems and services which enhance the management and care of archives, records and local studies materials
- Increase the use of and access to archives and other heritage assets through a wide range of digital and public engagement activities
- Constantly improve what we do through partnership and collaboration
- Actively promote equality of access to services and the diversity of collections held by the JAS.



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KEY PRIORITIES

The key priorities of the JAS are to:

- 1** Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve, conserve and promote access to them to optimum effect
- 2** Design and deliver digital preservation services across both authority areas
- 3** Provide efficient, innovative and quality digital and place-based services which deliver rewarding experiences for all JAS customers and value for money for the two funding authorities
- 4** Engage a wide variety of audiences with digital and physical resources and events, recognising barriers to involvement and working actively to dismantle these
- 5** Encourage and sustain on-site and remote volunteering so adding value through delivering targeted programmes of work
- 6** Develop and maintain partnerships with a range of organisations both public and private and to pursue project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties
- 7** Manage and enhance the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff

Selected corporate priorities of the funding authorities to whose outcomes the JAS contributes:

BCP Council – Corporate Strategy (2021):

- Sustainable environment
- Dynamic places
- Connected communities
- Brighter futures

Dorset Council – Council Plan (2020-24):

- Unique environment
- Strong, healthy communities
- Staying safe and well
- Economic development



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ACTION PLAN

Red Amber Green (RAG) Summary

The total number of workstreams within the current review period of the Service Development Plan is:

Red	1
Amber	2
Green	17
Total	20

For ease of comprehension the JAS's **business as usual** activities are listed adjacent to the workstream with which they have the most affinity.

KEY

<i>Symbols used:</i>	
✓	Completed
G	On track
A	Some minor slippage
R	Delays/ Serious Problems/ Not being Achieved
DF	Deferred



<i>Officers involved in specific workstreams:</i>	
SJ	Sam Johnston, Service Manager for Archives
JH	Jacqui Halewood, Principal Archivist
OS	Owen Simons, Archivist (Collections)
CP	Cassandra Pickavance, Archivist (Digital Preservation)
	Archive Conservation Officer – role currently vacant
LD	Luke Dady, Archivist (Public Services)
MG	Maria Gayton, Community Engagement Officer



Service Development Plan: workstreams and projects

Priority 1: Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve and conserve them to optimum effect;

Business as usual activities:

- Acquisition, appraisal, accessioning, and limited cataloguing of community-generated archival material, both hard copy and digital
- Proactive acquisition of Public Records
- Preservation management of collections within passively managed and [environmentally controlled repositories](#)
- Repair and conservation of documents from DHC's own collections as well as via private commissions
-



	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome/Target	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
1.1	Targeted acquisition of archives especially from a range of sources identified through gap analysis.	SJ/ OS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up the collection in areas of identified weakness within the DHC holdings. • To better reflect the communities of Dorset and BCP council area. • Adding to the publicly accessible cultural heritage of the county for research on the heritage of the county. • Particular focus on business and artistic archives. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with Exeter University regarding a gap analysis of the DHC current holdings. • Likely to require extra staff capacity or Community Engagement projects to successfully acquire collections from some communities. • Depositors strongly encouraged to help fund costs of storage. 	
1.2	Selected purchase of documents (auction etc) using the DAT purchase fund	SJ	Acquiring for public ownership items that would otherwise be sold privately.	Ongoing steady stream of material acquired.	Steady stream of purchases. Most recent acquisition (£5,000 with grant aid) in June 2022 were some 1861 plans of Athelhampton church drawn by Thomas Hardy.	

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome/Target	Timeframe	• Current progress	Rag Status
1.3	Externally funded document preservation and conservation.	JB	Rendering damaged/unusable documents available for digitisation and public access via projects.	Ongoing – as and when opportunities arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservator role vacated in August 2021, newly appointed conservator due to join the service in autumn '22. • Healthy body of project funding and external clients through to autumn 2021. • Successful application to NMCT (£15k grant to work on Dorset Authors). • £21k grant to work on railway plans. 	
1.4	Transfer archival content on obsolete and at-risk audio-visual formats and removable digital media to digital preservation system	CP	At risk archives are preserved and remain accessible	By December 2022	Work underway to transfer removable digital media. Significant portion of audio-visual formats have digital surrogates already. Likely to require resource to transfer remaining audio-visual formats. Potential regional digitisation project in development to which the JAS will contribute content.	

