



YORK

Gateway to History



explore



Project Evaluation Report
March 2016

Contents

1. Acknowledgements	4
2. Executive Summary	5
3. Project Background	7
4. Project Aims & Objectives	8
5. Project Delivery	9
5.1 Capital Works	11
5.2 Activity Plan	26
5.2.1 Activity 1: Creation of a Community Advisory Group	27
5.2.2 Activity 2: Staff Training and Development	30
5.2.3 Activity 3: Recruit Archive ‘Champions’	33
5.2.4 Activity 4: Askham Grange Placement Programme	38
5.2.5 Activity 5: Community Collections Development	41
5.2.6 Activity 6: Enhanced User Experience	46
5.2.7 Activity 7: Enhanced Family History Service	51
5.2.8 Activity 8: School Learning Resources	54
5.2.9 Activity 9: Volunteering Programme	57
5.2.10 Activity 10: Life Long Learning Events	60
5.2.11 Activity 11: Programme of Family Learning Activities	63
5.2.12 Activity 12: Gateway to History Poster Competition	67
5.2.13 Activity 13: Programme of Themed Talks and Tours	71
6. Project Review	75
6.1 Summary of Lessons Learnt	75
6.2 Legacy	79

6.3	Project Cost Review	80
7.	Conclusions	81
8.	Appendices	83

1. Acknowledgements

The York: Gateway to History project would like to thank the following:

- Our funders without whom this project could never have happened: the Heritage Lottery Fund and City of York Council
- Charlie Croft and everyone at City of York Council who supported the project
- The Senior Management Team at Explore including Fiona Williams (Chief Executive), Sarah Garbacz (Head of Strategy & Operations) and Victoria Hoyle (City Archivist)
- Core specialist staff at York Explore including Laura Yeoman, Justine Winstanley-Brown and Helen Whitehead
- Team Leaders and Reading and Learning Advisors at York Explore
- The project team: David Burton, Sarah Tester, Allison Freeman, Jennifer McGarvey and Francesca Taylor
- All other staff and volunteers at Explore York Libraries and Archives who have participated in and supported the project
- Former City Archivist Richard Taylor for seeing the archives' potential and writing the winning bid
- The designers and contractors involved in the construction works, including William Birch, Bissett Adams and Appleyard and Trew
- Fiona Himsworth and the team of tutors at York Learning
- Members of the Advisory Group, chaired by John Carlill, Explore Community Director
- York's community groups and local organisations
- Local Primary and Secondary schools
- Our creative partners including Emily Harvey artist for York Panorama, John Philips film maker and Lisa Guest publicity designer



The Project team including from left: Justine Winstanley-Brown, Sarah Tester, Jennifer McGarvey, David Burton, Artist Emily Harvey, HLF Committee Member Sue Mendus, Francesca Taylor, Victoria Hoyle and Richard Taylor

2. Executive Summary

In 2012 a city-wide survey was commissioned to discover the level of awareness the general public had about York's City Archive service. The results revealed that 40% of people did not know York had an archive, and only 6% had ever visited it.

The City Archive was previously housed in a wing of the City's Art Gallery with storage spaces in the basement and a small public space which also acted as a staff office and volunteering space. The building was bursting at the seams and the basement storage areas routinely flooded.

Investment in the City's valuable historical records was desperately needed and in December 2012, the City of York Council City Archive service was awarded £1,574,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant represented 89% of the overall project cost, with the remaining 11% provided by City of York Council (CYC) bringing the total project cost to £1,769,200.

The York: Gateway to History project has dramatically transformed York's City Archive service. The key approved purposes of the project were:

1. To unite the City of York Archives onto the first floor of York Explore Library (formerly York Central Library)
2. To build a PD5454 archive conservation store and workroom
3. To provide hands on access to the archives

The capital building works and Activity plan ran from January 2013-December 2015 and has successfully achieved and, in many cases exceeded, the approved purposes:

- City of York Archives, along with the Local History collections are available to the public on the first floor of York Explore and during 2015 received 94,858 visitors, almost doubling the target of 50,000
- The new PD5454 archive store is successfully preserving York's archives and the design of the space received a York Civic Trust Design Award in 2015
- A wide range of activities provided hands on access to archives with a total of 13,629 members of the public participating; ranging from under 5's to retired members of community groups
- A total of 57 volunteers provided 3,492 hours of collections, events and service support during the project
- Since the Archive & Local History Service opened 22% more people now know the archive exists and a further 22% now know where the new service is

- 92% of those who engaged in activities in 2015 had never used the Archive & Local History Service before.



“It would be fair to say that, since that phone call three years ago, York’s Archive has undergone a period of enormous and thrilling change.”

Victoria Hoyle, City Archivist,
Explore York Libraries and Archives

City of York charters, some of our most iconic historic documents

3. Project Background

York's civic archive is recognised as one of the most outstanding examples of its kind in Europe and has been considered the most important city archive outside of London. The value of the archive lies in its comprehensive coverage of city life and in its continuity of coverage over eight centuries, as much as in individual documents.

The archive consists of 392m³ of documents, with 54% of these being records of the City of York Council and its predecessor bodies dating from c1155-today and the remaining 46% of the archive collections include a total of 402 community archives dating from c1529-today.

The Local History Library collection comprises 33,400 publications, 2970 maps, 951 volumes of newspapers and 11,000 images. In addition to this there are a wide range of local history books on local people, places and events.

The previous Local History and Archive service was split across two sites; the archives were held in a wing of the City Art Gallery and the Local History Library was held at York Explore Library. The archive collections were physically at risk, and the premises did not meet current archive storage standards. Although fitted with fire and intruder alarms, there were no temperature or humidity controls with the large windows allowing in light and presenting a security risk. One archive store was damp and required constant dehumidification to prevent mould growth. Prior to the submission of the HLF Round 2 application there had been two floods in the basement strong room resulting in this space being evacuated into offsite storage.

Whilst the Local History Library was housed at York Explore Library, large sections of the collection were available by request only using a physical card catalogue. It was therefore a challenge for researchers to gain access to a wide range of rare local published works.

Access to the archives was available just 2 days a week and it had never been actively promoted or developed due to limited staffing and resources to meet any increase in demand.

In order to reach a solution to these problems it was proposed that a new joint archive and library service would be created in the existing York Explore Library in a key city centre location. A round 1 application was submitted to the HLF with proposals for refurbishment to the Library and creation of archive storage facility. This was approved in July 2011 with a development grant of £107,500 awarded to progress the proposals.

The successful Round 2 Bid to the HLF has dramatically transformed the storage conditions of the archives and the range of people who now have access to them. The archives have been brought to life in a range of dynamic ways and have given York an Archive & Local History Service of which to be proud.

4. Project Aims & Objectives

The following were the stated project aims:

1. Dramatically raise the public profile of the archive so that visitor numbers increase
2. Make it easier for everyone, whatever their previous level of knowledge, to engage with the collections in ways that suit them as individuals, families or groups
3. Offer a range of formal and informal learning opportunities to visitors, volunteers and staff to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the collections so that that they become advocates for the archive
4. Create meaningful ways for people to become actively involved in the development of the collections and for diverse communities to be represented in the archive
5. Implement a step-change improvement in the conservation and management of the collections so they have a sustainable future
6. Use the project as a catalyst for improving public access to and understanding of the hitherto neglected Mint Yard complex.

5. Project Delivery

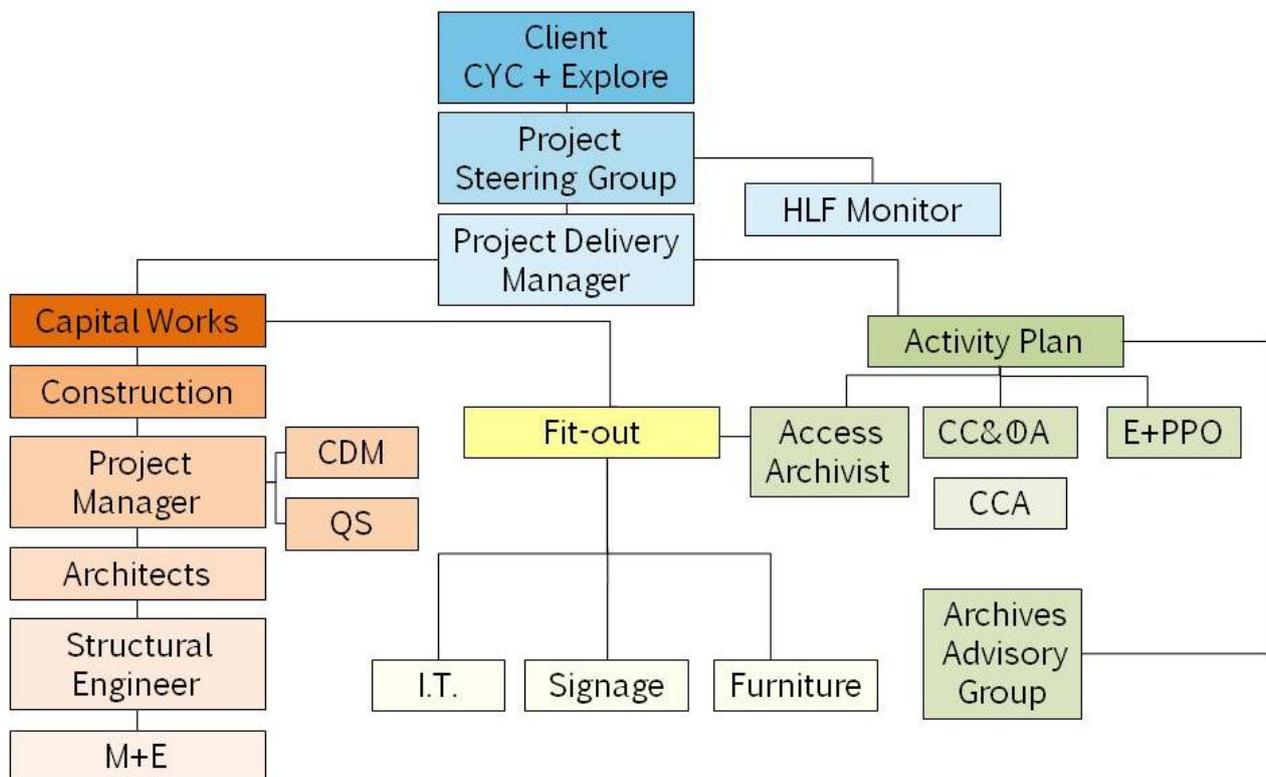
The project was delivered in two inter-related strands: Capital Works and the Activity Plan. All Activity was delivered by a core team of project staff with support from existing members of the Archive & Local History team and Library staff.

Project Governance

In order to deliver the Activity Plan element of the project successfully the following team of specialist staff was recruited:

- Community Collections & Outreach Archivist (CC&OA) – Sarah Tester
- Community Collections Assistant (CCA) – Francesca Taylor/Jennifer McGarvey
- Education & Public Programmes Officer (E&PPO) – Allison Freeman

The remainder of the project was delivered through core service staff. The project structure is set out in the following project organisation chart. The Project Champion/Sponsor was Charlie Croft, CYC Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm) who had overall responsibility for the delivery of the project and chaired the Project Steering Group. Other members of this group were Fiona Williams (Chief Executive of Explore Libraries and Archives); David Warburton, formerly CYC Head of Conservation & Sustainable Development and James Henderson, Head of Customer Management for Aviva UK (CYC’s partner at an earlier stage of the Library’s refurbishment programme).



There were several staffing changes during 2014 which affected the management structure of the project. The City Archivist, Richard Taylor, who was also named as the Project Director, became part-time in January 2014. During the same time frame the Civic & Public Records Archivist, Victoria Hoyle, began a part-time PhD and took the remaining hours of the City Archivist post. Richard Taylor left his post as City Archivist in April 2014, therefore leaving a vacancy for the overall management of the project. This role was temporarily undertaken by Victoria until the new post of Gateway to History Delivery Manager was filled in September 2014 by David Burton who successfully steered the remainder of the Capital Works and Activity Plan through to completion.

In order to counter delays in the Capital Works programme and the effect of personnel change, certain staffing changes were introduced, most notably reducing the Community Collections Assistant overall employment period by 8 months and increasing the role to full time.

Due to the increased workload created by the intensive design development phase of the capital works, recruitment of Activity plan staff did not begin until August 2013, with the CC&OA starting on 6th January 2014. The CCA was appointed following initial scoping work completed by the CC&OA, in July 2014. A further CCA was appointed in May 2015 after the previous staff member left the role. The E&PPO started in November 2014.

The original project plan also featured an Archives & Local History Development Manager, however this role did not exist within Explore during the life of the project. The majority of Activity plan support from permanent members of staff came from the newly created role of Access Archivist in April 2014.

In May 2014 the Library and Archive service devolved from City of York Council to become an Industrial and Provident Society, a form of community benefit society called Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd. The move away from Council control was not anticipated at the time of the project commencing, however the new aims and objectives of Explore fitted with the community led nature of the Gateway to History Activity plan and as a result worked cohesively.

Evaluation Methods

To successfully evaluate the success of the project, the following quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were used:

- People counters for the Archive & Local History Service counting all visitors to the service. The counters give a rough estimate of general visitors based on heat sensor technology
- Physical and digital standard feedback forms designed to fit with the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council framework for learning including Generic Learning Outcomes and Generic Social Outcomes
- Audio feedback from adults with low levels of literacy
- Illustrations and postcards for comments by children and adults with low literacy

5.1 Capital Works

Key Outputs

- 3 new dynamic public spaces were created as part of refurbishment works to the 1st Floor at York Explore for archives, local and family history research
 - The PD5454 compliant archive store holds over a mile of shelving providing a safe home for York's history from the 12th Century onwards
 - The design of the archive store won a York Civic Trust Design Award in 2015.
-



The Archive Pod pictured from the roof of York Explore. Image courtesy of Phillip Vile.

Background

Following on from the successful Round 2 Application, a Project Team was assembled to deliver the Capital Works. This drew on the main members of the Round 2 team whilst adding members with specialist skills to take the proposals forward.

The project management, quantity surveying and CDM co-ordinators consultants used at the Round 2 stage had been appointed through the City of York Council's Framework Agreement. In order to demonstrate that a competitive tendering process had been followed and ensure that value for money was delivered, a procurement exercise was carried out for these three roles. The result being that new consultants were appointed.

The design team commissioned at the beginning of the project through a competitive tendering process were re-appointed following the success of the Round 2 submission. This ensured the retention of knowledge and skills gained through the various consultation exercises. This was felt to be essential to the overall quality of the scheme, enabling the consolidation of the detailed designs within the overall concept of the Conservation Management Plan.

The Principal Contractor was appointed in accordance with the requirements of the City of York Council and the HLF. The most economically advantageous tender was accepted from William Birch & Sons Ltd.

What did we say we would do?

The majority of funding granted for the project was to transform the first floor at York Explore Library into an Archive & Local History Service and ensure the integration with the overall Library service. The aims of the Capital Works were to:

- Implement a step-change improvement in the conservation and management of the collections so they have a sustainable future
- Use the project as a catalyst for improving public access to and understanding of the hitherto neglected Mint Yard complex.

