RESEARCH INTO THE BENEFITS OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN ARCHIVES

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Executive summary

Introduction
Over the last twenty years there has been a large amount of capital investment in archive services. This has resulted in a whole new generation of archive buildings and some high profile projects. This is the first research to investigate the benefits of multi-million pound investments and gather evidence to support future development.

The research
The research aimed to investigate for the first time the proven benefits of capital investment in archive services in the UK.

The research had three stages:
- An online survey which was distributed across the UK to practising archive professionals
- In-depth interviews with four case studies (the History of Advertising Trust, Norfolk, The Highland Archive Centre, Inverness, Hull History Centre, the National Railway Museum Search Engine, York)
- A Focus Group with representatives of stakeholder groups within the archives sector.

Key findings
Capital investment in archives has delivered a significant and broad range of benefits to users, the community, depositors, staff and managers. Users benefitted the most, but the benefits to the safety and longevity of the collections were also profound.

When new archive facilities opened, demand increased significantly, routinely doubling or tripling; there is clearly unrealised demand for what archive services can provide. In the most successful case documented, public usage rose by more than a factor of nine.

Success bred success. It is clear that the staff of services which received investment gained confidence and continued to achieve, taking on stretching targets and new activities.

The author coins the phrase ‘Euphoric Intangible’ – the emotional impact of a successful capital project on a wide range of stakeholders.

At best, new build delivered immense pride for the local community. The Hull History Centre is now a major element in the City’s ‘offer’ to tourists, students and academics and the business community. ‘It has made Hull what it should be – a centre of excellence and serious academic work.’
Investment alone, however, was not the answer. Investment in the bricks and mortar without consequent investment in staff and failure to exploit the capital expenditure to the full, resulted in under-performing services. The quality of build and design, and the speed of build also worked against excellence in some cases.

There are clear lessons for the archive sector from the research. Services need strong advocates if they are to succeed financially and make their case for improvements and investment. Vision is needed to create compelling forward-looking projects which look beyond solving current problems and are genuinely ‘transformational’.

The archives sector lacks key standard metrics, particularly around service performance (e.g. the relevance and efficacy of services from the customer’s perspective, operational efficiency (e.g. for collection management to demonstrate the impact of investment and non-investment in archival operations) and financial costs.

**The Service/Staff/Collection dependency model**

The author offers the ‘SSC Dependency Model’ and postulates that at the heart of a good service are three elements: a relevant collection; appropriate types and levels of staff; and appropriately designed and sufficient space. When a service is founded on high quality collections, well trained staff and appropriately designed spaces it can create an impact that stretches well beyond its core audiences and generates a virtuous circle of service, familiarity and reciprocal support.

**Summary of benefits**

**Benefits for users – ‘You’ll be welcomed and you’ll get the answer’**

Users are the biggest beneficiaries of capital investment in archives. Benefits included:

- A much improved Searchroom environment which prompted longer and deeper research
- Vastly improved access to records and collection knowledge due to:
  - longer opening hours
  - more staff (one of the most highly valued outcomes for users)
  - better finding aids (resulting from arranging collections for moving into the new building)
  - more collections in total
  - more collections (including retention of public records that could have been withdrawn by The National Archives due to poor conditions) due to more storage space
  - faster delivery of records once ordered due to streamlined backroom processes
- In some cases several services were bought together under one roof for a ‘one-stop shop’
• Much better ancillary facilities such as toilets, rest areas, parking, disabled facilities
• A more attractive space, including art work and the architecture, which incited curiosity making the building a destination in its own right
• A strong sense of civic pride
• A wider range of services - family and learning programmes often for the first time, exhibitions and lecture programmes, a registrar on site
• Facilities for groups other than traditional researchers such as families and schools – even a move into ‘edutainment’ market
• More capacity for the local community, for example accommodating local history groups.

Benefits for collections and depositors
• Improved storage conditions to meet BS5454 (often for the first time) and fulfil operational requirements such as building layouts that encourage efficient working and ease of moving collections
• Capacity to accept new collections after years of very restricted collecting due to lack of storage space
• Creation of a dedicated digital scanning area in some projects enabling easy creation of online resources, copying for users and consequent preservation of analogue originals
• Much better preservation and security through elements such as full location list, good environmental conditions and isolation rooms
• A move from storage of collections to professional collection management due to sufficient and bespoke spaces to accept, catalogue, conserve and move collections. This has resulted in rationalisation of collections, better packaging, better security through full location knowledge, and faster retrieval times for material
• A shift from reacting to the effects of poor storage, for example, leaks to planning and implementing strategic physical and intellectual management of collections
• Greater ease of accessing collections and organising collections for the move into new accommodation has also highlighted intellectual management problems, particularly around the extent and quality of cataloguing. Even planning the investment triggers the process of contemplating and planning collection management.

Benefits for staff
• Significantly more efficient internal systems enabling more effective and co-ordinated working
• More room in which to work making particularly collection appraisal and cataloguing much faster
• Additional staffing, required to run a service to match the quality and larger size of the accommodation

• New outreach and education staff have proved very popular and have bought in new and valuable knowledge about key educational audiences. Other new manpower includes additional volunteers and interns

• Improved health and safety arising from spacious, bespoke premises

• Greater understanding of their work by colleagues who are attracted to find out more as a result of the high profile of the investment

• Greater involvement in wider organisational decisions due to the higher profile of the Archive Service post-investment.

**Benefits for the parent organisation**

Greater contribution by the archive service to parent-body goals on issues such as:

• Financial efficiency such as records management (multi-million pounds for one authority), saved costs on room hire, and savings from the co-location of several services

• Good value given an archive building will last for 50 to 70 years

• The parent organisation using rooms in the archive building rather than external sites saves room hire costs

• Income generation, for example from room hire, events, reprographics, conservation

• Increased success rates in grant applications on the back of the success of the building

• Contribution to agendas in education and learning, social welfare, health

• Economic regeneration within the community

• Community engagement

• Promotion of cultural identity

• Public awareness of the organisation on a ‘feel-good’ level

• Outstanding landmarks recognisable even to non-users and thus a way of the parent providing a presence to the general public

• Maximum exploitation of an information asset.

**Benefits for other stakeholders**

• Increased training and volunteer opportunities due to the larger space created and the need for a larger workforce

• Increased confidence of external stakeholders in seeing the successful delivery of an attractive and intriguing building project
• Another space (and an unusual one) in which to undertake business.

The outcomes for Archive Services as a result of these benefits

Major and sustained improvement in Self-Assessment results
From a 1 or 2 star rating to a 3 or 4 star rating, due primarily to improvements in Preservation and Buildings categories but also arising from the Resources, Document and Access areas which tend to also be improved by the investment. This dramatic improvement is sustained in the long-run showing that investments in archive services have long-term impacts. For services that do not receive material levels of investment, a 1 or 2 star rating persist.

Significant rises in user numbers from a third to multiples of ten
On the basis of her research, the author considers that an archive service undertaking capital investment that materially changes the quality and scale of its operations can increase user numbers by a third to a half as a conservative estimate. A truly transformational project (such as the Hull History Centre or the Search Engine at the National Railway Museum) can generate increases of tens of times the original number of users.

Significantly increased usage of documents and enquiries
The number of items produced and remote enquiries will generally increase, bearing out users’ comments that they stayed longer and undertook more research. It also reflects to some extent larger user numbers. However, the research did not uncover any correlation between the scale of investment, changes in on-site visitor numbers and number of items produced or enquiries. Therefore, it is difficult to make any estimate as to the likely increase in the number of items or remote enquiries other than to say they are probably going to rise.

Users stay longer and undertake more complex and more wide-ranging research
Users do not simply do the same research quicker. They use the improved accessibility to collections to take their research to a higher level.

Users ask more complex questions of staff
Users are able to undertake more self-directed research for the simpler questions. Staff are now taking on a more important and sophisticated role as the quality of the service increases, rather having to do less because users can help themselves more.

User profile becomes much more diversified in age-range and purpose
Diversification includes the under 17 age group (through enhanced education services) and working with other professionals such as heritage, education and social welfare. Education and outreach in particular could increase from perhaps half as much again to ten times as much in terms of number of participants due to the delivery for the first time of spaces and staff for educational and learning activity.
**Additional resources to run a larger service**

Several services received additional core funding or grant funding for new posts to help run larger scale services or provide new services, notably education officers. Failure to provide sufficient staff will result in a poor service, undermining the original investment.

**Total revenue cost per user perhaps 20% lower**

Whilst sample sizes were very small all exhibited lower total revenue costs per user ranging from 6% to 60%, using CIPFA statistics, probably due to the large increases in user numbers. This requires further investigation.

**A lifeline in a period of cost-cutting**

Probably because of the high profile nature of the investments many services have not been heavily cut during the recession. Whether this will continue waits to be seen.

**A significant increase in the rate of deposits of material**

One case study talked about deposits being up 50%.

**A more efficient service**

Anecdotal evidence suggests efficiencies are delivered including faster document delivery times and collection processing accompanied by new policies and procedures generate out of developing the project. There are currently no universal efficiency measures against which this can be measured.

**Happier staff resulting in happier users.**

Many interviewees spoke of a much more welcoming service and much higher staff morale.

**Archive becomes a destination for non-users**

Visitors come to understand more about the building and its function without any interest or awareness in the collections. Such buildings ‘incite curiosity’. One service has even found itself put on the tourist bus route!

**Increased recommendations by word of mouth**

**A higher public profile for the Archive Service**

Resulting in everything from more usage by internal stakeholders to being the venue for key local events and high profile visitors.

**A greater sense of the Archive being a public service**

The Archive as a source of civic pride – ‘I value it as a rate payer and user.’

**Improved ability to access additional funding**

Due to increased organisational confidence to make bids and increased confidence in funders of the organisation’s ability to deliver based on the evidence of the successful large building project. Also funders are keen to be associated with success.
**Greater involvement in the activities of the parent body**
Such as records management, fundraising, locations for trustees meetings and advocacy to key stakeholders.

**A wider network of contacts**
Attracted by the publicity and outcome of the investment plus finding more synergies through the wider services provided by the new accommodation.

**Easier internal advocacy**
Colleagues are attracted by the building work which provides a starting point for dialogue and evidence of competence.

**Users still do not consider they should pay for services**
... some things never change.

**The Staff/Space/Collections (SSC) Dependency Model**
This research has shown that the provision of space has a central role in maximising the benefit that the physical archive service (as opposed to digital services) can deliver. This role and the consequent dependencies and outcomes are depicted in the SSC Dependency Model.

The SSC Dependency Model postulates that at the heart of a good service are three elements: a relevant collection; appropriate types and levels of staff; and appropriately designed and sufficient space.

These three resources come together to deliver benefits to a wide range of people. Some groups are directly affected by the benefits (with improving research, collection management and educational activities). Beyond this group there are other benefits derived from the building itself, which is a landmark in the physical landscape and provides, for example, an attractive meeting point and engenders an emotional response (community pride).

Between the benefits for direct participants and the landmark effect is the boundary. This is the point where some experience a powerful ‘double whammy’ effect because they benefit both from the improved archive service and from the ‘landmark’ effect. This group becomes the most powerful proponent of the service and has a very emotional response as a result.
The ramifications of the SSC Dependency Model are:

- Well-designed space is a fundamental asset in a successful service
- All the actions and benefits are dependent on the provision of appropriate space, staffing and collections
- If any of these are inadequate the service’s full potential cannot be recognised possibly to the point where the Model collapses and only limited actions and limited direct benefits can be derived
- The Model displays the flexibility of the actions, benefits and landmark effects. Different service types will have different combinations with a matrix of direct and indirect benefits to a range of stakeholders who have varying proximity to the service. Substantial investment in resources has this wider impact on non-users which a small scale of operation cannot achieve
- When a service is founded on high quality collections, well trained staff and appropriately designed spaces it can create an impact that stretches well beyond its core audiences and generates a virtuous circle of service, familiarity and reciprocal support.
Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the Society of Archivists and the National Council on Archives, now brought together as the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland), who provided the large majority of the funding as well as members of the Project Board and a representative for the Focus Group work. Without their support this research would not have been possible. University College London and my own company, Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan Associates Ltd, also provided small amounts of support in kind.

I would also like to thank Dr Andrew Flinn, UCL course director for MAs in Archives and Records Management, and the Department of Information Studies UCL for hosting this research. Dr Flinn provided invaluable research advice in planning and conducting the project as well as supporting the Focus Group work. He also provided encouragement and a sense of humour when it was most needed.

The input of all the survey respondents, case study interviewees and Focus Group participants was invaluable. All gave their time freely and with good grace. I am particularly indebted to the case studies that put a large amount of effort into ensuring I interviewed a wide range of stakeholders and welcomed me with enthusiasm and knowledge.

Finally I would like to thank Will, Anna and Hal and hope that they will forgive me for the number of bedtime stories I cut short to get this project completed.

Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan

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Acronyms

ARA – Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland)

BS5454 – BS5454:2000 Standards for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents

CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

DDA – Disability Discrimination Act

HAT – History of Advertising Trust

HAC – Highland Archive Centre, Inverness

HHC – Hull History Centre

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund

TNA – The National Archives

Note on the term ‘new archive buildings’

Throughout this report the author will refer to ‘new archive buildings’. This denotes archive buildings which replace previous facilities. It can refer to capital projects which are either new build or refurbishment and purely denotes a building in which investment has been undertaken, rather than only those projects that are completely new structures. Where the author intends to make a differentiation between new build and refurbishment this will be made clear within the context of the discussion.

To contact the author

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1. **Background**

1.1. **Description of the project**
This research project aimed to investigate for the first time the proven benefits of capital investment in archive services in the UK. It was funded by the Archives and Records Association and hosted by the Department of Information Studies at University College London led by Dr Andrew Flinn. The research was designed and conducted by Consultant Archivist, Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan. The Project was overseen by a Project Board of senior archivists (listed in Appendix 2).

The research had three stages:

- An online survey which was distributed across the UK to practicing archive professionals
- In-depth interviews with four case studies (listed in Appendix 1)
- A Focus Group with representatives of stakeholder groups within the archives sector (listed in Appendix 3).

These stages are described in more detail below.

1.2. **Why was the research undertaken?**
Over the last twenty years there has been a large amount of capital investment in archive services. This has resulted in a whole new generation of archive buildings and some high profile projects such as the Hull History Centre and the Norfolk Record Office, as well as attractive smaller projects such as the Hereford Cathedral Library and Archives. At the time of writing more projects are coming on stream such as The Keep in East Sussex and the combined facility in Birmingham. But there has never been any research undertaken to understand what are the benefits of multi-million pound investments nor to create a bedrock of evidence for supporting future development.

Prior to this project the author had undertaken a short online survey to start to gauge the nature and impact of capital investment. From this the author then developed this current project. This project seeks to tackle this knowledge deficit by providing a first attempt to identify potential benefits and quantify their impact for a range of archive stakeholders. As the research has developed it has become clear that there are a wide range of issues to be considered and as a result this research can only be considered to have started the analysis process. It throws up many questions and any one of the areas considered would benefit from its own research project. However, it is the author’s hope that this work has begun to bring clarity and, for the first time, hard evidence to the key issue of investment and that others will benefit from its findings.
1.3. **Methodology for the online survey**

Notices were sent out three times to the key archive email discussion lists for the UK, Wales and Scotland. Emails inviting involvement were also sent out to the following representative bodies:

- Society of Archivists / Archives & Records Association plus a separate email to the branch of the ARA representing the former constituency of the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government.
- British & Irish Sound Archives Group – BISA
- CyMAL
- ARCW (Archives Wales)
- British Records Association
- Scottish Council on Archives
- Business Archives Council
- Religious Archives Group
- Standing Conference on Archives in Museums
- Film Archive Forum.

There were 35 response of which 8 were blank returns leaving 27 usable responses. It is possible that the response rate could have been higher except that internal software security prevented access to the online survey. There was certainly one known case of this occurring. Furthermore, only about nine respondents worked their way through the whole survey. Whilst this is disappointing and means that certain results cannot be considered representative of the sector as a whole, it is hoped that they can at least enable some general conclusions to be drawn as well as highlighting individual experience. In the analysis the response rate is clearly shown.

Of these 27 responses two were for large-scale digital projects. As the survey was looking at the investment in physical assets as opposed to digital assets these responses have been removed where appropriate.

1.4. **Methodology for the case studies**

The case studies were chosen to provide both a geographical spread and capture the experiences of archive services in both the private and public sector, as well as covering projects of different scales. They were also chosen because of the availability of a number of different stakeholders (users, depositors, staff, key decision-makers) who were willing to be interviewed. The case studies included:

- The History of Advertising Trust, Norfolk
- The Highland Archive Centre, Inverness
- Hull History Centre, Hull

During 2011 the author toured each facility and interviewed a range of stakeholders including archivists, education staff, users, and senior managers or trustees.

The author also undertook interviews with the managers of two archive services that had not received capital investment despite clearly being in need of significant investment. The aim was to provide a ‘control group’ to see if benefits could still be delivered in circumstances of poor physical conditions.

1.5. **Methodology for the Focus Group**

The purpose of the Focus Group was to provide a ‘helicopter view’ of investment in the archives sector. It included representatives from:

- The British Association for Local History
- The Business Archives Council
- The Federation of Family History Societies
- The Heritage Lottery Fund
- The National Archives.

The group undertook a half-day session facilitated by Dr Flinn and the author, in which the participants explored key issues in a group discussion.

1.6. **Structure of this Report**

This Report has been structured to discuss the benefits delivered to different types of stakeholders namely:

- Users (Chapter 3)
- Collections and depositors (Chapter 4)
- Archive personnel (Chapter 5)
- The parent organisations (Chapter 6)
- Other stakeholders (Chapter 7).

For ‘Users’ and ‘Collections and depositors’ the chapter starts out looking out at expected benefits because these were noticeably narrower than the actual outcomes.

The Report then considers what are the identifiable outcomes for the Archive Service as a result of the investment (Chapter 8) to identify what are the ramifications for the Service of investment. There is also an assessment of drawbacks as a result of the investment (Chapter 9).

As a counter-balance the Report then goes on to consider to the experience of services that lack investment (Chapter 10).
Finally, the Report captures the views of decision-makers and archival interest groups to provide a sense of broader opinions about investment in the archives sector (Chapter 11). Finally, the author draws her own conclusions about the impact of capital investment in archives (Chapter 12).

Each chapter is informed by a mix of information arising from the research e.g. Benefits to users is informed primarily by case study interviews whilst Outcomes for the Service uses information from the online survey, case study interviews and other resources such as Self-Assessment data.
2. The nature of capital investment in archives

2.1. Introduction
Capital investment takes place right across the archives sector. To provide a broad picture of the nature of the investment this chapter provides a profile of the respondents to this project’s online survey.

2.2. Types of repository responding to the online survey
Archive repositories are found in many circumstances beyond the familiar local authority record office. A key aim of the research was to capture the experience of repositories both inside and outside of the local authority framework. Table 1 shows the types of respondents.

Table 1: Type of archive repository that responded to the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other educational</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist audio/visual repository</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic house</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unsurprisingly local authority repositories dominated the responses. However, there was small input from most other types of repository which provides some balance to the local authority bias. Furthermore, one repository described itself as covering five types of repository whilst another project included both a local authority and a charity.
2.3. **Years that projects opened**
The survey asked for any projects since 1993. However, all the responses were for fairly recent projects (including one that is not to open until 2013). The spread is shown in Fig. 1 and includes the two digital projects.

![Fig. 1 - Number of projects opening by year date](image)

Fig. 1 suggests the last ten years has been a fruitful time for investment in archive services. There have been numerous large scale archive capital projects (e.g. Hull History Centre, Wolverhampton Archives, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) which have delivered striking new landmarks. The funding cuts that now face all sectors will thus be even starker given the previous two decades of a continuous delivery of successful and effective capital investment projects.

2.4. **Regional distribution of projects responding to the online survey**
The regional distribution of respondent projects, including the two digitisation projects, is shown in Fig. 2. The survey had a reasonable geographical spread of projects. It was particularly pleasing to see a good response rate from Scotland and Wales. But there were no completed responses from the North East England or the Midlands. However, this has been partially rectified by having the Hull History Centre as a case study.
2.5. **The nature of capital investment covered by the survey**

Respondents were asked to classify the investment into specific categories with an option of ‘Other’ where the categories were unsuitable. There was a good range across virtually all the categories as Table 2 shows.

*Table 2: Investment categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of investment</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New building for sole occupancy by the service</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building for shared occupancy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy by the service</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New annexe to existing building for sole occupancy by the service</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New annexe to existing building for shared occupancy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was interesting to see the predominance of projects involving shared occupancy, almost half of all projects. New build (of either a whole building or an annexe) accounted for 14 of the 25 projects (56%). The two ‘Other’ category entries related to large scale digitisation projects.

2.6. **Operational areas receiving capital investment**

Operational areas included in the capital investment according to online survey respondents are given in Table 3.