Priority 2: Design and deliver digital preservation services across both authority areas

Business as usual activities:




- Raising awareness of digital preservation, and offering advice and support to stakeholders generating and transferring digital archives.
- Proactive acquisition of council-generated hard copy and digital records in close collaboration with records management colleagues in both funding councils


	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
2.1	<p>Fully resourced JAS digital preservation strategy resulting in robust digital continuity for JAS and its clients: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/understanding-digital-continuity.pdf</p> <p><i>See consultancy report chapter 3</i></p>	CP/SJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the accessibility of digital content now and in the future. • Reduction in risk and guarantor of the councils' corporate memories • Collaborative opportunities with other local authorities. • Work with IT and records management colleagues over electronic records management and systems integration. 	Positive engagement with BCP over Preservica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longstanding use of Preservica software, now integrated with Epexio re: public access. • Significant ingest of Dorset Council records include Mod.Gov • BCP to ingest adoption records into Preservica • Growing skills base within JAS team. • Resourcing challenges as workload in this area grows. 	
2.2	Local authority consortium using Preservica software. Led by DHC, now includes 18 members in a new 5-year contract.	SJ/CP	To deliver cheapest possible price for access to preservation software and to share skills and knowledge.	April 2019-present.	Consortium contract will expire in June 2022 and will require re-procurement beforehand.	

Priority 3: Provide efficient, innovative and quality digital and place-based services which deliver rewarding experiences for all JAS customers and value for money for the two funding authorities;

Business as usual activities:

- High quality provision of access to original archives and local studies material on-site at DHC
- Processing of enquiries from members of the public relating to a wide variety of subject matter
- Selective digitisation of archival material to enhance access to DHC-held collections and by private commission




	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current Progress	RAG status
3.1	Participation in Public Services Quality surveys of archive services	LD	Score of at least 90% 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	2021 (biennial)	There was no survey in 2020 due the Covid-19 pandemic. 2021 survey is a remote enquiries survey Awaiting new statistical survey led by The National Archives.	
3.2	Archive Accreditation	SJ/AI I	Meet the standard set by The National Archives covering wide range of service activities and functions	Next full accreditation review in 2024	Service successfully accredited in 2018. Service successfully re-accredited in Oct 2021 following 'light touch review' with a full re-submission in 2024.	
3.3	Continue to develop Epexio archive catalogue and its links to Preservica together with public front end. <i>See consultancy report chapter 4</i>	JH/ LD/C P/OS	To increase the quality and varied means of access to a greater quantity of DHC-collections online. More publicly available collections-related data, including access to digital material through Preservica. (See also Priority 2)	Implementation complete by end March 2022	Further functionality development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide paid for access to digital archives • Document ordering • Geolocation of collections to facilitate map based searching • Remote Volunteering to improve quality of customer access to collections and volunteering experiences. Continue on-site volunteering to enhance catalogue – Covid permitting	

3.4	<p>Further investigate development of online mapping resource such as Know Your Place or similar working with Historic Environment Service (now integrated into the Archives and Records Service).</p> <p><i>See consultancy report chapter 4</i></p>	JH/ LD	<p>Enhanced access to collections. Potential to link to other SW resources</p>	Within 3 years.	<p>Potential to form part of NLHF-funded capital project public engagement programme or to be actioned as a standalone project for which external funding could be sought.</p>	
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Priority 4: Work with a wide variety of audiences and through public engagement and advocacy to raise the profile of DHC, to encourage access to and appreciation of the archival resource;

Business as usual activities:




- Delivery of outreach services including talks, project design, workshops, tours and engagement with stakeholders, educational institutions and community groups
- Provision of digital services including the online catalogue, website, social media, blogs and material hosted by Ancestry.co.uk

