



Chester-le-Street District Council

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting: 26 March 2009

Report from: Performance, Improvement and Equality Manager

Title of Report: Custodianship of the What Wonderful Women archive

Agenda Item Number:

1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council for the transfer of the copyright of the What Wonderful Women archive to the Chester-le-Street Heritage Group.
- 1.2 A project team which included the Leader of the Council, members of staff of the council, and people from partner organisations and the community, has produced an archive, which celebrates the lives and achievements of the women of Chester-le-Street. It has been distributed to all schools and libraries in our district, as well as key partner organizations and individuals.
- 1.2 The archive consists of folders containing introductory and instruction pages, plus 3 discs – an inspirational DVD, a supplementary DVD and a CD containing photos, written stories, newspaper cuttings and other documents.
- 1.3 A website has also been developed, and approval is also sought to transfer the rights and maintenance of the website to the Chester-le-Street Heritage Group.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, and Director of Corporate Services have been consulted on political and practical issues of transfer.
- 2.2 The Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Assistant Solicitor have been consulted as to the legal implications of transfer.

- 2.3 Chester-le-Street Heritage Group have been consulted as to their willingness to take on custodianship of the archive and website.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

- 3.1 The What Wonderful Women project was part of the Strengthening Partnerships action learning set, under the People and Place priority.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The cost of producing the archive has been met from the People and Place action learning sets budgets. There are no financial implications in respect of transference of copyright. However, the archive was established as a 'gift' to the community and we would seek to ensure that future custodians would retain that ethos, rather than use it for commercial purposes.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Issues

There are no LGR issues.

4.3 Legal

In order to transfer the Copyright, the Council will need to send a formal letter to the Heritage Group confirming which items are subject to copyright and confirming that the Council agrees to the transfer of the Copyright to the Heritage Group. There is no prescribed format for this.

The document will need to be signed by an authorized officer of the Council and Council will therefore need to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Agreement on its behalf.

4.4 Personnel

There are no personnel implications.

4.5 Other Services

There are no other service implications.

4.6 Diversity

This project supports gender equality, and in particular forms part of the action plan to deliver the Council's commitment to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.

A size 14pt font has been used for the majority of the introductory and instruction pages. However, electronic versions of the documents will be given to the Heritage Group so that they will be able to supply larger print or other formats of the document should they be requested.

The website has been developed to AAA standard, and a recommendation would be made to the Heritage Group that this standard be retained.

4.7 Risk

There is a low risk that the Chester-le-Street Heritage Group could cease to exist in the future. The Legal Agreement will contain the requirement that, in such circumstances, the copyright would then transfer to the Durham County Council unitary authority.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

There are no other implications.

5. Background, Position Statement and Option Appraisal

5.1 The purpose of the 'What Wonderful Women' project was to celebrate the lives and achievements of the women of Chester-le-Street, both past and present. A number of people came together to undertake the project. These included the Leader of the Council, members of staff from the authority, people from partner organizations, and some members of the community who had an interest in the subject.

5.2 The team used their skills, experience, enthusiasm and contacts that have enabled us to bring together the stories, photos and documents that make up the archive. It will be invaluable for students and researchers who want to know more about the women of Chester-le-Street and its district during the 20th and early 21st centuries.

5.3 In addition, we commissioned a local company to produce a DVD. Local women came forward to be interviewed for the film, which is some 45 minutes long, and truly inspirational. Extra footage has been included on a supplementary DVD, so nothing has been lost.

- 5.4 A What Wonderful Website has also been developed. This does not contain all of the archival material, but gives a flavour of what is included and signposts website visitors to where they can find a copy of the full archive to borrow.
- 5.5 Copies of the archive have been distributed to all schools and libraries in the district, Chester-le-Street Heritage Group, Durham County Records Office, Durham University Library, New College Library, Bridge Project and Empower 2.
- 5.6 Current copyright and ownership belongs to Chester-le-Street District Council, but as the Council will cease operation as a local authority on 31 March 2009, consideration needs to be given to the future custodianship of the archive.
- 5.7 The preferred options for ownership of the future copyright are either the new unitary authority of Durham County Council or Chester-le-Street Heritage Group. It is not yet clear which department of the new authority could assume responsibility. The Records Office have indicated that they would not take on official custodianship, that it would have to lie within a specific council department. The Heritage Group have been heavily involved within the project, and have provided much archival material. They meet regularly, have weekly open days for the public and would be in a position to add to the archive from their own resources. They would also retain a local community approach, thus enhancing sustainability.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that Council approve the transfer of the copyright and custodianship of the What Wonderful Women archive and website to Chester-le-Street Heritage Group, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the Legal Agreement.
- 6.2 It is also recommended that Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Legal Agreement on behalf of the Council.

7. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

- 7.1 What Wonderful Women archive

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Version 1.0

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