

# **BRITISH ARCHIVES**

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

**The National Council on Archives**

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## **The purpose of this document**

This document was prepared in 1999 by the National Council on Archives as a contribution to the shaping of the agenda for the development of U.K. archive services during the five years, 1999-2004. The hope in producing it was that, in building upon recent work by the archive profession in analysing its present position and future goals, it would:

- sharpen priorities within the archival world;
- clarify our major concerns and problems to related professions and agencies;
- assist potential resource providers to adjudicate between the hard choices that are inevitable in a climate of limited availability;
- encourage debate and further, more detailed work on resolving issues and shortcomings

Given the central place which the Heritage Lottery Fund has assumed and will continue to occupy in the life of all heritage services, including archives, the document also carried a specific intent in seeking to guide the Trustees of the HLF towards an understanding of the kind of choices which, in a period of limited resources and extensive need, the archive community would itself make to identify priorities and concentrate effort.

The document was presented to the Trustees of the Heritage Lottery Fund and is published now, with minor revisions to indicate progress over the past twelve months, as a contribution to the continuing debate on the present and future of archives in Great Britain.

The document sets out the background to archive provision in Great Britain (Section 1); indicates recent initiatives by the archive community to analyse current needs and priorities (Section 2); and demonstrates the widespread relevance of archives to the community (Section 3). It identifies (Section 3) four major target areas for concentration of energy and resources within the archive community for the next five years:

- Access for all
- Preservation

- Comprehensive availability
- Conservation and innovation

These are explored in Section 5. Specific targets are set for attainment across five years and funding needs identified. A summary of the proposals is set out at Section 7.

# BRITISH ARCHIVES: THE WAY FORWARD

## 1. The background: Where we come from

- 1.1 Britain's archival heritage is the chronicle of our collective past and the bedrock on which rests our knowledge of many other aspects of history - the buildings around us, the landscape we see, the books we read. It is a heritage unrivalled in quality and depth anywhere in the world.
- 1.2 While the concept and practice of preserving archives for future generations reaches back almost to the dawn of writing, in Britain the burgeoning of bureaucracy over the past century has hugely extended the range of materials demanding care. To the older groupings of records of state, manor, parish, estate and family have been added those of a myriad of institutions, businesses and social groupings - and in previously unknown forms: sound recordings, film, computer disk and tape. Our knowledge of almost every aspect of the past is channelled through and dependent upon this collective memory.
- 1.3 It is cared for in over 2,000 diverse repositories, from the national institutions to local authority record offices and the specialist (universities, charities, businesses and private estates). Much, of course, remains in private hands. About 300 of these repositories represent the main collecting institutions, in which the vast majority of British archives are held.
- 1.4 Most repositories have grown up to meet new demands over the past half century, a period during which they have had to compete, not only with much older established institutions in related fields - the Carnegie Libraries, for example, or the great national museums of the Victorian age - but also with all the resource-hungry enterprises of the modern welfare state. As a result, the archival profession has battled, almost from its beginnings, with limited resources, against huge tides of incoming archives, many of them taken in as rescue operations, and has had to cope with often sub-standard accommodation where the lack of external elegance is depressingly consistent with the frequently

unsuitable, cramped, insecure and environmentally hostile internal conditions in which they are stored and consulted.

- 1.5 The problems of the archive world are similar to those of other heritage sectors. Archives can decay with time, can be threatened by overuse, may be poorly presented, are sometimes inaccessible. The task of the archive community at large is to work to improve their care and access despite the resource constraints which have almost always surrounded them and to reinterpret their significance to each new generation, in the language and medium of the time. Their unique role as 'the core of history' has not always been matched by their profile. The raising of that profile to ensure the widest possible appreciation and exploitation of the resource must remain an abiding concern.

## **2. Where we are now**

- 2.1 In the past two years, the community has acted together to take stock of its position and plan strategies to move Britain's archives into a new century of safe preservation and increased access for all who are the collective legatees of these unique glimpses of our past.

- 2.2 Several major initiatives have been undertaken:

*An Archives Policy for the United Kingdom*, drawn up by the principal bodies involved in archive care and published by the National Council on Archives in 1996, sets out a series of principles and policy objectives for the archive sector. Its recommendations touched, among other themes, on the need for greater co-ordination of government policy on archives, the development of objective standards within the field and the need for increased collaboration.