Table 3: *Operational areas affected by capital investment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational area</th>
<th>Number of projects affecting this area type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff areas excluding conservation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searchroom</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public facilities such as rest areas and toilets</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition areas</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External areas such as parking</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Other’ included:
- Education rooms
- Lecture rooms
- Meeting rooms
- Location for registrar and modern records
- Home for the Family History Society
- Drying room
- Areas for wider use than purely archive users including cafe, toilets, car park.
- Exhibition space
- Spaces for museum partner functions
- Library
- Kitchens.
Clearly investment has been used for all physical aspects of an archive service. This spread is partly due to the number of ‘total building’ projects which saw the building or refurbishment of complete archive buildings. However, this response shows the demand for investing in more than purely the ‘direct’ archive areas such as storage and searchroom. An effective service must be able to service different audience types (with rooms for education, meetings and lectures, and exhibition spaces), undertake vital conservation work (with dedicated and equipped conservation spaces), service staff needs and often provide accommodation for sister services such as museums and registrars.

2.7. **How much is being invested in archive capital projects?**

The survey asked for the costs of the projects within set parameters, excluding land purchase costs. These are shown in Fig. 3.

*Fig. 3: Cost of projects*

It was pleasing to see that there was wide range of funding scales. It was remarkable to see the number of projects over £1 million. However small scale investment has a significant role to play. Whilst the large scale investment provides overarching, integrated solutions with many elegant features, small scale investment can still have a notable impact. Archive services are very used to getting by on very small amount of funding so any addition to that funding can have a significant impact on activity.

2.8. **Conclusion**

From the nature of the response to the online survey the investment in archive services appears to be well-balanced in terms of geography and the variety of operational areas affected by the investment. There is also a wide mix of project costs suggesting that as a sector archives does have some capacity to access
larger funding pots, although how this might compare with similar sectors such as museums and libraries cannot be commented upon here. During the Focus Group the HLF has expressed concern that it does not receive as a high a proportion of bids from archives as say museums so there may be factors at work which hinder the archives sector from obtaining as much capital as it could. Nevertheless, over the last twenty years there have been some impressive schemes (Essex Record Office, Norwich Record Office, Hull History Centre, Hereford Cathedral Library and Archives) which have taken individual services to a whole new level of operation.
3. Benefits to users

3.1. Introduction
The needs of users and collections are often the starting point for developing investment plans. Users are obviously the primary audience that can benefit from capital investment. If they are not benefitting (either directly or indirectly) it is not unreasonable to ask why the investment was undertaken. This chapter first looks briefly at what users' benefits might be expected from investment. It then goes on to describe the actual benefits experienced and the gap between the expectation and the delivery. Quotes come from case study interviews.

3.2. Expected benefits for users
Interviews with the case studies found that generally the expected benefits for users were pragmatic and based around the needs of traditional archival users. The underlying theme was about improving the Searchroom and storage resulting in more comfortable environment with better ancillary services such as toilets and rest areas, better access to records and possibly access to other service providers onsite such as the Registrar. There were some general ideas about a wider user base, higher user numbers, increased outreach activity and higher profile for a couple of the case study respondents. One case study Archivist talked about ‘a loose idea that the investment would help the [parent body’s] function’ to deal with enquiries but ‘not necessarily differently from how it had before’. Generally the expected benefits were defined in routine, measurable terms that responded to existing problems rather than explicitly embraced an aspirational vision of the new service.

The notable exception to this pragmatism was the Hull History Centre where there was a greater breadth and a degree of true aspiration, rather than purely a desire to overcome existing issues. Hull had written its HLF bid to express its aspiration of attracting a wider demographic in Hull outside the traditional narrow user base of the 3 repositories. Concepts such as enabling people to come together for cross-fertilisation of ideas, making the building a place where people could feel they belonged and increasing the ‘pull’ of Hull as a place to undertake academic study permeated the whole design process.

3.3. Actual benefits for users – an overview
The simplicity of the expected benefits was not evident in the actual benefits. Users received a wide range of returns ranging from practical help to personal reaction. In order to present this quantity of information in a digestible manner the responses for each area of benefit have been summarised showing the physical improvements and the resultant benefits. It is hoped that this summary will provide a quick ‘checklist’ of benefits. Quotes given are from interviews with users. Each summary is then followed by a commentary to give greater detail and explanation.

The results have been categorised into the following areas:

- The Searchroom Environment
• Access to records and collection knowledge
• Support facilities
• Range of services
• Facilities for user groups other than traditional researchers.

3.4. An improved searchroom environment

The Searchroom has traditionally been the key location for the interface between the user and the Service. Whilst the emergence of online resources is broadening that interface, the Searchroom still remains an important element in the user experience and, of course, the setting for the very personal experience of working with original documents. Table 4 summarises the tangible changes and the effect on the user.

*Table 4: The impact on the Searchroom environment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible change</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A dedicated, bespoke searchroom either for the first time or on a larger scale.</td>
<td>A sense of being welcome rather than users feeling they are intruding on a hard-pressed service.” You do not feel you have to leave quickly. You can spend as long as you want.” Pride in ‘their’ new archive facility. ‘It’s a great building and looks good.’ The service feels a genuinely a public service. A sense of money well-spent by users who are local rate-payers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More space for research</td>
<td>Consult records in comfort and at less risk of damaging material. Improved efficiency in research. Faster research meaning time to move on to deeper and more meaningful research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible change</td>
<td>User benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighter, more airy and generally more attractive space.</td>
<td>Greater physical comfort which makes research slightly easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘This is one of the best research facilities. It’s light and airy and that helps productivity.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It can be inspiring looking out over the engines [at the Search Engine of the National Railway Museum].’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time or improved capacity for user self-service to open-access material e.g. reference books.</td>
<td>More effective research visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for a greater number of researchers.</td>
<td>Less/no requirement to book providing greater flexibility in visiting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poor searchroom facilities are often the starting point for prompting capital investment and a key area in the design process. This is not surprising given that the Searchroom is where Services engage with their traditional audience and are often the most tangible element of non-investment (alongside poor storage), providing daily irritations for both users and Service providers. Furthermore, the specification for the ideal Searchroom is relatively easy to define. Archivists know what they want the space to do. The processes that take place within that space are straightforward and replicated for most users. The Searchroom is a familiar space to archivists contemplating change and a central element in Service operations (although this emphasis will lessen as online resources grow).

Over the last 20 years the UK has seen a plethora of attractive and well-thought out Searchrooms - the large scale of the Essex Record Office, the elegance of the John Rylands, the lively functionality of the London Metropolitan Archive, the high-ceilinged peace of the Hull History Centre. The physical benefits are easy to enumerate. A dedicated room purely for Searchroom functions has replaced ‘cosying up’ with the Archivist in their office. Space dimensions properly calculated around user needs and projected numbers ensure sufficient research space for the individual user. A thoughtful layout enables a clear flow of functions, each with its own identifiable space. Bespoke furnishing provides the simple but necessary tools for research such as map tables, fiche readers, bookshelves for secondary material, computer terminals, sockets for laptops. Well-planned proximities and document delivery routes ensure easy access to both staff and Records. Simply put, time and time again the investment delivers a space that works. The concept of ‘effective space’ is one that recurs throughout the research.
Unsurprisingly the Searchroom user derives very immediate but long-term benefits from a dedicated, bespoke research space. With the provision of sufficient space, light and peace along with better internal systems, users are able to undertake research more effectively and efficiently. More will be said about this under ‘Access to records and collections knowledge’ as several factors are necessary for effective research.

But what is just as interesting is the psychological effect on users. There were two recurrent themes in interviews: a sense of being welcomed and a civic pride in the renewed Service.

The welcoming aspect is in part a counter-reaction to the previous situation of non-investment where a small number of users could only be accommodated at one time requiring both a cumbersome appointments system and the turning away of casual visitors. Furthermore, the ‘searchroom’ was often tucked away at the back of another service (such as a library) or in a dingy building and might even be the archivist’s office. This inevitably created a feeling amongst users that they were impinging on the Service and causing a nuisance. There were few signals that the Service valued their presence, other than the attitude of the staff (although even this was not always that forthcoming as staff battled with a multitude of pressures). Once in a properly designed space the user felt they had a right to visit and that the Service was orientated to their needs, rather than squeezing them in alongside the other demands of the Service. A properly appointed Searchroom is a clear sign that the researcher is valued and wanted and that the systems are geared up to service their needs. In the words of one user interviewed for this research ‘You’ll be welcomed and you’ll get the answer’. This could be the mission statement for any archive service.

The second psychological impact of civic pride will be explored in more detail later on. Nevertheless it is important to note here that it does exist and how that pride manifests itself. One user described it as feeling that it was money well spent saying ‘This is what we should spend our taxes on’. Other users felt that, with its welcoming environment and beautiful new fit out, the Service was truly a public service. So, by creating a new physical environment a Service can clearly demonstrate to audiences its underlying intention to provide service and assistance.

The overarching outcome of a bespoke searchroom was again psychological. There was significantly improved morale in both users and staff. The combination of workable systems and an attractive environment that enabled staff and users to achieve their goals creates a virtuous circle of optimistic working and successful outcomes.

As a footnote to this section, it is the author’s opinion that the conscious impact on users of a bespoke searchroom is very short-lived. Although people did comment on perhaps a space being ‘more light and airy’ they did not comment on the searchroom in detail. They moved swiftly on to the access to collections, which of course is their priority. This is not to suggest that a well-designed searchroom is not important, indeed it is vital if people are going to handle collections over a long period in comfort and without damaging material.
However, if users face barriers and restrictions in accessing collections and related information then a nice physical environment is of limited value to them. The ideal service delivers both.

3.5. **Better access to records and collection knowledge**

Users are visiting to find out information. Every archive service is constantly striving to improve the ease with which users can get to that information. Capital investment can make have marked impact on the quality of access, as Table 5 summarises.

*Table 5: Summary of the improvements in access to collections*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible change</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ease of visiting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerably longer opening hours including daily opening, evenings, lunchtimes and weekends (possibly for the first time).</td>
<td>The user has much greater choice of when they will visit rather, than being driven by the limited hours of the service. ’The problem with the old service was that it was shut a tremendous amount of time.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much longer individual periods of research enabling faster research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to visit more often, again increasing the speed of research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>’I certainly use the Service more because I do not have to book. If there is something I want I can go and look.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of requirement to make an appointment.</td>
<td>Much greater flexibility in visiting and able to ’drop in’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less to organise ahead of a visit, making visiting easier and more attractive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to email staff with research queries in advance to check whether relevant records are held and thus whether a visit is worthwhile.</td>
<td>Faster research through more productive visits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tangible change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible change</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to collections</td>
<td>Visitor has access to a wider range of records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The possibility of material being lost because the Service cannot accept it is greatly reduced, thus saving material for current and future generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Repatriation’ of records from other repositories.</td>
<td>Increased coherence and depth of collections enabling better research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved access through records being located where potential users expect to find them. ‘The trouble with the old service was that... the wrong things were in the wrong place.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissipation of threat of removal of records due to poor conditions e.g. by the National Archives.</td>
<td>Retain access to local records in the most appropriate and local repository.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Improved computer and microfiche facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved computer and microfiche facilities.</th>
<th>Improved access to collection and contextual information making visits more productive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved physical access to reference material e.g. creation or expansion of reference library sections.</td>
<td>Improved access to collection and contextual information making visits more productive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible change</td>
<td>User benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved access to collections - continued</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting other researchers with similar research interests.</td>
<td>Accessing the knowledge of others which may speed up or shape one’s own research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating new friendships and working relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to share one’s own research finds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The sense of belonging to a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing value beyond that provided by the collections and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring archive services or related services (e.g. local studies) bought</td>
<td>Much increased efficient and productivity in undertaking research through the provision of a ‘one stop shop’. ‘Having the local studies and archive stuff together is very efficient. I can consult primary and secondary sources at the same time. It’s a great increase in efficiency for me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together in one location.</td>
<td>Delight at the variety of resources freely available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovery of new resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting a wider range of fellow users and all the benefits of their knowledge and friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The move requires staff to know the content of all boxes and thus increases</td>
<td>Improved awareness of collection content, particularly hitherto unexplored collections. ‘The move forced them to open every box...others will get a lot out of this.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collection knowledge which is passed on to users.</td>
<td>‘They have discovered a lot of material I did not know they had.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible change</td>
<td>User benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved access to collections - continued</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified front end catalogues for archive services co-located on the same site.</td>
<td>More efficient retrieval of collection information speeding up research and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expanding opportunities for working across collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to access primary and secondary information in the same location.</td>
<td>More effective and quicker research visits through being able to access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complementary resources side by side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significantly improved quality of service</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much faster ordering of records because they are on site and properly located.</td>
<td>Faster research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sense of using a professional service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a private interview room</td>
<td>Opportunity to discuss delicate issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sense of being able to take time over potentially difficult issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another signal of the professionalism of the Service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing access to collections is why archive services exist. When they are unable to carry out this function they are failing in their professional duties and letting down users. A Service which cannot provide access to its collections is writing its own death sentence because it cannot justify its existence. Access is rightly at the heart of virtually all archival capital investment programmes. So how does investment help access from the user’s perspective?

Firstly investment provides space for collections to be managed and added to. Many archive services in poor accommodation must put valuable offers of material on hold whilst they hunt out some space through a combination of appraising existing collections and clever juggling of limited space. Properly designed storage accommodation with expansion space enables services to collect in a coherent and proactive manner. Good storage conditions also enable repositories to house material previously fostered to other institutions and remove the threat of collections being removed due to poor conditions (e.g. loss of public records via The National Archives withdrawing ‘Place of Deposit’ status). In the long-term this means a larger research resource, properly appraised and catalogued to create a coherent, rich resource which is easy to assess through proper catalogues. There is more for the user to draw on and the user is apprised of the contents more easily.
Secondly, processes are streamlined and more efficient in a properly designed environment. Ordering is quicker because records are on site (rather than distributed over several locations in many cases) and have a straightforward journey down a corridor or in a lift rather than numerous flights of stairs from a basement or attic. Archive services do not take place in a vacuum. Users come from a context of accurate, fast service be it next-day delivery by Amazon or a meal in two minutes from MacDonalds. An archive service cannot pretend that somehow it can excuse itself from setting and attaining comparable standards. If it does it merely irritates its audience and projects an amateurish image. Well designed archive buildings have been shown to vastly improve delivery times and created the means by which services can establish stretching service standards e.g. ten or five minutes for document delivery times. This demonstrates the professionalism and user focus of the Service. As manager of a case study said ‘One of our punters drew the analogy of us being like an Argos for information – except that it’s free!’

Thirdly, a larger building can mean more services on one site. Hull History Centre combines Hull City Archives, the Local Studies Unit and Hull University Archives creating an enviable ‘one stop shop’ for users in this horizontal ‘merger’. The Highland Archive Centre in Inverness pulled in the local authority archive, the Registrar and the local authority records management functions to create a vertical fusing of functions from record creators to record users. Interviews showed that users greatly appreciated the ‘one-stop shop’ approach. As one user said ‘It’s all here in one location’.

Fourthly, it’s easier for the user to get on site. Longer opening hours including evenings, lunchtimes and weekends remove cumbersome appointment systems and lets the user, rather than the archive, decide when they will visit. This is often supported with greater availability of staff to answer remote enquiries about the content and accessibility of collections. The overall result is that users are much more in control of their visit and it is their requirements, rather than the service’s restrictions, which shape their usage patterns.

The fifth point concerns access to staff. Along with more space often has come more staff to manage the enlarged services, which users have greatly appreciated. Greater availability of knowledgeable staff was repeatedly noted as a core benefit by users interviewed for this research. Staff have knowledge about the content and interrelationships between collections which is difficult to replicate in written collection information. They can understand the nuance of the researcher’s enquiries and shape their collection information accordingly. As the high results of PSQG visitor satisfaction surveys constantly show, the knowledge and personability of archive staff is one of the sector’s great strengths.

One perceptive user interviewed also noted how, with the increased staff complement, more collections were getting catalogued and thus users had access to hitherto ‘unknown’ material. Obviously cataloguing is a back-room operation so if a Service does experience more cataloguing through more staff this should be clearly broadcast to stakeholders or it can remain a hidden payback.
Finally, users get a psychological payback for the investment. The greater space, better access to collections, wider user base and better ancillary facilities (see below) provide users with increased opportunities and locations (e.g. searchroom, reference section, rest area) to meet with other users. The initial result is the prospect of tapping into the knowledge and experience of others. However, this can grow to the user feeling they have become part of a community of users, which stands apart from the staff or the service per se. When this is combined with the increased optimism with which users view the service and the pride they have in the new building, it is clear that investment in an archive service can result in significant sense of well-being and positivism in the user. Is this consciously designed into projects or should we as a sector be working harder to encourage and maximise the ‘well-being’ of the user?

For the user this easier access culminates in very important and tangible returns for their research. What it means quite simply is that they can find the answers they were seeking. The following quotes from case study users show the fundamental value of being able to easily retrieve collection information and interact with diverse and well-maintained collections:

- ‘I could not do this research without this facility.’
- ‘It’s much cheaper than using chargeable online services. You also get far more information and quicker plus the staff expertise.’
- ‘Generally it’s an easier place to work in and much more accessible in time and collection times’.

### 3.6. Significantly upgraded ancillary facilities

Ancillary facilities are those basics which make life easier. Whilst they can be easily overlooked, poor ancillary facilities can make the user experience so uncomfortable as to dissuade the user from coming again. Services without investment are characterised by their poor ancillary facilities – no rest area, lack of parking, limited ability to accommodate disabled visitors. Capital investment enables a service to remove logistical irritations for the user and create a practical, harmonious environment in which to work and relax. Table 6 summarises these benefits.

**Table 6: Benefits to users of improved ancillary facilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible improvement</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafe or drinks area</td>
<td>Users have all they need to make a long visit to the Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free on-site parking (though not for all projects!)</td>
<td>No need for visitor to go into town early to find a parking space. Users avoid the cost of city-centre parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved toilets</td>
<td>We all value a nice loo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible improvement</td>
<td>User benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| More accessible location | Easier to visit.  
Easier to describe to other potential users. |
| Significantly improved health and safety management. | Users may be unaware of the issues lack of investment raises, but the unconscious benefit will be a safer environment in which to spend possibly very long amounts of time. |
| Inclusion of art work in the building’s visual presentation. | Surrounded by a physically attractive and intellectually engaging environment. |
| Facilities which are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act for the first time. | Disabled users find it is practical to visit the Service.  
Disabled users and their carers feel welcomed and appropriately accommodated. |

It can be easy to overlook support facilities in the design process but it is these that make the difference between a visit that the user ‘endures’ and a comfortable and positive experience. Accessible location, easy parking, refreshments, accessible computer terminals, attractive decor – these are all things that add a sense of quality and customer service. Users responded well to provision of these elements feeling they made a visit practical and comfortable.

Perhaps the most important element of the support facilities was the new ability to comply fully with the Disability Discrimination Act. This is an important step in archives being open to all and central to the needs of many archive users who are older and physically less able. One Service was proud to explain how this vastly improved level of DDA compliance had resulted in the arrival of two disabled volunteers.

The inclusion of art work is an important element and again one that can be easily overlooked. Art engages, art provokes thought, art creates understanding, art covers bare walls! This is most beautifully demonstrated in the new building of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The numerous beautiful pieces at PRONI, commissioned in its ’Integrated Art Project’ as part of the capital investment, include a poem etched into a giant steel sheet in the entrance foyer and shelving filled with archives made out of porcelain entitled ‘Heritage’. The poem is held within the archives of poet John Hewitt at PRONI and the porcelain archives captures what PRONI’s work is about, saving very vulnerable materials.

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1 For a full exposition of the art works go to [www.proni.gov.uk/proni_integrated_art_project](http://www.proni.gov.uk/proni_integrated_art_project)
3.7. **A wider range of services for existing and new users**

The online survey and the case studies have revealed that investment has not resulted in doing the same as before but in nicer circumstances. Rather it has provided the space and impetus to create new services and broaden existing ones, as Table 7 summarises.

*Table 7: Summary of changes in services and resultant user benefits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible change</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wider range of user activities such as open days, lecture series and building</td>
<td>User intention shifts to ‘make a day of it’ when visiting as there are a wider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tours.</td>
<td>range of reasons to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A more engaging visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking customer satisfaction surveys for the first time because there is</td>
<td>Planning for delivery of services is based on hard evidence about what users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the confidence to seek user opinion.</td>
<td>value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of sister services such as the Registrar and Genealogy Service.</td>
<td>Close proximity of related information resources enables faster and more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>productive research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to use other nearby facilities such as shops and sports centres.</td>
<td>There are other engaging attractions to pull the user to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A visit to the archive can be combined with getting other tasks done such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of family and learning activities for the first time.</td>
<td>A new range of users are serviced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Users experience the archive in a different way e.g. as a family rather than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lone researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions mounted for the first time.</td>
<td>A new and easy way of engaging with collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An attraction for visitors who would not be interested in using the archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>per se</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With much greater spaces properly equipped Archive Services are capable of providing a much wider range of services (as long as there are sufficient staff). Indeed, a large investment is often made on the basis that a wider range of
facilities will be developed to increase audiences. What comes out of this summary is the need to see archives as part of other process such as ‘edutainment’ for families or a day’s shopping and ‘getting things done in town’. The less archive services set themselves apart and the more they provide services which fit in with people’s expectations and routines, the more easily they can pull in new audiences and yet still maintain that wonderful surprise element of uniqueness and revelation.