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
4.1	Continue to work with the Cultural Hub and the Cultural Education Partnership	JH/ MG	To identify opportunities to work with BCP schools, other cultural providers and creatives to develop stimulating resources for engagement with archives in educational settings.	Ongoing until 2022 and review	Innovative mixed media resource developed and delivered Contributions to schools' 'artist in residence' projects'	
4.2	Community engagement - support and facilitation for a range of externally-resourced groups and projects to enhance access to and enjoyment of archival heritage.	MG	Positive engagement with a range of groups and subject matter. Value of archives as source material for a wide span of uses.	Ongoing – ad hoc Ongoing – ad hoc and subject to individual project schedules	Groups include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Creative Life • Telephone Friendship Group • Valise Noir • Gypsy, Romany, Traveller (Kushti Bok) 	
4.3	Digital promotion, advocacy and outreach, through a range of social media platforms and DHC presence on DC & BCP corporate websites and intranets– Digital Development Group <i>See consultancy report chapters 3 & 4</i>	LD/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of DHC to customers and stakeholders • Provide detailed information on DHC and first point of contact • Attract new audiences • Help to sell services and generate income. • A Digital Development Strategy 	Ongoing – Digital Development Strategy by the end of 2022	New DHC Digital Development Group is actively enhancing the social media and outreach presence of the service, including developing engagement with BCP and DC Communications services.	



Priority 5: Increase and sustain on-site and remote volunteering so adding value through delivering targeted programmes of work;

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
5.1	Developing a strong on-site and remote volunteer programme. <i>See consultancy report chapter 3</i>	OS/JB/ MG/LD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering critical 'added value' capacity, sorting, repackaging, listing collections and for Community Engagement projects Involving the community in the life of DHC and its collections. Includes work experience opportunities for young people. Wider range of projects for volunteers to engage with (digitisation, research, oral history, conservation, cataloguing, collections indexing). 	Ongoing and review annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epexio offers remote volunteering opportunities, e.g. geo-tagging. Service is reorganising and re-focussing its volunteering offer and programme post-Covid and in the light of technological change. Maintain standards gained through Investors in Volunteers 	
5.2	Dorset Archives Trust (DAT) www.dorsetarchivestrust.org	SJ/JH	<p>Mobilising the effective support of DAT for DHC projects through its 3 key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising Collections development Advocacy 	Ongoing annual review Annual review prior to AGM	Membership steadily increasing. Events programme based around archive collections. Crowdfunding for Hardy's archives. Successful funding bids on behalf of DHC priority projects will be important in terms of fundraising in the event of a capital project.	

Priority 6: Develop and sustain partnerships with a range of organisations both public and private and to pursue project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver mutual benefits;

	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
6.1	Seek external funding for collections related projects including cataloguing, conservation and selective digitisation	SJ/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make large quantities of new material available to the public. • Assist preservation through digital facsimiles; • Increase the JAS's online presence via catalogue and other digital tools. • Complement scarce core resources. 	Ongoing, but subject to available funding opportunities and programmes	<p>Reliant upon opportunities to seek funding through either public or private sources.</p> <p>Collections requiring investment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wessex Water • Quarter Sessions • 'Dorset Authors' (Hardy, Barnes, Townsend Warner) • Records of local government and predecessor councils 	
6.2	Archives South West – regional head of repository group working on strategic areas of mutual interest.	SJ/CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge and skills • Promote archival best practice • Partnership fundraising opportunities 	Ongoing – project based activity subject to funding	Following a successful application to The National Archives and a project to analyse the digitisation of historic newsprint, ASW is now seeking to deliver a smaller follow-on project focussing on the acquisition of community-generated digital archives.	
6.3	Investigate partnerships with academic institutions to better exploit DHC-held collections and encourage student and academic interest in archives.	SJ/OS/JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong links to regional HE institutions • Possible collaborative projects • Opens up new potential sources of funding through external grants. 	Ongoing; annual review of MoUs and project opportunities via academic departments.	<p>Positive activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Building relationship via MoU with Bournemouth University through the capital scheme and library services. Links with AUB re: Poole Pottery and Frink archives Opportunities emerging with BU and its BA in Public History – work experience and extended project placements. MoU signed in 2020 with University of Exeter. Student travel fund (DAT). 	

