



**ADULTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2026**

**RECORD OFFICE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND
RUTLAND**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND CULTURAL
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the outcome of the review of the Accreditation status of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) by the National Archives (TNA).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The statutory basis of the Archive Service delivered by the ROLLR is derived from the Local Government Act 1972, Sections 224-229. Section 224 imposes a duty on principal authorities (which includes the County Council) to make 'proper arrangements' for the safekeeping of their records, and records in their custody.
3. A statutory Code of Practice issued under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that 'authorities must have in place appropriate governance, organisational capability and technical measures to ensure that they manage information in accordance with the Code'.
4. The ROLLR supports the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, in particular the 'Great Communities' outcome, helping to ensure that cultural and historical documents and digital records are enjoyed and conserved. It also supports 'Improving Opportunities' by enabling the Council to continue to provide high quality and targeted cultural and historic resources to schools and young people.
5. On 12 June 2018, the Cabinet agreed to develop proposals for an Archives Collections and Learning Centre.
6. Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the implications of TNA Improvement Requirements for the ROLLR in the context of the proposed development of the ACL Centre on 3 June 2024

7. On 21 June 2024, the Cabinet noted the outcome of the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee workshop and re-affirmed the development of the ACL Centre, including the development of more detailed appraisal, to compare the cost of a new building with the costs associated with continuing at the current sites over 25 years; and the review and renewal of the partnership agreements for the Record Office with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council.
8. On the 18 February 2026, Council approved growth over the four years of the MTFS for the Leicestershire County Council's proportion of costs to address required improvements for digital preservation and offsite storage.

Background

9. The ROLLR is an Accredited Archive Service assessed by The National Archives (TNA) to meet the required national standards for preservation of and access to collections including The Public Record. It has secure strong rooms for collections, public research facilities for both original and digital records and conservation and technical facilities. The capacity of the current provision of archival standard storage for the ROLLR has now been exceeded.
10. The ROLLR is delivered by Leicestershire County Council and through two partnership arrangements with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council on a population-based percentage share of the costs.
11. The ROLLR returned its submission for re-Accreditation to the TNA in 2023 and after review in 2024 was awarded provisional Accredited status for two years. This was dependent on meeting Improvement Requirements including the provision of archival standard storage for collections not currently preserved in adequate conditions, a plan for 25 of years of collections development, and the procurement of a Digital Preservation and Access software system for born digital records.
12. Leicestershire County Council had previously proposed the development of an Archive, Collections and Learning Centre which would have accommodated the ROLLR collections and public spaces and provided 25 years of growth for collections which is a requirement of TNA Accreditation.
13. Following the report shared with this Committee on 6 November 2023, the County Council approved the provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on 21 February 2024. This demonstrated the challenging financial position facing the County Council and the need to reinforce existing financial control measures to address the budgets gaps and ensure a balanced budget.
14. At the same time, discussions with partner authorities showed they were facing similar financial challenges and given the challenging financial climate, the partnership agreed to address only the most urgent priorities, which were the two improvement requirements as set out by TNA.
15. In February 2026 Leicestershire County Council wrote to TNA Accreditation team outlining its plan to meet the Improvement Requirements.

16. The TNA Accreditation Panel met on 1 July 2026 and noted the ‘strong progress towards addressing issues, recognising the significant efforts around finance, procurement and staffing as vital precursors to delivery, and representing real institutional commitment’ and have extended the provisional award until the ROLLR’s planned regular midpoint review which is due in the summer of 2027.

Risk Assessment

17. Failure to resolve the current storage situation is expected to jeopardise the Accreditation status of the Archive Service.
18. As a provider of an Accredited archive, the Council has a duty of care in relation to the collections it holds. Secure, environmentally stable and fit for purpose buildings are fundamental requirements, alongside professional staff, to ensure long-term care and preservation of those collections and facilitate public access.
19. The ROLLR Building is in need of continued maintenance and investment and the overflow storage of archive collections in the Eastern Annex at County Hall, Glenfield falls below acceptable standards and therefore place collections at risk.

Resource Implications

20. The estimated costs of maintaining the current accommodation and commissioning external storage are outlined in the table below and based on a minimum lifespan of 25 years, and proposed apportionment of costs:

	Current site plus commercial storage		
	Years 1-5	Years 6-25	Total
County Total costs	8,068,151	34,802,297	42,870,448
City Total costs	3,136,664	10,366,016	13,502,680
Rutland Total costs	896,190	2,961,719	3,857,909

21. It is expected that running costs will continue to increase due to the age of the buildings and the requirements associated with maintaining archive Accreditation standards.
22. Officers are in the process of developing the Invitation to Tender for the procurement of commercial archival standard offsite storage and a digital preservation and access system.

Legal Issues

23. The service agreements set out the basis on which the operating costs of the ROLLR are shared across the partnership. The proportionate financial contributions are based on the respective populations of the three authorities

and the approximate percentage of archive collections relating to those authority areas. These are Leicestershire County Council - 55%; Leicester City Council - 35%; Rutland County Council - 10%.

24. The two separate partnership agreements were put in place in 1997. The partnership had intended to review and revise these agreements once a decision on the ACL centre had been reached. These agreements will now need to be reviewed following the announcement by the Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the 16 July of the decision on the future of local government across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.
25. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

26. The deadline to address the issues identified in the Accreditation assessment is summer 2027, as part of the TNA mid-point review of ROLLR standards. If the issues identified in the 2024 Accreditation assessment and the 2026 review of progress are resolved, and if no subsequent areas of concern are raised, then TNA may choose to confirm full Accreditation for the full six-year period.

Recommendation

27. The Committee is asked to note the report and make any comments.

Background papers

Report to County Council (Budget Meeting): 18 February 2026 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27-2029/30

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=7862>

Report to the Cabinet 21 June 2024 - Archives, Collections and Learning Centre

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/g7507/Public%20reports%20pack%20Friday%2021-Jun-2024%2011.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Report to Adults and Communities, Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4 March 2024 – Update on the Archives, Collections and Learning Centre

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=7728>

Report to Adults and Communities, Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 6 November 2023 – Update on the Archives, Collections and Learning Centre

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=7110>

Report to the Cabinet: 12 June 2018 – Archives, Heritage and Learning Collections Hub

[http://cexmodgov01/documents/s138163/6_June_Heritage%20Mus%20and%20Records%20Collections%20Hub%20final.pdf?\\$LO\\$=1](http://cexmodgov01/documents/s138163/6_June_Heritage%20Mus%20and%20Records%20Collections%20Hub%20final.pdf?LO=1)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

28. None.

Equality Implications

29. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

30. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Officers to Contact

Jon Wilson - *Director of Adults and Cultural Services*

Tel: 0116 305 7541 Email: jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk

Inderjit Lahel - *Assistant Director of Strategic Services*

Tel: 0116 305 7379 Email: inderjit.lahel@leics.gov.uk

Franne Wills - *Head of Service, Cultural Services*

Tel: 0116 305 0692 Email: franne.wills@leics.gov.uk

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