3.8. **Facilities for user groups other than traditional researchers**

Many older archive buildings suffer from not having bespoke facilities for audiences beyond traditional researchers. This automatically excludes key potential audiences from interacting with the service, particularly those where the Service needs to proactively attract that audience rather than waiting for the audience to come to it. Education programmes, attracting families, work in the community – these are the types of engagement which are precluded for the sake of very prosaic facilities such as meeting rooms, presentation facilities, toilets and sufficient lockers. Once these simple but necessary elements are provided in a well laid out building new audiences are ready to be unlocked, as the summary in Table 8 shows.

*Table 8: Summary of changes in facilities and resultant user benefits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible change</th>
<th>User benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The building has become an attraction in its own right that people want to look round.</td>
<td>An engaging location to discover and be surprised by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of equipped spaces to service groups.</td>
<td>Programmes and activity tailored to needs of specific user types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raised awareness of the nature and breadth of collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The teaching rooms were unexpected but a wonderful opportunity that I am now using.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of education services for the first time.</td>
<td>The requirements of a central audience (i.e. those in education across the all age ranges) are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service can now actively make contact with local community centres and groups.</td>
<td>Communities receive positive encouragement to interact with ‘their’ collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible change</td>
<td>User benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service can provide facilities for community groups to host their activities.</td>
<td>Communities become empowered to take on heritage for their own use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User and community groups have a forum in which to network and learn from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to accommodate families for the first time.</td>
<td>A location for families to come together in a joint activity i.e. be a family together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach work shifts from reactive to proactive.</td>
<td>Tailored services delivered in a coherent, focused programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New services for hosting teacher training.</td>
<td>Teachers become aware of a whole new resource which can bring uniqueness and demonstrable relevance to their teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New services for hosting professional meetings</td>
<td>Professionals have opportunity and location to share and learn from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a wedding/conference suite.</td>
<td>A rather unique ‘heritage’ location with which to mark a historic day in people’s lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Suite is an unexpected attraction for the’ behind the scenes ‘tour visitor.</td>
<td>Greater understanding of what it takes to ensure our heritage survives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A unique experience which they can tell to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of an exhibition space, often for the first time.</td>
<td>A new way of interacting with collections without having to do any personal research. Exhibitions are well known for reaching much wider audiences than formal services as they capture passers-by.</td>
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This research shows in several ways the importance of providing space for human activity and preferably space that is designed to accommodate defined activities. For many archive services new facilities really do open up new possibilities, new audiences and new communities. As the ‘uninvested’ case studies explained, the desire to expand services is very strong but the capacity to do so often is not there. Investment provides that capacity and with really very modest additions notably:
• One or two meeting rooms with professional presentation facilities and flexibility e.g. moveable seating, moveable but sound-proof partitions.

• Toilet facilities

• Tea-making facilities

• Additional lockers and coat hooks

• Dedicated exhibition space.

The Service then exploits this space to target audiences particularly schools groups, community groups and fellow professionals.

The benefits for these users who range beyond the researcher can be split into three categories. Firstly, there are those users who get the opportunity to interact with collections (and knowledgeable staff) in a way that is adapted to their own needs and approach. So school visits can work with a range of original materials which support the requirements of the National Curriculum. Here the benefit is a highly mediated experience clearly focused on their own needs and delivered by dedicated staff. There is family learning described by one Education Officer, ‘which approaches activities for children from the point of view of the family i.e. engages the adult and child at the same time so the parent must get engaged too, intergenerational interaction. And these courses are grounded in archival/heritage resources (rather than balloons and face painting) to give it archival integrity. There’s got to be a reason people come to the History Centre rather than the Shopping Centre for family events. People are always a bit surprised at the family and learning activities as they aren’t traditional archive users – “You’ve got that upstairs and I can look it?”

Secondly, the users who learn in an ‘unintentional’ manner. Thus exhibitions and behind the scenes tours provide a populist and undemanding method of interaction, enabling a much wider range of people to learn about the collections and the Service than would be the case if it were purely researchers. These users learn ‘by accident’ and have new experiences with unexpected learning emanating from the unique work of an Archive Service. For them the benefit is one of surprise and alternative experience, which they will often want to share with others. As one Head of Service said of the tours of the Conservation Suite ‘It is an aspect that even archive users don’t see. So when people go on building tours they are really ‘pulled in the by the sciency bit’.

Finally, there is the user of the Service who does not interact directly with the collections. For them the building is the benefit in that it provides the location for their activities e.g. community groups, professional meetings, training sessions. The ‘heritage’ remit of the building may well make it a sympathetic location for these gatherings but that it contains archives is usually not critical to the purpose of the user.

3.9. **Conclusions on the benefits for users**

Assuming capital investment is across the whole archive operation and not just back of house activities, users are the biggest beneficiaries of capital investment.
They receive the greatest number of benefits both tangible and intangible and these have commensurately the largest impact on the Service both in measurable terms such as increased user numbers and broader audience types, and in intangibles such as civic pride in the Service and a sense of providing a community to visitors. Those users who were familiar with the old service developed a much more positive attitude towards the Service. Whilst they recognised the limits that the old service imposed on staff, they were nevertheless frustrated by the effects of those limits such a limited opening hours and booking systems. The new Service often provided users with much greater flexibility to visit and programme their visit themselves. But it also gave them a new pride and new communities with which to interact. The following long quote from one user encapsulates the payback users receive on investment:

*Has your attitude to the Service changed?* 'Oh yes. It’s much more of a community. There’s more things going on - in the old archives there was nothing going on ever. There is a space in which things can happen (same at the Treasure House in Beverley). You go to these events and meet people and form new relationships. I teach on the local history course which has mature students who now work as volunteers at the Archive and some of them has signed up for my Latin course. You run into people there you know from the local history scene.

*Do you recommend the service to others more since investment?* 'Oh yes, definitely. I never, never suggested that people should go [to the old place]. I take field trips from the University and look at original documents. I never did this in the old place partly because it was never open. The access was terrible. I recommend the documents. I say ”You can actually go and look it. Do so.”

Clearly there is a sense of great utility. Users start thinking how they can use the service to further their own interests and in so doing add to the overall offer from the Service by getting involved in groups, bringing others along and recommending the Service.

There is also a sense of pride and pleasure in the new building. One user said ‘I would like to emphasise how useful it is and how good an experience it is. It’s an amazing facility....It’s definitely an archive for the modern age.’ This results in users feeling a strong sense of loyalty and even ownership - ‘On the whole I think it was tremendous. Building a community was never possible elsewhere. The public space is fantastic and it needs a lot more use. Anything I can do for the archives. It’s my archives!’
4 Benefits for collections and depositors

4.1 Introduction
Concerns over physical facilities for storing collections are major drivers for the majority of capital investment programmes. Indeed they are often the starting point from which other beneficiaries, such as users, are then identified. All of the case studies identified poor conditions for collections as a primary reason for investment. This chapter looks at the expected and actual benefits that were delivered for collections.

4.2 Expected benefits
For the case studies the expected benefits for storage were practical answers to pressing logistical issues. Improved storage was expected to deliver more space for both storing and moving collections thus enabling an increased level of collecting and easier collection management. Case studies also expected significantly improved preservation through the creation of environmentally controlled conditions. As can be seen in this chapter all these expectations were met.

4.3 Improved storage facilities
Storage, like the Searchroom which is the other central factor in most archive building projects, is one of the few parts of archive projects which have clearly defined parameters which are familiar to archive professionals. Consequently, it is an area of comparative comfort for archivists (although not always for architects!) when developing building proposals. Expected benefits are straightforward to define and can be presented to stakeholders as a major rationale for undertaking the investment.

Investment which included storage areas delivered ‘proper’ storage conditions for the first time for most respondents and all case studies. ‘Proper’ means:

- adherence to the requirements of BS5454 with regards to issues such as accrual space, fire prevention, on-going environmental management, media-specific storage conditions, and furniture
- plus meeting operational requirements such as good proximity and ease of travel to the storage room.

All the case studies which invested in storage reached BS5454 for all their collections for the first time. By attaining professional standards in storage collections longevity is improved and thus the availability of collections to users and the assurance to depositors of high quality care are both improved. It also means the creation of dedicated spaces for functions rather than sharing odd available areas with other service providers such as cleaners, the finance department and even the library.

It is interesting to note the role of BS5454 in this process. There is no legal requirement to implement this Standard (which at the time of writing is currently under revision). However, it is the required standard from the HLF, is the
aspiration in TNA’s Standard for Record Repositories and is incorporated into assessment systems such as Benchmarks in Collection Care and TNA’s Self-Assessment. It will also in all probability be included in the impending Accreditation Standard from The National Archives. So through adoption by key bodies and acceptance by the profession the Standard has become de facto the automatic yardstick for measuring the design and performance of certain areas of physical build. With the number of new buildings established in the last 15 years this has become a virtuous circle of expectation and implementation.

4.4 Capacity to accept new collections
Naturally increased storage space enabled services to take in more collections. However, this benefit was not only the practicality of having more shelves. There was also an expectation on the part of the archivists to develop collecting to ensure the historical record was coherent and retained its relevance. However, in this research it became clear that other stakeholders also took up this expectation. Unsurprisingly users expected more collections because that is what they require from the Service. Gratifyingly potential depositors also picked up this expectation. The high profile that accompanies many of these projects bought the collecting role of the archive service into the consciousness of donors who might otherwise never realise this role and body exists. But the projects also encouraged senior managers and decision-makers to seek improved collecting.

Clearly to be successful in gaining funding and institutional support for a capital project an Archive Service has to clearly explain its purpose and how it fulfils that purpose. Collecting is at the heart of this purpose and thus is bought explicitly to the attention of senior managers, Portfolio holders, trustees and the like – possibly for the first time. They must then use their awareness of this, and other archival functions, to inform their decision as to whether to accept or reject the capital proposal. So the very process of decision forces exploration of the value and activity of the Archive Service.

4.5 Creation of a dedicated digital scanning area
Digital scanning is now a core part of many archival services. It allows easy copying of original resources of a wide range of formats. These copies are then available for numerous uses such as supplying documents to remote users, creating resources for outreach purposes, populating online content provision and preserving the original. Digital scanning enables the Service to reach the archival nirvana of widening access without increasing damage and threats to the archival document.

Not all capital investment includes a digital scanning capacity and where it does this can differ widely in scale. For some organisations the process was simply dedicating a particular area to this activity and purchasing a suitable camera. At the other end of the scale, one local authority record office in the North of England in its new building created an extensively equipped operation that works on a commercial basis serving both heritage institutions and other organisations.
Provision of a digital scanning area enabled services to provide a service which users want and expect. It also helped services easily create online resources and provide an additional resource when working with partners.

4.6 Coherent organisation of collections
Moving collections from one location to another is a major project in its own right. To satisfy the requirements of insurers, calculate move costs, ensure an efficient move and be able to access the collections after the move, collections have to be properly organised and labelled prior to the move. It is also a process that is clearly governed by strong strategic and operational requirements to gain control over collections and thus is a process which is carefully planned and clearly focused.

For some respondents this was the first time they have had the time, resource and managerial permission to undertake this wholesale review of collections. It was an opportunity which was relished by archivists and proved invaluable for the long-term management of collections.

Coherently organising collections before a move delivered the following benefits:

- Removal of low grade material thus removing an element which uses up resource for very little archival value in return and freeing up that resource for more high quality material
- Storage of collections in archival standard and media specific packaging often for the first time, thus improving their longevity and the professionalism of the Service
- Identification of the location of all material, sometimes for the first time, so enabling easy discovery of material and creating efficiencies in the document retrieval system for users and collection management by staff
- Ability to implement effective and efficient collection management systems particularly for storage, collection movement and tracking thus creating a system which fulfils the needs of both collection users and curators and provides relevant up-to-date data for the archive service.

As one case study said 'The move provided opportunity to reorganise archives in focused, considered manner.....Every box was moved at least once resulting in more space and better knowledge and organisation of what we have and is an on-going improvement. '

4.7 A move from storage to professional collection management
A new building enabled services to ‘professionalise’ the administration of collections. In this context ‘professionalise’ has several strands. Firstly it is the ability to and practice of adhering to professional standards and best practice across the full range of collection management activities, from pro-active collecting to coherent cataloguing programmes. Allied with this has been the provision of spaces dedicated to particular aspects of collections management such as accessioning, isolation, cataloguing and possibly conservation. So
'professionalise' refers to the practical, hands-on aspects of supervising collections.

But 'professionalise' also means a shift in the management culture. Prior to investment the case studies were often in a makeshift accommodation working in a reactive manner and operating under what might be called ‘a survival mentality’. Simply to get through each day’s operational challenges was enough. There was little space or resource for strategic planning. However, in the process of investment and its aftermath, the case studies moved to outward-looking institutions with a strong sense of strategy and purpose, and a desire to fully exploit their collection assets. As one Service Manager said ‘As conditions for other collections improved it merely emphasised the poor quality of storage and access for archives...Trustees were moved by the need to improve professional practice’. So collection management is more strategically managed with clear identification of which areas of collections need attention to fulfil other organisational priorities.

One of the most explicit examples of this shift in the culture of collection management was the History of Advertising Trust (HAT). HAT collects the archives of firms in the advertising industry and marketing material of other organisations. Prior to investment it offered ‘archive storage’. With its new accommodation it could move from storing material to delivering ‘brand heritage management’ for depositors i.e. preserving and making accessible the history of product brands. HAT’s role is now collections manager on behalf of its corporate clients. It acts as their archivist but also responds very quickly to their frequent research requests, very often to inform the latest advertising campaigns. So, HAT worked closely alongside Hovis on a big project to create a new marketing campaign for its bread. By working with HAT Hovis realised that it wanted to move back from an animated campaign but to a former pitch of a traditional loaf that has stood the test of time. This culminated in the memorable ‘timeline advert’ where the boy cycled through 100 years of history as he carried the loaf of bread home. This was a long advert requiring immense amount of work in which HAT was instrumental. On a smaller scale, Heinz recently bought another company that owned ‘Daddy’s sauce’. The brand manager wanted a new ‘daddy’ so used the Heritage Brand Management service to trawl the Heinz archive to understand past ‘Daddys’ and create a coherent new ‘Daddy’. The advertising industry is constantly searching for durable, recognisable brands so this service focuses squarely on the needs of HAT’s key constituency. It is also valued in the advertising and marketing industry because there is such a high turnover of staff in individual firms that corporate memory may not be particularly reliable or durable. HAT can deliver all this through its archival skills supported by a well-functioning physical environment.

4.8 Provision of a conservation suite for the first time
Not all archive investment projects include a conservation suite. These tend to occur only in the larger projects because they are a significant investment in their own right and require a good-sized space. So smaller projects such as HAT did not include a conservation suite. However, in those projects were they have been included, such as HHC, the conservation suite (and its associated staff of
professional conservators) was an important element in improving the physical care of collections.

4.9 **Intellectual management concerns bought to the fore**

This benefit is clearly described by one archivist from a case study. ‘[Physical] access is much better but has thrown into sharp relief the cataloguing backlogs and lack of electronic archives management system which is a mish-mash of electronic and analogue catalogues. Improving the physical environment is forcing intellectual management and online access and so it was planned after the physical improvement move onto the intellectual.’

Archivists can find it hard to make the case for cataloguing and improving intellectual access, as shown by the paucity of funding for cataloguing projects other than the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme. A new building makes explicit in physical terms the concept and importance of access to the success of an archive service. Consequently, decision-makers and other stakeholders can readily envision the impact on the visitor of walking through the shiny new building (of which all the decision-makers are so proud) only to discover that they are unable to find out what is actually in the collections. Cataloguing becomes an important process in servicing users effectively and maintaining the prestige of the Service. One Head of Service said ‘It helped the Friends [of the Archive] understand... the value of cataloguing and consequently put their financial support into cataloguing. In 2010/2011 the Friends paid for an archivist to catalogue for six months a large engineering collection. We could not have predicted this.’ This wider stakeholder awareness was also evidenced in the case study interviews where several stakeholders, who were not archivists, described the centrality of access to the Service and touched on cataloguing as a role of the Service.

4.10 **Conclusion on benefits for collections and depositors**

Physical and intellectual management of collections is often hidden from stakeholders, yet it is the bedrock of any successful Service and the means by which a society’s heritage survives. Sufficient capital investment is fundamental in enabling this management. It provides the means to undertake that management. Investment also triggers the process of contemplating and planning collection management through the very act of planning, fundraising and implementing a major capital programme.

The expected and actual benefits delivered by the investments had a similar pattern to that of benefits to users. Case study respondents expected and got pragmatic benefits of space and improved storage conditions. However, case studies had not expected the ‘softer’ elements such as increased awareness by managers and decision-makers of the issues surround the intellectual management of collections and the desires by a wide range of stakeholders to improve the quality of collections. Again, like the emotional reaction of users to the new building these more complex results based on opinion and awareness, rather than hard quantifiable results, were not envisaged.
5 Benefits for archive personnel

5.1 Introduction
Competent staff and productive volunteers are vital to the operation of a successful service. For many staff and volunteers that have worked in the old environment the move to a new building is a move to a completely new world. This chapter looks at what benefits the new working environment provides to those who work within that environment and are responsible for its management.

5.2 Expected benefits
Expected benefits for this group of stakeholders were limited to practical issues. Case studies hoped to deliver more spacious work areas with practical layouts that would improve efficiencies in working.

5.3 Significantly more efficient internal systems
The act of designing a new building forces an archive service to consider what services it wishes to deliver and how it will undertake the functions necessary to deliver those services. These systems can be physical, intellectual and managerial. They fulfil the needs of both the collections and the users. For example, a Service might consider how it undertakes the process of collecting and the resources (skills, manpower, space, technology, equipment) that this requires to create a flow of appropriately resourced processes. This is repeated across the Service to create a matrix of interrelated systems (collecting, access, conservation) that enable staff and volunteers to do their work efficiently and effectively.

One case study explained how the design process made them look at their own systems and focus them upon delivering a service which users required. All the case studies commented that having properly designed layout enabled them to undertake work far more efficiently.

5.4 More room in which to work
For Services that lack investment one of the greatest daily frustrations is the lack of space in which to undertake core archival functions. Without space collections cannot be properly laid out to be appraised and catalogued so making cataloguing cumbersome and slow and prohibits work on larger collections. Store rooms packed to the rafters ensures that finding material for researchers or staff use is slow and physically awkward. Isolating material infected with mould or pests is difficult or impossible. Any work with collections involves moving around other collections simply to access the required material. Sharing office space with users because of the lack of dedicated staff and user spaces prohibits work and removes privacy. Lack of space really does create massive inefficiencies in the operation of an archive service.

So sufficient space is a really important benefit for archivists, particularly when those spaces are properly appointed to undertake a dedicated archival function such as accessioning, cataloguing, conservation, research and enquiries.
All the case studies delivered large operational spaces laid out in a logical relationship. This resulted in staff being able to work far more efficiently and quickly (and even more so if they had been able to organise collections as part of the move into the new building). As one staff member said the investment ‘made everyone’s job easier’. They could undertake tasks that had been impossible before such as conservation work and cataloguing large collections. Collections that were being worked on could be left out in secure areas rather than having to be put away at the end of each day. Staff had dedicated workstations, sometimes for the first time. As noted elsewhere in this Analysis, it is the provision of space that really transforms how an archive service operates.

5.5 Additional manpower
For all the case studies the new building incurred a larger scale of operation and a wider range of services which required an increase in staff numbers. This was met by a number of means.

Firstly, there were additional archive staff taken on – both professional and para-professional. One local authority Service increased its number of archivists from two to five, a doubling of vital professional capacity. Another case study stated that it was able to appoint a second archivist off the back of the success of the building project. New posts were funded either through additional core funding or project funding.

Secondly, the majority developed a new outreach/education function which incorporated at least one education/outreach officer – something unknown in the pre-investment scenarios. Education officers have proven vital in enabling archive services to tap into educational and wider audiences. They bring knowledge of learning and curriculums, contacts in the educational world and experience of working with groups for which archivists often have no training or experience. The benefit of this recruitment is shown in Chapter 7 where the expansion of the audience profile is examined. Clearly with the provision of dedicated education/outreach facilities within the new buildings the value of having a dedicated officer can be maximised.

Thirdly, some Services felt they now had the capacity to take on interns creating additional basic staff support. One case study was just about to take on interns for the first time. Another, which was only a small organisation, in 2010 had four interns from the local university of which one then went on to become a member of staff. This is partly because the investment made it practical to take on interns. There was more space and dedicated staff areas. Investment highlighted the need to upgrade intellectual care (discussed in Chapter 4) for which interns can be part of the solution. But it also illustrates the increased confidence of the Service. The Services felt they could manage additional people and were positive about how they could use the interns.

Finally, volunteers’ numbers increased for some case studies. This was possible because the Services now had more room to accommodate them. It was driven by the high profile of the new building which attracted people in coming forward to volunteer and be part of this attractive and novel new facility.
Lack of staff is a constant problem for under-resourced Services. To upgrade the staffing numbers so quickly and on such a scale initiates great enthusiasm and a feeling of capability. One case study commented how they were even daring to hope to have their own conservator one day – an aspiration which would have been unthinkable and impractical before the investment.

For staff this additional staff complement means more activities can be undertaken and completed more quickly. It also enables staff to access new skills such as those provided by education officers.