Priority 7: Manage and enhance the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff;

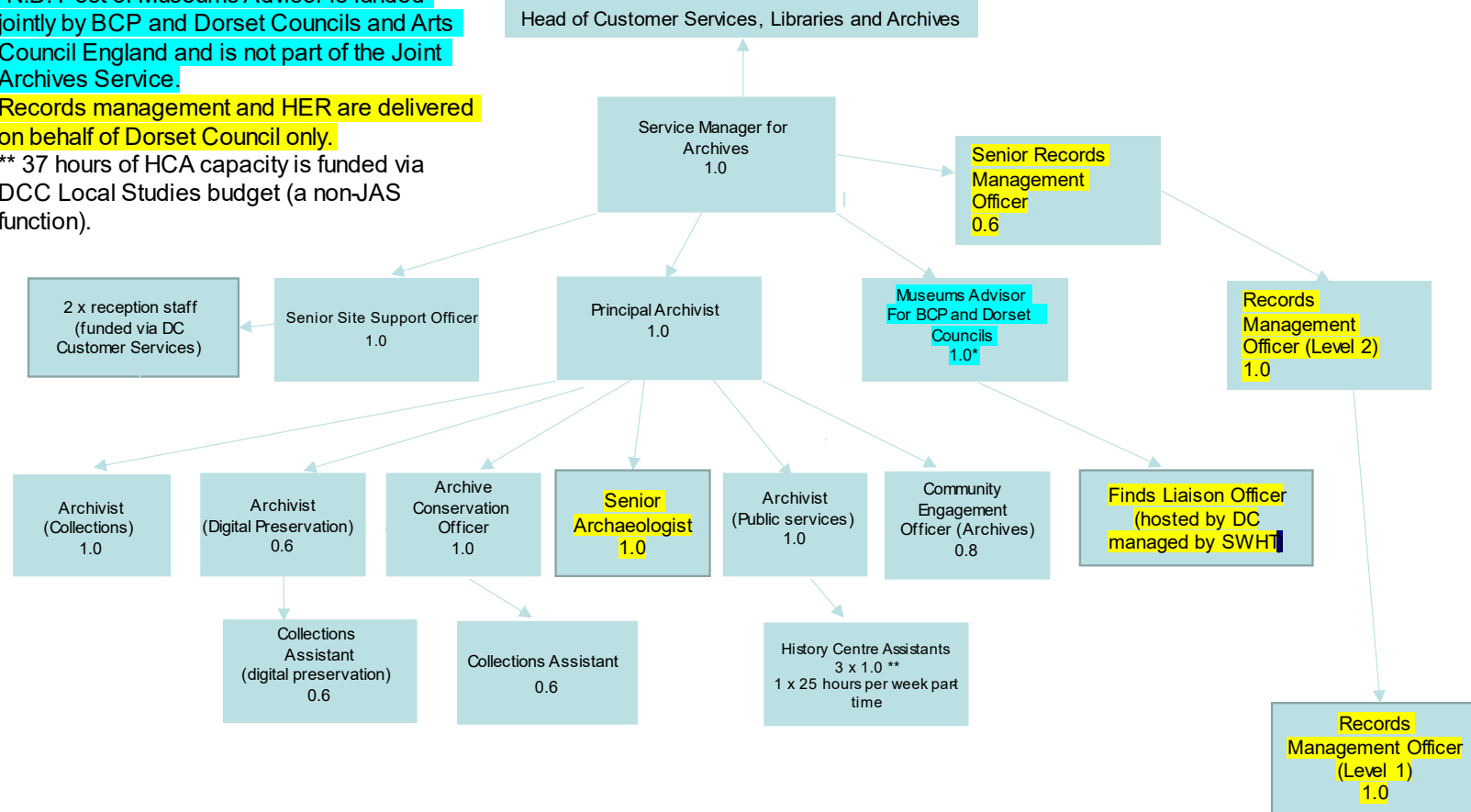
	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
7.1	Capital project; extension of DHC building to ensure adequate future space for collections. <i>See consultancy report chapter 6</i>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate storage is available for the next 25-30 years of hard copy archive acquisition. • Ensure that the best value 'full life' solution is agreed. • Wide programme of public and community engagement across the county (if NLHF-funded). • Improve public access to the building 	HLF project rejected Dec 17; 2021 strategy review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Light touch' review of options appraisal (2013) to confirm best solution for additional accommodation (May 2021) • Currently awaiting steer from the two funding councils. 	
7.2	Take part in Dorset Council energy efficiency initiatives and projects. Pursue the improvement of the fabric of the DHC building	SJ/JH	To improve fabric and energy consumption in DHC building – (heat pump and low energy lighting, roof and facias and soffits, lift)	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC has been awarded funding for improved energy efficiency projects. • New PV solar arrays added to DHC roof summer 2022. 	

