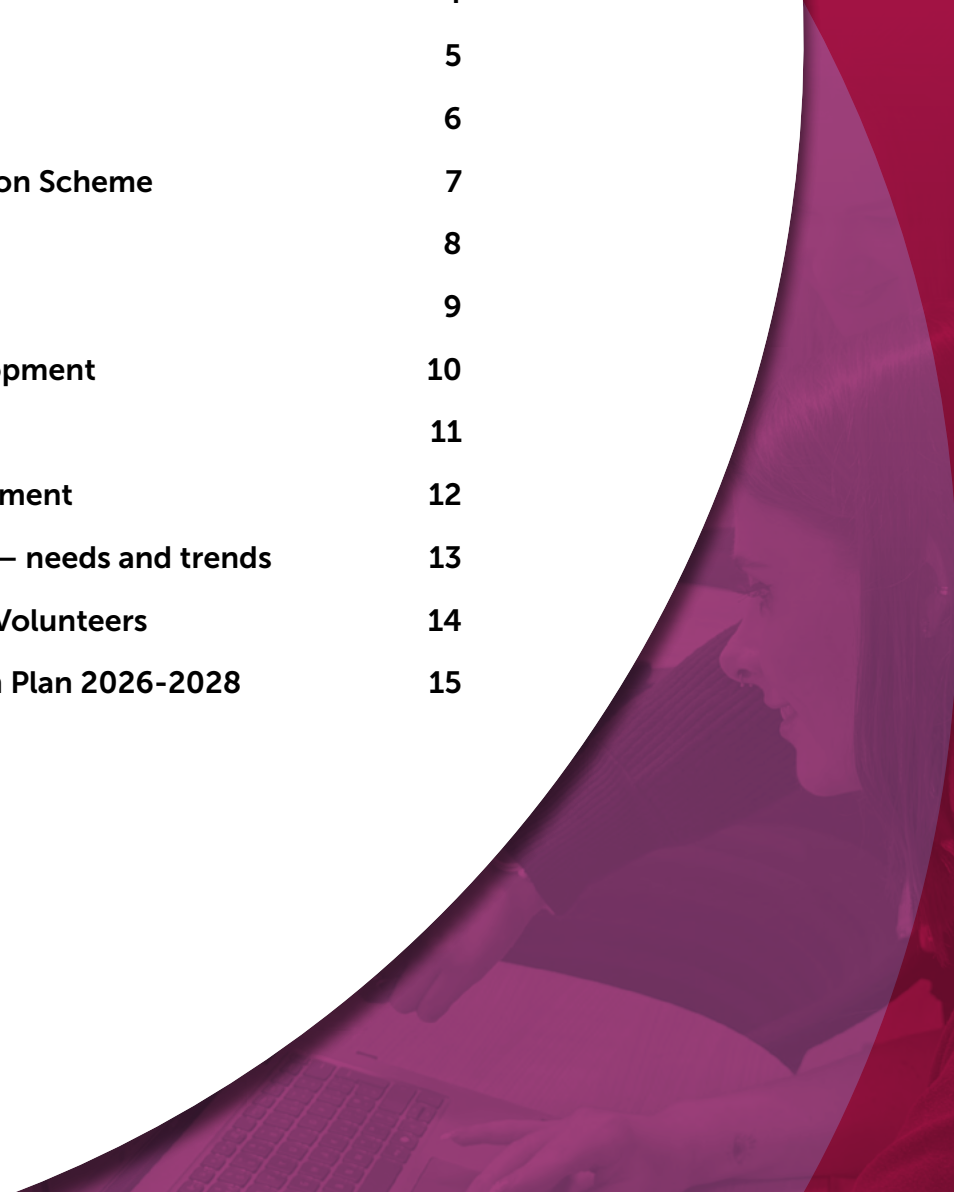


# Nottinghamshire Heritage Services Management Plan 2026-2030



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# Foreword

The history of Nottinghamshire is something we can all be proud of. We have records dating back to 1155 and details of things, which happened only yesterday. That's not far off a thousand years of documented local history.

The county has a rich and diverse history and has played a key role in the story of our nation. From the legends of Sherwood Forest, the groundbreaking work of Jesse Boot and Ada Lovelace and the literary giants of Byron and Lawrence, to our mining industry, lace making and crucial place in the English civil war, Nottinghamshire has lots to explore and document.

In addition to the history of the rich and famous, our archives and heritage collections include the story of ordinary people and the places they live, from Sutton Bonnington to Misterton, from long established towns and villages to new communities, we aim to collect and preserve the truly unique Nottinghamshire story.

This heritage plan outlines what we do at our specialist archive office, the Records Management Service and across the library network and identifies our priorities for the coming years. We are committed to widening access and fully exploiting the technology we have, to both preserve our history and provide better access for everyone.