5.6 Improved health and safety

Health and safety can be difficult to implement in old buildings - cramped storage making accessing collections difficult, no lifts, heavy old equipment, fire exits blocked by the sheer volume of material. A new building is automatically designed to provide a high quality of health and safety provision. Material is properly stored away, routes through the building are clear and sufficiently large to move material around, loading bays minimise lifting requirements, appropriate shelving with proper weight distribution of collections, sufficient lighting, high quality fire detection/suppression – the list goes on.

A well-designed, spacious, modern building removed major health and safety issues existing in the old accommodation. Whilst this was not looked at in any detail during the research it was touched upon as a benefit by several of the case studies. It was also self-evident when comparing old and new buildings. The benefit is that staff are better cared for and work in a safer environment. This in turn reduces the potential liability of the employer as well as inefficiencies and potential absenteeism caused by a harmful workplace.

5.7 Greater understanding of their work by colleagues

All the case studies interviewed felt that their internal profile had been significantly improved by the new building. This had the knock-on effect of enabling fellow staff to either better understand or understand for the first time the purpose of the Archive. This in turn prepared the ground for productive relationships with colleagues elsewhere in the parent body which resulted in colleagues coming to look at the new building, using the archive for their own research purposes and collaborative ventures. Suddenly colleagues realised that there was an accessible and relevant resource within their own organisation. However, as one case study explained ‘It was incumbent on the archive staff, as their profile rose, to clearly explain to colleagues their role and purpose to ensure that colleagues correctly understood their work.’

For one case study the investment moved the Archive from being ignored by staff, who would seek out external resources or work at their desk using archive material, to it being the central resource for research. ‘[The Archive] is now the default setting for in-house research e.g. by the Design department. Before staff would have stayed at their own desks and borrowed books and even archive material so the investment also improved security of collections internally.’
This greater understanding also benefits colleagues by making them aware of a useful information resource which they can use in their own work. As one senior manager said 'There is a great benefit in terms of customer service because staff can direct visitor enquiries directly to the [new archive facility] rather than trying to find staff or saying they can’t answer the questions. It’s there and anybody can ask. So the answer never has to be “I don’t know.”'

5.8 **Greater involvement in wider organisational decision-making and activities**

The higher profile of the archive service moved some archive staff into greater involvement in institutional activity and decision-making. The success of the capital projects has raised organisational consciousness of the Service and thus a greater tendency to include staff in wider activity and discussions.

‘The archives are now involved in the whole fundraising and development corporate programme e.g. targeted fundraising to say sponsor this cataloguing and your sponsorship will be highlighted in connection with that collection. If a particular corporate sponsor has an interest in particular records the archive will do private viewings for that sponsor or even take material out to possible sponsors to ask for funding for cataloguing and/or conservation. This is the first time we have had a voice on that.’

5.9 **Conclusion**

Just as for users, archive personnel experience both tangible and intangible returns. Unsurprisingly investment delivers easier working environments. But this has important psychological responses. Firstly, archive personnel feel happier and morale rises. Secondly, the archive service is perceived by colleagues as capable and successful and thus becomes an agency which other agencies want to work with.
6 Benefits for the parent organisation

6.1 Introduction
This chapter is informed by the findings of the online survey and the case studies. The online survey is discussed first because it provided a broad-brush response to the issue of contribution of parental goals and because the responses were provided by archivists. The responses provided by the case studies are then discussed as they provide more detail about specific areas of contribution and covered a wider range of stakeholders beyond the archive staff.

6.2 Contribution to parental goals arising from the online survey
The online survey asked respondents to rate how they contributed to the goals of the parent body as a result of the investment in the following areas:

- Financial efficiency
- Income generation
- Education and learning
- Social welfare
- Health
- Economic regeneration within the community
- Community engagement
- Promotion of cultural identity
- Public awareness of the organisation including promotional activity
- Commercial decisions
- Product development
- Corporate social responsibility
- Brand development.

The rating system was:

- No effect
- Slight improvement
- Noticeable Improvement
- Very significant improvement.

Disappointingly only seven respondents answered this section of the online survey. However, this did provide some useful and surprising answers over a wide spread in terms of amount invested. Three of the responses related to major new building works of over £1 million. The other responses were for much
more modest activity of up ranging from the £11k-£50k range up to £250k. The graph in Fig. 4 shows the results of this section.

*Fig. 4: Impact of capital investment on archive services' ability to contribute to the parent body's goals*

The key message to bring out is that firstly archives can and do contribute to the parental goals, moreover they have the ability to contribute to a wide range of goals. There are clearly areas where archives have a natural 'fit' as this graph bears out. Investment in the archives bought noticeable improvements for a high proportion of respondents in the ability to deliver education and learning, enable community engagement and support promotion of cultural identity.

However, it is interesting to note that investment in archive services can support the financial activity of the parent. As the graph shows investment did allow four of the seven respondents to increase their income generation. This is discussed in detail in 6.3. However, it should be borne in mind that this increased income generation activity may not cover the increased running and staff costs of running these larger new facilities.

The scale of contribution to financial efficiency is not possible to discern. Certain investment will inevitably bring in financial efficiencies e.g. a refurbishment may
result in lower maintenance costs, new insulation should reduce heating costs. However, if the investment results in a new, larger location efficiencies may be once again balanced out by higher overall running costs. Furthermore, investment can result in many everyday efficiencies which are not picked up in standard financial reporting. For example, a refurbishment of a storage area may result in better physical organisation and accessibility of collections making for faster retrieval times and more staff time to spend on other activities. Such efficiencies will probably not be picked up in the monthly figures but will make a significant difference to the quality of the public service and the patience of the archivist!

As with the financial activity, this small sample demonstrates how archives can contribute to wider organisational goals which might not seem immediately obvious. The graph shows that archives can have a role in raising awareness of the whole organisation. Archive services are an interesting topic in terms of awareness. Public awareness of archives is low. However, when there is contact with the Service or its collections there does tend to be a level of respect and perhaps a less judgemental approach than the organisation per se receives. Archives and ‘history’ generally are perceived as ‘a good thing’ – neutral, honest, trustworthy. Combine this with the fact that contact with the archives service is overwhelmingly a positive experience for the individual. The archive service provides a very positive, individual point of contact for an organisation’s stakeholders – archives can be an ideal promotional tool.

The contribution to product development and brand development did not feature as a major area for contribution. However, this may be due to the type of Service responding to the Survey. In the business world the successful archives are those that do support products and brands. It is well known amongst marketeers that consumers feel greater trust towards a brand that can prove its longevity and pedigree – the archives provides that proof, as well as the quirky and unexpected. A high profile example of this type of contribution was the development of product lines based on archival evidence to celebrate the 125th of Marks and Spencers and has culminated in the new archive building opening in March 2012.

One area of contribution that could benefit from wider research is the role of archives in health. This was an area of low performance. Yet archives have been proven to be important in several areas of health including medical research (providing long runs of patient records in hospital archive, providing longitudinal and social data to plot and correlate disease factors) and mental health (e.g. through reminiscence work). Perhaps, unlike other areas, the fit is not immediately obvious and thus the archivist may not be able to make appropriate links into the medical profession.

The survey brings out that archives do have relevance to their parent bodies and the investment in the physical assets can only help to increase that relevance, potentially across a wide range of indicators. Investment can be skewed to ensure that the relevance is maximised and not purely for the immediate benefit of the archive and its users.
Financial returns

Financial return from investing capital in archives is not usually forecast. Archive services are seen as a consumer of financial resource rather than a major contributor. However, maybe this is unfair and a result of a failure to specify in the project design the opportunity to create income. Certainly obvious commercial activity such as cafés and gift shops are seldom successful, primarily because the footfall does not meet a critical mass, the archive service may be away from main thoroughfares for passing trade, and because archive audiences tend not to be big spenders. (In mixed developments e.g. a museum and archive project shops and cafes appear to be more successful.) However, if the potential for financial return is approached in a more creative and relevant fashion there are a number of ways that the service can generate income for itself, its parent body and other stakeholders.

Probably the most straight-forward route to income generation or cost savings is the inclusion in the building design of flexible meeting spaces. These can be spaces dedicated purely for holding meetings or can be purposed in a more complex manner to incorporate education and outreach facilities (which saves on space but can result in a compromise that might not serve all intended purposes as well as individually dedicated spaces). A simple meeting room with suitable presentation facilities provides the service with a direct income generator through hiring out the room, assuming the archive is in a location with close proximity to potential customers.

A new building also provides the platform for further financing through grants. Several case studies were able to successfully bid for grants such as those from the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme. Hull History Centre was awarded a grant for World War II records but the manager believes that would not have happened in Hull City Archives’ previous premises. Another respondent was also convinced that the Scheme would not have been willing to invest in the Service prior to the capital project because it did not have the facilities to enable users to properly consult the catalogued material. ‘The investment gave us the platform to apply for grants. I do not think I could have applied for a National Cataloguing Grant without a proper searchroom. I knew we could provide a good service.’ The same respondent said that the past fundraising successes have encouraged them to go for an HLF bid to improve public service space to create classroom, workroom for volunteers, more sorting space, improved library, expand digital area to create better public service, more public toilets and possibly a kitchen with the classroom to create function room. So the building and its resultant funding had vastly increased the ambition of the organisation.

However, it can also provide a resource for the parent body. Several local authority respondents noted how, with a generation of public funding cuts, their parent bodies were actually short of space to conduct business meetings. By providing a modern, attractive, accessible meeting facility the Archive Service contributed to reducing the costs incurred by hiring outside venues. This also generates the invaluable by-product of the archive becoming a recognised venue across the parent body, thus promoting its internal profile and encouraging other staff to visit the archive in their own time.
A more complex approach to income generation is to incorporate the records management function into the new archive building. This obviously adds to the cost and complexity of the building and the future operation of the archive service. However, the records management function is the precursor to the archive function and therefore to not site the two functions together could be viewed as creating inefficiency. When these complementary processes are on the same site clearly there are automatic efficiencies for both functions in being in close physical proximity and communication with each other. Decisions can be made more quickly and possibly be better informed as the professional staff have ready access to each other.

The real payback from placing the two functions in one location was clearly demonstrated with one large local authority archive service. The local authority records management service as moved into the bespoke new archive building, the first time that archives and records management had ever been co-located. The results were dramatic. Firstly, the move of semi-current records provided an opportunity to weed out unnecessary records, thus reducing storage requirements. Secondly, the Council could free up previous storage areas for other uses (which for any organisation using external commercial providers will generate savings). Finally, the Council sold off those buildings which it was no longer using, in line with its strategy of efficient asset management. In the process it raised millions of pounds from property sales. There is no doubt that the move of the records management function into a dedicated archive building made a direct and major contribution directly to £13mn savings in asset management and £3mn in rationalisation of business processes for this particular local authority.

Services can also generate a small amount of income during their operation. This comes primarily through reproduction services. As noted elsewhere this can be on a small scale for individual users’ requests but can be taken to a more commercial scale as has been done at Woodhorn in Northumberland. One Service Manager noted that ‘the Archive service generates more income. Genealogy staff undertakes private interviews which are charged for using onsite interview rooms. Other income is the usual e.g. photocopying.’

One final note on the financial payback was briefly captured in a case study interview. A very senior stakeholder commented that the archive investment had been ‘good value for money’ given the revolution in service delivery and the explosion in user figures. This was echoed to some extent in the wider stakeholder focus group when one participant noted that given the longevity of archive buildings (50 to 70 years), the per annum cost of a new building is actually quite low, showing again the value for money which an archive project can deliver.

6.4 Enhanced profile
Archives are a ‘feel good’ story. They are rarely politically contentious, they involve human stories and they hold unique and sometimes bizarre resources which simply cannot be found anywhere. So, a new archive building provides a wonderful vehicle for promoting the parent institution as benign, outward-facing organisation and one which readily gets the attention of the media. Hull History
Centre and the History of Advertising Trust both made it to national television. HAT was live on national breakfast TV which elicited numerous enquiries. The HHC provided Councillors with a really positive example of Council work of which they remain very proud.

6.5 Maximum exploitation of an information asset
Archives that receive large scale investment become recognised by their parent body as a valuable asset. For the case studies this was exhibited in a number of ways:

- For one museum the access to good archives made it ‘much easier to get facts right when content is easy to search. They use it as their primary research resource. The [new Archive] has upped the research/academic calibre of the collections department.’

- A desire to get the most out of the Archive and think about it in new ways – ‘The management team has had to see the investment in action to realise what benefits it could deliver and there is no stopping them now.’

- Greater involvement of the Archive in wider organisational activity.

6.6 Conclusion
Properly invested archive services can be a positive contributor to the parent on a wide range of issues from education to social responsibility. They can contribute to financial performance and they are important in the management of information assets. But they also have an important role in promoting a ‘feel good’ image of the parent that is non-political and engaging.
7 Benefits for other stakeholders

7.1 Introduction

An improved archive service has an impact on a far wider range of stakeholders than purely potential users of the improved service. These stakeholders may not always be self-evident ahead of the investment but they will have specific concerns and priorities which investment can address. This chapter looks at what returns stakeholders can receive from capital investment.

7.2 Increased income generation

Income generation is not an expected or assured outcome for investment in archive services. However, when archive services are assessed in a wider context their financial impact for other stakeholders can be easier to identify.

One financial impact is the larger rental/rates cost of new archive buildings. This is clearly a benefit for private property owners but a cost to the archive service. Nevertheless, it may be a useful argument in persuading stakeholders to support the development. The author is aware of an example where the landlord, who was an important element in the project, received a higher rent for the enlarged premises and this added marginally to their support for the project.

Secondly, the archive can be seen as a magnet for attracting related businesses. The History of Advertising Trust (HAT) is based within a small business/retail park in a rural location in Norfolk. Under the influence of the landowner this park has an underlying theme of arts and heritage. Since HAT has moved from smaller, cramped premises on the park to modern, attractive, spacious accommodation additional businesses have come to the park with that arts/heritage content. Whilst HAT cannot claim to be the prime motivator undoubtedly its presence adds to the kudos and impression of this modest area as a sympathetic location in which to conduct business and a destination with an interesting range of attractions (commercial and otherwise) for the visitor. The result is an active business community which attracts more occupants thus increasing its security of operation and rent for the landlord, as well as providing additional amenities for users who may have only intended to use one of the services. Thus a virtuous circle of need and provision is created in which HAT is an active element.

Thirdly, a modern, high profile archive service can be a demonstrable contributor to income generation within the locality. At Hull and Inverness the new archive centres are additional elements in the tourist offer and explicitly described in that offer. The HHC is also a specified component in the proposition the University makes to prospective students. The HAT Archive is based in a rural community in Norfolk. It attracts visitors from all over the UK, notably London where the advertising industry has its centre. The Archivist explained that these visitors use local hotels, B&Bs and restaurants. So HAT is doing its bit to support the local rural economy, a point which HAT’s philanthropic landlord also values. The HAC had a very focused input into the local economy as its opening was planned to coincide with the enormous ‘Homecoming’ celebrations in 2009 which Scotland undertook to attract the Scottish Diaspora to visit the ‘mother country’. HAC was
a natural participant in this given that the ‘Homecoming’ centred on people thinking about their Scottish roots which, of course they could study at places like HAC. HAC also participated in the Year of Highland Culture.

On a more generalised basis the reinvigorated archive services can be considered to helping the wider economy in their own way. HAT again is a prime example of this. Through its close work with marketing managers of large businesses such as Heinz and Hovis it is enabling these British companies to promote their products through their brand of longevity, successfully compete in aggressive markets and thus generate wealth and jobs within the UK.

7.3 Increased training and volunteer opportunities
When an archive service thrives it provides opportunities for individuals flourish. Capital investment usually means a significant increase in the scale of operations for a service which means there needs to be more people on the ground providing that service. This may be met through new staff posts. However, it can also be met through additional trainees and volunteers.

There has always been a ready supply of people keen to join the archives profession. Central to their career route is that initial work experience within a professional archive service. Archive services have always provided these types of volunteering opportunities. However, with larger premises and properly appointed dedicated collection processing and staff spaces these volunteer opportunities can be expanded and professionalised. An independent archive explained how it had established two internships.

Volunteers have always been an important element in running archive services. They provide free labour, additional skills, advocacy, connection with certain audience segments, and often long service. With new accommodation comes the opportunity to provide volunteers with sufficient space to work on a range of tasks both physical and intellectual (e.g. simple cleaning, repackaging, basic cataloguing, answering straight-forward enquiries). Indeed, many services see their volunteer numbers expand, having been previously constrained limits on space and possibly a lower profile. For the volunteers the payback is a sense of pride in their new workspace, a wider range of volunteer opportunities, lots of chances for a ‘mental workout’, and greater prospects for feeling part of a community with fellow volunteers. They also get to work more closely with archive staff which again adds to that sense of community and also helps volunteers to feel more supported. Louise Ray’s report ‘Volunteering in Archives’ identified a wide range of additional skills including improved their historical knowledge, new or improved archival and conservation skills, improving general workplace skills and finally social benefits to volunteering in archives. By providing greater number of volunteer places with improved facilities, those services which receive investment really do make a tangible difference to the quality of life for volunteers across all ages and social backgrounds. As one Service Manager for a case study said ‘We help them develop skills and do things they enjoy.’

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2 Volunteering in Archives, A Report for the, National Council on Archives - Louise Ray, June 2009
7.4 **A tangible expression of the importance of archives**
When a body acts to create a new archive repository it is a very public declaration of the worth which that body places in its archive collections. It is explicitly stating to the world ‘archives are of value and should be valued’. This is a message which is broadcast to all who come into contact with that building. What people then do with that message then varies. Some will come in to the building to see what it is that so prized. Others will use it to make their own decisions. So, for one case study the new build helped their Friends Organisation understand more clearly the priority which was finally being placed upon archives. This resulted in the Friends providing six months of funding for a professional archivist to catalogue a major engineering collection.

7.5 **Increased confidence of external stakeholders**
During the research the message that came through time and time again was that success breeds success. A new building is one of the most demonstrative acts of success. All the case studies for this Report moved into modern, individually designed buildings which were highly visible to their communities, however these might be defined. By such a move an archive service exhibits not only its ability to raise funding but a clear sense of worth in the service it provides. It becomes viewed by others as a ‘can do’ organisation and thus one which others feel they can trust and want to be connected with for both practical and image purposes. For many archive services this is a complete reversal of fortune after possibly decades tucked away at the back of some dingy building.

So, how does this confidence exhibit itself? Firstly, several of the case studies had succeeded in additional funding bids after the investment. Secondly, the service finds it has a wider range of partners wanting to work with it. For the Hull History Centre the University Archives felt it attracted a far wider range of partners for its Philip Larkin project in 2010 than it would have prior to the investment. Thirdly, the building becomes a point of success for the town/region so Hull History Centre is used as a venue for student recruitment to demonstrate the modern, ambitious face of Hull.

7.6 **A point of pride for the community**
For the author this was the most touching element of the research findings. It could be argued that it was obvious that the archive staff and parent corporate body would be satisfied with the results. But no case study had anticipated or confidently articulated ahead of their project was the impact the investment would have on their community, geographical and social. Users in Inverness, Hull and York talked seriously about the pride that the city residents had in their new archive facility. Indeed, the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness even featured on the tourist sight-seeing bus route despite being outside the city centre! Staying in Inverness, local pride culminated in a royal visit. The Lord Lieutenant of Invernesshire had just handed over his estate papers which were catalogued in Inverness (then passed to the HAC’s Lochaber centre for storage). He was delighted with the Service and very happy to pass a request to the Royal Household to visit. This resulted in the Earl of Wessex officially opening the HAC in November 2009.
7.7  An improvement in the public profile of the local area (and wider)

Following on from the previous point about a point of civic pride, it would appear that the archive buildings studied provided a point of good news and success sometimes in cities that suffered from a poor public image, just as the archive services had once done. A case in point is Hull which had been ascribed a non-descript, even negative, public image. The Hull History Centre generated an enormous and on-going amount of successful news stories which had, in the words of the Lord Mayor, 'lifted the reputation of the city completely as a place to visit, live and do business. It has made Hull what it should be – a centre of excellence and serious academic work'.

Of course the reach of archive services goes well beyond their local region. For the NRM the profile is international. To maintain this international standing investments such as ‘The Search Engine’ are vital to deliver innovative and world-class access to collections. One interviewee described how ‘people love it and write in to say it is perfect.’ This is what all archive services should be experiencing.

7.8  Another space in which to undertake business

Throughout the research the issue of functional space has arisen on numerous occasions. With regards to ‘other’ stakeholders the provision of additional meeting space, through creating flexible classrooms/meeting rooms, has proved useful. A wide variety of stakeholders use the record office location to conduct their own business. This includes professional heritage organisations (such as the Archives and Records Association), local heritage bodies and members of the parent body simply looking for a meeting room e.g. the departmental meetings of local authorities. Such stakeholders need not have any kind of association with the heritage sector, although those that do will be more likely to think of the new archive as a potential meeting facility. But what all such stakeholders like are the modern, functional facilities and for many the location within this ‘history store’ is an added bonus.

7.9  A vindication of the role of the National Archives

The National Archives has recently taken over the archives remit of the late Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and it has always taken an active interest in the wider archives sector, particularly through its system of visits and assessments. Several of the case studies commented, unprompted, on the role of TNA in a number of ways (a role which numerous other clients of the author have also described in the past). The effect with the greatest impact was the warning from TNA that it would withdraw approval for holding public records (known as being an Approved Place of Deposit) which results in local authority archive services having key public records such as court records withdrawn by TNA and placed elsewhere. This would be a significant embarrassment for any authority and appears to be one which most local politicians and decision-makers are keen to avoid.