*Our shared past: an archival Domesday for England* and an equivalent document on Welsh archives are the results (the first published in March 1998, the second due out shortly) of detailed analyses of the state of local authority archive services in the two countries. They grow out of preliminary summary surveys compiled by the Historical Manuscripts Commission for the HLF. From all these

there emerges a clear picture of the development needs of these services. A similar survey of needs relating to papers held in university libraries and archives has been published this year by the of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Archives Sub-Committee and is being followed by a survey of conservation needs. A Scottish survey is currently underway. These exercises will prove key elements in defining objective measures of priority, for example between competing capital projects.

*A standard for record repositories* was revised and issued in 1997 by the HMC (Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts) to provide an independent yardstick against which archive buildings and services can be assessed.

*Archives On-Line: the establishment of a U.K. archival network* was published by the National Council on Archives in June 1998, and sets out a blueprint for the creation of a digital network to link archives across the U.K. and so provide a cohesive and comprehensive national resource discovery mechanism for archives. Parallel developments in the public library network initiative and the National Grid for Learning, for both of which archives represent an enormous pool of content potential, make this particularly timely.

*Survey of Visitors to British Archives*, published in November 1998 by the Public Services Quality Group is the analysis of a survey of the profile and comments of nearly 5,000 users of public archives in the UK, designed to provide the basis for value-for-money developments in individual archives, built upon an improved view of user needs.

*Archives at The Millennium*, published by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts in 1999, presents a wide-ranging analysis and commentary on the current state of archive care and use, compiled following a large-scale consultation exercise. It will inform debate for many years to come.

2.3 The following paragraphs represent a distillation of the major themes and preoccupations identified through these initiatives and set out proposals for the

focusing of future activity and funding. For the purposes of this document, these proposals are pitched at the next five years.

### **3. Where we want to be**

- 3.1 Archives have a relevance to every member of the community, without exception. The experience of every archivist is that, for millions of people, regardless of formal educational attainment, the exploration of family 'roots' through archives creates a personal involvement with history which is unchallenged in its immediacy and which can both inform and be informed by further exploration of historical sites and avenues. For others, often newcomers to remote rural communities or inner cities, their immediate local environment can be given striking new value and significance when it is illuminated by an understanding through archives of how it came to be as it is. For many ethnic groups, archives have in recent years been able to unveil a legacy of interaction with the community, sometimes good, sometimes bad, but either way unarguable. For others, basic social rights and entitlement to services prove wholly dependent on access to properly preserved, objective records.
- 3.2 No further evidence is needed of the role of archives in satisfying a public appetite for knowledge of the actions of government, than the annual press and media coverage of new document releases from the Public Record Office. These revelations of how government has in the past conducted itself not only catch the public eye but, importantly, provide a firm assurance of the operation of open government and democratic accountability.
- 3.3 Archives are, then, in every sense relevant, to the individual citizen and to the community as a whole. For the archive profession, the challenge is, first, to ensure that the right evidence is properly kept, preserved and arranged; secondly, to see that the arteries of archival information are clear and properly functioning, that there are no blockages to access and openness; and thirdly, that the individual is fully aware of the existence and potential significance of the whole range of archives. This must be done in ways which constantly evolve to meet the developing pattern of contemporary life.

3.4 Our vision of the future of British archives is of a flow of archival information which takes account of all the opportunities offered by digital networks and offers opportunity for exploration - historical, personal, social - to the broadest possible range of people wherever they can use it - in the home, the classroom or the office. Recent initiatives in relation to the People's Network and the National Grid for Learning and work undertaken by the Higher Education Funding Councils, operating through JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee), have only served to increase our enthusiasm for this goal, and our certainty of what we can add to the broader vision.

3.5 Behind this new level of local delivery will lie, often invisible to the individual beneficiary, the essential continuing battle to ensure that the archival heritage is safely and securely preserved, with all that that implies in terms of environmental control, protection against fire, flood and theft. That battle must be waged if this vision is to mean anything. The edifice will fall without sound mortar.