The major deliverables in the project plan were:

- A new secure conservation grade archive repository built to the PD5454 standard
- A new 'plug-in' link structure linking the new repository with the first floor foyer. Documents can be stored in this space before being added to the main collections
- A new Family History room, created in the book stack room, to include areas for computers and microfilm equipment and a space for informal study and presentations at the lower level. A new mezzanine structure would create a small space for more formal individual study or alternatively small group study/collaboration
- New signage and displays would be installed on the first floor landing with new seating
- Refurbishment of the public spaces at first floor level to create a new environmentally controlled Archives Reading Room for general public use and the Local History Room for reference and quiet study
- Installation of new mechanical and electrical equipment, including specialist plant to control the archive repository, further small amounts of mechanical equipment to cool the Archives Reading Room and Family History Room
- New lighting schemes within the Archives Reading, Local History and Family History Rooms to enable reading lighting standards and provide a contemporary feel
- Installation of a new modern boiler plant in the basement for the building, to be paid for entirely by the City of York Council.

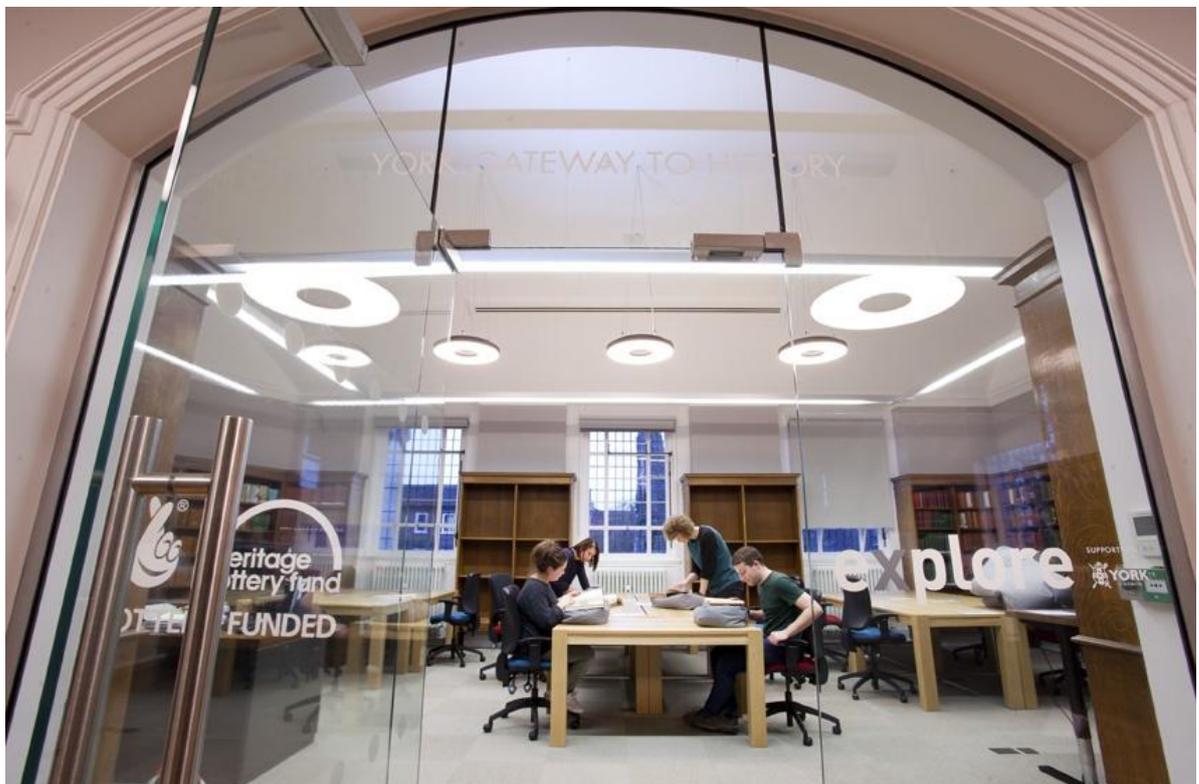
What did we do and how did we do it?

Approved Purposes

In order to unite the Archive & Local History Service onto the first floor of York Explore Library, the existing spaces previously occupied by the Reference Library and Local History Book Stack were refurbished and new spaces were created. Comparative before and after images are available as an appendix.

- **Archive Reading Room**

- This occupies an area of the former Reference Library first floor space which has been separated by the insertion of a new glass screen and staff-controlled doorway into the existing arch. This maintains the security of the archive collections when in use, but allows the passage of light from all sides of the building, and other users to see what goes on in the archives reading room and therefore helps to break down visual barriers to access
- The existing Grade II listed furniture was renovated and complemented by the addition of new furniture including a height adjustable desk for accessibility
- A new computer at a staff desk has been provided to support the staffing of the space at all times
- A digital screen has been installed to display information about the archive service to users. This screen can also be used to host presentations, enabling this space to be used flexibly outside of core opening hours
- A specialist book scanner has been installed to allow scanning and copying of archive documents without damaging pages or bindings.



The glass door into the Archives Reading Room provides a window into York's History and represents an open-access approach to discovering archives

- **Local History Room**

- The main room formerly occupied by the Reference Library has been converted into a drop-in Local History room including a main reception desk, quiet study space and informal seating area
- The existing Grade II listed furniture has been renovated and complemented by the addition of new furniture including new soft seating. Height adjustable desks have been added to ensure the room is accessible to wheelchair users
- New contemporary mobile shelving has been installed that allows the flexible use of the room for events and presentations outside of core opening hours
- The IT facilities have been upgraded for staff and public use including additional terminals for searching the online catalogue. Customers are also encouraged to use their own laptops and tablets and can use the free Wi-Fi across the Library. Additional power sockets have been installed at each set of tables in specially designed towers
- A digital screen has been installed to display information about the Local History Service to users. This screen can also be used to host presentations, enabling this space to be used flexibly outside of core opening hours
- A specialist book scanner has been installed to allow scanning and copying of archive documents without damaging pages or bindings.



The Local History Room, refurbished with quiet study and soft seating areas

- **Family History Room**

- The Local History Book Stack Room was previously inaccessible to the public at the rear of the Local History Room. The space has been converted into a Family History Room, designed for group study and collaborative work
- New computers and digital microfilm readers have been installed to improve access to family history resources
- A digital screen has been installed to display information about the Family History service to users. This screen can also be used to host presentations, enabling this space to be used flexibly outside of core opening hours
- The height of the room enabled additional space to be added in the form of a mezzanine level. The new space seats up to 8 people and can be used flexibly for collaboration and group learning activities.



The mezzanine level in the Family History Room creatively uses the high ceilings to create new collaboration space. Image courtesy of Phillip Vile.

Throughout all of the newly refurbished public spaces, a number of upgrades and repairs have been completed:

- Extensive ductwork and air conditioning plant and equipment have been installed within the roof space and also on the adjacent roof to service the Archive Reading Room and the Family History Room. The existing heating system and roof ventilation to the new Local History Room has been refurbished
- A new lighting scheme within the Archives Reading, Local History and Family History Rooms has been installed to improve lighting standards and provide a contemporary feel
- The existing toilets have been refurbished to cater for the increase in visitors anticipated for the new spaces.
- **Archive Conservation Store**

The new archive conservation store and workroom is located on the roof of the existing single storey east wing of the building. This structure is concealed from the front of York Explore, but visible from the side and rear of the building. It is a modern addition to the building with its cladding consisting of gold tinted textured folded stainless steel panels.



The archive store showing the link structure. Image courtesy of Phillip Vile.

The concept of this structure was for the gold to represent the treasures that are stored inside, whilst the folded panels reflect the proximity of the city walls. The store itself is constructed of cross laminated timber panels with high U value insulation placed in the walls, roof and floor construction. It is slightly elevated, being placed on a grid of steel beams, to allow a breathing space from the original building. The existing building structure was strengthened to take the loadings from above.

Additional features include:

- Specialist plant to control the archive repository to the requisite environmental conditions specified by PD5454. The plant is located in the existing garages to the rear of the extension reduce the visual and acoustic impact
- The new 'plug-in' structure linking the new repository and the first floor foyer was designed to the same high standards as the store itself, so that the transition between the two ensured the integrity of the store's environmental conditions.



The Archive Store interior with electronic mobile shelving. Image courtesy of Phillip Vile.

The original capacity requirement for the archive store was to house 1609 linear metres of York City Archive collections. The final product has exceeded this requirement and holds 1713 linear metres of archives in electronically controlled mobile shelving.

The store can hold a wide range of different archive documents including 250 linear metres of large flat documents, 98 linear metres of rolled plans and 1365 linear metres of boxed documents and volumes.

When full to capacity the archive store holds a third of all collections held by the service. The most heavily used records remain on-site, whilst unprocessed and lesser used collections are held in an off-site storage facility through a contract with Deepstore, based in the salt mines in Cheshire. Collections are regularly delivered on-site and returned as appropriate as part of the contract.

- **The Upper Foyer**

The upper foyer of York Explore is the primary route through which archive material is transported between the new repository and the Archive Reading Room. It is a public space and is used to display information about the service via two digital screens, host pop-up exhibitions and is the location of York Panorama, a public art installation created as part of the Activity Plan. [See Activity 12 for more information.](#)

The foyer also includes new informal seating in front of the radiators, which provides an opportunity for visitors to meet outside of the quiet study area, allowing the space to be used as a destination and not just a corridor.

Across all of the spaces new signage has been designed and installed in line with the signage across the whole of York Explore to highlight the fact that the Archive & Local History Service is now part of the wider service, and is located within the York Explore building.

The signage includes:

- Directional signage for visitors to all areas of the service, with the Archives and Local History service featuring prominently on way finding and directional signage
- Images from the archive and local history collections are displayed within the niches on the staircase to illustrate the extent of the collections available to the public and tempt people upstairs
- The Local History reception desk and nearby shelving now includes additional images and information to encourage more customers into the space. Individual subject headers have been mounted and placed on the appropriate shelf units.



New signage concept for the Archives and Local History reception and 1st floor landing spaces

Programme

Following the successful award of a Heritage Grant in December 2012, the project team set about developing the requirements and complying with the terms and conditions of the grant award. There were a number of early delays to the original programme:

- The professional support services for project manager, quantity surveyor/cost advisor and CDM Co-ordinator were put out to open tender in January 2013. This process resulted in a delay to the granting of the Permission to Start of 1 month until 18th February 2013 and thereby the start of the design development. As a result Appleyard & Trew LLP were not appointed to deliver these services until 20th March 2013, replacing Sweett Group plc. Bisset Adams was re-appointed as Design Team lead following the break in their contract

- There were a number of unachievable timescales on the original programme largely due to the complex nature of the archive store design and the need for it to meet the PD5454 standard
- Additional requirements emerged for the repair and refurbishment of the building causing the development phase to be further delayed.

All of these factors had a knock on effect to the workload of the CYC project team, which was further complicated by the reorganisation of the Library and Archive Service and the formation of Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd as a spin-out from York City Council.

The design of the PD5454 archive conservation store and workroom was a critical element of the project and the main new build component. It was decided that this should be contractor designed in order to use the specific skills of a specialist installer. The design team used a performance specification as a means of obtaining the most efficient design and value for money for this element of the work. In order to inform the structural design for the store and the supporting infrastructure (on the roof of the existing library) an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the racking was issued on the 29th April with Bruynzeel being appointed on 3rd June 2013. These detailed procurement exercises delayed the whole of the design development stage by 5 months until October 2013.

In order to mitigate these delays the following timetable was put into action:

- An open Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) for the principal contractor was issued on 1st May 2013 with a closing date of 3rd June 2013
- RIBA Design Stage F was completed by 22nd July 2013 allowing the tender documents to be prepared
- Following the PQQ process ITTs were issued on 26th August to six contractors
- Tenders were returned on 14th October 2013, with the return date having been extended from 28th September 2013
- Following various value engineering exercises and approval requirements, William Birch Ltd was appointed as principal contractor. The contract completion date was originally set as 20th October 2014. At this point, there was a project delay of 7 months.

William Birch Ltd was unable to start on site until 6th January 2014 with actual practical completion certified as 3rd December 2014. Partial occupation of the first floor of the building took place on 28th November 2014 which allowed for the first large scale move of archive collections from off-site storage in early December 2014.

Why did we do it that way?

Despite the delays in the Capital Works delivery phase, the client felt justified in taking all necessary steps to ensure a robust design and procurement process was implemented. As detailed above, this added a number of months onto the programme however the delay had a number of beneficial outcomes:

- Designs were completed and fit for purpose prior to the construction period, thereby ensuring that as many foreseeable risks as possible would be mitigated
- Value for money was obtained through the competitive tendering process to appoint a project management consultant to lead the delivery phase
- The extra time allowed additional funding to be obtained through City of York Council in order to carry out essential works to the main Library building, such as major floor and roof repairs and upgrading the heating system.

What were the outputs?

The main output was the physical delivery of the Capital Works elements within the overall timeframe of the project, albeit with an extension to the Grant Expiry Date from 31st December 2015 to 31st July 2016. The approved purposes were satisfied by the delivery of:

- A new secure conservation grade archive repository installed to PD5454 and operating within the parameters set at the practical completion stage, i.e. 50% Relative Humidity and 16 deg Celsius
- A new 'plug-In' link structure connecting the new repository and the first floor foyer, creating an area for the transition of the archives from storage to public access
- Refurbishment of the public spaces at first floor level to create a new Archives Reading Room, Local History Room and Family History Room, used by almost 95,000 people in the first 12 months
- Installation of new signage externally and internally to publicise the fact that the Archives & Local History is now located within York Explore, yet giving the service its own 'branding'
- New display installations and seating areas on the first floor foyer makes this a destination as well as a transitional space
- Installation of new Mechanical and Electrical equipment to service the requirements of a modern public access Archive & Local History Service, ensuring visitors and documents are catered for within bright and comfortable surroundings.

How did we know we were successful?

To evaluate the Capital Works, an assessment of the outputs, targets and where possible the outcomes and benefits that were set and included within the Round 2 Heritage Grant Application took place.

The following are the results of the specific evaluation measures that relate to the Capital Works:

- **Project Governance**

The Project Steering Group worked to deliver objectives as set by the Project Board as detailed at the beginning of this section. This Group met on a regular basis to monitor and determine any issues requiring resolution on the project. The main remit of the Group was to ensure the quality and robustness of the project management structure and

working relationships within the project team. The Group also had responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the whole project on time and within budget.

The Steering Group considered information through a series of Project Managers reports which included both the design team and cost consultants' progress reports. The record of these meetings is available for audit purposes at the end of the project.

- **Project Design Team**

The project design team was managed by the project management consultant and met on a regular basis to consider and review the progress of the design and specifically on a monthly basis to review progress. These meetings were extended to include the contractors once they had been appointed.