The second useful function of TNA is in providing advice on how to upgrade collection care (including designing buildings) and how to undertake successful
funding applications. Closely allied with this is TNA’s promulgation of core standards such as BS5454 and ISAD(G). This work helps to reinforce common standards across the archives sector.

Finally, TNA’s publications do help services. HAT commented on the value of the ‘fantastic’ Corporate Archives: guide to business memory. It has clearly articulated the type of service that HAT can provide and is useful for either borrowing from or showing to stakeholders.

7.10 Conclusion

Archive services clearly have impact on a far wider range of people than purely those that they serve directly. Many are based within the community and thus a significant change to the service is a significant change for that community. A well-placed investment provides a place for that community to meet, a place by which the community identifies itself and a place by which the community presents itself to the outside world. Archive services are apolitical and thus provide a comfortable backdrop against which a whole range of community members can conduct their lives.
8 Outcomes for the Archive Services

8.1 Introduction
In the main the expected benefits for Archive Services were pragmatic and based around the needs of traditional archival users. The underlying theme was about improving the Searchroom and storage resulting in more comfortable environment with better ancillary services such as toilets and rest areas, better access to records, access to other service providers onsite such as the Registrar. There were some general ideas about a wider user base, higher user numbers, increased outreach activity and higher profile for a couple of the case study respondents. But generally the expected benefits were defined in routine, measurable terms the responded to existing problems rather than explicitly embraced an aspirational vision of the new service.

The actual outcomes for the Archive Services were much more diverse and exciting. They affected all aspects of the Services. This chapter provides an overview of the outcomes for Services but it is clear that greater research needs to be done into these areas, particularly to generate more empirical data on returns on investment.

8.2 Significant improvements in Self-Assessment results
Self-Assessment is undertaken by local authority archive services across the UK and administered by TNA. The individual services complete a return answering questions about: governance and resources; documentation of collections; access; preservation and conservation; buildings, security and environment. Each Service receives a star rating for these individual sections based on a percentage scoring system, plus an overall star rating. The ratings range from a lowest score of 1 Star to a highest score of 4 Star. The questionnaire is designed, circulated and analysed by the National Archives who publish a summary of findings plus a confidential analysis for the individual services. It has been undertaken three times since 2007 and whilst voluntary has a very high response rate and is viewed as a valuable indicator of the performance of local authority services

As Table 9 shows, capital investment has a clear effect on this independently assessed measure. For this research a number of local authority projects that had completed capital projects within the 2007-2010 period were analysed. It showed firstly that all significantly improved their overall star rating.
Table 9: Self-Assessment ratings for Services receiving investment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Year of project completion</th>
<th>Star rating in 2007</th>
<th>Star rating in 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glamorgan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Glamorgan</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>No overall rating but low individual section ratings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these figures it can be surmised that an archives service which has not received significant investment before will move its TNA Self-Assessment rating up by two or even three stars after a major capital project.

So within the individual Self-Assessment categories where does this improvement take place? Table 10 summarises the Self-Assessment ratings in the various categories.
Table 10: Changes in Self-Assessment categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Governance and Resources score</th>
<th>Documentation of Collections score</th>
<th>Access score</th>
<th>Preservation and Conservation score</th>
<th>Buildings, Security and Environment score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glamorgan - 2007</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>46.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glamorgan - 2010</td>
<td>83.00%</td>
<td>75.50%</td>
<td>76.50%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
<td>97.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire - 2007</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
<td>53.50%</td>
<td>61.50%</td>
<td>65.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire - 2010</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
<td>69.00%</td>
<td>76.00%</td>
<td>72.50%</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull City – 2007</td>
<td>58.00%</td>
<td>49.00%</td>
<td>50.50%</td>
<td>52.50%</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull City – 2010</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
<td>58.50%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>88.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset – 2007</td>
<td>75.50%</td>
<td>73.50%</td>
<td>62.00%</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>59.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset – 2010</td>
<td>79.00%</td>
<td>77.50%</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
<td>89.00%</td>
<td>79.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Glamorgan – 2007</td>
<td>59.50%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>43.50%</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Glamorgan – 2010</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
<td>66.00%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Governance and Resources score</td>
<td>Documentation of Collections score</td>
<td>Access score</td>
<td>Preservation and Conservation score</td>
<td>Buildings, Security and Environment score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral – 2007</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>45.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral – 2010</td>
<td>84.50%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton – 2007</td>
<td>74.00%</td>
<td>56.00%</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton – 2010</td>
<td>65.50%</td>
<td>74.00%</td>
<td>65.50%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average percentage rise</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.86%</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.93%</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.29%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29.43%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 10 shows improvement takes place across all categories of Self-Assessment. The lower points of improvement are for governance and resources (which interestingly start off at a reasonable level for all the examples chosen) and documentation (which is not an area included in capital projects anyway). Preservation and conservation shows a very commendable improvement, up almost a fifth on average in its scoring. But the clearest areas of progress are access and buildings, security and environment which are up by almost one third on average for services listed. This is not surprising given that the focus of major capital projects are to improve storage conditions and transform access but this provides evidence the impact of investment is very substantial.

Furthermore, such capital investment appears to provide continuing support strong performance as measured by Self-Assessment. Table 11 lists archive services that undertook major capital projects between 2000 and 2006. It can be seen that they all have high performance ratings of 3 or 4 stars. Whilst this cannot all be attributed to proper accommodation, having a well designed space in which to conduct an archive service is logically a major contributor to long term performance.
### Table 11: Self-Assessment ratings in 2010 for archive services receiving capital investment prior to 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Year of completion</th>
<th>Governance and Resources</th>
<th>Documentation of Collections</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Preservation &amp; Conservation</th>
<th>Buildings, Security &amp; Environment</th>
<th>Overall star rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>77.50%</td>
<td>66.50%</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>85.50%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
<td>64.50%</td>
<td>59.50%</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
<td>64.50%</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Riding of Yorkshire</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>77.50%</td>
<td>79.00%</td>
<td>86.00%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>86.50%</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
<td>75.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>95.50%</td>
<td>88.00%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
<td>92.00%</td>
<td>89.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland and Berwick</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
<td>78.50%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
<td>86.50%</td>
<td>80.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tameside</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>77.00%</td>
<td>71.50%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>77.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 suggests that those Services that receive substantial capital investment are then able to score highly in Self-Assessment for years afterwards. All but one of the Services in this table are scoring the highest mark of 4 up to ten years after a large building programme with high scores across all the areas covered by Self-Assessment (Governance and Resources, Documentation, Access, Preservation and Conservation, Buildings etc.). Clearly well-planned investment has a long-standing impact on the quality of the operation of an Archive Service.

The converse of this situation is borne out in Table 12 which looks at three services which are well known for having received little or no investment over the years.
### Table 12: Self Assessment ratings for 2007-2010 for services lacking capital investment

| Institution                  | Year of Return | Governance and Resources score | Documentation of Collections score | Access score | Preservation and Conservation score | Buildings, Security and Environment score | Overall score | Overall star rating |
|------------------------------|----------------|*********************************|***********************************|-------------|***********************************|******************************************|--------------|--------------------|
| Bath & North-East Somerset   | 2007           | 39.50%                       | 30.50%                          | 36.00%      | 26.50%                            | 45.00%                                    | 37.00%       | None given         |
|                              | 2008           | 45.00%                       | 34.50%                          | 36.00%      | 39.50%                            | 50.00%                                    | 41.50%       | 1                  |
|                              | 2010           | 59.00%                       | 49.00%                          | 40.00%      | 51.50%                            | 59.00%                                    | 50.50%       | 2                  |
| Plymouth & West Devon        | 2007           | 49.00%                       | 58.50%                          | 43.50%      | 50.50%                            | 37.50%                                    | 46.00%       | *                  |
|                              | 2008           | 59.50%                       | 67.50%                          | 51.50%      | 60.00%                            | 37.50%                                    | 52.50%       | 2                  |
|                              | 2010           | 48.50%                       | 68.50%                          | 50.00%      | 61.50%                            | 46.00%                                    | 52.50%       | 2                  |
| York City                    | 2007           | 42.00%                       | 58.00%                          | 41.50%      | 48.00%                            | 44.50%                                    | 46.00%       | *                  |
|                              | 2008           | 42.50%                       | 36.00%                          | 24.50%      | 35.00%                            | 44.50%                                    | 35.50%       | 1                  |
|                              | 2010           |                               |                                 |             |                                  |                                           |              | No return          |
For the Services in Table 12 the situation is depressing. Lack of investment has driven all three Services to the lowest ratings of 1 or 2 every year since Self-Assessment was introduced in 2007. The analysis of the contributing elements draws out an interesting fact. Even where a Service can manage reasonable governance and documentation of its collections, as Plymouth does in 2008, the quality of its Access and Buildings pulls the overall assessment right down to a 2. What this demonstrates is that lack of capital investment will affect all aspects of the Service and undermine the overall quality of that Service. Governance and operational resources may be reasonable and are not necessarily dictated by capital investment. Likewise documentation can be taken to a reasonable quality without investment (although the impact of poor accommodation will limit documentation activity at some point). But these good quality elements will be undermined by a poor physical environment.

So, not investing in the physical assets of a Service not only results in obvious areas such as poor access and storage. It also degrades that which is being well-done - elements of the Service that perform well come up against a barrier where that performance cannot be improved any further. Thus poor capital investment undermines those areas in which an organisation has been investing, such as cataloguing, by failing to enable maximum exploitation arising from that investment e.g. unable to accommodate larger audiences who might want to see collections now that they are properly catalogued.
8.2.1 **Significantly increased numbers of visitors**

Investment invariably results in high visitor numbers as Table 13 shows.

*Table 13: Approximate percentage changes in annual user figures prior to and after investment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>% change in user figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Outstanding’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Railway Museum Archives and Library</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Notable’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Riding (The Treasure House)</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull History Centre (comprising Hull City Archives, Hull Local Studies Library and University of Hull)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire Record Office</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Advertising Trust</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Standard’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Archive Centre</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glamorgan Record Office</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire Record Office</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire Record Office</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire and Swindon Archives</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland Archives (at Woodhorn Colliery Museum)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Exception’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Different institutions have included different types of figures. Most have included total number of visitors whilst a few have counted just users of the Searchroom. Nevertheless, it can be said that capital investment in general will have a significant impact on onsite user figures. The author has split these figures into four categories –

- ‘Outstanding’ – remarkable increases in user numbers which show the Service operating at a completely different scale than before investment
- ‘Notable’ – a doubling to tripling in user numbers
- ‘Standard’ – a sizeable increase in user numbers which makes increased demands on the Service but does not identify a complete transformation in the Service
- ‘Exception’ – those services whose user numbers have declined after investment in contrast to the usual increase in numbers seen in most projects.

Looking first at the ‘Outstanding’ - the Archives and Library at the National Railway Museum shows dramatic increases in user figures. Prior to investment the Service could only accommodate around 1500 visitors a year. Investment heralded 30,000 visitors in the first two years of opening. This example represents the extremes of investment. It was originally hidden way in very poor accommodation in low profile locations. The investment catapulted it into high visibility locations where it was promoted as state of the art resources. The Service was literally moved out of the backrooms right into the ‘Loco Hall’ which is the ‘must-see’ destination for all 700,000 visitors each year to the NRM. Its stylish glass facades and its balcony location make it a natural draw for many of those visitors, most of whom will have entered the Museum without any intention of visiting the Archives or, indeed, consciousness of its existence. Both of these case studies show that where an investment is located will have a significant impact on how many people will visit and how it can capture the unintentional visitor. A high profile location seems a good insurance policy on getting a high return in terms of user figures. This suggests if archives are given a strong profile they will readily attract users.

In the case of the NRM Archive and Library it can be argued that by bringing the Service out from behind the scenes it became an active part of the wider Museum and a clearly signposted element in the Museum offer to the onsite visitor and thus became joined up to the wider museum operations for the first time, rather like Hull City Archives joining with the University and Local Studies Library. Neither of these ‘mergers’ would have by themselves generated such large increases in user numbers because the Services would not have taken on that physical profile or attractiveness that the new buildings delivered. However, combined with the imaginative capital developments the joining up with other services has helped to boost the user numbers.

Moving into the ‘Notable’ section there are enormous rises in user numbers with doubling and tripling of visitor numbers. Both the East Riding and the Oxfordshire Record Offices moved to engaging new central locations (The East
Riding in a stylish modern new building right opposite the Council and Oxfordshire into a refurbished church). Likewise, the Hull History Centre was an eye-catching new building in the heart of the city’s landscape. Undoubtedly location has helped increase user numbers but spacious new facilities will also play an important part, as they did for HAT which actually remained within the rural commercial park that it had always occupied.

The category of ‘Standard’ holds the majority of the Services analysed in this section. It seems a rather harsh description given the impressive increases in user numbers that are being delivered. The term ‘Standard’ is intended to suggest that this is the range of increases in user numbers that a major capital investment could reasonably be expected to deliver. All of these Services remained as standalone archive services apart from Northumberland (which moved on to the Woodhorn Colliery Museum site) and the HAC, which joined with the Registrar and the Council’s Records Management function but which is badged as an Archives Service rather than a joint service. This suggests joining with other service providers can increase user figures more than remaining a single service and more than purely by the some parts of the services being conjoined.

Nevertheless these ‘Standard’ services show a very healthy increase in user numbers. They suggest that significant capital investment be considered conservatively to increase user numbers by a third to a half.

The ‘Exceptions’ bring out an interesting contradiction to the experience of the other institutions. Their user numbers actually fell by small amounts (5% and 10%) after investment. It is not possible here to say what was the driver for these falls but some speculations are possible. Firstly, there is anecdotal evidence that some local authority services throughout the UK are experiencing falling user numbers as more resources become available online. Secondly, these investments were smaller projects involving refurbishments of an existing archive building in one case and a floor within the Council building in the other. Neither of these were intended to be transformational projects on the scale of Hull or the NRM. So it may be that the investments simply did not have the scale of physical change or upgrade in services to counteract this process of failing numbers. But, as will be seen in the next section, these investments were followed by increased usage of documents.

8.2.2 Significantly increased usage of documents and enquiries
Using the online survey and CIPFA returns for other services that are known to have had major investments it has been possible to calculate the percentage change in the number of items (i.e. material from the collections) produced to users in the Searchroom. The results are shown in Table 14.
Table 14: Percentage changes in items produced and remote enquiries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On site visitors</th>
<th>Number of items produced</th>
<th>Remote enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New building £11mn</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment of building at up to £250k</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building up to £5mn</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion up to £5mn</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment up to £50k</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New annexe just under £1mn</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building £10.5mn</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These result clearly demonstrate the impact of capital investment on usage of collections. As shown all the Services experienced an increase in the number of items produced. This ranged from a modest 3% to a significant 56%. Given that the purpose of an archive service is to bring people into contact with archival material the investments have been a success. Six of these services also increased their remove enquiries again from the modest 6% to an enormous 38%. It should be remembered that retrieving material from stores and answering enquiries require sizeable staff resources therefore any increase in either of these metrics will create a notable increase in the demands on staff.

One notable feature is that those Services which experienced a small decline in user numbers experienced an increase in the number of items produced. This bears out the statements by users in case study interviews who said they were undertaking broader research. So those users that are coming to these Services are clearly consulting more documents. Indeed, this is very marked in the service that had a 10% drop in users yet its items produced metric rose by 40%. Presumably the other services will also be experiencing this increased document usage by individual users, although it will be hidden by the impact of greater numbers of users resulting directly in greater numbers of documents being used.
This increase in document usage and visitors is also reflected in the increases in enquiries. Clearly the new services have generated interest amongst potential users both physical and remote. However, there are anomalies which cannot be explained here. So, whilst one service’s visitor numbers rose by 56% and its remote enquiries rose by 38%, for another whilst visitor figures rose by 38% remote enquiries fell by 21%. At this point it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the impact of investment on remote enquiries. Possibly these are more affected by delivery of online services than the state of physical assets.

The primary finding is that investment in areas relating to public services will deliver returns of higher usage. (One project covered purely storage areas and this did not yield any discernible changes in the user metrics. Therefore, it has not been included in the analysis.). Investment in physical assets really does improve access to collections and increase user numbers across a variety access methods.

Finally, it can be seen that large percentage improvements in user metrics can be attained without multi-million pound investment. One refurbishment delivered an increase in average annual onsite visitors of 135%, although others were followed by a slight dip in such visitors. However, it is the large scale investment that appears to deliver improvements in metrics across the board, suggesting smaller investment must be carefully targeted to derive the benefits the Service desires most..

These patterns are also reflected in a number of institutions analysed using CIPFA statistics. These are given anonymously in Table 15.

*Table 15: Changes in the number of items produced and remote enquiries before and after investment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of institution</th>
<th>% change in items produced</th>
<th>% change in remote enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>-24</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>-39</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>-34</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3 Changes in usage patterns by researchers
The improved conditions in the Searchroom and ancillary spaces prompts researchers to increase their usage of the service. Nearly all the users who were interviewed said that they stayed longer – 'I work slightly longer hours [and undertake] weekend visiting.' - and broadened their research interests. They were looking at a wider range of records and making greater use of facilities for pre-ordering records. When researchers are given better facilities they can research more effectively and more efficiently which prompts them use that additional time created by a better service to expand their research endeavours. They do not purely undertake the same research as they would have under the old conditions but in a shorter period. Investment actually extends the user’s knowledge acquisition.

Furthermore, interviewees said that they were able to undertake more self-directed research in the new facilities. However, this did not reduce demands on staff because researches were now able to answer more of the 'simpler’ questions by themselves and thus now turned to the staff for advice for the more 'difficult' enquiries that they now found themselves able to undertake, given the ease with which they could get through the preliminary stages of research. Again, improved systems did not reduce user demands on the Service but moved them to a new area of need.

This has implications for a Service. What this means is that greater efficiencies in delivering a Searchroom operation prompts users to increase their activity and thus does not lead to less but more demands on the Archive Service. Improving a Service increases its value to users who in return use it more.

This change in usage patterns driven by a new physical environment must also be viewed within the context of widespread anecdotal evidence of changing user habits as a result of information technology. Within the archives sector as a whole the increasing availability of online catalogues and other collection information is resulting in fewer visits to archives. However, those that do visit are requesting more documents and asking more complex questions. Likewise remote enquiries are becoming more sophisticated as the online resources enable people to answer the basic questions themselves. So the Searchroom may become less busy in the future but the quality of the research it accommodates is becoming more complex and detailed.

Users who were interviewed also said that researchers come to view the Archive as a destination for meeting other like-minded people to discuss matters of mutual interest. At this point the Archive becomes not just an information resource but the location for a range of communities, thus generating an additional cause of user loyalty and interest beyond the records themselves. A successful Service will accommodate this by providing rest areas, refreshments and separation of ‘noisy’ areas from ‘quiet’ areas so that this socialising does not interfere with research activity.
8.4 **A radical change in the user profile**

The online survey asked respondents to rate the change in the level of activity with specific audiences. This section was answered in detail by five respondents. The answers are given in Table 16.

*Table 16: Changes in activity with audience types following investment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience type</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Static</th>
<th>Reduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 years old and under</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-45 year olds</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male users</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female users</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and Asian communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local communities not covered by the above groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the parent body</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial usage of collections</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other heritage professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and creative organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy making organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning/single issue organisations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overriding message is that after investment archive services increased engagement across a wide range of audiences – external and internal, public and professional, individuals and groups. The five respondents registered 37 increased activity profiles, compared with 19 static profiles and one reduction.

The key areas for increase appear to be with younger members of the public (primarily educational work for the 16 years and under) and working with other...
professionals (heritage, education, cultural and social welfare). This probably reflects the current heritage policy environment which promotes educational work and joint working between sectors and professions. There was also some increase in activity with commercial bodies. However, development of activity with Black, Asian, Ethnic Minorities and other community groups showed virtually no change as did activity with policy and campaigning organisations. Whether this reflects a genuine pattern in archive services’ activity or is simply due to the user profile of the small sample that answered this section cannot be deduced on the evidence available.

The individual respondents were then analysed and the results are presented in Table 17 below.


**Table 17: Audience activity for individual respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Other educational, business, arts, charity</th>
<th>Local authority, charity</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment</strong></td>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>New building for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment cost</strong></td>
<td>£11k-£50k</td>
<td>£51k-£100k</td>
<td>£1mn-£5mn</td>
<td>£11.1mn</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years old and under</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-45 year olds</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male users</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female users</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and Asian communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other minority ethnic groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local communities not covered by the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the parent body</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Benefits of Capital Investment in Archives

**Chapter 8 – Outcomes for the Archive Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Other educational, business, arts, charity</th>
<th>Local authority, charity</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>New building for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment cost</strong></td>
<td>£11k-£50k</td>
<td>£51k-£100k</td>
<td>£1mn-£5mn</td>
<td>£11.1mn</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial usage</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other heritage professionals</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; creative organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare organisations/practitioners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific organisations/practitioners</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector</strong></td>
<td>Other educational, business, arts, charity</td>
<td>Local authority, charity</td>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>Local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment</strong></td>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment of existing building for sole occupancy</td>
<td>New building for shared occupancy</td>
<td>Refurbishment for shared occupancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment cost</strong></td>
<td>£11k-£50k</td>
<td>£51k-£100k</td>
<td>£1mn-£5mn</td>
<td>£11.1mn</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy making organisations</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning/single issue organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What comes through very strongly is that small scale investment can increase audience activity and large scale investment is not the only answer. However, it should be borne in mind that the multi-million pound projects covered developing whole new buildings including areas not directly connected with users such as storage, staff areas and plant. Therefore, only a proportion of the expenditure would have a direct impact on user services.