## **Councillor Dawn Justice**

*Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health*



# Heritage Services

Our three heritage services collect and curate the collective memory, empowering communities to discover, value and share the Nottinghamshire story.

## Nottinghamshire Archives

Nottinghamshire Archives is the record office for the historical county of Nottinghamshire and the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

Preserving the collective memory and story of our city and county, a National Archives accredited Place of Deposit, protecting and providing access to five million documents reflecting the history and heritage of local communities, institutions and people. Our archives date back to the 12th century and cover over 800 years of the county's history.

## Local History Library Collections

Local history resources made available across public libraries, with a programme of engagement, talks, events and exhibitions. Larger collections are located at Arnold, Hucknall, Mansfield, Newark, Retford, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Worksop. All local libraries have a collection covering the history of the library catchment area as well as broad Nottinghamshire resources.

## Records Management Service

The Records Management Service (RMS) manages the lifecycle of hundreds of thousands of Nottinghamshire County Council semi-current records, supporting the work of the authority's statutory services. It is also the conduit for the transfer of information from the council to Nottinghamshire Archives.



# National Context

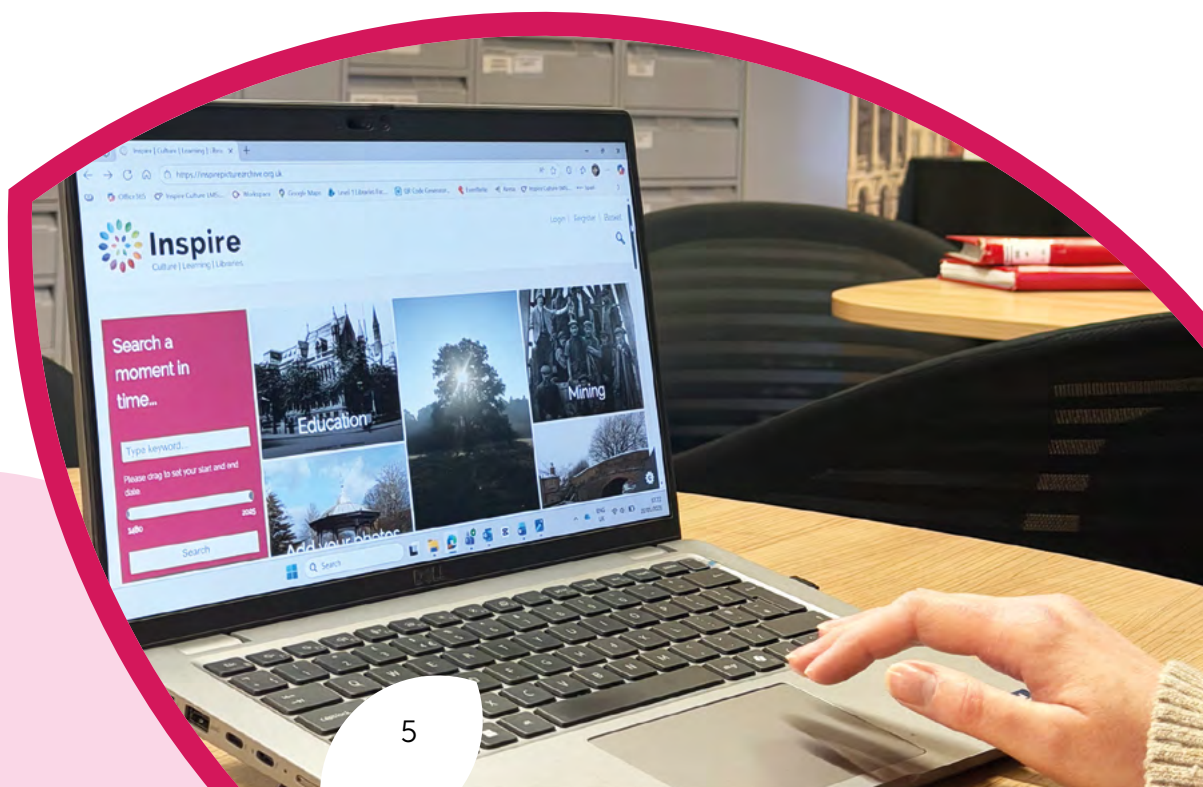
The National Archives (TNA), a non-ministerial department is the national lead for the archive sector in England and Wales. Three key strategic principles have been identified:

- **Inclusive** – building trust, tearing down barriers, participation and understanding. Bold and outward-looking
- **Entrepreneurial** – alert to new possibilities, partnerships and collaborations
- **Disruptive** – constantly adapting, exploiting emerging technologies, adapting to the digital age from creation to presentation.