A formal project review workshop was held on Monday 16th November 2015 to coincide with the End of Defects Liability inspection. The participants in this workshop, which included representatives from the client, project management, design team and contractors, were very positive in response to the question about the quality of the working relationship between the members of the project team. It was agreed that the design team had been successful in incorporating all the client's requirements into the design and in delivering the Capital Works within budget. The major issue that arose on the contract was the relationship between the Mechanical & Electrical consultants and the contractors over the quality of information provided and the lack of co-ordination in the spaces designated within the building. These issues were resolved practically on site, but without always following the process set out in the contract documentation.

Minutes of the design team, contractor's progress meetings and all tender reports are held as a record of the decisions taken and progress made. A copy of the Project Review is available as an appendix.

“The robust structures of the project board, design group, and other sub-groups provided a sound structure for the governance of this project. Dedicated project leadership from within the Council together with rigorous procurement processes ensured that a strong design, QS and project management team were put in place. This was key to the project's success.”

Charlie Croft, CYC Assistant Director
(Communities, Culture and Public Realm)

- **Critical Success Factors**

The following factors were specifically identified by the Client at the beginning of the project in the Project Execution Plan as part of the success criteria for the delivery of the Capital Works.

- **Continuity of Services**

It was stated that the key factor in the successful delivery of the Capital Works would be ensuring that the design and construction of the works caused minimal disruption to the public service delivery at York Explore within the Library.

Although the completion of the work at York Explore was delayed from March 2014 until 3rd December 2014, the Archive & Local History areas on the first floor were handed over a few days earlier to allow the fitting of furniture and IT installations commissioned directly by the Client. It also enabled the retrieval of the archive collections from their off-site storage facility with Deepstore.

In order to minimise the period during which the building was closed to the public, the construction works were phased. During phases 1-2, the main Library area, the reference library and staff areas on the ground floor and the whole of the first floor were open to the public (January-February 2014). Phase 3 started in the middle of March 2014 by closing access to the first floor but handing back the remainder of the ground floor to the Client for public access. It was only during Phase 4 from the beginning of June 2014 that the Library was closed entirely to the public, a period of 7 months, which was two months less than originally envisaged.

- **Time**

It was stated that the delivery of the project within the time constraints detailed would be critical to the success of the project.

After the start of the delivery phase of the Capital Works, it became obvious that the original construction completion date of March 2014 was unachievable. The completion date was then revised to enable the transfer of the City Archives to York Explore by the autumn of 2014. This date was again revised to November 2014 at the start of the building contract, but it became evident that this date could not be met either. The client was able to start transferring archives from storage at the beginning of December 2014 with the building opening to the public on 5th January 2015.

- **Cost**

Another key factor for the delivery of the project was that it should be on cost and within the approved budget. The cost of the HLF element of the construction works was within budget, as was the additional works paid for by CYC as additional funding. Details of the costs are shown in the [Project Cost Review](#) section.

- **Quality**

It was crucial that the project should be completed to all relevant conservation design guidance and requirements as well as exceeding user needs. This was in addition to all design and construction related statutory requirements, legislation, etc.

The confirmation that the design is of the highest quality has been evidenced by the presentation of a York Design Award for 2015 through the York Civic Trust.

The planning conditions were signed off by the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer on 23rd October 2014 and the Completion Certificate was issued by the Building Control Officer on 2nd March 2015.

- **Health & Safety**

It was stated that the delivery of the project in accordance with all regulatory and legislative requirements and achieving an exemplary health and safety record on the project was deemed a critical success factor.

William Birch reported no serious incidents during the delivery of the capital building works at York Explore.

- **Meeting HLF requirements**

It was stated that meeting HLF requirements for project monitoring, reporting and financial control was critical, ensuring that project progress reports and grant claims complying with HLF contractual requirements must be submitted to the HLF each quarter in relation to expenditure relating to York: Gateway to History project.

All reporting requirements of the HLF have been met with both Progress Reports and Payment Request being submitted on a quarterly basis. A number of meetings have taken place with the HLF Monitor where progress and outstanding issues have been discussed. A Grant Expiry Date extension request from 31st December 2015 until 31st March 2016 was approved by the HLF. A further extension was requested in January 2016 to ensure that the necessary works and procedures could be completed in time.

The project cost reporting system has been designed to ensure that all eligible and ineligible costs have been identified and only those eligible have been included in any Grant Payment Requests.

What will we do in the future?

The Archive Store will hold approximately 1/3 of the entire archive collections held by the service. The Gateway to History project has established a process of cataloguing and

“The various modifications to the existing interiors are elegantly designed and beautifully finished - contemporary without being overstated, simple without being plain, using high quality materials beautifully detailed.

We found the design of the new building extremely impressive - dealing with a complex and technically demanding brief in a way that is both practical and innovative. It employs an unexpected range of contemporary technologies and forms, which are used in ways that are at the same time striking but also entirely sympathetic to the existing building.”

York Design Awards Judges

gaining intellectual control over the collections, see [Activity 6](#) for more information. The new public service has methods of recording frequently requested material to track the popularity of different collections. In the long term, once all archive material is catalogued, the most requested archives will remain on-site, with the lesser used being held with Deepstore in off-site storage.

The building contractor, following the return of York Explore to the Client, has carried out remedial works on a number of defective items which were identified at practical completion and the end of the defects liability period.

Following practical completion the contractor handed over the Building Manual which included a health and safety file. This document contains the mechanical and electrical specifications and operating and maintenance manuals enabling Explore to understand the building and its systems thus allowing the building to be operated and maintained efficiently and safely. The contractor also carried out a training day explaining the purpose, function and operation of the installations.

Explore has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the City of York Council (CYC) Facilities Management Service who carry out a programme of ongoing servicing and maintenance. The programme includes regular servicing of:

- Archive store environmental controls and electronic shelving
- Air conditioning in public spaces
- Fire alarms
- Door access systems
- Technology including digital microfilm readers and book scanners
- Electrical controls
- Lighting systems

It is the responsibility of Explore to schedule services and maintenance tasks and ensure that CYC comply with the terms of the SLA.

Disaster plan documentation is available in relation to safeguarding the archive collections and is currently being revised to reflect the new storage and access arrangements.

5.2 Activity Plan

Aims of the Activity Plan

Alongside the capital building works, an Activity plan was created consisting of 13 different activities aimed at making the archive collections and new spaces easier for everyone to use, whatever their previous level of experience.

The main aims of the York: Gateway to History Activity Plan were:

- To deliver an enhanced user experience, offering free, hands-on access to 800 years of the history of the city and its people
- To deliver a programme of activities and events to raise the profile of the service and to demonstrate its relevance to all communities in the city, old and new
- To work in partnership with volunteer groups such as the Friends of York City Archives, the York and District Family History Society, and the Association of Voluntary Guides to deliver an enhanced public offer above the core service
- To support community organisations across the city that have, or are thinking about, developing their own archives to record their lives and activities for the benefit of future generations
- To create a sustainable network of contacts, supporters and partners across all parts of the city to assist in future developments and enhancements to the service
- To work with community partners to add their material to the archive and local history collections to ensure that the archive comes to represent “all our citizens for all time”.

“The overarching ambition of the Gateway to History project was not to build a store and refurbish our public spaces but to develop the archive into a resource for all the people of York, enabling a diversity of children, families, adult learners, societies, organisations and individuals to interact with the collections in ways that suit and are meaningful to them.”

Victoria Hoyle, City Archivist,
Explore York Libraries and Archives

5.2.1 Activity 1: Creation of a Community Advisory Group

Key Outputs

- 12 members attended 8 advisory group meetings during 2014-2015
 - 10 suggestions made by the advisory group relating to the new service were implemented
 - A post project review revealed that the group had improved the “Co-operation between people within a framework”.
-



John Carlill, Chair of the Advisory Group meets with a member of Friends of York City Archives

Background

To ensure that the York: Gateway to History project delivered its full potential and left a lasting legacy, it was proposed that a Community Advisory Group would be formed. The group would consist of those from different organisations across the city that could provide ongoing guidance based on their field of expertise, to ensure the ongoing inclusivity of the Archive & Local History service.

What did we say we would do?

It was proposed that the Advisory Group would include representatives from a wide range of local organisations, services and community groups. The aim of this Activity was to create a support network for the project that was representative of the wide ranging viewpoints across the city.

What did we do and how did we do it?

In August 2014 the Project Delivery Manager, City Archivist and the Access Archivist scoped and invited a range of community group and local institution representatives to join the Advisory Group. The first meeting chaired by John Carlill, one of the Explore Community Directors, took place in October 2014.

Members were asked to make suggestions on a wide range of service issues including accessibility, promotional activities and user experience. The remaining meetings then took place bi-monthly and discussions included:

- Priority of community archive cataloguing
- Fundraising
- Use of technology
- Collaboration across local archives
- Ways of measuring success
- Improving the overall user experience

Why did we do it that way?

The Activity plan timetable set out that the Advisory Group would be formed in conjunction with the capital building works. Due to staffing changes during the first half of 2014 the formation of the Advisory Group was delayed until the second half of 2014. As a result the remit of the group was changed to assist in setting the direction of the new service during 2015 following re-opening.

What were the outputs?

The Advisory Group consisted of representatives from 9 different local organisations and community groups including:

- Friends of York City Archives
- York Oral History Society
- York and District Family History Society
- York Association of Voluntary Guides
- York Alternative History Society
- City of York Council, York Learning
- Local Link Magazine
- The University of York
- The Borthwick Institute for Archives, The University of York

Up to 12 attendees, including members of the team at Explore, participated in each meeting and made a variety of suggestions on the direction of the service including:

- Access to archives outside core working hours to attract different users
 - Opening hours of the Archives Reading Room were extended to include Saturdays

- Digital microfilm readers to include a printing as well as a scanning facility
 - A system for printing from microfilm was introduced
- Simple signage across all Archives and Local History spaces to aid navigation around the spaces
 - A new signage offer across the whole of Explore was implemented in February 2016 as part of the Capital Works programme
- Showcasing the community archives
 - ‘Voices of the Archives’ booklet and pop-up banner exhibition were designed to give a clear, visual overview of the collections. See case study as an appendix for more information.

How did we know that we were successful?

The Advisory Group formed part of wider Explore governance as it was chaired by one of the Community Directors and has proved to be successful in sharing different perspectives on the Archives & Local History service. In total 10 suggestions put forward by the group have been adopted into the ongoing management of the service.

A post project review was carried out in December 2015 to evaluate the success of the Advisory Group. When asked what worked well in the Group, comments included:

- Great for information sharing
- Helped community groups communicate with each other
- Enabled concerns to be voiced

Members of the group also commented that as well as feeding into the service, the Group had acted as a way of building community relationships.

What will we do in the future?

As a result of the success of this Advisory Group format, the principle has been used to inform Explore’s development of advisory groups for other aspects of the service. This particular group will be re-launched to advise and support Explore York’s Management Team and Board of Directors on the management and investment of current and future restricted funds.

“The Advisory Group has demonstrated the need to get like-minded people together in order to start process of putting thoughts into actions- need something similar in the future”

John Carlill, Community Director,
Explore York Libraries and Archives

“Has re-established relationships which had broken down. It’s now a different kind of relationship, but it is a relationship”

Alan Hardwick,
York Oral History Society

5.2.2 Activity 2: Staff Training and Development

Key Outputs

- 28 hours of staff training, 9 internal and 2 externally hosted, were delivered during 2014-2015
- 70% of staff enjoyed the training sessions they attended
- 65% said they learnt something they didn't expect during the sessions.



A member of staff working at the reception desk in Local History. Image courtesy of Phillip Vile.

Background

The capital investment for the Gateway to History project would provide the Archive with a wide range of services and equipment. To enable these to be used to their full potential staff training was to play a key role. The training would raise awareness and understanding of the Archive & Local History Service across all front-of-house staff to effectively imbed it in the core service.

What did we say we would do?

The aim of this Activity was to deliver a culture change by implementing a programme of staff training to increase awareness and understanding of what the archives and local history collections contain and how they can be used by the community.

It was determined that the main target audiences for this Activity would be front-of-house staff at York Explore, all branch library managers, and heads of some CYC departments. Training would cover; a basic introduction to archives, information on the archives held at

Explore, examples of how archives can be used and awareness of other archives in the City and beyond. The training programme would be delivered via regular workshops by a combination of internal specialist staff, local community groups, and bought-in specialist expertise. To support the training a number of additional resources would be created including reference guides and online resources.

What did we do and how did we do it?

Staff training began following the appointment of the Access Archivist in April 2014. In June 2014, during the closure of York Explore Library due to the capital building works, the Access Archivist, CC&OA and the Civic & Public Records Archivist hosted an 'Introduction to Archives and Local History' session for all front of house staff at York Explore. The session was used to scope current training needs of staff to inform future training.

Between July and November 2014 a series of training sessions were delivered in the lead up to the opening of the new service in January 2015. A visit to the Hull History Centre in July 2014 was also organised to develop staff knowledge and skills of how other archive services operate.

In September 2014, conservation staff at The Borthwick Institute for Archives at the University of York hosted a 'handling archives' session to increase confidence in caring for archives and communicating this to customers.

In February 2015 a further staff training session was held to get staff feedback on the new service and to set training objectives for the remainder of 2015.

In June 2015 the Team Leaders, who manage the front-of-house staff across the service at York Explore, attended an 'Archives for Non-Archivists' training course hosted by the Archives Skills Consultancy Ltd.

Why did we do it that way?

All training sessions for the Archive & Local History Service were scheduled as part of a wider training programme to ensure that managing the archive service became part of the working culture of Explore as a whole service.

What were the outputs?

The training sessions have seen a culture change in the way staff view the Archive & Local History Service. All front of house staff at York Explore now work across all areas of the service on a rota, spending time answering enquiries, retrieving archives, supervising the reading room as well as working across the main library. In addition staff have been equipped with the skills to deliver family history sessions and support in family activities.

Training sessions covered all aspects of archive management and the running of the public service. In total 8 internal and 3 external sessions were hosted including:

- Introduction to Archives and Local History
- Visit to Hull History Centre
- Archives Handling (Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York)
- Archives and Local History: Who we are and what we do
- Archives enquiries
- Feedback on the new ALH service
- Contextualising archives
- Basic Archives Skills Training (Archive Skills Consultancy Ltd.)
- The new Archives and Local History Familiarisation Plan
- Association of Voluntary Guides walking tour of York
- Introduction for non York-based staff

To support staff training, additional resources aid both staff and public in accessing the collections and resources across the service including:

- A hard-copy quick reference guide with information about the types of collections held in the new service and the ways in which the different spaces can be used by visitors
- Expanded Explore website featuring more information about the service, including frequently asked questions.

How did we know that we were successful?

All staff who participated in training sessions completed a survey with the aim of assessing the impact of the training and to scope a future programme based on gaps in staff knowledge and confidence.

Before the training took place, 40% of staff said they felt unsure about which collections and resources were available within the Archive & Local History Service. As a result of training on the different collections and resources, 41% stated they now felt confident in what was available, with just 23% still feeling unsure.

Overall 70% of staff enjoyed the training sessions they attended with 65% revealing that they learnt something they didn't expect. These survey results reveal a marked culture change and interest by front-of-house staff to continue developing their skills.

“Actually working in ALH gives me more confidence each time.”

Reading and Learning Advisor,
York Explore

What will we do in the future?