Also, from this survey it is not possible to assess the scale of the increase. So, for example, a service which managed a modest refurbishment that enabled it to accommodate a small number of school groups for the first time would indicate increased activity in the under sixteens but so would a large building project which delivered a separate education and learning zone.

However, the CIPFA statistics start to provide a guide as to the increases in one key outreach groups namely talks, education and learning. Table 18 gives a number of services which experienced investment between 2004 and 2010 and their CIPFA statistics for talks, education and learning.

Table 18: Increases in attendees at talks, education and learning events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>In 2004/5 or 2005/6</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South of England</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of England</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>5123</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of England</td>
<td>1167</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of England</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>6277</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2272</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>11043</td>
<td>1293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of England</td>
<td>2206</td>
<td>8609</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of England</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What immediately emerges is that all these services have significantly increased their numbers during this period. Now clearly each one will differ in its experience with differing scales of service operation and investment and whether they have a dedicated officer at either of these dates. But the message is undeniable - investment enables services to tackle vital education and learning markets. As is shown elsewhere in this report the provision of flexible, equipped spaces and, if possible, enables Archive Services to undertake this core function. Looking at the figures it is clear that it would not be unreasonable to predict an investment which enables education and learning properly for the first time to deliver conservatively an increase of 100% in outreach audience figures.
However, depending on the scale of transformation of the Service these figures would indicate that boosting such audiences by ten fold is by no means impossible. Furthermore, these figures do not include those who interact with exhibitions and online resources, as well as searchroom users. So the overall increase in numbers of people who interact with the Service after investment might be contemplated to be multiples of twenty or more times for a really transformational project.

It should be noted that investment also enables a service to pull in a larger number of audiences that one would expect to see in an archive. In Hull the University Archivist had been concerned that there would a drop off in university users when the University Archive moved out into the newly History Centre in the middle of the city. Instead, the larger, higher profile service has enabled the University Archive to attract more University users and bring the collections to University audiences that previously could have got benefit from using the collections but did not use them. Interestingly the University Archivist believes that one driver for this has been the fact that the Council, University and HLF has been willing to invest so much money in the facility. It has generated ‘curiosity’ from the academic community, which is always on the hunt for relevant, new and unique information sources.

Nevertheless, this does show that carefully targeted investment of any size can pull in new or larger audiences. This is particularly true where an archives service receives a new facility, such as education facilities, exhibition space, a lecture room. The HHC can now provide a dynamic full schools programme thanks to its teaching spaces and appointment of education and outreach officers. At HAT simply the provision of additional space allowed it to develop its ambitious and successful ‘AD:mission’ online education resource for schools which has proved very popular with schools in its region.

Such audience expansion can be further enhanced by joint occupation with related services such as a museum. Undoubtedly the success of the Search Engine at the National Railway Museum is due partly to its location within this national museum which generates an enormous audience which the Search Engine can tap into. The skill of the Search Engine has been, quite unwittingly, to pull in family audiences into the archive and library facility for the very first time. This is because of its high profile location in the locomotive hall which houses, amongst many fine locomotives, the famous Flying Scotsman.

8.5 Additional resources
Where the investment has shifted the Archive Service to a larger scale of operation (by virtue of being in much larger premises and having longer opening hours) the Service has received additional resources, notably staff. On local authority service increased its number of professional posts from two to five and established an in-house conservation service for the first time. Several case studies appointed education and outreach officers for the first time, a vital element in developing audiences.

If investment does result in a larger scale service additional staff are vital. One case study commented how ‘A project like this would be better with a much
larger reserve of professional staff. We are working flat out.’ Investment in staff is necessary if an organisation is going to get an appropriate payback on its investment in physical assets.

8.6 **A lower total revenue cost per user?**
Some analysis was undertaken of the CIPFA Statistics looking at the cost per user for 2004/5 returns and 2009/10 returns for services that were known to have had some level of capital investment. The results of this investment are shown in Table 19.

*Table 19: Cost per user comparisons for 2004/5 and 2009/10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Average total revenue cost per user (£)</th>
<th>Average net revenue cost per user (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>09/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>238.2</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of England</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Users’ includes all readers, those attending outreach and education events, and remote enquiries by phone, post and mail (where these figures are given in the CIPFA statistics). It does not include website visitors. When looking at these figures it can be proposed that investment helps reduce the total revenue cost per user by a significant amount. In this random sample of services the reductions were as follows:
Table 20: Percentages changes in total revenue cost per user between 2004 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>-17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>-17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>-43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>-59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>-13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>-24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of England</td>
<td>-39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>-28.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On this small sample it would appear that total revenue expenditure users could conservatively be estimated to fall by at least 20% following investment. The figures above much greater savings could be achieved. However, this issue needs more investigation. Whilst the Services chosen were random they were selected in as much as they had investment within 2004 to 2009 and they supplied sufficient information on the CIPFA statistics to enable these calculations. Nevertheless, there is a clear trend in lower costs per user.

A significant element of this lower unit cost is a result of much higher user numbers, particularly in the education and outreach markets but also in the Searchroom and through remote enquiries. But it will also be driven by a more efficient physical environment which enables more efficient work processes and creates economies of scales. Clearly these figures will also be affected by environmental issues such as the number of staff available to service users and the level of promotion undertaken by the Service to raise awareness and thus user numbers, and budget cuts arising from the recession.

The net revenue cost per user does not have the same marked downward pattern. This is because each Service experienced different income levels caused through elements such as grant from the local authority and income generation from external sources.
8.7 **A more efficient service?**

This research has not set out to measure efficiency and there are no standard measures of efficiency within the archival sector. So it is not possible to say categorically that investment creates a more efficient Service. However, during the interviews both staff and users talked about faster delivery times on documents ordered. Staff also mentioned how it was easier to get to material and take in new collections. One Head of Service explained how the investment had forced the Service to review and develop its suite of policies and job description, thus creating a clear professional focus for the organisation. Users can also be encouraged to work efficiently. One case study noted that people were ordering a lot more material in advance thanks to the availability of an online catalogue.

So the anecdotal evidence is that investment can noticeably improve the efficiency of a service purely through creating enough space to access collections and physically manage their processing and usage. Balanced with this is the increased user demand that can arise from a service reinvigorated through investment. One case study described itself as being ‘a victim of our own success’ because of the high levels of enquiries that the new building generated. Unless staffing is increased proportionately this increased demand may reduce efficiency. Clearly the archives sector needs some clearly defined efficiency measures both to indicate when a Service is struggling and when it is performing well.

8.8 **A lifeline in a period of cost-cutting**

In the current tough economic climate archive services are very vulnerable because they are not viewed as crucial functions by decision-makers. Interestingly a number of the interviewees commented, unprompted, that the investment had actually protected the Service from significant cuts and possibly even prevented its closure. One case study surmised that the current cuts could have resulted in the archive being moved into a centralised service, relocated and significantly reduced in scale. However, the investment had created a first-rate service that drew visitors in. Consequently, any idea of significant scaling down or relocation was now difficult for the parent body as it would result in the loss of a key visitor attraction and bring into question the priorities of the parent body. Likewise other Service managers questioned whether their service might have been slashed or even have been in existence by now without the investment.

As a footnote to this one interviewee expressed the hope that by creating a highly accessible service they hoped to 'help the public understand that archives are for everybody and not dusty, dull places where you are only allowed in under sufferance. I hope the knock on is that people will have the confidence to go to other archives that might not be so high profile.' On this basis it is not an unreasonable to postulate that investment in one service will have a ripple effect on the usage of other services and thus enhance the archive sector as a whole.
Happier staff resulting in happier users

An easier working environment, improved staff morale and greater capacity for handling users has resulted in a more affable service, according to some users. One spoke of ‘a friendlier service’ which was ‘much more welcoming’ which also exhibited itself in practical outcomes such as receiving printouts of particular specialist catalogues – ‘that is helpful and unexpected’. One staff member talked about the new service not only raising the spirits of the staff, ‘It has also raised user morale.’

One senior manager noted that ‘The [Archive] has scored the highest of any area of the Museum in the accreditation “World Class Customer Service”. There is a high degree of customer service and people write in to say thank you for a service they ought to expect.’

A service focused on the needs of users and collections

Poor environments force services to concentrate on dealing with the effects of that environment. Cleaning up after leaking pipes and covering areas where leaks threaten, moving collections around to reach material and squeeze in more in cramped storage, juggling bookings and spaces to accommodate as many users as possible in cramped user areas. Such activity is very time consuming but does not move the Service forward or attend to users’ needs. It is just constant fire-fighting. Sufficient capital investment removes these daily operational hindrances, freeing staff up to understand users’ needs (both current and potential), and design and deliver suitable services.

An interesting example of this is digitisation – not necessarily a process one would immediately associate with capital investment in buildings. One Director in a case study explained his frustration that, with limited the Service’s limited resources, he feared his Service was not up to speed with its digital service. Digitisation was a major priority but so was the need to invest in the accommodation. Which should he choose? As he explained ‘I was worried that we were spending a lot of effort and resource on bricks and mortar and this affected our progress in the digital world. But even looking back I do not feel there was any alternative. Planning sustainability for any business will always involve coming up with a string of priorities and ours were right. Progress on the digital would have been even slower without the physical investment.’ The accommodation upgrade improved physical and intellectual access to collections, space to work and digitise material, and a culture of can-do to motivate staff, attract partners and pull in funding for a major online project. So good accommodation provides the freedom to plan and deliver high quality user-facing services.

The archive building becomes a destination for non-users

If an archive building is appropriately designed it can be destination for people who have no need to interact with the archives. For one service the co-location with the Registrar meant that the building was also a wedding venue. For some Services the additional meeting room marked the archive building out as useful
meeting location for a range of groups including internal staff from the local authority, related professional groups and community/history research groups.

The Archive also becomes the destination for those who fall in-between users and non-users i.e. ‘the curious visitor’. As archivists well know many people do not know what an archive service is. Spurred on by the publicity of the opening, the very visible new building and the uniqueness of the activity inside the building, the curious visitor comes to visit simply to understand what goes on behind the high walls. Several case studies commented on the emergence of this type of visitor.

Any archive planning a capital project should consider whether it wants to attract this ‘non-user’ element and if so what are the facilities it needs to provide (e.g. meeting rooms, refreshment areas, technical equipment, an ‘events’ area) and what return does it expect to gain (e.g. increased user numbers, revenue, higher profile, reaching new communities). Whilst this ‘non-user’ element cannot always be predicted certain types can be actively planned for and encouraged to visit e.g. families who come on the recommendation of one family member who has already visited such as through a school visit, local residents, other cultural service providers.

8.12 Increased recommendations by word of mouth

All the users interviewed were very proud of their renewed service and what they were now able to achieve through its new facilities. As a result they were vociferous in their praise and readily recommended the Service to friends and associates. This was also mirrored in school children who visited Archive Services and told their parents, prompting the parents to visit. ‘I do recommend the Service. I know they have material that other people would be interested in. I probably would have recommended before [the investment] but not much before because the culture of the Service was off-putting.’

This quote also shows how a Service’s critics can become its promoters. One Service explained how ‘we did have quite a poor reputation amongst [this particular research community]. [The investment] turned this around. We did high profile cataloguing projects which were widely reported within [this community]. This led to fewer complaints about the service and rather to people offering to help sort out cataloguing problems. It helped with winning over the most vocal constituency. They are now telling people how good [we] are and the critics are noticeably quieter.’ This particular example shows how good relations can be managed by involving people in the work of the new Service.

In marketing terms personal recommendations are very valuable because they are based on a level of trust between the two people. They are a very direct form of ‘marketing’ as they are a message directly to an individual for whom there is probably going to be a strong relevance. Whilst a Service cannot force personal recommendations it might consider suggesting to users they ‘spread the word around.'
8.13 **A higher public profile for the Archive Service**

All the case studies confirmed that the Service had a much higher public profile within their communities as a result of the new building. This manifested itself in a variety of ways such as being the chosen location for events, awareness among the general public of the Service, awareness of the Service by staff in the parent body and interest from local media in the Service’s activities. It can also lead to more visits from depositors. Hull History Centre has welcomed high profile depositors such as John Prescott and Shami Chakrabarti keen to see this attractive new facility where their collections will reside.

Furthermore, that higher public profile need not be confined to the local area. One staff member at HAC talked about how the building ‘raises the profile on the national level. This building is to be held as something to aim for in terms of caring for archives so it raises the Highland Council’s profile a lot. The Council sees it as a building of which it is proud.’

8.14 **A greater sense of the Archive being a public service**

With the local authority case studies all the users mentioned their increased awareness of the Archive as a public service and as such something that they valued. One said ‘I value it as a rate payer and user. It’s the type of thing we should have.’ Clearly for users the application of public money to an archive is valued rather than seen as a waste of taxes. Obviously this has to be balanced with the potentially opposing view of a non-user. But it does show that amongst the local electorate there are individuals who are staunch supporters of the creation of such facilities.

One notable aspect is that the comments by users on the public service aspect were often developed out of discussions about the increased professionalism of the Service. ‘It feels much more professional and a proper working environment’ said one user.

8.15 **The archive building becomes a source of civic pride**

For the local authority projects in Hull and Inverness the striking new buildings have become a proud focal point for these cities. In Inverness one user said that ‘The building is a point of pride for the City of Inverness, especially after planning to have a new building after such a long time of seeking to have one.’ The Lord Mayor of Hull has been very vocal in his praise for the HHC and its contribution to the image of the city.

8.16 **A significant increase in the rate of deposits**

All the case studies commented on how they were attracting significantly more offers of material from potential depositors. As one said ‘Depositors are happy lending to more collections.’ Another interviewee commented how in the old accommodation they had ‘lost potential collections’.

For some case studies this rise in deposits was far greater than had been predicted in the planning stages. One local authority service talked of donations being up 50%. This increase was prompted partly by people becoming aware of the Service and its collecting function for the first time, and by existing potential
depositors becoming more trusting of the Service given its new facilities. Again, the investment demonstrates the value that the parent body puts in the Archive Service, thus prompting donors to feel that the Service is high quality and will have longevity. Also, people like being associated with successful projects. Personal pride will encourage them both to contemplate saving their records for posterity and to place those records with a high profile institution with state-of-the-art facilities.

So any Service planning an investment project should undertake analysis of the experience of other Services so that it make some reasonable predictions about the likely level of deposits and consequently the demands that will place on the Service such as staff time, cataloguing resource, space and packaging needs.

8.17 Ability to access additional funding

As noted elsewhere in this Analysis, success breeds success. Services that have had capital investment have then been able to access other sources of funding because they have more confidence, because other people can clearly see their need and competence, and because they have more resources to make funding applications. One service said it ‘managed to raise funds for oral history equipment on the back of the building through grants... available to fund cultural projects. Without the building there would not have been the outreach post to undertake this application.’ As noted elsewhere, another case study was given £10,000 by its Friends organisation to appoint a cataloguing archivist for six months, once the Friends could realise the value and potential of the hitherto ‘hidden’ archive collections.

8.18 Improved morale amongst staff and users

Put simply people were a lot happier working in the new environments. As one Director said ‘Overall morale and the sense of pleasure in the working environment has definitely gone up.’ For staff there was a strong sense of pride at being associated with a successful operation and an attractive building (‘Staff are proud of the building. It has raised morale.’).

When a body decides to put a large investment in its Archive Service it is actively demonstrating the worth it places in the Archives. Staff pick up on this message of being valued and really enjoy being given high quality surroundings in which to work. The new premises also enable them to work more effectively thus long-standing frustrations are removed. Staff can point to tangible successes in their own work, creating a sense of success and getting things done plus a belief that they can fulfil further goals. This heightened sense of ability and satisfaction is demonstrable. The user interviewees made a number of unprompted comments about the difference in staff attitudes – ‘the staff have changed and are much more approachable’.

Such an important cultural change is not formally or logically programmed into archive developments. One Director noted that ‘the impact on staff morale and quality of life was much greater than foreseen. Beforehand I was very rational about the benefits [of investment], especially given the stress of moving and
making the change....but overall morale and the sense of pleasure in the working environment has definitely gone up.’

Users also enjoy the building and the positive culture. Like staff there is a pride taken in being part of an attractive and high profile development. This is then further developed by very real paybacks for users such as effective research and the appearance of little ’research communities’ as like-minded users meet up in the Archive building. Users genuinely enjoy the building, particularly those who had had such struggles to use documents in previous old accommodation.

An affirmative culture is invaluable for any organisation. It creates a ‘can do’ attitude which seeks out success and further development. This is demonstrated by HAT. Since its investment HAT has boldly and successfully undertaken funding bids that it would never have contemplated before, and expanded its volunteer activities.

Finally, a positive environment just makes a place a much more enjoyable place to be for anyone who comes into contact with it.

8.19 Greater involvement in the activities of the parent body

For some case studies the increased profile and professional image has resulted in them being included in organisational activities beyond the Archive. One case study was able to house the Council’s records management function for the first time. This has meant that the Service can ‘now influence disposal decision at records creation stage and ensure provenance is intact at creation so records transferred at archives are the right ones with full provenance. Also, we are supporting the Council in records management generally. The building facilitated this.... Having custody of the records is key. It is a way of persuading people to do things so without the new building the Archive Service would not have gained that influence.’

One Service manager described how he is now expected to lead on non-archive projects and how his service is now seen as ‘a main part of the planning and delivery’ of the parent body. ‘So now the archive is properly entrenched in the [parent’s] vision for how it plans its events and programmes....the Library and Archives is now involved in the whole fundraising and corporate development programme...It is the first time we have had a voice on that. Before it was orientated around other [elements].’

8.20 A wider network of contacts

Contacts are vital to developing and raising awareness. Some of the case studies commented that they now have a much wider range of contacts that have been drawn to the Service either by the new building or, more often, by the new capacity that the Service has to deliver better and more services and more quickly. The investment has enabled the Services to show to others their potential value. One staff member commented that ‘We are gradually making contact with local community centres. The History society is based in the building and holds their talks here. We would like to make contact with the Open
University and the University of the Third Age [U3A]. All this is only feasible with this building.’

Also, the building can act as venue in which to entertain and meet with potential partners and contacts. In so doing the building can be the beginning for new relationships and thus new directions of travel for the Service. One Director said ‘The limitations on the speed of progress are always money and struggling to gain traction in a digitisation process that makes us relevant but also generates money. This requires us to network to find relevant expertise, particularly technically and in educations. This means putting yourself about, offering up your facilities, inviting people to the premises to build a base of contacts to take you in to areas you have not previously been in. So improving the buildings was the first step. People are impressed by the scale, the nature of the building and the professionalism. It is seen as a learning centre...So, it’s all part of a much broader business plan and is an essential building block in that plan.’

8.21 Easier internal advocacy
An attractive and successful physical project provides demonstrable and unavoidable evidence of the purpose and success of the archive. It automatically engages managers and provides a starting point for dialogue between the Service and its overseers. One interview sums up this outcome. ‘[This new facility] gives the Library and Archives more of a presence with [the parent body]. It’s a success. The Trustees will frequently have their meetings [here] or will visit to look at displays of material during their meetings. It’s seen as a prime example of giving better access to collections. This higher profile across [the organisation] was expected but is to an even greater degree than anticipated. So, on an internal level it enormously helps the Library and Archives teams with senior management and the Director. The Director after 15 minutes could easily see what we were seeking to achieve. So we do not have to fight to get our voice heard on things like professional standards.’

8.22 ....but no change on user attitudes to paying for services
Users of the case studies were asked whether they would be willing to pay for any services from the newly invested archives. Unsurprisingly they all said ‘no’. This was for a number of reasons including the right to have free access to information (‘I am against any entry fee in principle’) and already being charged as a local rate payer. However, several users readily suggested that ‘other’ user types should be charged notably ‘commercial’ users.

8.23 Conclusion
Outcomes for the invested archive services are measurable and significant. The outcomes are both tangible and intangible and wide ranging. Expected results which are generated directly from service operations e.g. increased user numbers delivered. However, there are also wider outcomes wider outcomes such as easier internal advocacy and wider network of contacts which are vital and need to be exploited if a service is to thrive in the long-term.

One point to be noted is that when services receive investment they often operate at a larger scale than previously. This means that they must receive a
sustained increase in their resourcing if they are to operate at this scale successfully. If this resourcing is not forthcoming the benefits of being in a new building may not be fully realized and may even result in a poorer service driven by the same number of staff in larger premises.
9. **Drawbacks to investment**

9.1 **Introduction**
The case studies were asked whether there were any drawbacks to the investment. Unsurprisingly the investment bought such a revolution in their fortunes that the drawbacks were very few. However, they are described below to provide balance to the research.