3.6 These goals give us our four target areas for concentration of energy and resources for the next five years:

- **Access for all**
- **Comprehensive availability**
- **Preservation**
- **Conservation and innovation**

3.7 These goals are explored in detail in Section 5 of this document. In setting them, we seek to achieve co-operation with a wide range of organisations and agencies whose activities touch upon these interests, not least the Heritage Lottery Fund, which, we assume, will continue to be a lead-player among the sources of external funding to which we must and will, inevitably, look for continuing support and assistance. We are all too conscious that our planning presupposes a level of support from the HLF - albeit at this stage unquantifiable - and, in shaping our planning, have borne closely in mind the HLF's own strategic plan, as published in draft in the Spring of 1999.

#### **4. Pursuing the vision: our way forward**

4.1 The following paragraphs represent the outline of a 5-year programme, based upon our earlier published investigations and drawing out, under the four headings above, the issues of the broadest strategic significance as national priorities for the archival community. Inevitably, these will not necessarily be the priorities which every archivist in the U.K. would identify, but the National Council on Archives believes there is a broad consensus about the importance of these issues. Further detailed discussion within the community will establish the routes by which these targets will be pursued.

4.2 We are very conscious that *Our shared past*, *The National Archives Policy* and *Archives On-Line* have been steps along the road to more clearly defined goals for the future - but only the first steps. Significant choices need to be made on the back of these. One specific enhancement of the current geography of decision-making within the community is, we feel, important to the achievement of meaningful choices and cost-effective collaborative working. The Council believes that in some areas, joint projects by a number of repositories could have major benefits, allowing the emergence of centres of excellence that could drive up the standards of the archive profession as a whole. To provide a forum in which the respective priority of particular schemes can be debated and joint initiatives can be discussed, the National Council on Archives has taken steps to establish a series of nine regional archive councils in each of the regions of England as defined by government. Bringing together the user community, custodians from all the sectors represented in the archive world, owners of private archives and representatives of the sister heritage professions, these Councils are already advancing locally such issues as those raised in this document and seem set to provide the best opportunity for local prioritisation. Local forums of this type will, we feel, do much to break down the sectoral divisions which have slowed collaborative development and to provide clear, locally informed and well-founded advice and direction for the future.

#### **5. The Future Picture**

## **5.1 Focus I: Access for all**

- 5.1.1 The last three decades have witnessed a steady rise in the numbers of people using archives. In 1995-6, in almost half a million visits, readers used 2 million documents in local authority archives alone. The evidence is that, far from this being the abstruse preoccupation of a small number of academics, archives are used at every level of education from the primary school upwards, and for an astonishing diversity of practical, personal and commercial purposes. Like public libraries, archives provide an opportunity for broadening horizons throughout the lifespan. At the Public Record Office for example, 45% of readers are unwaged or retired, 65% amateurs, 49% are pursuing the history of their own families, a constantly developing field of interest which often proves to be a gateway for the individual to an in-depth interest in and understanding of the wider past. Outreach has been a developing preoccupation for archives in recent years, but the arrival of the Internet Age provides the opportunities to take archives, as never before, to the doorstep of the community at large.
- 5.1.2 Work is already going on in this area. The Public Record Office is already well down the road to achieving the conversion of its catalogues to digital format, accessible remotely. With HLF aid, the Scottish Record Office is developing the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) to link Scottish repositories in a digital network. Many archives are embarking on digital conversion projects. The PRO is already working with the DfEE on the provision of archival content for the National Grid for Learning - a huge potential across the whole field of archives - while the archival community has played a part in the LIC's deliberations on content creation, preparing guidance for the New Opportunities Fund.
- 5.1.3 The National Council on Archives and its constituent bodies, representing the users, owners and custodians of archives, have responded to these new opportunities by drawing up the blueprint for a 21st-century network of archive information transmitted electronically to the home or school, starting with the development of resource discovery information, identifying the location and

relevance of archives for any particular research project, and moving on ultimately to the delivery of images of the archives themselves.