In response to feedback in the training survey, a new staff training programme for 2016 has been created which will take place as part of regular training slots at York Explore.

Training in various elements outlined in the project Legacy Plan will be delivered during the first half of 2016.

5.2.3 Activity 3: Recruit Archive ‘Champions’

Key Outputs

- A network of 170 individuals from 78 different local community groups was developed during 2014-2015
 - As a result of the project 80% of ‘Champions’ said they felt more connected to and proud of their own community as a result of working with Explore
 - 94% of ‘Champions’ said that as a result of the project they had a greater understanding of how the archive manages services
-



A member of Poppleton History Group presents at the launch of the archive in Poppleton Library

Background

The consultation process undertaken to develop the Activity Plan identified a number of organisations and individuals that could provide a route into communities that are under represented amongst current service users, and whose history is under-represented in the archive collections. The consultation also indicated that one of the most effective ways of developing links with these potential audiences and collection holders is to work through trusted intermediaries within “gatekeeper” organisations. These intermediaries have the potential to raise the profile of the archive service within their community, whilst also identifying how the archive can support the work of their organisation and the communities they work with.

What did we say we would do?

The aim of this Activity was to develop a network of Archive ‘Champions’ to act as a two-way channel to communicate messages about the Archives and Local History Service to and from the communities and individuals they work with.

Several 'hard to reach' audiences were identified as the focus for the 'Champion' Activity:

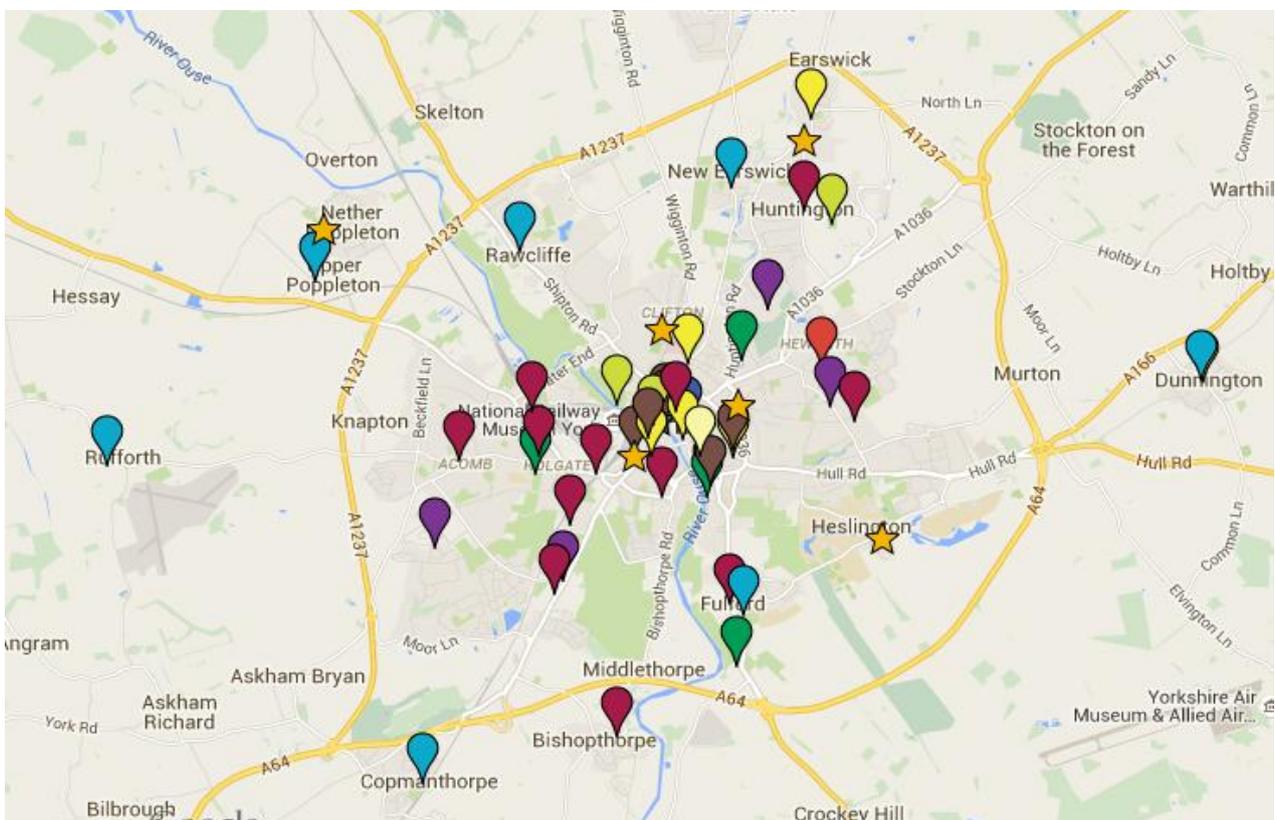
- York's BME communities
- Refugee support organisations
- Roma/Travellers
- Disability rights groups

York Learning at City of York Council was identified as an additional partner in this Activity.

What did we do and how did we do it?

The CC&OA spent January 2014 scoping the different community groups across the city. Contact information was compiled by utilising partnerships with the City of York Council Communities and Neighbourhoods team as well as using other Council systems such as Yortime and existing contacts within the Library and Archive service.

During February-December 2014 the CC&OA met with a wide range of community groups from within the city centre as well as the smaller outlying villages. The meetings were a mix of formal group meetings featuring a presentation on the project and 1:1 relationship building meetings, mostly taking place out in the community. Once the Library re-opened in January 2015, the majority of meetings were held centrally to allow groups to tour the new facilities and discuss how the spaces could be used by those they represent.



Visual representation of community group meetings 2014-2015
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zCaJk7ewzUc.kjamgfhpWNHI&usp=sharing>

During early meetings in March 2014 the CC&OA discovered that many community groups wanted to develop projects with the Archive & Local History Service. So throughout the project a total of 4 pilot community projects were delivered.

Community group meetings continued officially until June 2015, however further meetings took place throughout 2015 in response to community groups getting in touch directly.

Why did we do it that way?

The above approach was developed as part of a conscious decision to move away from the traditional method of archive community engagement, whereby projects and communications are led solely by the archive service. There were several reasons for this:

- A more collaborative approach generated longer-term Archive 'Champion' relationships to create a stronger project legacy
- Community relationships could be sustained through developing and delivering a wide range of projects. These projects had tangible outcomes that would improve the scope of archive collections held within the service, further promote their existence and make a real difference to communities
- A new approach to community engagement has placed the archive service at the forefront of community engagement across the Archive sector. This way of working presented new opportunities for the service to attend and speak at the following national and regional conferences:
 - Research Libraries UK Discovering Collections Discovering Communities 2014 Conference, Library of Birmingham, 29th-30th October 2014
 - Pararchive Conference, University of Leeds, 27th-28th March 2015
 - Yorkshire Federation of Museums and Art Galleries Regional Conference, National Railway Museum, York, 29th May 2015

The CC&OA was also interviewed as part of the Within the Walls PhD programme at the University of York by PhD student Victoria Hoyle for her thesis titled 'Who do Archives think they are?: Value and Community in the Heritage City'.

What were the outputs?

During 2014-2015 the CC&OA created a group of local, audience-specific advocates for the Archive & Local History Service. Key Archive 'Champions' included:

- LGBT Forum
- Friends of West Bank Park
- York Unifying and Multicultural Initiative
- The Wilberforce Trust
- York Irish Association
- York Scout Association

- York's Alternative History Society
- Poppleton History Society
- Lord Deramore's Primary School
- York Normandy Veterans Association
- Alcoholics Anonymous York
- Wigginton Parish Council

A full list of Archive 'Champions' is available as an appendix.

In-depth partnerships were developed through the delivery of 4 pilot projects with community partners. See the following case studies as appendixes for more information. Projects included:

- Lord Deramore's Primary School Research Project
- York Normandy Veterans Legacy Project
- First World War Pop-up Banner Exhibition
- Poppleton History Society Archive Access Project

During 2015, as the new archive service was open to the public, a number of events were hosted with Archive 'Champions' to enable future use of archive and local history collections in projects. Key events included:

- 28th February 2015 – The York Irish Association Research Day
- 7th-8th November 2015 - York Scouts Association Open Weekend (see case study as an appendix for more information)

The HLF development team also hosted a series of 'Grant Surgery' days during 2015 at York Explore Library and Archives which a number of Archive 'Champions' attended.

How did we know that we were successful?

In total a network of 170 individuals from 78 different community groups was developed to act as local, audience-specific advocates for the archive, some of which had participated in pilot projects with the service.

Archive 'Champions' were asked about their experiences at the end of the project. A total of 20 community groups responded and based on the MLA Generic Social Outcomes, Stronger Safer Communities criteria, 80% felt more connected to and proud of their own community as a result of working with Explore.

The survey results also revealed that the project has supported communities to participate in local decision making, as outlined by the MLA Generic Social Outcome, Strengthening Public Life. Overall 94% of 'Champions' said that as a result of working with Explore they felt they had a greater

“It made me realise there is a support system in York through Explore with archivists there to help with any problems or queries. The new storage for archives is superb.”

Archive 'Champion'

“Its great for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lives and experiences to be valued...at last”

York LGBT Forum

understanding of the archive service.

Of those groups that had participated in pilot projects, 90% said that the project had responded to the needs of their community.

What will we do in the future?

A post project questionnaire revealed that 100% of Archive 'Champions' would like to continue working with Explore in the future. In response to demand, annual meetings for Archive 'Champions' will be hosted at Explore and will give groups the opportunity to meet up with each other and share ideas and form new partnerships. These events will be a chance for the Archive staff to promote newly catalogued collections and disseminate key service information.

“It has captured information that otherwise would have been lost and importantly, given a great sense of pride to those individuals providing the information”

Member,
York Normandy Veterans Association

5.2.4 Activity 4: Askham Grange Placement Programme

Key Outputs

- 3 large community archive collections, totalling 36 boxes were processed with help from the Askham Grange resident
 - 2.5 weeks of staff time was saved as a result of the 80 hours of volunteer support provided by the resident
 - The resident rated their placement experience as ‘excellent’ and said that it has helped them gain confidence.
-



Volunteers get hands-on with archive collections

Background

HM Prison Institution Askham Grange is an open prison which delivers a national service to women prisoners (residents) and young offenders. Explore York Libraries & Archives provides a prison library service at Askham Grange under a Service Level Agreement with the prison, funded by the Ministry of Justice via the National Offender Management Service.

Residents tend to be transferred to Askham Grange to complete the last part of their sentence, and the prison's main focus is the reintegration and resettlement of prisoners into the community and preparation for life after prison. The prison provides work placements for residents at stage 1 of their release programme to get re-accustomed to a normal working environment before their release.

What did we say we would do?

To support Askham Grange residents and the ongoing link between the prison and Explore, the Library & Archive service would provide a series of work-based placements. The programme of work during the placement would be defined by Explore, working with the Pathways Department at the Prison. Feedback would be provided to the resident during and after the placement. The placements would consist of a mixture of clerical and manual work in connection with the archive and local history collections, together with some practical basic conservation projects.

What did we do and how did we do it?

Initial discussions with Askham Grange took place in January 2015 once York Explore was open to the public. Meetings took place with Prison representatives and Explore staff to complete risk assessments, scope volunteer roles and define supervisory responsibilities.

In March 2015 an interview was held between the Project Delivery Manager, the Access Archivist and a suitable resident. Following this meeting, in April 2015, the resident started working to assist in the cataloguing of community archive collections supervised by the CC&OA. The placement officially ended in June 2015, however the resident continued to provide archive and local history support in addition to the full time work they had obtained following the placement.

Why did we do it that way?

The initial target for this Activity was to deliver a total of 4 placements to Askham Grange residents. The closure of York Explore during 2014 delayed this process, leaving less than 12 months during which placements could be offered.

Not all residents were suitable for work with archives and local history and many of those suitable were not at the right stage of rehabilitation. Due to restricted timings and lack of available residents, only 1 placement was delivered during the life of the project. This placement acted as a pilot for future placements and in December 2015 a further placement was set up for January 2016.

What were the outputs?

One placement over 8 weeks was hosted by the Archives and Local history Service, on a Wednesday and Saturday, totalling 10 hours a week. The Cafe and Library service also hosted a placement each over 8 weeks, totalling 5 hours a week.

In total the resident supported the processing of 3 large community archive collections, totalling 36 boxes, searchable via the online catalogue and accessible to the public. The support of the resident was equivalent to 2.5 weeks of paid staff time thus boosting service capacity to make community archives accessible.

How did we know that we were successful?

The Askham Grange resident who took part in the placement completed an individual feedback report and took part in an exit interview. The resident rated their experience as excellent for induction, overall experience and expectations. The resident said that “it has helped me to gain confidence” through providing a structured working day including partial independent travel to and from the place of work and working alongside professional colleagues. The resident has since secured full time employment, demonstrating the positive role these placements have in reintroducing residents into the workplace.

What will we do in the future?

In January 2016, following the official end of the project, a further Askham Grange resident began a placement with the Archives & Local History Service. This demonstrates a continued relationship with Askham Grange to offer ongoing placements as part of the wider Explore volunteer programme.

“I feel that with working with Explore has given Askham Grange residents a wider range of opportunities, to enhance skills in the different areas that our residents have worked in while volunteering for you.

It is good for the residents to have these options in the long term to enhance their skills to be able to gain paid employment in the future.”

Shirley Seaman, Communities Officer
Askham Grange HM Prison

5.2.5 Activity 5: Community Collections Development

Key Outputs

- 98 representatives from 52 different community groups attended archive training workshops during 2015
 - 98% of workshop attendees said they felt more supported by Explore as a result of attending a workshop and 35% had never used the archive and local history service before
 - 95 new and additions to existing community archive collections were deposited with the Archive & Local History Service during 2015.
-



Attendees at a Gateway to Your Archives workshop take part in a cataloguing Activity

Background

The City Archives holds a range of different community archives. However, as communities grow and change, the breadth and depth of the collections would need to be extended and enhanced. Through improving the range of archive collections held by the service new opportunities for community cohesion would emerge.

During the consultation process, representatives from a wide range of community groups across the city expressed that they needed professional support and guidance from the Archives & Local History Service on collecting and cataloguing their community archives. Groups also felt they needed guidance on what type of information they should be keeping for future generations.

What did we say we would do?

The aim of this Activity was to provide training to groups and individuals that currently have, or are developing, an archive collection. The training would enable groups to confidently collect and manage archives, gain awareness of how to deposit archives at Explore and prepare the correct documentation to allow the archive service to make collections accessible as quickly as possible.

The frequency of workshop sessions would be informed by an initial review and mapping exercise of collections and organisations in the community that may benefit from this type of support. The initial target was to deliver 12 training/workshop events with a total attendance of 180 community representatives.

What did we do and how did we do it?

As soon as the CC&OA started in January 2014 an initial review of the community collections held by the Archives Service was undertaken, and these collections were mapped against the broader community Activity across the city.