9.2 **Impact of poor planning**
For one project the speed of the project created problems. Firstly there was some poor building design which is still creating problems over a year after opening. The speed also led to the rapid appointment of staff members who were unsuitable for the posts, leading to an expensive churn of staff.

9.3 **Poor design decisions**
Both archivists and users commented on poor design for certain case studies. For archivists the gripes were around operational issues such as inappropriate proximities. Users griped about environmental issues such as noise transmission from other areas into the searchroom and lockers in inappropriate places with insufficient space to sort belongings. Many archival respondents emphasised the importance of working with an architect who had previous experience of archive buildings.

A linked complaint was the failure of the parent body to take onboard the need to properly manage what is a sophisticated building. Consequently, the Service Manager had to push to ensure the building ends up on the 'right lists' i.e. key people who can support the needs of the building are aware of its operations.

9.4 **Poor choice of location**
The choice of location is often constrained and may well be a decision driven by expediency rather than best professional practice. For one service being sited away from the town centre did hinder some visitors. Another response explained that the site chosen was popular with travellers which could throw up problems. Location is very important. As discussed elsewhere in this research location can make the difference between a reasonably successful project and a transformational project. Good location presents a powerful physical profile to the public and easy access to suitable audiences. Poor locations require a Service to work harder to raise awareness of its existence.

9.5 **‘With increased profile comes increased expectation’**
So said one archivist. As noted elsewhere in this Analysis, a new building embodies the concept of access and makes it very explicit. A new building also proclaims a successful and professional body. So, given this physical evidence users and stakeholders can come to expect a level of service which is either just unrealistic or is not feasible for a service so recently moved out of poor accommodation where high standards of service delivery were simply impossible. What it tells us is that an impressive new building must have operational systems to match.
9.6 **Enormous demands on archive staff**
The delivery of such a large capital project places great demands on a small complement of archive staff, most of whom have no experience of major building projects and are expected to maintain the existing service throughout the creation and implementation of the project. This becomes more pronounced as the size of the service decreases. However, projects are delivered successfully and for the staff involved it is an enormous morale boost to come out the other side of the project with such a successful monument to their work.

9.7 **Possible alienation of former users and volunteers**
One case study mentioned that one user left because he did not feel he got the level of personal attention he had been used to. In the same Service, two volunteers left because they missed the intimacy of the previous set up. ‘In this Service the operation is larger, more disciplined, with more procedures now so perhaps that ‘chumminess’ with between staff, volunteers and customers has been lost somewhat.’ ‘The old place was like a club.’

However, these losses are very small compared with the increases new users. What is not known is if in due course these users and volunteers return once they have acclimatised to the new order.

9.8 **Potential loss of previous relationships**
The move to a new location does alter the dynamic and availability of previous relationships e.g. where a university archive moves into a co-location with a local authority service away from the campus the university archive must work hard to ensure it does not become ‘forgotten’ by its parent body.

9.9 **Reluctant accountants**
Several interviewees commented, unprompted, on the attitudes of internal accounting staff to the proposed investments. All had the same experience that the accountants were unenthusiastic about the projects. They were uninterested in the wider vision of the proposed investment and were preoccupied purely with the ‘bottom line’. One interviewee described them as ‘concerned about procurement rather than functionality or design’. Another Head of Service explained how the finance department was very reluctant to get involved and it was left of the building project staff to sort out many of the financial issues. So, the underlying message from this research is that if an institution purely follows the demands of some of the accountants archive projects that could transform organisations and their services would never happen. Archives thus need powerful champions to overcome prosaic concerns from within their own organisations.

9.10 **A victim of its own success**
All the case studies were very successful in expanding their audiences and services. However, this expansion of user numbers often was significantly greater than had been envisaged and planned for. This created a strain on the service in very direct ways such as the speed with which enquiries could be answered or minimising queues at the enquiry desk.
9.11 Conclusion
The drawbacks of investment centre on poor design or location and coping with the increased scale of operation. However, when the case studies were asked whether they regretted the investment they all immediately answered 'No'. Any situation brings its own problems but compared with what the services were coping with before investment, these drawbacks were minor issues that could be managed.
10. What would have happened if there had been no investment?

10.1 Introduction
To provide some perspective to the research the case studies were asked what would have happened to their Service if there had not been any investment. The responses to this question are presented in this chapter. These are then contrasted with the experience of the two case studies that did not receive funding.

10.2 Impact of non-investment from the perspective of those Services that received investment
Obviously if there had not been the investment then none of the numerous benefits defined in this analysis would have been delivered. Looking at the size of this report it is clear that this scenario would have meant the failure to provide significant returns to a wide range of stakeholders. Without this outlay the benefits simply were not attainable.

However, the impact would have been worse than just the loss of these defined gains. With investment the case studies felt that they would have declined even further, possibly to the point of closure. One talked about the continuation of ‘a nightmare of a service’ and another of an ‘atrophied service’, whilst a third felt that the current recession would have bought ‘devastating cuts’.

Lack of investment would have doomed some collections. Decay through poor storage conditions would have continued and probably accelerated closure of archive services due to lack of finance. It would have created serious issues about the future curation of document collections. One service said it would have ‘struggled to get in more material’ and would have required tough appraisal of collections which could have been ‘possibly damaging to the value of the collections.’ Other services faced similar issues. Furthermore, some moves were partially motivated by threats to collections such as flood risk. Without investment those threats would have persisted to the point that some services may have had their attribution as a Place of Deposit removed by the National Archives, not to mention a continuously poor rating under TNA’s Self-Assessment.

Key stakeholders would have lost out. The users would have suffered as the poor quality of access to collections would have continued to the point where users would have had to go elsewhere for information (if possible). Certainly the services would have had no hope of entertaining new audiences. Key supporters both internal and external ‘would have given up hope’ and thus the service would have lost those prime movers who actually could make large scale investment a reality. It would not have been possible to engage with or have space to work with partners. There would have been no capacity to accommodate volunteers. All this would have made the Services more vulnerable to cuts in the current tight funding climate.
The Services would not have been able to fulfil wider agendas, both current and emerging, such as providing a service to all students or pushing services out beyond academics. They would have been unable to demonstrate its relevance to stakeholders, funders or communities despite having the potential to be very relevant to people’s work and lives. Again, this would have threatened the long-term security of individual Services.

The Services believed they would have failed to have the capacity to raise their profile through events and the building itself. They would have simply spiralled further down in its ignominy whilst the capital funding would have gone to other service providers. So lack of access to investment funds at key points could have cut off additional funding for the foreseeable future.

Other services would have also been constrained in their own development. For several case studies the move to new premises enabled their previous host, e.g. a library, to have additional space for its own operations.

10.3 The experience of the case studies without investment

The author interviewed two case local authority studies that have not received capital investment other than small scale activity such as redecoration, purchase of occasional computers. The lack of investment has resulted in problems for both services including:

- Full up storage spaces with very little capacity to accept new collections and unable to accept large collections
- Reactionary cataloguing due lack of staff time to undertake proactive cataloguing
- Little or no involvement in collecting digital collections which means that material will have already been lost because of the relative fragility of the digital record
- Very little space to undertake collection management or cataloguing.
- Significant cataloguing backlogs due to lack of staff and space
- Poorly laid out searchrooms with a very limited number of spaces for users
- No rest area for users
- A poor local profile maintained through word of mouth and articles in the local press
- Very small complements of staff which limit the range of feasible activities
- No capacity to attract or serve new audiences such as schools
- Inability to capitalise on opportunities, including financial ones, such as contributing to the local tourist
- Unsuccessful funding bids particularly for cataloguing possibly because ‘we can’t show offer any progress in tackling the backlogs ourselves’
• Low public profile resulting in issues such as loss of offers of material ‘because people do not know we exist’.

However, the mindset of the managers of these Services is very pugnacious. They refuse to let their Services stagnate simply because of the significant limitations provided by the physical constraints. Collection management is taken as close to professional standards as is feasible under the difficult conditions e.g. good packaging and handling but storage conditions do not meet BS5454. Poor conditions can actually drive a Service to work very proactively to meet professional standards. As one interviewee said ‘Indeed we emphasise good professional practice to overcome poor storage.’

This persistence to meet good standards also permeates the provision of services to users. There is a commitment to high quality service regardless of conditions. One case study won an award from the Your Family History Magazine for the ‘Outstanding Achievement Against All Odds’! As well as receiving an Outstanding Achievement award to a staff member by the local Family History Society. They still seek to take their collections to the widest possible audiences.

These high standards come out in customer service. Both Services interviewed were keen to provide the best user experience. This contrast between the high quality of the customer service and the poor physical conditions was born out their PSQG User Surveys where they scored highly for customer satisfaction but low on facilities. Of course the User Survey only looks at existing users and therefore does not capture the Services’ inability to meet the needs of other audiences such as schools.

Such beleaguered Services can also have very vociferous supporters such as local residents and ‘Friends’ groups. This can be a two-edged sword. It keeps the issue of the poor conditions on the political agenda but can mark the Service out as an annoyance to local politicians. However, when one considers what kudos the same politicians can take from a successful investment programme it would seem that whether the politicians can take pride or pain in their local archives service is dependent in no small part on their own decisions.

For these Services the volunteers are also an important asset. So finely balanced are the limited resources that the volunteers can be vital in enabling projects to continue. Indeed, one small Service was running a team of 25 volunteers (they no room for any more) which is comparable to some larger services. A competent staff member was responsible for their management and ran a very effective work programme resulting in work around digital scanning, packaging and indexing. The Family History Society played an important role helping with indexing, front of house and helping out at events.

What was endearing was the loyalty of staff and volunteers to their modest Services. People often worked through their lunch break and volunteers were keen to assist wherever they could. One case study did not have designated roles to ensure the workforce had maximum flexibility – ‘All roles are shared between the archivists make for a flexible workforce and maybe that encourages them to be enthusiastic’. Staff were described as ‘resigned to the situation’. So poor
conditions did not destroy staff morale but did not provide any incentives to boost it either.

These Services also had their supporters. As noted above in this section the Family History Society provides useful volunteer support and is also a vocal supporter. The local newspapers highlight the plight of the Service but also finds in its collections (although this can be out of proportion. One Service found that the public perception of the state of the storage was far worse than members of the public actually found when they attended the first behind-the-scenes tour). For one Service the Lord Mayor is a strong supporter but unfortunately the continuous turnover of Portfolio Holders and Lord Mayors means that this support cannot be guaranteed in the future.

Users were also an important support. Often they are also members of Friends groups, work as volunteers and lobby local politicians. But they also understand the situation – ‘They see what the Service is trying to achieve within the limitations and therefore support efforts to improve e.g. shorter opening hours.’

Services in this situation can take some actions to help themselves. One case study has been closely involved with Corporate Property department and is on the Corporate Risk Register (as loss of heritage and possibly business continuity as it holds some Council business records such as adoption papers). It describes itself as having ‘a productive relationship at the operational level’.

Despite this Dunkirk spirit these Services do run up continuously against the severe limitations and ubiquitous inefficiencies imposed by the cramped, poorly laid out physical conditions. This drives the Services to work in a particular way. One Service Manager commented how ‘If we were in a new building we would not just do the same. It would be a different kind of Service because it would have more opportunities.’

Why the Services do not have investment is an interesting issue which shows the frustrations of seeking investment. For one Service there was a history of possible projects that never came to fruition. For the other it was not the case that the Service had ever been rejected but rather had never had the staff capacity to create an investment proposal to present to the Council. This frustration is exacerbated by the fact that this Service could combine with other local heritage Services to create a really impressive heritage ‘offer’. These situations are probably not helped by the archivists managing the Service having junior grading within the Council and thus being reliant on managers above them to take on promoting the investment proposal. This can be fraught with dangers ranging from the manager just not being interested and failing to see the potential of the Service to completely inappropriate proposals such as ‘putting the archives in a store eight miles out of town and just bussing in documents as users require them’.

Allied to this frustration is a question over the role of external agencies. One interviewee described themselves as being ‘very disappointed in such agencies’. The former Museums, Libraries and Archives Council was described as of ‘no benefit’. The National Archives was seen as ‘too remote’ and advocacy by such
bodies was of no practical use. This is in sharp contrast to the ‘successful’ case studies, a number of which praised the role of TNA in highlighting the need to change and providing information around building design, the value of corporate records etc.

So how do these Services see the long-term impact of no investment? Well, it was a little more upbeat than the successful case studies but entrenched in the fact that the Services would not be able to actually develop any further. Likely future conditions identified included:

- Unable to take on any more collections
- Existing depositors might take out existing collections if additional material cannot be taken in (rather than because of poor storage conditions)
- The current research service could be continued
- Support groups would become more vociferous
- It is unlikely staff would leave.

### 10.4 Conclusion

Lack of investment does not automatically mean the decline of the archive service, as the ‘successful’ case studies predicted. However, it does mean that staff must continue to fight against the limitations and provide new services under very restricted circumstances. Development of the service, particularly to meet new audience needs and digital collection requirements, is significantly undermined. Perhaps what the interviews bought out was the relief of the successful services that they no longer had to battle in this way and an element of ‘how did we manage?’ now that they had passed that difficult point.

The overriding impression received from the two uninvested Services was the determination to provide a high quality archive despite the conditions. Both took the attitude of one service manager that ‘It is surprising what you can achieve with very small resources and I would never accept that you can’t do anything because there are always ways of doing things differently.’ Whilst this is to be praised it does beg the question of what these Services could achieve if they received the opportunity to undertake serious investment. The commitment to professional standards and focusing on users’ needs could create genuine change and new audiences as this Report has proven. Mirroring this determination was a hope that investment might be forthcoming one day.

As noted elsewhere in this Report, poor physical conditions create continuous inefficiencies and frustrations which absorb precious resources such as staff time and automatically inhibit good service beyond a particular point. Lack of investment creates unnecessary costs. So although investment involves an upfront cost it does result in more efficient services which can meet a much larger audience.
The two case studies also bought out comments made by the Focus Group about the importance of timing investment plans to fit in with political timetables and the importance of having key strategic relationships with senior decision-makers. These issues had complicated plans for investment.

It is the author’s conclusion that for many Services the lack of investment is the result of very low staff capacity. Because staff do not have the capacity to pull together investment proposals they cannot attract the attention of decision-makers. They cannot exploit the knowledge and opinion of TNA. They cannot undertake projects that can persuade potential funders of their competence and ambition. How to extend capacity to these restricted services is a persistent question for the archives sector.

So in conclusion lack of investment results in a Service performing far below its potential. That it manages to provide a satisfactory service to a small, traditional user group is primarily down to the determination of the staff. Such services can become trapped in a cycle of under-capacity due to lack of investment and resourcing which inhibits developmental work which means services fail to attract funding or support thus leaving them with low capacity. Success means breaking that cycle through means such as a change of heart by a major stakeholder, a productive partnership or a brave decision by the Service to divert scarce resources away from daily operations to develop a funding proposition.
11. The view from the bridge – the Focus Group findings

11.1 Introduction
The Focus Group comprised representatives from stakeholder groups including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Federation of Family History Societies, the British Association for Local History, the Business Archives Council and the National Archives. The aim of the Focus Group was to capture opinions from a ‘helicopter view’, providing an overview to compare with that of individual service’s experiences. This chapter assesses the benefits that the Focus Group participants perceived from their wider view and the issues that are thrown up by the British experience of capital investment. These have been grouped into the following areas:

- The tangible benefits that are delivered
- The intangible benefits
- Value for money through longevity
- The centrality of space
- The role of funders in shaping decisions
- The euphoric intangible
- ‘Soft skills’
- Timing is everything
- Reaction to failure
- The future.

11.2 The tangible benefits
The tangible benefits identified by the Focus Group mirrored those found in the online survey and case studies.

Attractive searchrooms and reception areas
For users’ groups the benefit was all about creating modern searchrooms with sufficient space to undertake research comfortably. Furthermore, modern buildings enabled much easier access for those with physical disadvantages such as impaired mobility and sight. Good reception and registration facilities are also important outcomes because they are the first point of contact between the service and the user and set the tone for the user experience, as well as being important elements in the smooth operation of the service.

Effective ‘backroom’ operations delivering more efficient services
However, users’ groups also recognised the importance of improvements to ‘back room’ operations to increase efficiency in the searchroom service. Improved
storage was considered to improve the speed of document delivery thus significantly reducing the time spent ‘twiddling thumbs’ awaiting arrival of documents. This in turn makes it much more feasible for people to drop in and use the service when their time is limited. Likewise the easier accessibility of documents would contribute to faster cataloguing. For all researchers the poor quality or lack of cataloguing is a major irritation as it prevents researchers understanding the contents of a collection and thus its relevance to their work. Anything that helps cataloguing helps the user. In the same vein improvements to conservation services increase the accessibility of records to users by either assuring their longevity (through passive conservation e.g. environmental management and packaging) or making stable and usable documents that were previously deteriorating and/or illegible, using those scarce conservation skills that can only be found in the archive or using freelance conservators. So for users there are very direct benefits when capital investment takes place behind the scenes as well as in the public areas.

Re-using organisational assets
Some businesses, such as John Lewis and Marks and Spencers, use the archives very directly in the building. John Lewis was basing a range of women’s fashion on archive content and using historic textile designs to clad the outside of their buildings. At this point the archive is a clear business resource. From the perspective of the business and public sectors intelligently designed archive buildings provide some very tangible and operationally useful benefits. Additional meeting rooms and flexible spaces can host other business meetings and events beyond those of the archive and, as space is always at a premium, this is a welcome resource. An archive can also provide the opportunity for reutilising old buildings, particularly important for large organisations holding significant property portfolios. One business archive was able to offset the costs of renovating the building against the capital costs of building the archive because the business would have had to incur these renovation costs anyway so building the archive removed these particular costs to the business. These themes are explored more fully in the National Strategy for Business Archives\(^3\).

11.3 The intangible benefits
As was seen in the other elements of the research, the Focus Group identified many intangible benefits.

Profile
Raising the profile of the archive service both internally and externally was agreed to be a key benefit by all participants.

Demonstration of value
The first of these was the demonstration of value. All participants agreed that any organisation that is willing to invest in its archive service is publicly showing the value it puts on its collections.

Political
Whilst it may not always feel like it to archivists, archives can be well placed to fulfill political agenda, particularly as archives are not in themselves a politically sensitive issue. For example the important role that volunteers have always played in archives is now formalised in the Big Society agenda and highlights the expertise of archive services in managing volunteer work programmes.

Demonstration and understanding of corporate longevity
Organisations, like individuals, cannot operate successfully if they do not have a strong sense of their own identity. A major element in identity is understanding where that organisation and individual has come from. They need to understand their own history. Archives are central to that process. They provide the hard evidence and the explanatory facts as to how we got to where we are today. The understanding is then used to create loyalty in staff and core values to which the organisation adheres. But it is also a way of proving longevity and ‘pedigree’ to outsiders such as suppliers and customers, creating a sense of reassurance. A well-designed archival investment can both prove and imaginatively illustrate that reassuring message. So, the enormous HSBC History Wall, comprising almost 4000 historical images, greets all visitors to the bank’s London headquarters and is used to educate both visitors and staff about the bank’s life story. This is clearly a large investment for a piece of art and with its very high profile position. It makes the viewer realise that this major international business would not have undertaken this project if it did not really think that its history was a significant selling point.

Demonstration of corporate prosperity
The frustration for archivists is that they are often not viewed as a core service by the parent body and thus lose out on opportunities. However, the Focus Group discussed how, by not being a core business service, when an organisation does make significant capital investment it is demonstrating its prosperity. The archive shifts from its traditional position of being ‘Cinderella service’ to being a ‘trophy’. The Group gave examples from both the business world and the local authority world where this was the case. The archive becomes a prized asset which is actively paraded to stakeholders as an example of the organisation’s success and confidence in itself.

Provides a direct business advantage
The experience of the business archives is always instructive as they operate in a world where the underlying driver is competitive advantage. If they cannot prove their contribution to this they have little chance of surviving. As seen above this competitive advantage can take place in very tangible ways such as contributing to new product lines and helping to form the corporate brand image. But it can also take place in more subtle manners outlined above such as providing evidence for corporate longevity and wealth.

11.4 Value for money through longevity
Archivists think in very long timescales, often centuries away from the current point in time. Whilst getting other stakeholders to understand this mindset can sometimes be difficult, the emphasis on longevity can be an advantage for capital investment. The predicted lifespan for most new archival buildings is
around 50 to 70 years. This is considerably longer than most buildings and longer than comparative projects such as libraries and museums. So, when the capital cost of an archive building is assessed over this period it appears a lot more cost-effective than competing projects might. So, if £5mn were spent on a building lasting 50 years then the current cost is £100,000 a year.

11.5 The centrality of space
The Focus Group unanimously agreed that space is a precondition to further development. Space allows a Service to grow and manage its collections. Space allows users to work and be comfortable. Space creates place and in that place people can then locate themselves and commune with others. Lack of space bars people from taking part in their heritage and inhibits the creation of new communities and ideas.

11.6 Creating a new presence
Those on the Focus Group involved in policy making pointed out that new investment can create a new presence, both physical and political. On the physical side for smaller communities such as Hull the appearance of the new archive building generates a new physical presence that was not there before. It creates something new in the landscape and the flow of the city. This presence should be borne in mind when designing an archive. It should make a positive contribution towards the landscape and the experience of those living, working and moving within that landscape. ‘By their existence they shape and affect people’s lives.’