- 5.1.4 This huge task will take many years and cannot be achieved without external support. The Council has established a Resources Sub-Committee to pursue potential avenues for funding the network. There can be no higher priority for archives than the creation of this collaborative electronic network, overcoming the limitations of geography, crossing the many archival sectors and creating a truly unified digital directory or encyclopaedia of British historical documents.
- 5.1.5 The Council has set a challenging timetable for completion. Already, some building-blocks are being put in place. National Name Authority Files, establishing internationally recognised standards for proper names to facilitate electronic searching, are being developed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission for the archive community. First-stage implementation projects are underway, in the Higher Education area and in a collaboration between the Public Record Office and local authority record offices. The implementation of the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) will also provide valuable experience and will form one element in the ultimate UK-wide network. The commencement of a full network installation for this broader project is planned for the end of 2000 if funding arrangements are achieved.
- 5.1.6 Over the next five years, archives up and down the country will be diverting resources to ensure participation in this network. This will be a substantial drain on limited budgets, but the goal is of unquestioned importance and will be pursued vigorously.
- 5.1.7 ***To reflect this highest priority, we would suggest to the Trustees of the HLF that a high percentage (say, 30%) of the annual archive allocation of funding is devoted across the next five years to the support of the National Electronic Network for Archives:*** in part and initially to assist with the creation of the infrastructure, but also, by supporting individual applications for the conversion of catalogues and other resource discovery tools to digital format.

5.1.8 Both the local elements of the network structure and the provision of digital content will need to conform to standards laid down for the network. In both cases, the Council are working to devise criteria. If the HLF is persuaded of the value of the National Network goal, we would look to them to assess applications against these criteria, as soon as they are in place, in order to ensure that funding is channelled into projects which will further the goal of a comprehensive and consistent network and will, in their own right, have a continuing life-span once the network is in place.

## **5.2 Focus II: Comprehensive Availability**

5.2.1 A besetting problem of archives over the last fifty years has been that both the pace of rescue and the ever-increasing pressures of researcher numbers have always outstripped the resources for providing proper access to archives through the essential work of cataloguing. Like fragments from an archaeological site, meaning can only be given to documents once they have been pieced together, identified and described. A major finding of the Mapping Project has been that in 82% of local archive repositories, 20% or more of the collections have never been adequately worked upon and so remain inaccessible to the public. This constitutes a huge buried heritage of knowledge about our past. No-one knows what findings await. This is a major overdue debt which the archive community owes to the world.

5.2.2 A nationwide drive to reduce this by a concerted programme of discovery and analysis, linked to and driven by the development of the digital network, could dramatically transform the accessibility of our archival heritage. Our target would be to enable the creation of outline descriptions ('collection level descriptions', in professional parlance) - to international standards - of every substantial collection of archives in each UK archive repository within a defined timeframe. Given the prospect of an achievable network (the potential already exists in the shape of the National Register of Archive's ARCHON web-site to host this data initially) and the inescapable advantages of participation, archive repositories could rise to the challenge of a target-date for comprehensive achievement of at least this first level of resource description, making the totality of British archive collections

comprehensively visible for the first time ever, providing immediate and important content for the National Network and paving the way for its expansion into more detailed levels of resource discovery.

5.2.3 The Council will pursue this project as part of its work on the Archives On-Line development. It will shortly be undertaking a survey of British archives to assess, among other things, how far archives have already attained this level of accessibility and to assess the time and resources needed to complete the exercise. At the end of that survey, a timetable could be established. For many archives, the completion of this task would constitute a significant diversion from daily service demands (which will continue unabated). Inevitably, therefore, some will be forced to pursue additional funding options.

5.2.4 ***A programme of assistance to archive repositories to open up the large backlogs of valuable archives that are languishing inaccessibly in their strongrooms would revolutionise access to our archival heritage. The NCA suggests to the HLF that work on the attainment of this project is viewed as connected to the content-provision element of the broader National Network scheme, on which it is of course dependent if this new level of accessibility is to be enjoyed to the fullest possible extent. A regular commitment of 15% of the archives allocation for a fixed period of five years would concentrate work on the attainment of this goal.*** Again, technical criteria would be devised by the Council against which applications might be judged.

### **5.3 Focus III: Preservation**

5.3.1 Careful preservation is the sole guarantee of long-term access to archives for future generations. The chief enemy of archives is poor care and it is understandable that over the last fifty years the emphasis in the maturing profession has been on the development of proper recognised standards of care, including the provision of accommodation designed to meet these standards and to extend the life-span of our irreplaceable heritage.