This initial Activity revealed where the community collections were weakest against the number of active community groups in York. Collections and groups were divided into themes and the following communities were identified as being a priority for the project:

- Parish Councils
- Residents Associations
- Local History Societies
- Advice, support and wellbeing groups and organisations
- Campaign & event groups
- Language & culture groups and organisations

During February-September 2014, the CC&OA met with a wide range of community groups to scope interest in community archive training. These meetings were conducted as part of discussions with groups about becoming an Archive 'Champion' as many groups were interested in the archive service, working on a project and learning how to manage their own archive. See Activity 3 for more information about [Archive 'Champions'](#). Based on community feedback, from September-December 2014 the CC&OA created a guidance booklet entitled 'Gateway to Your Archives' and supporting workshop.

From February-October 2015 a total of 6 'Gateway to Your Archives' workshops were hosted at York Explore Library and Archive. An additional Social Media half day workshop was delivered in collaboration with The University of Leeds Pararchive Project who introduced groups to their online storytelling platform. At the same event an introduction to Social Media was delivered in-house by Explore's Digital Inclusion Manager.

In October 2015 a series of three training films were created to capture the content of the workshops for those unable to attend a workshop during 2015. The films were uploaded onto YouTube with a view to being launched onto a new Explore wide website in April 2016.

Why did we do it that way?

The content and regularity of the workshops was based around the feedback from community groups during the course of building a network of Archive 'Champions'. All groups were asked what they would like to learn about as part of a training workshop and this ensured that the workshop and guidance was relevant, accessible and realistic for groups with limited staffing and budget.

Initially the focus of this Activity was to promote the deposit of archives with the service at Explore, however during the scoping process many groups stressed the importance of caring for their archive locally. As a result the workshops covered practical storage solutions as well as advice on depositing archives. See case studies as appendices on Wigginton Parish Council and Poppleton History Society for details of how we enabled groups to store and manage their own collections.

What were the outputs?

The Gateway to Your Archives workshops were designed to take community groups on a journey from seeing the value in their archive collection right through to deposit or self-management of their collection.

The workshops included a guided tour of the archive service, including behind the scenes look at the Pod. The tour gave attendees a chance to ask archivists about the collections, discover ways in which they can use the service and see where their archives would be stored should they wish to deposit their collections.

The workshops were delivered with the understanding that community groups often have limited staffing and budget to manage their archives. To ensure that groups were equipped with skills they could realistically use, emphasis was placed on 'real life' scenarios. Practical activities were combined with presentations and question and answer sessions to allow for different styles of learning and inter-group discussion. See case study as an appendix on the workshops for details of the activities.

Key groups that attended a workshop included:

- Friends of York Art Gallery
- Bishopthorpe Community Archive
- New Earswick Parish Council
- Fulford Community Orchard
- Friends of West Bank Park
- York Oral History Society
- York-Münster Twinning Association
- Foxwood Residents Association
- William Birch & Son Ltd.
- Alcoholics Anonymous York
- The Wilberforce Trust
- York City Knights Foundation

During 2015, 95 new collections and additions to collections were deposited with the Archive & Local History Service. Key community collections included:

- Kingsway Residents Association
- York City Rowing Club
- York Rotary Club
- Coppergate 2 Campaign Group
- York Normandy Veterans Association
- River Foss Society

These collections have addressed gaps in the community archives as scoped by the CC&OA. See [Activity 6, Enhanced User Experience](#) for details of this scoping Activity.

How did we know we were successful?

In total 98 representatives from 52 different community groups attended workshops during 2015. All of the workshop attendees were asked to complete a survey of their experiences and as per the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Generic Learning Outcomes:

- 95% claimed to have learned something new
- 98% claimed to have learned something of relevance to them
- 63% claimed to have gained new practical skills

Overall fewer people claimed to have gained new practical skills as a result of the workshops. However, when asked to list what they had learnt, most responses included a practical skill. This reveals that there is a lack of clarity around what a practical skill is versus learning something new.

Based on the MLA Generic Social Outcomes Stronger, Safer Communities, the workshops improved group and inter-group dialogue with 94% saying they felt that it had helped them to engage more effectively with their local community and other groups.

The workshops have also contributed towards the MLA Generic Social Outcomes Strengthening Public Life by providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces. 98% of attendees said they felt more engaged with and supported by Explore York Libraries and Archives than before.

“To meet with all of the other community groups was really great. I really enjoyed talking to everyone and hearing their similar stories of how they were trying to record their local history.”

Workshop attendee

“Service seems very approachable regarding community archives. I would definitely recommend other groups to come and talk to the service.”

Workshop attendee

“As an organisation hoping to start an archive it has taught me where to start, what to consider and how to avoid just amassing stuff without any structure in place.”

Workshop attendee

Of those that attended the workshops 35% had never used the Archive & Local History Service before, therefore contributing to widening access to the service.

What will we do in the future?

To enable groups to continue accessing archive training and advice, all of the Gateway to Your Archives workshop materials are now available on the Explore website including a digital version of the guidance booklet and short training videos covering [cataloguing](#), [storage](#) and [digital records](#).

5.2.6 Activity 6: Enhanced User Experience for Hands-On Access to Archive and Local History Collections at York Explore

Key outputs

- 17 additional hours of access to original archives per week is provided as part of the new service
- During 2015, 94,858 people visited the archive and local history service
- 121 community archive collections were catalogued during 2014-2015 which is 30% of the total.



A user in the Family History Room demonstrates the use of the Digital Microfilm Readers to attendees at a Gateway to Your Archives workshop

Background

The capital investment provided for the York: Gateway to History project has safeguarded the long-term preservation of nationally important archive collections and provided new and innovative user facilities at York Explore Library and Archive. To make the most of these dynamic spaces, a range of introduction and induction materials and activities would need to be developed to help all people access the collections.

What did we say we would do?

The aim of this Activity was to provide opportunities for new and experienced users to gain hands-on experience with archives and local history resources.

The two main strands of Activity included:

- Providing access to all collections including scoping and cataloguing archives
- Improving user information and induction including producing user guides and hosting new user inductions.

What did we do and how did we do it?

The first task of the CC&OA during January-February 2014 was to scope the existing community archives and map the range of collections available.

In August 2014 a CCA was recruited to begin processing the community collections and make them available via the online catalogue. Physical processing of these collections began in November 2014 once the capital building works at York Explore were complete and collections were returned from off-site storage. Cataloguing continued during the remainder of 2014 and throughout 2015.

When the new service opened in January 2015, new volunteer roles including Local History Support and Family History Buddies were created to provide induction to new users of the service. A series of user guides and updated public catalogues and rules to help users self-direct their research were also launched with the new service.

During September-November 2015 the Archive & Local History Service partnered with the Workers Educational Association (WEA) to host an Introduction to Family History and Introduction to Local History courses. The courses covered research basics as well as utilising the new resources at York Explore.

In September 2015 the CC&OA and CCA worked with Archive 'Champions', volunteers and researchers to create a booklet and pop-up banner exhibition to promote the community archives entitled 'Voices of the Archives'. The new resources will promote the community collections to a wide audience during 2016 and beyond.

Why did we do it that way?

The approach to cataloguing the community archives was focussed around making as many collections as possible available to the general public. Initially the Activity Plan stated that a high-level catalogue of the collections was to be created, however the diversity of the collections meant that the creation of themes was a more accessible approach to gaining intellectual control.

Core staffing changes with the Archive & Local History Service and wider York Explore meant that daily and in-depth induction sessions were unachievable. The use of volunteers to provide support alongside printed resources worked as a viable alternative.

Initial partners in delivery of training and induction were the York and District Family History Society. Following submission of the Round 2 application the Society no longer had the capacity to deliver sessions, so the Workers Educational Association (WEA) became an alternative partner.

During the cataloguing process, a number of collections were identified as needing

further research in order to make them accessible to the public. To address this problem an innovative, crowd-sourcing approach was taken during 2015. Through a partnership with York Press a series of feature articles asked for information about certain collections to enhance catalogue entries. A social media campaign via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and a Wordpress blog also encouraged people to interact with the collections.

What were the outputs?

The new service has adopted a self-service approach with user guides and resources replacing the need for intensive staff inductions, therefore enabling staff to focus on making more collections accessible. Information created included:

- Introduction to Archives & Local History booklet, available in hard-copy and on the Explore website
- Building floor plan to help users navigate the different spaces, available in hard-copy and on the Explore website
- A geographical map of other local archive services was launched on the Explore website to raise awareness of the wider archive context
- New signage across York Explore clearly outlining the use of each space
- Updated guides to microfilm and map resources
- Service and event information on the five digital screens across the service
- ‘Voices of the Archives’ booklet and pop-up banner exhibition to promote the community archive collections. See case study as an appendix for information.

Improvements in technology across the Archives & Local History service have enabled more users to self-direct their research and access to resources. These include:

- Book scanners to create high quality scans of archive and local history material
- Digital Microfilm Readers to improve access to microfilm resources
- Computer terminals providing access to the new online archive catalogue

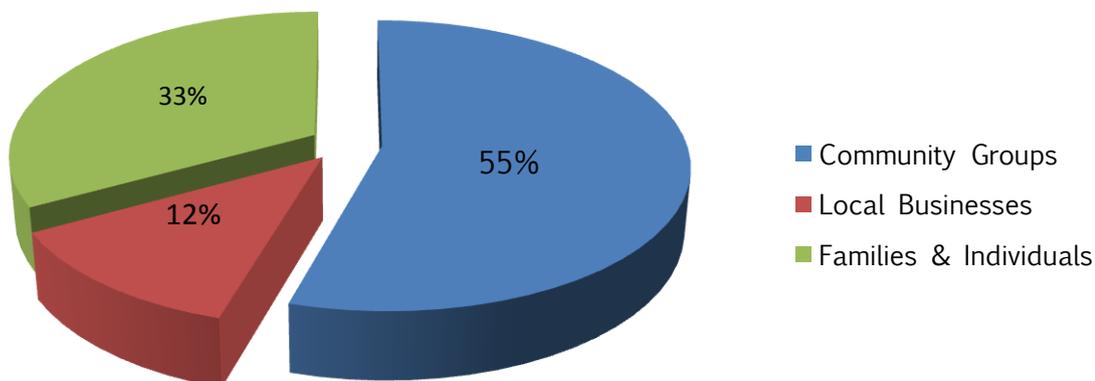
New volunteer roles support access to technology and provide more in-depth support to researchers beyond the user guides.

Partnership working with the WEA in the delivery of Family and Local History courses has encouraged new users to the service and to self-direct their research using physical and digital resources.

The 402 community archive collections were split into three key themes to aid in the intellectual control and access to the collections:

- Community Groups
- Local Businesses
- Families & Individuals

Total Catalogued Community Archive Collections



Breakdown of 2015 catalogued community archive collections by theme

These themes were used to create a framework for identifying the strengths and weaknesses to provide an overview of where active collecting would improve the range of communities represented. For the first time York's community collections are being made searchable via the online catalogue as well as being promoted and used as part of outreach activities.

How did we know that we were successful?

The new archive reading room has space for 12 researchers per day, compared to the 4 seats available in the old facility at the Art Gallery. With the new dedicated Local History space at York Explore there is space for up to 62 people per day. Access to original archives is provided 30 hours a week, a marked rise from the 13 hours a week in the old service. As a result during 2015:

- 94,858 on-site users of Archives and Local History spaces
- 427 were intensive hands-on users of original archive material
- 3,162 original archives were retrieved for researchers at pre-advertised times and benchmarked against other similar services

Of the 402 community archive collections a total of 121 were catalogued and made accessible to the

“What a resource to have on our doorstep. I was a little nervous about my level of IT skills and it is good to know that someone will help me with the IT at the Archives if I struggle. I shall certainly be exploring the ancestry files and probably other things as well.”

Visitor to York Explore

public, accounting for 30% of the total. These collections accounted for 69% of customer requests in the archives reading room during 2015.

Visitors to the new service have mentioned the IT facilities, staff support and new uses of spaces within the Library as positive changes.

Web presence and the use of social media have played a vital role in providing remote access to information about the service and collections. During 2015:

- For Archive and Local History pages on the Explore website, there was a 26% increase in page views since new content was launched
- The @yorkarchivesuk Twitter account, by December 2015 had over 1,170 followers, a 75% increase in just one year
- Archive related posts on the Explore York Libraries and Archives Facebook page have received a total of 1049 interactions
- A Pinterest account showcasing the community archives received 2398 views during 2015

Partnerships with York Press have resulted in a total of 10 feature and news articles about the collections and service. As a result of these articles 21 people have interacted with the service and have resulted in 2 additions to the community archive collections. Examples are available as an appendix.

“There are not many places round York where can get such great access to these kind of resources. Before the refurbishment, the family history room was misused but is now much better.”

Visitor to York Explore

What will we do in the future?

The gap analysis of the community archives has helped shape cataloguing and collecting priorities for 2016 and beyond and has been integral to the Archive Access Plan for 2016.

The ‘Voices of the Archives’ booklet is a printed and digital legacy of the project which will be distributed to branch libraries and Archive ‘Champions’. The resource is supported by a pop-up banner exhibition which is available for touring branch libraries and will be on display during 2016 at York Explore.

5.2.7 Activity 7: Enhanced Family History Service in Partnership with York and District Family History Service

Key Outputs

- 70 members of the York and District Family History Society attended an introduction to the Archive & Local History Service talk
 - The Family History Society held a key role as part of the Archives Advisory Group, offering advice on family history resources
 - Explore and the Society shared expertise at national and regional Family History events during 2015.
-



Customers using family history resources in the Family History Room

Background

The Archives & Local History Service includes a designated Family History room with access to a wide range of printed and digital resources. To make the most of these new facilities a partnership with York and District Family History Society would be developed. The Society is an active volunteer organisation of over 700 members. The Society holds a collection of family history resources and archival research equipment, and regularly produces family history resources and materials for sale to the public. It also offers a family history research service for remote users from their premises on the outskirts of York.

What did we say we would do?

The aim of this Activity was to utilise the skills and expertise of the Family History Society through a range of activities. It was originally planned that the Society would relocate from its current premises to York Explore on completion of the capital building work. However, during 2014, the York and District Family History Society issued a statement to the Archive & Local History service stating they no longer had the capacity to partner with the service. As a result the activities delivered were redefined to better fit with how the Society wanted to work with Explore.

What did we do and how did we do it?

In February 2015 the Chairman of the York and District Family History Society attended an Advisory Group meeting. It was at this meeting a statement was issued stating that the group were no longer able to collaborate with Explore on the project as envisaged in the Activity plan.

To establish a new partnership, in April 2015 the Access Archivist presented at a meeting of the Family History Society to raise awareness of the new facilities at York Explore and to encourage members to use the new service.

The partnership between the Society and Explore continued later in April 2015 when both attended the national 'Who Do You Think You Are?' event to promote services and skills. Both were also present at the Yorkshire Family History Fair in June 2015 and at the York and District Family History Fair in September 2015. Explore also joined up with other Yorkshire archive services to promote partnership working across the sector.

In October 2015 the Access Archivist and Project Delivery Manager arranged with the Family History Society the delivery of the following:

- A 'Spotlight on Family History' talk as part of the Explore Your Archives week of activities in November 2015
- A promotional stand during the same week for researchers to ask questions and explore family history resources.