By 2038 TNA aims to be:

- A living digital national archive
- A national archive of government and the state
- A genuinely inclusive, collaborative and available national archive
- A demonstrably sustainable national archive

TNA holds the national leadership for the archives sector in England. Nottinghamshire Archives receives support, training, advice and project funding from TNA. TNA are also the accrediting body for places of deposit, to which Nottinghamshire Archives adheres.

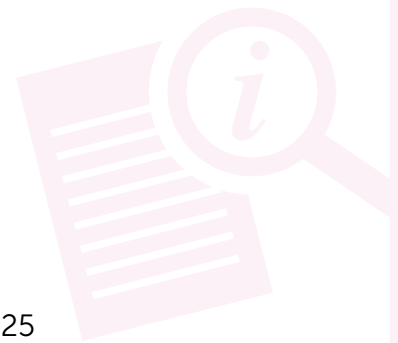


# Legislation

Nottinghamshire Archives serves as the corporate memory of Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council. It provides archive services to Nottinghamshire County Council and its constituent authorities under sections 224 and 226(5) of the Local Government Act 1972. It exercises the county's powers in respect of historical, private and business records under the terms of the Local Government (Records) Act, 1962, amended by the 1972 Act.

## Other relevant legislation:

- Law of Property Act 1922 and the Manorial Document Rules 1959
- The Tithe Act 1936
- Public Records Act 1958
- Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
- Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015.



The service is required to meet the following standards:

- BS EN 17820: 2023 *Conservation of Cultural Heritage*
- International Standard on Archival Description (General) 1999
- BS4971: 2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*
- BS EN16893: 2018 *Conservation of Cultural Heritage*.



# Archive Accreditation Scheme

As a Place of Deposit, Nottinghamshire Archives is required to meet the standards of the Archive Service Accreditation framework. The scheme is administered by a partnership and led by TNA.

Archive service accreditation defines good practice and agreed standards for archive services across the UK. The scheme looks at an organisation's ability to develop, care for, and provide access to its collections, and those areas such as resources and planning which underpin those activities. As part of a 2024 review of the scheme the following themes have been incorporated:

- Audiences and future expectations
- Digital preservation delivery
- Embedding inclusive practice
- Environment and sustainability.

The current scheme assesses archive services against the following criteria:

- Collections Care
- Collections Development
- Collections Information
- Resources.



# Local Context

Our heritage service support Nottinghamshire County Council's delivery of the ambitions as outlined in 'Our Council Plan 2025-2029':

- Stronger families, Caring Connections
- Rooted in Communities, Thriving Together
- A Connected County, Creating Opportunity.

In addition, the heritage service contributes to the council's Library Strategy and Visitor Economy Framework.

We also support the vision statement of Nottingham City Council, contributing to its ambition to be "a city where people are proud of its history".



# Purpose

Inspire's three heritage services collect, curate the collective memory, empowering communities to discover, value and share the Nottinghamshire story. To achieve this we will:

- Connect communities in celebration and commemoration
- Create opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills
- Empower creative engagement
- Ensure the collection reflects the diverse histories of all communities
- Inspire the enjoyment of archives and heritage
- Offer excellent and inclusive customer service for all, every time
- Value, care for and sustain our community memory.

In Nottinghamshire, we define a good heritage service as one that is evaluated against the following factors:

- Accessibility – to collections, technology and buildings
- Customer experience and journey – welcoming, inclusive and non-bureaucratic
- Impact – able to deliver positive outcomes for individuals and communities
- Range and quality of resources and services – archival collections, local studies book stock, records management, digital resources, and engagement activities
- Staff skills – development and flexibility
- Sustainable – preservation of our physical and digital heritage collections and efficient use of resources and technology
- Value for money.

We also uphold seven design principles:

- Be financially sustainable and attract new funding, income and investment
- Be shaped by the needs of our local, national and international customers
- Focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience
- Make decisions informed by evidence, building on our success
- Meet legal requirements
- Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise
- Support delivery of consistent and quality core offers.



# Change and Development

The National Archives has been commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to create a new government strategic vision for archives. TNA acknowledge challenges such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the pivot towards enhanced digital capacity and engagement and the increased urgency to be a genuinely inclusive archive sector.

In line with TNA we will focus on exploring opportunities, challenges and new models of work in the following areas:

- Advocacy and reputation: educate, inspire, preserve the collective memory
- Channel shift from physical to online and remote access
- Digital transformation: capacity, skills, collections
- Ensure we reflect the communities which we serve, be relevant, authentic and accessible for all
- Impact: economic, educational, placemaking, identity, health and wellbeing
- Innovation: devise novel approaches, engage diverse audiences, explore new ways of sharing work
- Leadership and partnerships: local, regional, national and international
- Resilience: leverage resilience demonstrated during the pandemic
- Sustainability: financial and environmental.