5. Service structure



Joint Archives and RM Service Structure September 2022

*N.B. Post of Museums Advisor is funded jointly by BCP and Dorset Councils and Arts Council England and is not part of the Joint Archives Service.
 Records management and HER are delivered on behalf of Dorset Council only.
 ** 37 hours of HCA capacity is funded via DCC Local Studies budget (a non-JAS function).



5. Risk Register

September 2022
Archives Service Strategic Funding
(Risks have been listed in order of severity)

Risk Scoring	Impact	H	6	8	9
L = Low		M	3	5	7
M = Medium		L	1	2	4
H - High			L	M	H
			Probability		

Risk No.	Risk Description	Likely Impact if Risk Occurs	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Score	Counter Measures	Comment
1	Core Funding: continued risk to local government funding from 2022/23. This will need to be factored into the JAS's ability to maintain current levels of service delivery.	Further reductions in standards, levels and capacity of services offered by JAS - potentially taking it below the minimal effective level through the loss of distinct functions	H	H	9	Consultants' report indicates few obvious additional sources of revenue not already accessed. Ensure understanding of value for money through CIPFA benchmarking and TNA Accreditation. Importance of digital preservation in supporting business continuity and will require increased resourcing in the future.	Standstill budgets in 7 of 8 years. Inflationary pressure specifically from national pay agreement and business rates rise. Important to gauge the views of the two unitary councils on the role and priorities

2	Failure to develop preferred option to provide extra space for JAS collections	Finite and diminishing space within repositories. DHC would, in time, have to start refusing material. Failure to preserve corporate memory or Dorset's heritage. Potential revenue cost implication if space has to be rented.	H	H	9	Discussions between BCP and DC to establish the terms on which a capital project might be undertaken. Full life cost of DHC extension is the cheapest solution. External storage would be much more expensive in the long term.	Project will be pursued once clear trajectory is established.
3	Funding for digital preservation is not continued and work concludes without long-term sustainable solution.	Failure to provide digital preservation services for funding authorities and wider community. Information loss and/or data corruption. Potential legal implications.	H	M	7	Prove the long-term benefits of digital preservation and the risks and consequences of not having such a system. DC finance in place until 2021. Consortium model has halved costs to each member. Need BCP Council to adopt digital preservation via Preservica.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JAS is leading the local authority sector in working on digital preservation. • Information loss/corruption is a major risk to the corporate memory of both authorities. • Evidence of growing understanding of digital preservation and its benefits.
4	Dorset Archives Trust: failure to sustain Dorset Archives Trust due to lack of external interest and low capacity to support from within DHC.	No revenue impact; loss of support in communities, harm to reputation and loss of potential for special projects and funding to benefit Dorset's archives.	M	L	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate new trustees to strengthen body. • Ensure alignment of DHC activities and those of DAT. 	Body increasing in confidence and understanding. Very positive results in terms of fundraising.