Why did we do it that way?

The Activity was delivered to fit with the changed way in which the Family History Society wanted to work with the service. To ensure that the Archive & Local History Service still provided guidance and advice to researchers, a partnership with the WEA to host local and family history courses was developed. [See Activity 6 for more information.](#)

What were the outputs?

The Family History Society participated as part of the [Advisory Group](#) during the project and shared their expertise to support the use of the resources at York Explore to their full potential.

The Society also provided support at national and regional events on family history as well as welcoming Explore to the York and District Family History Fair to further promote the services on offer. Awareness amongst current and prospective researchers was raised through a talk by the Society as part of Explore Your Archives week and their presence at a stall during the same week gave researchers the chance to ask detailed research questions.

How did we know that we were successful?

The Family History Society was represented at all Advisory Group meetings and therefore had a real input into the direction of the family history service.

Talks were held by the City Archivist and the Access Archivist both at York Explore and at the Society's building. These talks shared knowledge of the family history resources with over 70 members of the Society, thus widening the reach of the service amongst local experts.

The 'Spotlight on Family History' talk that took place as part of Explore Your Archive week attracted a number of individuals interested in researching family history. There are currently discussions taking place regarding the hosting of the 2016 York and District Family History Fair at York Explore and other ways in which the Society could work with Explore.

What will we do in the future?

To maintain the relationship with the York and District Family History Society and to provide ongoing support to researchers, York Explore is offering to host the 2016 York and District Family History Fair.

5.2.8 Activity 8: School Learning Resources

Key Outputs

- A broad range of partnerships were developed with practitioners in the learning sector across the City to inform future work
 - A total of 5 school resource packs were created around different subjects including history, art and creative writing
 - A total of 1,212 participants took part in 31 education visits during the project.
-



Year 4's at St. Barnabas Primary School interact with a vinyl floor version of an archive map

Background

A consultation with teachers and education advisers revealed that there was little knowledge and awareness of the ways in which archives could be used as part of school learning and the national curriculum. Teachers were keen to see a wide range of activities delivered and made available to them for both in-class and on-site sessions.

What did we say we would do?

A wide range of on-site sessions would be developed using original archive documents in the Archives Reading Room at York Explore. Alongside this, a series of learning resource packs would be created and made available for download from the Explore website. Packs would be created on different themes to give teachers easy access to curriculum-linked activities and resources. All activities would be focussed on Key Stages 3-5.

The target audience and partners in this Activity would be:

- History coordinators in primary schools
- Subject Head Teachers in relevant disciplines
- Education advisers at the CYC, including Adult Education
- York Youth Council

It was anticipated that the main beneficiaries of the education resources would be teachers in schools across the city and the wider region, delivering 400 school pupils on-site visits annually, with a similar number being involved in off-site activities.

What did we do and how did we do it?

In November 2014 the Education and Public Programmes Officer (E&PPO) started and began developing contacts with local schools and education practitioners across the City. With these contacts the E&PPO ran a consultation to ensure that activities and visits matched the curriculum and needs of teachers and pupils.

During 2015, following initial consultations, the E&PPO planned and delivered a range of activities for Primary, Secondary and College students on-site at York Explore and in-class.

In October 2015 a range of school packs were produced on the most popular themes and in January 2016 these were distributed across local schools. Digital versions were also hosted on the Explore website to provide ongoing access to the resources.

Why did we do it that way?

During the project there were various changes introduced to the National Curriculum and this meant that some of the initial ideas for activities and learning packs had to be altered and this affected timescales for delivery.

A consultation was undertaken with teachers and tutors throughout the project to ensure that activities and education packs reflected the needs of staff and fit with the National Curriculum. The consultation also revealed that secondary colleagues found it challenging to arrange an on-site visit within the constraints of the school day. The size of the reading room and total capacity of the spaces within the Archive & Local History Service does not enable large numbers of students to visit, such as a school might wish to bring when working with a year group. As a result a greater focus was placed on education packs specifically for secondary level for use in the classroom. Secondary teachers suggested that copies of documents on a similar theme with notes on context would be more useful than detailed worksheets or tasks.

What were the outputs?

One of the key outputs from this Activity was the development of partnerships with practitioners in the learning sector across the city. Key partners included:

- CYC advisers who manage contacts with Council primary and secondary schools
- The York Independent State School Partnership
- York College
- York St John University
- York Cub and Scout Groups
- York Hospital Teaching Staff

In addition to the activities delivered as part of partnership building, a number of on-site learning experiences were piloted for early years, primary and secondary school children. A complete list of activities delivered is available as an appendix.

In response to the challenges many schools faced in arranging an on-site visit, a range of education packs have been created that provide teachers with resources and activities to deliver in the classroom. The following education packs have been created:

- First World War: The Chocolate Letters (KS2+)
- First World War: Contentious Objectors (KS3+)
- Creative Writing: From Fact to Fiction A Trip to the Theatre (KS2)
- Creative Writing: From Fact to Fiction Crime and Punishment (KS3+)
- York Panorama (KS2+) ([See Activity 12 for more information](#))

The packs have been produced in both digital and hard-copy format. Hard copies have been distributed to schools across the city to raise awareness, and the digital versions are available for download on the Explore website.

How did we know that we were successful?

A total of 1,212 participants took part in 31 education visits during the project. 20 of these visits took place on-site with 581 participants and, 11 off-site with 631 participants.

Of this total, 23% (223) were tutors and teachers, with the remaining 77% consisting of students. Overall less than 1% of the tutors, teachers and students stated that they had used the Archive & Local History Service before.

What will we do in the future?

A training plan is in place to give frontline staff at York Explore the skills to deliver bespoke local history study visits to the service for schools. This offer will be launched in September 2016 following distribution of the school resource packs in April 2016.

“Having the chance to work with archival material was great. Allison’s time and attention to the learning requirements was much appreciated and made the session very effective. The room and central location are effective for learning.”

Teacher, Year 9-Year 11

“The archives are beautifully kept and the sources we looked at were incredibly interesting. Thank you for the opportunity!”

Year 9 pupil

5.2.9 Activity 9: Volunteering Programme

Key Outputs

- A total of 3,492 volunteer hours were recorded during 2015; 43% over the target set
 - Front-of-house volunteer roles are now embedded in the wider Explore volunteer programme
 - Community Collections volunteers processed a total of 5 collections, consisting of 99 boxes, 203 volumes and 32 rolls.
-



Community Collections volunteers working to catalogue some of York's archives

Background

The new Archive & Local History Service needed to create targeted volunteer roles to support the service and development of the collections. A range of volunteer roles would support front line services and provide ongoing support during the project and beyond.

What did we say we would do?

A variety of volunteer opportunities would be offered including:

- Preparing for relocation of the archive support
- Community Archive Collections Project
- Volunteer involvement in developing user guides
- Volunteer exhibition project
- Post-opening volunteer led programmes

Training would be provided to all volunteers and would be recruited from a variety of audiences, using the community contacts developed during the project.

What did we do and how did we do it?

The old Archive service closed to the public at York Art Gallery in February 2013. Existing volunteers were used to assist in the inventory and packing of all archive material from March to June 2013 to be moved to Deepstore.

During the closure of York Explore in 2014, volunteers participated in a range of community projects. See case studies as appendices on Lord Deramore's Primary School and York Normandy Veterans for more information.

In November 2014, a series of volunteer roles were scoped and advertised by the Access Archivist. Archive and Local History roles included:

- Local History front-of-house support
- Family History Buddy
- Local History Card Index cataloguing project

Induction sessions and training were then provided to all prospective volunteers who started in their new roles when the new service opened in January 2015. All volunteer roles were embedded into the wider Explore volunteer offer from the beginning.

In April 2015 a community collections volunteer project was scoped by the CC&OA and CCA. An induction and training session was hosted in May 2015 and a team of volunteers catalogued community collections for 6 months until November 2015.

From May 2015 existing volunteers across Explore supported the E&PPO in the delivery of school and family learning activities. See activities [8](#) and [11](#) for more information.

In September 2015, the community collections volunteers along with Archive 'Champions' and researchers undertook research to create the 'Voices of the Archives' booklet. The volunteers also created a pop-up banner exhibition to support the booklet in November 2015. [See Activity 6 for more information on this resource.](#)

Why did we do it that way?

The embedding of the Archive & Local History Service into the organisational culture of Explore meant that it was logical to build volunteer roles into a bigger programme. Through embedding the roles in the wider Explore offer it ensures that the volunteer programme is sustainable beyond the life of the project.

What were the outputs?

There is now a new structure in place for all Explore volunteers, including the Archive and Local History roles. The new structure included advertising well defined role descriptions, delivering inductions and appropriate training, providing ongoing support and managing contact information. The process is now transparent and open to everyone.

The temporary Community Collections volunteer role supported specialist staff in cataloguing a number of community archive collections. This increased the number of larger archive collections that could be made available to researchers. Using volunteers to support the front-of-house service has enabled the Access Archivist to take a more strategic approach towards the service and have a less direct role in daily operational activities.

A pop-up banner exhibition was created to tour all Explore Libraries as a legacy of the project. The exhibition supports the 'Voices of the Archives' booklet and provided a different voice and perspective on the collections, demonstrating that archives are for everyone to enjoy and experience.

The diversity of volunteer roles offered has provided volunteers with a wide range of opportunities to enhance their skills including:

- Customer service
- Attention to detail and accuracy
- Research
- Team work with other volunteers and paid staff
- Literacy & numeracy
- Specific skills in how to handle, organise and make archives accessible

How did we know that we were successful?

A total of 25 volunteers participate in front-of-house roles. In addition, 13 volunteers worked as part of the community collections and outreach projects and 19 volunteers, 6 of which were 'young volunteers' aged 13-19, provided event support to the E&PPO. Overall a total of 3,492 volunteer hours were recorded during 2015.

The community collections volunteers processed 5 collections, which consisted of 99 boxes, 203 volumes and 32 rolls in total. See the volunteers case study as an appendix for more information. The experience of the community collections volunteers was evaluated and 100% stated that they enjoyed their experience on the project.

What will we do in the future?

A range of volunteer and student placement projects have been scoped to support Archive & Local History staff. A detailed plan for cataloguing is now part of the service Access Plan for 2016.

The front-of-house support roles will continue in their current form as they are now embedded in the volunteer offer across York Explore.

5.2.10 Activity 10: Life Long Learning Events

Key Outputs

- A total of 126 learners visited and used archives and local history resources
 - 81% of learners had never used the archive and local history service before
 - 4 separate projects with learners covered subjects including art, history and creative writing .
-



Learners from York Learning at the launch of the Lidgett Grove public art piece

Background

The consultation process for the project identified a number of opportunities to run a number of short-term adult education activities using the archives collections as the basis for core skills development in areas such as literacy and numeracy. The activities would target the general adult education audience and also aim to reach audiences currently under-represented in the Archives & Local History Service.

What did we say we would do?

It was proposed that four pilot modules would be developed around the broad theme 'Then and Now'. Resources would be topic based, for example York's People, Buildings, Transport, Employment and Jobs, Health, Children and Families. These would run as 10-session courses, with materials also suitable to be used for one-off workshops. The proposed approach to learning was modular, to ensure that the programme was flexible and could be tailored to reflect individual interests, abilities and needs.

What did we do and how did we do it?

During 2014, five York Learning tutors viewed a sample of archive collections held in storage, prior to the relocation of Archives into York Explore. Tutors then began to scope possible course content for their learners based on the archives.

Two further tutor sessions were held in March 2015 once York Explore was open and a wider range of community archives were catalogued. Tutors had the opportunity to research in the collections and plan visits for their learners.

During 2015 a series of courses ran on a number of themes using the Archives & Local History Service as a source of information and inspiration.

Why did we do it that way?

Following initial introductory sessions for York Learning tutors to archives and local history resources, tutors felt that creating a one-off project over 10 weeks would be too prescriptive for the ideas the sessions had given them. It was therefore decided that a few larger projects on different subjects, co-funded with York Learning, would be more beneficial to learners and reflect individual learner's interests. It also gave tutors the opportunity to build archive and local history resources into the English Functional Skills courses with required reading, writing and speaking elements.

Learners on Keeping Up with the Children courses felt that the flexible approach to developing projects based around archive and local history resources did not fit with their need for more targeted learning. These learners preferred a one-off visit to the Archive & Local History Service rather than have a whole course based around different resources.

What were the outputs?

York Learning hosted a range of projects with their learners. A complete detailed list of the projects can be found as an appendix to this document. Projects included:

- 'Then and Now' Coney Street information booklet
- Lidgett Grove Community Art based on the history of the local area
- Keep up with the Children in English
- Creative Writing
- York People blog and display

Learners were encouraged to handle the archives, ask Archivists questions, feedback their thoughts and have a go at searching the online catalogue for further information.

During the sessions learners and tutors were able to photograph items of interest in the collections and record their discussions using iPads provided by the project. This was gave learners the opportunity to improve their digital skills in spaces with no ICT facilities.

How did we know that we were successful?

In total 116 learners and 5 tutors have engaged in this project working on 4 key pilot projects using the archive collections at York Explore.

Due to some of the learners having low levels of literacy, many struggled to complete standard feedback forms, despite receiving support from their tutor. Feedback was recorded for those with low levels of literacy to enable them to feedback on the project.

Overall 71% of learners said they found working with archives and local history enjoyable and felt ready to explore subjects further.

Additionally 100% of those who gave feedback said that the course had taught them something new.

In total 81% of those learners had never used the Archive & Local History Service before.

What will we do in the future?

An information sheet was created for tutors to assist them in self-directing their research and continue developing new and innovative teaching programmes based around the collections.

As a result of successful partnership working further tutors, in particular those teaching maths with York Learning, are keen to develop new content for their learners based around archive documents.

There are also plans for York Learning to introduce archives to the Gypsy/Traveller community, where new concepts need to be introduced gradually and meet community cohesion aims.

“The visit to the archives was extremely useful. In fact it was difficult not to then start finding out about all sorts of other things and forget why we were there!”

Learner, ‘Then and Now’ project

“It was really interesting to find out about this area. I haven’t lived here for very long and it’s helped me get to know people. I feel like I belong here now.”

Learner,
Lidgett Grove Community Art project

“It wasn’t about our learners doing academic research projects but about us using the archives as a springboard for further learning. We’ve gone off in all sorts of different directions and it’s been fun to see where we’ve ended up!”

Jayne Shipley,
Adult Education Tutor

5.2.11 Activity 11: Programme of Family Learning Activities

Key Outputs

- 13 different types of family activities were delivered at over 40 events at York Explore and across the branch library network
 - A total of 1,900 people attended family learning activities during 2015
 - 90% of attendees had never used the archive and local history service before.
-



A mother and daughter take part in Map Attack Lego Workshop as part of York Festival of Ideas

Background

York Explore Library hosts a wide range of family activities and prior to being united physically with the archive service, ran a regular monthly family programme featuring a wide range of activities. To embed the archives in this programme, it was proposed that a series of archive themed family activities would be developed.

What did we say we would do?