But, as has been demonstrated in this report, it also creates a new political presence. The Archive Service finds itself on the political map. As one participant said ‘Because of the scale and complexity of collections it can be, even for a local authority, a large and significant project. That gets you political attention and profile on which you can build on the glamour of something that is glitzy, up to the moment and sexy.’ This new presence can then be the foundation on which a Service can build to attract partners, philanthropy or collections.

11.7 The role of funders in shaping decisions
Unsurprisingly funders have a major influence on the nature and outcome of projects. Dedicated funding bodies all have their own criteria. It was agreed that the Heritage Lottery Fund had had a major influence in steering projects away from being practical solutions to operational issues such as storage, towards developing a wider appeal particularly based on education and learning.

As a side issue it was also recognised that in past times of prosperity unsuitable design decisions had been made. One local authority found that its museum, a product of a number of schemes, was its most expensive building to run. Another local authority with deep coffers ended up building an archive facility which was clearly located and designed to be a ‘statement’ building but which failed to meet the requirements for running an archive service.
11.8 Failure to anticipate the ‘euphoric intangible’
The participants agreed with the author that archive services invariably fail to anticipate the ‘euphoric intangible’ – that strong emotional reaction of pride and delighted surprise to the new look and capabilities of a revamped Service. Archivists need to be more willing to recognise and market this outcome ahead of the investment and also to recognise that this intangible needs to be framed within a long-term timescale, in sharp contrast to the physical advantages that can be readily identified right from the start of the project. Interestingly, some sectors are better at this than others. One major business archive had concluded that it was the intangibles that sold the proposal of a new archive facility to the Board of Directors. It was noted that other sectors such as the built environment and the natural environment were much better at visualising and selling this intangible. As one participant said ‘Intangibles should be about selling the unique.’

Anecdotally it would appear that this failure to capture the ‘euphoric intangible’ also extends to building design. Participants agreed that museums and galleries leaned towards delivering ‘iconic’ buildings whereas Archive Services generally still favour very functional buildings.

11.9 ‘Soft skills’ and the archivist
A recurring theme in the Focus Group and the rest of the research was that to deliver successful capital projects archivists’ needed to have a range of managerial and ‘soft’ skills well outside the technical archival tools. These included, but were not confined to:

- Project management
- Advocacy skills
- Relationship management
- Political awareness
- Strategic thinking and planning.

Discussion ranged around whether archivists do have these skills or not and if so how can they develop them? The discussion was split as to whether the profession did already have these skills. One participant felt they did and it was more a question of having the confidence to use them. However, the agreement was that these skills were as important as technical skills and of relevance regardless of whether a service wants to do a large investment project.

There was some debate about the characters of people entering the profession and whether they lack a natural predisposition to areas such as advocacy. However what was agreed was that these are not skills that can be taught just through the post-graduate qualification route. Indeed, their relevance will probably not be understood by many students until they are in the work environment. Instead, there needs to be a coherent strand of these skills in the profession’s own programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and employers need to be encouraged to support these skills development. Finally,
the archive professionals need to recognise the value of attaining these skills for the benefit of their own career and their archive service. Stakeholders such as TNA and HLF have an important role to play advocating and supporting skills development and indeed have started working on this with activity such as HLF’s Skills for the Future programme.

11.10 **Timing is everything**

Discussions amongst the Focus Group mirrored comments from successful case studies in that success was partly due to timing of bids which fitted in with the political zeitgeist of the Archive’s operating environment. ‘Correct timing’ requires the presence of elements such as sympathetic stakeholders and favourable strategic plans plus lack of competing demands on resources (e.g. similar funding bids to the HLF) at the point at which the investment proposal is presented.

11.11 **Reaction to failure**

The reaction of archive services when they failed to be awarded funding was considered a pivotal moment. It was agreed that experience shows that most services will get refused at their first funding application. Some services did not go through the process of reapplying possibly because the failure created or enforced a sense of defeatism or because a service simply did not have the capacity to undertake again what is a very resource intensive process.

However, the Focus Group felt that only a small proportion of services gave up on the first attempt. It was agreed that most successful projects were the culmination of numerous rejections and consequent re-shaping of plans to fit the operating environment, often ending up with a better project than the one originally proposed.

11.12 **What benefits are not delivered?**

It was agreed that occasionally buildings fail to deliver their full potential because those involved in the design focus on the tangible drivers for investment such as improving storage. There can be a failure to develop a more creative solution that could maximise both tangible and intangible benefits. One example was given where an archive service ‘tacks on’ a storage block because it wants to solve a storage problem. However, a more creative solution might be to view the totality of the space resulting from the addition of this new block and make the space work harder for the Service across all its functions.

It was felt that this ‘missed opportunity’ scenario can arise when the archive is only a small part of a much larger development or where the archivist’s voice is not heard loudly in the design process.

11.13 **Conclusion**

In archival projects stakeholders need to recognize the intangible benefits as readily as the tangible ones. They need to be able to conceptualise the effects of creating new spaces in landscapes where communities can interact with the service and recognize the specific needs and benefits that an archive service drives. Allied to this the archive profession needs to build wider management,
advocacy and relationship management skills into its education and CPD programmes. Archivists also need to be alert to political opportunities and time projects well. Finally, failure to attract funding at one point in time should not deter an archive service from seeking funding at a later date.
12. Conclusions and the SSC Dependency Model

12.1 Introduction
Capital investment takes place right across the archives sector ranging from tens of thousands of pounds up to multi-million pound projects. All the examples looked at by this research delivered numerous benefits regardless of their scale. As long as they were big enough to make a material change to how the Service could operate they could have an effect. This chapter pulls together the conclusions that the author has derived from this research.

12.2 Benefits from archive investments have longevity
Benefits from upgrading archive accommodation are long-term, not flash-in-the-pan. Once a good facility is available users will return to it over many years either because the nature of their research takes a long time or because they discover new things to look into. Those Services that target children and young people talked about creating audiences of the future. Once a person knows that archival resources are available and are comfortable interacting with them they will return to them, probably throughout their lives. They will also pass on their enthusiasm for this resource to others, thus broadening the number of users.

Once collections are properly housed this situation will last for the life of the building, assuming the building is properly maintained and the pace of collecting does not overtake the built in expansion capacity of the accommodation.

Bear in mind that archive buildings are designed to last. They are expected to have a life of 50 to 70 years (but may well last a lot longer than that). So although investments can seem enormous at the time, they do provide a very long-term payback to the community that took the risk to input the resources in the first place.

12.3 Investment in archives delivers a broad range of benefits
Capital investment in archives has a demonstrable impact on numerous facets of an archive service in which a wide range of stakeholders benefit. Users (existing and new), staff, managers, parent institutions, wider sectoral bodies – all can be said to receive demonstrable benefits both qualitative and quantitative. Any investment proposal should dare to contemplate to the widest degree who will reap rewards from the investment and how. It may well be a much larger audience than might be initially considered.

12.4 An Archive Service succeeds when it nurtures all its component elements
Following on from the broad range of benefits it is clear that a successful archives service is one that addresses the needs of all its components (namely collections, users, staff, stakeholders, and environment) in a balanced manner. So, if a Service builds a wonderful new building but fails to provide adequate staffing the building will fail to fulfil the needs of its collections or users despite being designed for that purpose.
12.5  The importance of creating space cannot be overrated
Space really matters in archive buildings. On a basic operational level it enables effective storage of collections, which are always growing, and provides locations for staff to operate the Service and manage collections. Space also provides the means for engaging new audiences (e.g. education rooms) and potential for income generation through hiring out the spaces. But if we move beyond the purely practical it is space that gives an Archive Service its role in the community. Space enables others to meet at the Service and participate in their own relationships and communities. Space enables the Service to be viewed as a good location for both business and pleasure by those both outside and inside the organisation. A well-designed building provides a memorable place of which others want to be a part whether or not they have a need to interact with the collections. This should be remembered in building design.

12.6  Successful investment needs a strong champion
Those projects that succeeded where those that had an influential and persistent champion. The Marks and Spencer Archive has had the full support of the then Chairman, the focused Sir Mark Rose. Councillor David Gemmell was the driving force at the political level for the Hull History Centre. The history of Advertising Trust succeeded thanks to the close personal support of not one but two committed CEOs. Champions are visionaries whose strong personal belief in the archives enables them to see what a strong archive could generate rather than what a currently weak archive fails to deliver.

But the archives sector is still finding it difficult to cultivate champions. Lowly positions in the decision-making hierarchy of their organisation, nervous attitudes towards self-promotion and limited advocacy training in professional development all stack the odds against many archivists finding and engaging their champions.

And yet the archives profession needs to believe that those champions are out there. All archivists have experienced the delight and disbelief when they show the uninitiated the treasures in their strong rooms. People genuinely marvel at the knowledge and dedication which archivists show. Furthermore, if the champion is the right person only one person is required and they will bring others with them. Archivists need to work in a strategic manner, targeting key personalities and then developing a campaign to win them over to supporting the archival cause.

12.7  Archivists need to be courageous salesmen
Archivists seem reluctant to dream or sell. Being a pragmatic profession that traditionally spends its time battling for resources the archives sector appears most comfortable couching predicted benefits in terms of controlled environments and provision of an education room. Archivists need to have the confidence to create and articulate persuasive visions that step away from hard outputs and capture the long-term intangibles delivered by a successful project such as civic pride, ownership and new communities based around the archive. They have to learn to be comfortable around euphoric intangibles!
12.8 Success breeds success – failure breeds failure?
Against the reluctance to undertake self-promotion is the morale boost which archivists receive when they complete and investment project. Taken to its extreme the Archive Sector could end up (or may already be there?) in a situation of the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’. The Sector and funding bodies need to ensure that their decisions do not discriminate against those for whom financial success is elusive. It is clear from this research that any archive service with sufficient resource can create engaging services that take them to a new level.

11.7 The archives sector lacks key metrics
This research has taken some time partly because of the lack of relevant, coherent and regular performance reporting across the archives sector. The CIPFA statistics provide only a basic view of performance around prosaic issues such as numbers of items produced and number of learning events. Within the CIPFA report none of these figures are analysed and there is insufficient information to contextualise results. Furthermore, completion of the CIPFA return is not mandatory and is only for local authority services. Even where Services have completed the return they may have not done so fully. The result is a basic and incomplete data set.

The National Archives Self-Assessment programme seeks to provide more meaningful data. However, it is still viewed very much from the archivist’s perspective. There are no basic metrics such as a meaningful measure of cost per user, efficiency measures or qualitative information about the value of Service to the user.

As one archival colleague noted in a professional meeting there is no benchmark against which we say that an archive service is or is not tenable. We have no basic metrics which we can provide to key stakeholders to say either this is what we need or this is an absolute which shows how well are performing.

12.9 Proposal for investment need to move from the pragmatic to the aspirational
A constant theme during the research was that most proposals for investment had been prosaic. They focused primarily on solving current issues with the hope of extending audiences. The Archives Sector needs to have more confidence in its own abilities and worth. Archivists need to be able to properly envision services of the future which are radically different from their current provision and pull in a much wider audience base. An engaging and creative vision will also pull in potential stakeholders much more readily that a ‘storage solution.’

12.10 Psychological attitudes have a major impact
Perhaps the greatest surprise for the author during her research was the role of the psychological state of stakeholders. The attitudinal changes wrought by the effects of successfully bidding for investment and developing new physical environments were seismic. Staff and stakeholders viewed the Archive Service in a completely new way. They were prepared to take greater risks, reach out to new audiences, promote themselves and set themselves much more stretching
goals. The author has called this the 'euphoric intangible' – that incredibly positive response to the new building which makes people feel that almost anything is possible. The question is how do we capture and utilise this?

12.11 There is a large unrealised demand for what an Archive Service can provide

Those Services which found themselves transformed from a back room operation to a central cultural resource within their organisation (e.g. the Search Engine at the National Railway Museum) or city (e.g. Hull City Archives) were able to tap into whole new audiences on a scale hitherto unknown. As one very senior stakeholder commented 'There are huge amounts of pent-up demand that could not be expressed. Without this investment there would be a relative dearth of serious historical research output. Also there would be a very large volunteer/enthusiast community who would have a pleasure denied to them over a central life interest. Likewise this pleasure can be broadened to a wider audience.'

This raises a very important question about what is the true nature and scale of need for the information and services which archive services can provide. There is often an assumption that archives are a niche area. Yet these services vastly expanded their audiences not by revolutionising the content of their underlying collections, but by dramatically changing the nature of the interaction between the public and those collections. This must inevitably lead us to consider if the whole archives sector could experience the level of transformation undertaken by the subjects in this research what this would do for the perception and use of archive services. The core asset of archive collections has a broad and long-standing value but as a nation the UK is not exploiting that value to anything like its potential. This is unforgivable in this Information Age. As one Service Manager said 'This has upped general demand as the more you give the more people want'.

12.12 Sector representatives need to lead promotion and development

The Archives Sector actually finds itself in a well-organised position to upgrade its own regulation, assessment and promotion. The recently created Archives and Records Association and the newly assigned Sector responsibilities given to the National Archives from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council means that there is a streamlined leadership across two organisations with strong relations that are both purely focused on the archives sector. They need to seize the novelty of this reorganisation to lead on promoting the benefits of investment and enabling Services to position themselves to exploit funding resources.

12.13 Further questions

This research is only the beginning. As this Report shows, it has thrown up an enormous number of areas for further research but here are some of the key areas that the author considers a priority:

- Coherent and on-going gathering of relevant performance data from all types of archive service across the UK
Identifying the critical point at which a certain scale of investment will deliver a particular benefit

Is it possible to define what constitutes ‘value for money’ in an archive investment project?

12.14 The SSC Dependency Model

This research has shown that the provision of space has a central role in maximising the benefit that the physical archive service (as opposed to digital services) can deliver. This role and the consequent dependencies and outcomes are depicted in the SSC Model in Fig. 4.

Fig. 4: The SSC Dependency Model

The SSC Dependency Model postulates that at the heart of a good service is three elements – a relevant collection, appropriate types and levels of staff, and appropriately designed and sufficient space i.e. Staff, Space, Collections or SSC. These three resources together enable a range of actions to be undertaken such as research, collection management, preservation and conservation, education,
meetings and communication. As a result of these actions benefits are accrued to a wide range of people affected by the actions such as learning, achievement of goals, understanding of collections, participation in communities, a sense of belonging, understanding of the collections and empathy for the role of the service. However, all these benefits are delivered to those have some link to the service as an archives service.

Beyond this there are other benefits derived from the building itself a landmark in the physical landscape. These benefits have nothing to do with the building housing an archive service. Such benefits include practical elements which people will use in their everyday life such as an attractive meeting point and a geographical reference point. But there are more emotional elements including community pride in an unusual or attractive landmark and another element which confirms the identity of either an individual or community as the building becomes a reference point in their every day lives and an element in how that individual or community describes its world to others.

Between the benefits for direct participants and the landmark effect is the boundary. This is the point where those who experience the building both as a recipient of benefits the archive service and as a landmark and as a result experience the powerful ‘double whammy’ of both service benefits and landmark impacts. They are the most powerful proponents of the service and have a very emotional response as a result.

What are the ramifications of the SSC Dependency Model?

- Appropriate space is just as important in a successful archive service as other resources. Indeed, if there is not sufficient space to accommodate collections and staff then any benefits which these latter two elements can bring will be significantly compromised. Space is a fundamental asset yet is not always explicitly recognised as such.

- All the actions and benefits are dependent on the provision of appropriate space, staffing and collections. If any of these are inadequate the service’s full potential cannot be recognised and in cases where one or more of these elements is severely depleted the Model collapses and only limited actions and limited direct benefits can be derived.

- The Model displays the flexibility of the actions, benefits and landmark effects. Different service types will have different combinations but the general scenario is the same. With the space and other resources to take multiple actions there will be a matrix of direct and indirect benefits to a range of stakeholders who have varying proximity to the Service from users, depositors and staff who have direct involvement through to the local community who see or pass by the building but never enter. The model suggests that substantial investment in resources has this wider impact on non-users which a small scale of operation cannot achieve.

- When a Service is founded on high quality collections, well trained staff and appropriately designed spaces it can create an impact that stretches
well beyond its core audiences and generates a virtuous circle of service, familiarity and reciprocal support.

**What happens to the Model if there are insufficient core resources?**

Where a Service is not sufficiently resourced with space, staff and collections the Model collapses. The Service cannot undertake numerous actions concurrently and is forced into choosing to undertake only one or two actions at any one time. This results in linear processes which has discernible impact only on those directly involved in that process, not on wider stakeholders. Inevitably such Services will concentrate on core activities such as Searchroom Services and basic collection management as shown in Fig. 5.

*Fig. 5: Linear processes in an under-resourced archive service*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue a collection</td>
<td>• Improved knowledge of collection content&lt;br&gt;• Research is made more feasible&lt;br&gt;• Collection management improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searchroom opened to users</td>
<td>• Users can access collections&lt;br&gt;• Service connects with a core stakeholder group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extensive outreach programmes and profile-raising is simply not possible, so limiting awareness of and involvement in the Service. This compares with the complex matrix of actions and benefits which generate wide-ranging impacts across stakeholders both at different points in time and contiguously.
Is it possible to identify a breakpoint between the SSC Dependency Model and Linear Processes?

Every archive service has its own make-up and operating environment. Given the large variety of situations in which archive services operate it is probably not feasible to state specific numbers such as staffing, floor space or collection sizes. However, the SSC Dependency Model enables us to recognise that an archive service is operating in such a way that it fulfilling its potential for benefits to a range of stakeholders when it is able to undertake a number functions contiguously and each function is executed in a coherent manner and to professional standards and best practice.

Therefore, a service which not operating at a preferred level is one in which it is only able to undertake one or two processes at a time. It may be executing these processes to a very high standard. However, the very fact of the limited number of processes that the Service can fulfil and the inability to undertake several processes at once necessarily limits the benefits that can be derived from the Service. Firstly a smaller number of stakeholders is being met with than with a larger scale operation. Secondly, the multiplier effect of having many processes operating, which creates a sense of moving forward, improved morale and higher profile, is lost.

As the SSC Dependency Model shows, the full potential can only be reached when all three elements (space, staff and collections) are present. So, if a service receives a major capital investment but then is not properly staffed for a new and larger building the Service may well end up in a situation of linear processes rather than the large scale benefit captured in the SSC Model.

12.15 A final word
Capital investment in archive services is really important because this is what will ensure the maintenance of memory and identity for the individual and society. As this Report has shown investment drives a whole host of benefits for a divergent range of stakeholders. As the SSC Dependency Model shows good space alongside adequate staffing and high quality collections are central to a flourishing service. This research as highlighted many issues that need further investigation. In particular the author would highlight:

- The development of a range of coherent metrics which have relevance to stakeholders other than archive professionals
- The need to clearly identify the operating minimum for an archive service so that coherent arguments and appropriate resources can be marshalled to support these socially and culturally vital services
- The formal gathering of data and its analysis to assess the on-going impact of investment in archive services both to learn from the past and make cogent arguments for further investment.

As archive services across the UK have shown significant capital investment enables these services to take on dynamic and valued roles within their communities, tapping into large scale demand that was completely unrealised.
beforehand. If all archive services were as fortunate we would unleash not only a remarkable information resource but create the backdrop for a whole range of new relationships and experiences. And all of this not just for now but for the very long-term. As one of the world’s greatest investors, Warren Buffet, once said ‘Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.’ We need to continue planting those archival trees.
Appendices
Appendix 1 – Case study interviewees

**Successful capital projects**

**Highland Archive Centre, Inverness**
Janet Baker, Education and Outreach Coordinator  
Susan Beckley, Highland Council Archivist  
Stuart Farrell, User  
Fiona Macleod, Senior Archivist  
Maureen Kenyon, Regular user

**History of Advertising Trust**
Barry Cox, Director  
Chloe Veale, Archive and Library Collections Manager

**Hull History Centre**
Judy Berg, University Archivist  
Rachel Drew – Audience Dev Officer  
Ester Farrow – Education Officer, appointed Jan 2009  
Dave Gemmell OBE, Lord Mayor and previously Portfolio Holder responsible for delivering the HHC.  
Helen Good - User  
Martin Taylor, City Archivist

**The National Railway Museum**
Helen Ashby - Head of Knowledge and Collections  
Alex Medcalf - User  
Sir Howard Newby – Trustee, Chair of HEFCE at the time of the Search Engine Project  
Tim Procter – Archivist  
Ross Woollard – User

**Archive Services that have not received investment**

**Bath Record Office**
Colin Johnston, Principal Archivist - Bath Record Office

**Anonymous respondent**
The lead archivist of one other service that did not receive investment was also interviewed.
Appendix 2 – Project Board Members

Susan Beckley - Society of Archivists
Dr Andrew Flinn – University College London
Roger Lewry - Federation of Family History Services
Margaret O’Sullivan – British Association for Local History
Louise Ray – The National Archives
Martin Taylor – Society of Archivists
Caroline Williams – University of Liverpool
Appendix 3 – Participants in the Focus Group

Judy Faraday - The Business Archives Council
Nick Kingsley - The National Archives
Roger Lewry - The Federation of Family History Societies
Margaret O’Sullivan - The British Association for Local History
Fiona Talbot - The Heritage Lottery Fund