- 5.3.2 In this time, much has been achieved and flagship repositories (like the Public Record Office itself, the Hampshire Record Office and the new Surrey History Centre) now exist. There has been substantial new building for the Scottish Record Office, for example, the National Library of Wales and (with HLF aid) the Flintshire Record Office. There is clear evidence that welcoming, well designed premises are an enormous encouragement to use. Since the opening of the new Hampshire Record Office in 1994, use has grown in a steady year-on-year pattern, by over 70%. Facilities such as classrooms and lecture theatres open doors to whole new, and important, sectors of use.
- 5.3.3 Nevertheless, too many problem locations still remain. The archive profession must and does remain concerned about the need for improved building stock, capable of ensuring the longevity of the archives. The recent archival mapping projects have drawn attention to these deficiencies: 32% of archive premises are at risk from water damage, from leaking roofs, flooding or burst pipes; one in six has poor fire protection. The HLF has played its part in recent years in showing the role which external funding can play in energising resources to provide solutions in the worst cases.
- 5.3.4 The Archive Mapping Project found that 11% (14 out of 123) of the local authority record offices surveyed in England completely failed to meet the relevant published standards and concluded that there was little viable alternative but to replace existing premises with a new build or conversion of premises. These findings, in themselves of course, cover only one element in the archival scene; other mapping exercises are charting similar priority needs in other areas. It seems clear that, looked at from a national perspective, it is among these poorest of premises that any available resources should be concentrated.
- 5.3.5 Of course, the opportunity to improve, with the help of external funding, will be dependent upon the mustering of partnership finance; any grandly conceived programme will be subject to circumstance, opportunism and chance (the fire in XXXX in the Norwich Library and Record Office, for example, changed the pattern of need in that county overnight). On the other hand, a clear and general perception that there would be a readiness on the part of external funding

agencies - and, in particular, the HLF - to consider seriously bids for external funding coming from those areas already identified as being in greatest need, would in its own right be a substantial incentive to take positive ameliorative steps; the prospect of success may begin to move a log-jam of many years.

**5.3.6 *The Council therefore recommends that the HLF, for the next five years, earmarks some 30% of its archives allocation to assisting with these priority cases of substandard premises. Each new building typically costs between £2m and £5m; some cost more. Even one substantial scheme a year supported by HLF would help raise the water-table of standards within the archival world. A programme of support for, say, three builds in each of the first three years, two in the fourth and one in the fifth would go a substantial way.***

5.3.7 In turn, the Council will play its part in using the resources of its Lottery Adviser to encourage the shaping of realistic and cost-effective schemes in this sector of greatest need. It would also initiate discussion of new approaches and lower cost options for storage and access, including such possibilities as large-scale collaborative repositories linked electronically to the user, or the development of closer liaison with other public facilities.

5.3.8 At the same time, the Council, through its Lottery Adviser, has been working - and will continue to work - to encourage the view that much can be done to improve conditions of storage or access or preservation through smaller schemes, less grand in sweep but more affordable and cost-effective, and sharply focussed on core need. Often relatively small adaptations to existing buildings (frequently themselves of heritage merit) can increase usable space and enhance service delivery. Specific, targetted improvements to environmental conditions or security levels, for example, can provide the bridge between the sub-standard and the acceptable. Once again, the archives where these needs are greatest have been mapped nationally or are in the process of being mapped, providing an objective standard for prioritisation. Once again general awareness of a 'priority area programme' endorsed by HLF, would create a climate for improvement which would be entirely within the spirit in which the

lottery was conceived and would help filter out applications from areas of lesser need with little prospect of success. The knowledge among 'priority-need' service-providers that their problems had been recognised and that a move to amend would be timely, would focus improvement exactly where it is most needed.

**5.3.9 *The Council recommends that, for the next five years, some 10% of the archives allocation of HLF be set aside for smaller-scale capital refurbishment schemes of this sort.***

#### **5.4 Focus IV: Conservation and Innovation**

5.4.1 The areas above represent three major initiatives which, together, could, we believe, transform the level of access to UK archives, broaden the contribution the archive sector is able to make to the worlds of learning, information and heritage and encourage improvement among the worst-provided services, so raising standards and levels of access and service overall.