It was proposed that a programme of learning activities would be developed and delivered one Sunday every month, linked into themes of wider family activities across the library service. Access to original archives to those who had never used the archives and local history service before would be a priority at these sessions, and a target of 1,500 visitors was set during the first year of the programme.

What did we do and how did we do it?

On the 31st January 2015, following the re-opening of York Explore and the launch of the Archive & Local History Service, a consultation was undertaken with families visiting the service for the popular York Residents' Weekend. Families were asked what type of activities they would like to see as part of the project and the historical themes that would engage them.

A further consultation took place during February 2015 as part of workshops with the Children's Advisory Group. The group is part of a wider set of Advisory Groups which, with community support, help to set the direction of services across Explore. Across all consultations several key types of Activity were suggested:

- Storytelling sessions
- Craft and creative activities
- Learning what is in the Archives
- Learning more about York

Between February and December 2015 a wide range of family activities were delivered at York Explore and in different Explore libraries across the city based on the results of the consultation.

Why did we do it that way?

The initial plan was to integrate family learning activities into the already established Family days at York Explore, however when York Explore re-opened to the public in January 2015 the decision was taken to discontinue this programme. As a result, a consultation with families and children was undertaken to assess the best way of delivering regular and relevant activities.

The consultation process at the beginning of 2015 revealed that for many families the lack of parking in the city centre meant that York Explore was not always the best location to hold all family events. As a result, a number of activities were delivered across Explore's branch libraries.

What were the outputs?

During 2015 a total of 13 different activities were created for families for delivery at York Explore and across the library network. Events included:

- Minecraft sessions using maps and historic images
- Dick Turpin themed story time and activities
- Planting the Past, sunflower seed planting based on historic Backhouse Nurseries archive material
- Archives Quiz, A tour around the Archives and Local History service with themed archive inspired questions
- Map Attack, using Lego to build iconic buildings using historic maps and images
- Telling York's Stories, creative writing workshop

- Animation Workshop using archives as inspiration
- Silk painting workshop using historic cloud photographs as inspiration
- Heraldic shield research and drawing workshop
- 3D Seals, Writing charters and making 3D seals workshop
- Family History themed under 5's story time session
- Memory Web, an artist collaboration to weave a web of York memories
- Curating online exhibition workshop including social media

See case studies as appendices on specific activities for further information.

The wide range of activities delivered also generated the additional outcome of building new partnerships with local authors and artists including Helen Cadbury and Mary Passeri.

How did we know that we were successful?

In total 158 families took part in the consultation process to scope 13 different types of family activities. During 2015 these activities were hosted at over 40 events at York Explore and across the library network. A total of 1,900 people attended these events and a sample of these completed a survey matched to the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO).

As per the GLO's, the sessions improved knowledge and understanding. 86% of surveyed visitors said that the activities had given them new ideas.

The activities have also developed new skills for both adults and children with 95% of people stating they learnt something new.

Feedback has also revealed that the sessions have encouraged people to work together on activities as well as with Explore staff. 94% said that as a result of the activities they felt more engaged with and supported by Explore. Families have also had the opportunity to work with each other and make new connections.

Of the representative sample of attendees surveyed 100% said that they had enjoyed the activities. Although not representative of everyone who took part, it gives a clear indication of the impact these activities had and that they have acted as a source of inspiration.

“It was interesting to see how children & adults can use their imagination to build maps and storytime, especially related to place where they live.”

Attendee, Map Attack Lego workshop

“We are new to York so it was nice to meet other families and explore the history of our area together”

Attendee, Planting the Past workshop

Of those surveyed, 90% of attendees had never used the Archive & Local History Service before, demonstrating that the creative nature of these activities has engaged new and non-traditional audiences to engage with the collections.

What will we do in the future?

To maintain interest in archives and local history for families with children of all ages, a range of resources have been produced. These are available for staff across the service to request and use as part of regular children's Activity delivered by the service. These include story boxes for Local History Story Times and equipment such as Lego and craft materials.

“I want to make a garden by growing lots of plants like they did in the past and I will call it my history garden”

Attendee,
Planting the Past workshop

5.2.12 Activity 12: Gateway to History Poster Competition/York Panorama

Key Outputs

- The ‘What Should York Remember?’ Activity which inspired the final art piece, gathered 600 responses from members of the public aged 3-90
 - Collaboration with The Wilberforce Trust generated Braille for the art piece and a Vox-Pops film added an audio element for accessibility
 - Free publicity provided through features in the York Press, would have cost the equivalent of £4560 in paid for advertising.
-



York Panorama, on the first floor landing at York Explore is tactile as well as visual

Background

The inspiration for the project title York: Gateway to History was the well-known 1950's railway poster, used to promote tourism in York. The poster represents York's history through its people, with the city's historic buildings appearing only as background. The representation of the City's people fitted with the interactive and community focussed way in which this project was designed; that the story of York is the story of its people. As part of the Activity plan it was proposed to create a new visual representation of how York people view the City's history and culture today.

What did we say we would do?

The Activity plan originally stated that as a pre-launch awareness-raising Activity for the project, a competition would be run to select new faces to update the original 1950's railway poster to reflect modern York.

Due to staffing and timescale changes during the initial phase of the project, this Activity did not take place as originally intended. The project team wanted to retain the concept of an artistic representation of York through the voices of the people and therefore created a piece of public art at York Explore Library and Archive.

What did we do and how did we do it?

In November 2014 the CC&OA created an Activity to capture the different perspectives of York residents and visitors. Large posters were designed with a blank space for people to respond to the question 'What Should York Remember?' through words and pictures.

During January-July 2015 the Activity was delivered at Explore Libraries and other external events including:

- Residents Weekend (31st January 2015)
- York Learning Community Art Course (12th May 2015)
- Gateway to Your Archives workshops (Various dates, See Activity 5)
- The Archives Roadshow (See case study as an appendix for more details)

In May 2015 an artist's brief was circulated and 6 artists responded with their artistic interpretation of the responses. The successful artist was Emily Harvey who has experience working on community art projects including Le Tour De France.

On 25th July, the CC&OA, CCA and Emily delivered a 'Text Workshop' at York Explore Library and Archive to create quotes from the responses to be featured on the final art piece. It was an opportunity to promote the project and for Emily to meet members of the community and learn about peoples' relationship to the City.

At the start of August 2015 a display of mood boards and images of Emily in her art studio went up on the landing at York Explore to promote the project. York Press also ran a double page feature on the project and the CCA regularly posted on the blog and other social media platforms to maintain public interest.

The final art piece was officially launched at the Community Celebration event at York Explore Library and Archive on 27th November 2015.

Why did we do it that way?

This Activity was delivered collaboratively with local people and with a community artist with experience working on projects in York. Despite the Activity being re-designed from the original concept, there were similar outputs achieved.

The crowd-sourcing nature of the response gathering fit with the broader themes of the Gateway to History project of working with local communities to reveal different perspectives on the City's history and culture. The final art piece and the responses also highlighted to the Archive service what local people view as important about the city, and this will help to set the collecting policy of the service for the future.

The presence of a piece of art on the landing at York Explore acts as a draw for new audiences to the service, who may use the library service but have yet to explore the Archive & Local History service upstairs.

What were the outputs?

A total of 600 responses were gathered as part of the 'What Should York Remember?' Activity, from members of the public aged 3-90 including residents, visitors and students. A broad range of responses were gathered from personal memories to drawings of iconic buildings such as York Minster.

The final piece of public art is entitled 'York Panorama: What York Means to Us'. It has been designed as a tactile panorama of York made of resin plaster, divided into bricks to reflect the City Walls. Each brick represents a different story as told by York's residents with their words and phrases flowing around the bricks bringing everything together into a collaborative representation of how York views itself.

Accessibility was key to the creation of the art and as a result two strands of Activity were developed to enable blind and partially sighted people to engage with the piece:

- Collaboration with The Wilberforce Trust to create Braille versions of key phrases to be featured on the final piece.
- Commissioning of a Vox-Pops film, asking local people 'What Should York Remember?' The short film provided an audio-visual element to the art piece.

A pop-up banner next to the piece gives visitors more information about the inspiration and background to the project and the Vox-pops film is hosted on the [Explore website](#).

A school resource pack was also created to support the art piece with associated activities based around the history and culture of the city. [See Activity 8 for more details](#).

How did we know we were successful?

The original target for the Activity was to receive 5,000 votes via the media. The 600 responses to the 'What Should York Remember?' Activity may be lower in quantity but each person had a more direct involvement with the Archives & Local History Service. Participants had the chance to meet Archivists, talk about the service and the archives as well as share their own personal memories.

Three double page spread press features in the York Press promoted the project from the delivery of 'What Should York Remember?' right through to the final launch of the artwork at York Explore. This publicity was free of charge as part of an ongoing relationship Explore maintains with York Press. The equivalent monetary value of this publicity, if Explore had purchased advertising from York Press, totalled £4560. Examples of press articles are available as an appendix.

“Can I say how impressed I am with the originality and technical quality of the final product in situ. I particularly enjoyed the invention of the narrative details along with those areas in which you have employed a restrained, near monochromatic palette of colours. It is so rewarding to see it applied in a fresh context whilst also being given a high profile in such a public location.”

Member of the public and local artist

What will we do in the future?

The presence of York Panorama: What York Means to Us is a lasting legacy of the project in its own right, providing a link between the capital and Activity plan elements to the project.

A printed panoramic poster and versions of the activities were provided to all Explore Libraries to enable them to host activities around the art piece. This was especially important as the majority of the responses came from users of Explore libraries.

The Vox-Pops film is hosted on the Explore website alongside background and context to the project.

“Colourful and tactile, it invites everyone to experience York’s history at many levels and works we hope as both a reminder of the past and an inspiration for the future.”

Victoria Hoyle, City Archivist
Explore York Libraries and Archives

5.2.13 Activity 13: Programme of Themed Talks and Tours in Partnership with the Association of Voluntary Guides

Key Outputs

- From September 2014-December 2015 a total of 40 talks and tours, with over 400 attendees, have been delivered at York Explore
 - Across the AVG and Spotlight sessions, 40% of those who attended had never used the archive and local history service before.
-



CCA Jennifer McGarvey delivers a Spotlight Session talk during Explore Your Archives week

Background

The Association of Voluntary Guides (AVG) delivers a diverse programme of free public walking tours across the city. The Association has a long historic connection with the Library and Archive Service, as it was founded by the City Librarian at a meeting in the York Central Library (now York Explore) in 1951, and members of the AVG use the Archives and Local History Service to research background information for their tours.

Since 2013 the Library and Archive Service has run a series of Mint Yard Lectures. These are based around local history from an academic perspective with the lectures taking place across different libraries within the service. This programme was administered, on behalf of the Library and Archive service, by the City of York Council York Learning department until September 2014 when it was taken in-house by Explore York Libraries and Archives.

What did we say we would do?

Discussions were held with the Chair of AVG and interest was shown in AVG developing a behind the scenes tour of the Archives, the Grade 2 listed York Explore building and its wider built environment (the Mint Yard complex). This site is of national historic importance as within a very small area it contains structures and monuments covering 2000 years of the city's history.

It was also proposed that a series of public lectures would be arranged at York Explore covering themed topics related to the collections and to showcase research that is being carried out in the archive.

What did we do and how did we do it?

In September 2014 the Access Archivist took over the management of the Mint Yard Lecture programme. During the closure of York Explore as part of the project capital works, the lectures were delivered across the Explore branch library network.

In January 2015 the programme of lectures was returned to York Explore to promote use of the new Archive & Local History Service. During 2015 a wide range of general tours of the new service were also delivered by staff members to showcase the spaces and use of new equipment.

The AVG were invited along to a tour of the service and hands-on archive sessions during October 2015. These sessions introduced the Guides to sources of information they could use as part of research into their tours.

In November 2015 Explore participated in the national Explore Your Archive campaign. During the week a wide range of public engagement activities took place. The full programme of events during this week is available as an appendix. As part of this week a day of researcher and archive staff led talks were delivered titled Spotlight Sessions. The talks included information on different archive collections, research skills and other local archive and family history services.

One of the talks was by the AVG based around the history of the Mint Yard Complex. The talk was then followed by a tour of the Mint Yard, acting as a pilot for future tours of the complex by the AVG.

Why did we do it that way?

The Activity plan initially stated that the project would develop and run a series of public lectures. It was decided during 2014 that instead of creating a new series of lectures, that a redesign of the existing Mint Yard Lecture series publicity would generate the same outcome.

What were the outputs?

From September 2014-December 2015 a total of 40 talks and tours have been delivered at York Explore to promote the new service including:

- 16 Mint Yard Lectures
- 14 tours of the Archive & Local History Service to different groups
- 4 tours and hands-on archive sessions for AVG members
- Spotlight On lectures

How did we know that we were successful?

A total of 308 people attended Mint Yard Lectures from September 2014-December 2015. A total of 44 Voluntary Guides attended sessions and tours of the Archive & Local History Service. 87% of those who attended the sessions said they learnt something new.

93% of those who attended sessions said that they now felt more supported by Explore York Libraries and archives and 40% of attendees had never used the Archive & Local History Service before.

As part of Explore Your Archives week, Explore hosted 21 events which were attended by 443 people all ages (226 to children's events and 217 to adult events). A total 60 people attended the Spotlight On lectures as part of Explore York Archives week. Of those that provided feedback, 100% said that as a result of a lecture they felt ready to explore researching a subject further. The sessions also opened up the archives to more people with 50% of attendees having never used the Archive & Local History Service before.

Across the AVG and Spotlight sessions, 42% of those who attended had never used the Archive & Local History Service before which demonstrates that this Activity had reached new audiences across the City.

What will we do in the future?

The Mint Yard Lectures are an ongoing programme which is built into the core events programme across Explore. This continued Activity is an opportunity to build relationships with local researchers and academics as well as introducing archives and local history to a wider range of people.

“The venue had a great atmosphere, the event was fantastic and informative and the speakers were interesting and engaging.”

Attendee at Mint Yard Lecture

“I found out some new interesting facts about York and our tour route that I can incorporate into my tours.”

AVG Guide

The Archive & Local History Service will continue to offer guided tours and talks on the service to a wide range of community groups and organisations on request to improve access and develop community relationships.

The Association of Voluntary Guides maintains a strong relationship with Explore. Following the successful Spotlight on the Mint Yard Complex talk by the Guides as part of Explore Your Archives week, it is hoped that this could run again as a way of promoting the library and archive service in the context of its historic surroundings.

6. Project review

The York: Gateway to History project has engaged with a wide range of people and created a new, accessible Archive & Local History Service for York. The project has been dynamic and innovative in its delivery of both capital building works and community engagement programme. It has inspired a culture change across Explore York Libraries and Archives as well as with how the general public interacts with the service. As a result, the service has learnt a lot about how best to deliver services and outreach activities to inform the legacy of the project.

6.1 Summary of Lessons Learnt

Capital Works

Following the completion of the Capital Works element of the project a post evaluation workshop was held on 16th November 2015. This was attended by representatives from the Client (Explore York), project management and design consultants and the principal contractor. This workshop was preceded by an invitation to each of the project team to express their views on a number of elements of the Capital Works programme under the following headings:

- What Worked Well
- Improvement Opportunities
- Stop Doing
- Action/Mitigation

The full report is available as an appendix and captures all of the various comments made prior to and at the actual workshop as well as summarising the Key Learning/Successes.