# Service Offer

In April 2016, the county council commissioned Inspire – Culture, Learning and Libraries, an independent Community Benefit Society with charitable status, to deliver a range of cultural, heritage, learning, library and music services across Nottinghamshire.

Nottinghamshire Archives has been assessed as meeting the Archives Accreditation Standard. The service also meets the Customer Service Excellence standard.

Our heritage services provide a core offer based on a digital and in-person delivery model:

- Access to key documents and collections in digital formats and online
- Catalogue data available via TNA's Discovery platform
- Digital delivery of archive resources via Inspire's public computer network (subject to data protection legislation and intellectual property rights)
- Digitisation of name dense records in partnership with a commercial provider
- Engagement events via the use of technology such as augmented and virtual reality.
- Online delivery of photographic collections via the Inspire Picture Archive
- Onsite archive delivery in line with customer demand and trends
- Preservation and development of archive collections
- Support for customers to access heritage collections relating to Nottinghamshire's story
- Support use of online services such as Ancestry and the British Newspaper Archive across the library and archive computer network
- Wide range of events, courses and exhibitions delivered across Nottinghamshire.



# Collection Development

We aim to develop collections that are truly inclusive and representative of the history of all communities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

We will take deliberate steps to engage people and places that may have been previously underrepresented by our collections:

- Apply for funding opportunities to enable us to work with communities underrepresented within our collections
- Build relationships with local community leaders
- Collaborate with cultural institutions, religious and community groups
- Create engagement events which celebrate heritage and document living history
- Create online exhibitions and social media campaigns
- Engage with young people providing opportunities to design engagement events using technology such as virtual and augmented reality
- Host focus groups or listening sessions
- Incentivise contributions by providing public recognition, collection highlights, or contributor of the month
- Offer digital and family history resources aimed at tracing specific ethnic or cultural roots
- Pop-up collection events
- Promote and facilitate online collections
- Reframe archival narratives to reflect the diverse histories and experiences of all communities
- Support for digital preservation for groups who do not have their own resources
- Understand cultural sensitivities, providing support whilst respecting traditional knowledge
- Support volunteers to engage with local communities and build capacity.



# Customer Services - needs and trends

Our customers are local, regional, national and international, with 18% of our remote services (customers who pay online) living outside of the UK. Non-UK visitors to the Inspire Picture Archive comprise 10% of the annual visitor total.

The number of physical visits to the Archives office has declined since 2010 (10,798) by 74% (2,803), whilst online interactions have increased by 556% (509,509 in 2010/2011 and 3,304,528 in 2024/2025).

Remote enquiries (email, telephone) (2,691 in 2010/2011) have increased by 15% (3,098 in 2024/25). The number of archives viewed by onsite customers has increased by 5%.

The covid pandemic where physical access to our collections was severely restricted saw an accelerated shift to online and supported remote access. This was provided for many months and was well received by existing and new customers. Since that time the increase in expectation and demand for resources and services to be delivered online, and without a visit to the Archive has continued.

The Inspire Picture Archive, the online catalogue and the recent development of the digital Preservica platform alongside key online resources and services have improved the ability and capacity of the service to meet changing user needs.



# Staff, Partners and Volunteers

Heritage and library staff are key to the delivery of the heritage services across Inspire's network. The ongoing approach is to train and empower staff to develop, promote and deliver services, whilst preserving the historic collections managed on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. We aim to grow the collections, create better opportunities to connect people with our collections, including an increased focus on digital delivery and sustainability.

The service works with many partners and partnerships to support community development and to connect people with their heritage. We also work with a growing number of volunteers. This is not a way to replace paid staff, but a way to develop services and increase their impact. Whether they are cataloguing documents, stewarding an event, or creating digital content, our volunteers enhance the offer available at Nottinghamshire Archives and their local library.



# Appendix

## Action Plan 2026-2030

	Key Action	Measure	When
1	Develop staff skills and embed digital approach to collection management, development and service delivery	Training and development plan agreed	April 2026
2	Create 'virtual' archive gateway to operate alongside physical archives offer (in Archives and Hucknall library)	Increased take up of online resources	March 2026
3	Maintain Place of Deposit status via TNA Accreditation Assessment. Ensure inspection readiness and compliance with standards and legislation	Re-accreditation achieved	April 2026, Summer 2029
4	Establish network of library heritage champions at level 1 libraries – train and increase skills	12 champions	Dec 2026
5	Roll out the Preservica digital portal to all level 1 libraries	Available at all level 1 libraries	March 2028
6	Implement a planned digitisation programme, including local studies material in non-current formats e.g. VHS	Number of unique records	March 2028
7	Develop further volunteer roles and opportunities	10 opportunities available per year	Ongoing
8	Record Management Service to consolidate storage and implement agreed retention schedules where possible	Reduction of storage space required	Ongoing



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