The Project Governance, dedicated project leadership within the Client team and the rigorous procurement processes were highly regarded and worked well, as was the willingness by the Client to respond to site issues quickly. The cost control established by the QS was praised. However, it was felt that the change management process should have been used more although this was affected by the principal contractor's slow response for cost information.

The majority of the improvement opportunities centre on the design and contract management issues created by the mechanical and electrical consultants who were appointed as part of the lead design consultant's commission. The main issues were the lack of design co-ordination by the consultants, an insufficient number of site visits and lack of direct communication with the sub-contractors. The sub-contractors were also remiss in the production and submission of the appropriate working drawings for approval. It was also felt that, although the site management of the contract by the principal contractor was very good, the management of post practical completion of defects and remedial works was not as responsive as it should have been.

However, the overall feeling within the Capital Works delivery team was that the

relationships between each other had worked well with the majority of issues being resolved within the spirit of the contract and in a timely fashion.

Activity Plan

Successes

The most successful activities of the project were those which not only achieved what the Activity plan set out, but exceeded these with support from community partners and public participation.

- [Archive 'Champions'](#)
 - 4 community-led projects to develop relationships with 'Champions'.
- [Community Collections Development](#)
 - Suite of materials created including online training videos and professionally designed guidance booklet.
- [Family Learning](#)
 - Wide range of innovative activities including Minecraft, Lego and planting seeds scoped as a result of public consultation.
- [York Panorama Public Art](#)
 - Entirely crowd-sourced content gives a powerful representation of how the city sees itself, far beyond the initial ambitions of a poster competition.

There were a number of other key successes which reflect the culture and direction in which community engagement within Explore will continue as a legacy to the project.

- **Working flexibly and responsively with communities**

The most dynamic element to this project has been the level of collaborative working across a wide range of community partners. Being able to work flexibly and responsively with different community groups has been due to the presence of dedicated project staff, who had the capacity to develop a wide range of relationships and creative projects.

The innovative and flexible approach project staff took towards engaging with the local community has developed stronger community relationships and set the pace for further engagement work both at Explore and across the wide archive sector.

- **Crowd-sourcing**

Crowd-sourcing also formed a large part of the project delivery through a range of activities and promotional tools. Public suggestions and resources provided new perspectives on the collections and the history and culture of York. The partnership that was created with the York Press proved to be invaluable for the promotion of the archives. The method of using social media and press articles as a crowd-sourcing Activity to improve documentation about the collections was an important lesson and continues the thread of collaboration which runs right through this project.

- **Partnerships with local authors, film makers, designers and artists**

Developing partnerships with local authors and artists has proven to be a successful way to draw in new visitors and has enabled the service to host innovative and visually attractive activities. Most notable partnerships have been with community artist Emily Harvey to create York Panorama and John Phillips to create a series of films showcasing various elements to the project.

- **Using existing service events and activities to embed an archive and local history offer**

It was important right from the start that activities were integrated into the wider service to have the most impact both during the life of the project and as a legacy. This became more important following the spin-out of Explore from City of York Council as public image and marketing played a stronger role. The Mint Yard Lecture programme was already operational across Explore when the project started. To maintain a consistent image to users, it was decided that this programme was to be given new branding rather than develop a new series of talks as part of the project. The Archives Roadshow made use of Explore's library network to effectively engage with the wider community and promote the Archive & Local History Service.

Challenges

Despite the success of the project, there have been a number of unplanned challenges largely as a result of the innovative approach to engagement undertaken. These lessons have been learnt from and changes have been put into the legacy plan for the project.

- **The changing nature of communities**

Whilst working responsively to the needs of the community worked well during the project, it also posed a challenge. In the two years between bid submission and the project starting many community partners had either lost contact with the Archive & Local History Service or were no longer able to participate in the same way, largely due to changes in funding.

As a result of this, the partnerships with York & District Family History Society and the Association of Voluntary Guides ended up looking different. Despite this a range of activities were delivered with these groups, however these did not happen as naturally as with other local groups.

- **Diversity of community engagement (age range and ethnic diversity)**

One of the key lessons learnt from this project is the limitations of impact in relation to the demographics of York. It was initially proposed that the Advisory Group, Archive 'Champions' and attendees at training workshops would be from a diverse range of groups across the city. Right from the beginning of this project, diversity proved to be a challenge and this is largely due to the demographics of York's population. Based on 2011

Census statistics, York has a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community of 10.2% compared to the wider England and Wales statistic of 20.5%.¹ These statistics are reflective of the number of groups that exist to support BME communities across the city and this has limited the success of our engagement in this area. Our most successful relationship has been with York Unifying and Multicultural Initiative, one of only a small number of groups in the city representing BME communities.

Overall 89% of Gateway to Your Archives workshop attendees were over the age of 50, with just 5% aged 18-34. This demographic largely reflects the fact that most of the workshops took place on a weekday and that members of many community groups are retired. To attract working members we hosted 2 workshops on a Saturday, however this still attracted mainly the older age group.

- **Reliance on availability of archive collections**

The overall visitor numbers to the Archives and Local History service have exceeded the initial annual target of 50,000 by June 2015. Despite this, lower visitor numbers were recorded for hands-on access to archives compared to those originally anticipated in the Activity plan. This is largely due to a smaller amount of the Civic archive being ready for access when the service opened in January 2015.

- **Flexible working**

Despite the flexible way of working for most of the project, there were a couple of areas where an increased level of flexibility was not anticipated. Askham Grange Prison were limited to the amount of Residents they had available for placements. It was therefore not possible to deliver a set number of placements during the life of the project.

It also became clear that adult learners with York Learning required a flexible approach to subject matter to enable them to remain engaged in subjects and continue wanting to use Archive and Local History resources. This meant that activities were more diverse than originally specified in the Activity plan.

“They are a creative team and allowing them to discuss and make decisions with different learner groups, meant that groups embarking on projects have taken ownership and been really engaged with the topics they have chosen.”

Fiona Himsworth, Family Learning and Skills for Life Manager
CYC York Learning

- **Capturing feedback**

Some of the activities delivered across the project involved children and adults with low levels of literacy. A standard feedback form was used across the project to gather accurate statistical information; however this method was not always effective at

¹Office for National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-286262> (Accessed 26th August 2015)

capturing the impact of a project. Solutions included hosting specific feedback sessions, recording audio feedback and using illustrations to gather information.

It also proved to be a challenge to maintain contact and gather feedback from teachers due to their time restraints and availability only in term time. Through creating a new area on the Explore website for suggestions, updates and ongoing discussions it is hoped that communication can be maintained beyond the life of the project.

6.2 Legacy

The lessons learnt from both the successes and the challenges of the project have informed a detailed legacy plan to enable Explore to continue delivering an innovative Archive & Local History service with a community focus.

A detailed legacy plan has been compiled as a result of this project and has been embedded into the service Access plan for 2016. Both the Access Plan and Legacy Plan are available as appendices to this document.

6.3 Project Cost Review

Cost Heading	Project Budget	Project Final Costs
Professional Fees	159,749	163,030
Repairs and New Build Elements	1,210,776	1,227,550
Furniture & Equipment	221,000	200,945
Activity Plan	167,175	167,175
Other Project costs	10,500	10,500
Total	1,769,200	1,769,200

Project Funding

The project was funded through a £1,574,200 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £195,000 from the City of York Council.

Capital Works

The costs were well managed throughout the project with only slight increases in the cost of the fees and repairs and new build elements but with respective savings being made in the Furniture and Equipment budget. The £100,000 contingency was fully expended.

Activity Plan

The costs included in this section cover the thirteen activities listed in the original Activity Plan, plus the cost of the project staff.

Other Project costs

These costs include recruitment of the project staff, publicity and promotion and evaluation.

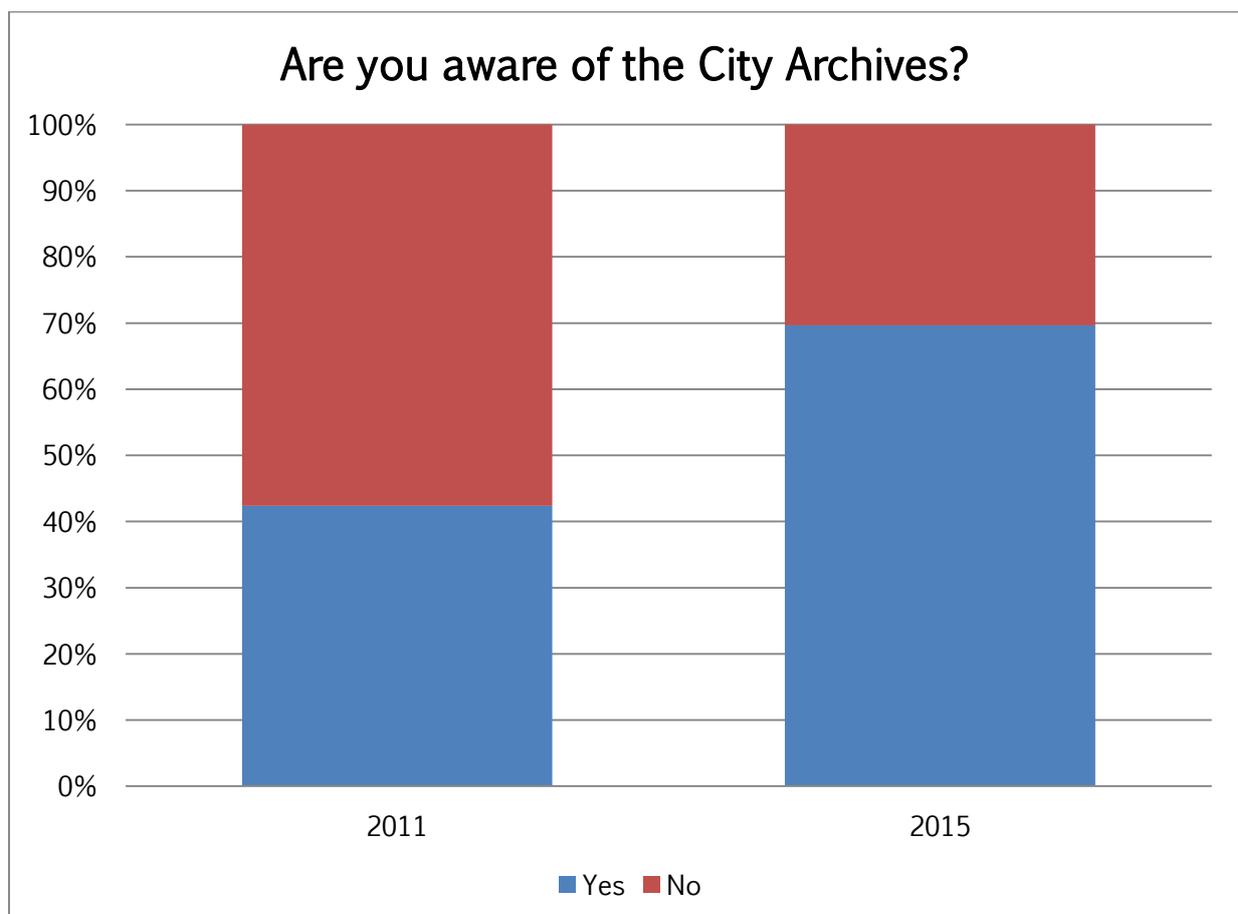
7. Conclusions

Towards the end of 2015, as the York: Gateway to History Project was coming to a close, feedback was requested via an online survey and the City of York Council Talkabout Panel. The format of the survey was based upon initial surveys carried out as part of the Round 2 HLF bid submission to gauge the level of awareness the general public had about the archive service. The full analysis of results is available as an appendix to this document.

The results provided an overview of the successes of the capital works and Activity plan in raising the profile of the Archive & Local History Service, as well as highlighting areas for further improvement.

In 2012, before the new Archives & Local History facility was built, made accessible and promoted, 39% of people didn't know that the archive existed. Following the project this was reduced to 17%, meaning a conversion rate of 22%.

The results of 2012 revealed that only 18% of people surveyed knew where the archive service was. By 2015 this had increased by 22%, with 40% stating they knew where the service is. Those who claimed to know were asked to specify a location, and 81% knew that the service was part of York Explore Library.



Visual representation of public awareness of the archives from 2011-2015

The 2015 results also revealed a number of reasons why people do not use the Archive & Local History Service including:

1. Not interested in Archives and Local History
2. Do not know what documents are in the archives
3. The collections are not relevant to them
4. Do not know where the archives and local history service is
5. Do not have time to visit and view the collections

These results give a clear indication of how the service should be developing further strategies to address these challenges. Interestingly, respondents stated that they would be most encouraged to visit the service if it was free, receiving 77% of responses. The archive service always has been and continues to be accessible to all, free of charge. It therefore reveals that more work needs to be done to spread a positive message about the service.

In 2015, new signage was commissioned through SoVibrant for all the spaces at York Explore Library and Archive. As part of this, SoVibrant conducted an On-site Observational Study and Recommendations Report. The results revealed that of those visiting the library 18% visit the upstairs and only 20% of those going upstairs visit the Archives & Local History Service. The full study is available as an appendix.

Of those using the facilities upstairs, customers praised the good working conditions and this is evidenced by the fact that they spend longer in these areas than anywhere else in the Library. Staff were also praised as being 'friendly' and running an 'effective' service. Customers with disabilities also complimented the service saying staff were helpful and the spaces were easy to move around.

The SoVibrant study took place prior to the installation of new signage in February 2016, so no further feedback on the impact of this could be obtained during the life of the Gateway to History project. Despite this, all of the survey results reveal that one of the key legacies to this project is to build on the work undertaken to engage new audiences in the new Archive & Local History Service, targeting those that do not currently use the service.

The York: Gateway to History project has transformed York's Archive service from inaccessible, poorly stored and little known, into one that is open to everyone, preserved to archive standards and innovatively shared with the wider community.

Explore has not only found a permanent home for archives of local and national importance, but has innovatively challenged the way archives think about engaging with the community. It is this, as well as the physical spaces, that form the real legacy to this project.

"It has been an inspirational project; and has truly raised the public profile of the city's archives."

Archive 'Champion'

8. List of Appendices

1. Project Evaluation Review – Capital Works
2. Before and After construction images
3. List of Archive ‘Champions’
4. Lord Deramore’s Primary School case study
5. York Normandy Veterans case study
6. WW1 pop-up banner case study
7. Poppleton History Society case study
8. York Scouts case study
9. Gateway to Your Archives workshop case study
10. Wigginton Parish Council case study
11. Example articles in York Press
12. Voices of the Archives case study
13. List of School activities
14. Volunteers case study
15. Details of York Learning projects
16. Map Attack case study
17. Memory Web case study
18. Archives Roadshow case study
19. Explore Your Archives programme of events 2015
20. Legacy Plan
21. Archives & Local History Access Plan 2016
22. Talk about Survey results 2015
23. SoVibrant Observational Study

© Explore York Libraries and Archives 2016

explore



YORK
Gateway to History