5.4.2 They are themselves, of course, the result of difficult choices. But, where there are limits to resources, choices have to be preferable to a free-for-all where need takes second place to chance. Not all would agree with our choice of priorities. Many would argue the case for placing resources in the vanguard where they can encourage best practice. Others would see the cataloguing in depth of the archives of major figures or institutions as a high priority; others the physical conservation of archives in poor condition. All are right. The need for work - and for help - in all these areas is unarguable.

5.4.3 A further element in the picture has so far not been addressed in this document. It must not be forgotten that all archives start their life in private or corporate hands. Some remain, well tended and conserved; others are transferred for safe keeping to public repositories. Where care continues to be exercised in situ and arrangements are made for access to researchers, there may well be a case for external support, particularly where this is linked to 'a relationship of care' with a

local public archive. In this way, privately held archives may come to be more clearly viewed as part of the overall archival heritage.

5.4.4 The application of external funding will inevitably be subject, at least in part, to the unpredictable. The unexpected, whether good (a newly discovered archive offered to the nation) or bad (a fire at Norwich), can always cut across best laid plans.

5.4.5 For these reasons, we suggest that, over and above the allocations we have proposed in the preceding paragraphs, provision should be made within the archives allocation for an element to encompass work of this sort:

- conservation, either in the form of physical repair or of the funding of surrogate copies to prevent further wear;
- cataloguing of pre-eminent collections, including those in private hands with appropriate access arrangements (though we would argue that, increasingly, such work should comply to standards which will accord with the criteria for inclusion in the On-Line Network);
- 'spearhead projects', small but high in value in their encouragement of best practice and in their setting of new directions for others to follow. The identification of a 'spearhead' category into which such projects would fall would not only avert the assumption that precedents for acceptance of applications were being set, but would also focus thinking within the archive profession on innovative, cost-effective modes of service delivery.

5.4.6 In all of these we believe there is real scope for encouraging collaborative projects and funding applications and would hope that the establishment of regional forums will do much to develop such thinking.

5.4.7 ***We suggest that an allocation in the region of 15% be set aside by the HLF to meet these needs, for work in support of preservation and conservation, for in-depth cataloguing of archives of pre-eminent importance and for innovative 'spearhead' projects to encourage and develop best practice.***

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 It cannot be contested that we are now in a period where, increasingly, the providers of heritage services are looking to external funding sources - principal among them the HLF - to provide the impetus for development. Conscious of the failure of the archive sector to react as positively as it might to the challenges posed by this development, the Council believes that a structured approach to external funding, rather than a free-for-all, can only represent a more mature response, potentially beneficial to both fund seekers and providers. The steps already taken by the archive community to define need by undertaking objective surveys of current service provision, combined with the appointment of a Lottery Adviser to improve communication between both sides of the 'funding fence', have laid the groundwork for this structured approach. Crucial now are the development of procedures within the archive community to agree priorities and the reaching of a common ground between the community and the HLF as to those priorities. With a greater understanding on both sides of current need and a recognition by the community of where bids will be deemed more appropriately focused, there should be a much better chance of external funding resources being applied to best advantage, making a real impact on the development of the whole sector.

## 7. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

### 7.1 Focus I: Access for all

**Target:** The development of an electronic National Archive Network, providing on-line access to archival information from all UK archives.

#### **Progress to date:**

- Publication by the NCA of 'Archives On-Line', a blueprint for the network
- Establishment of working groups to pursue technical and resource issues
- Inception of the Public Record Office's retrospective conversion programme to provide electronic access to the records of government
- Completion of National Networking Demonstrator Project, supported by JISC

#### **Programme:**

1999: Start of First-Stage Implementation Projects  
Reports of Resource and Technical Committees, defining the full structure and implementation programme for the network. Launch of Implementation Consortium

2000: Implementation of first elements of the Network

2000-2004: Continuing programme of data migration onto the Network

#### **External funding requirements:**

Cost elements will be sought from a range of agencies to support infrastructural development and conversion work for content. It is suggested that the HLF allocates 30% of its archive budget to this for the next five years, initially to give support to infrastructural development and then to support content creation through retrospective conversion of resource discovery data.

## 7.2 **Focus II: Comprehensive availability**

**Target:** Access, via the National Archive Network, to outline descriptions of every substantial collection of archives in the UK, opening up hitherto unrecorded archival collections.

### **Progress to date:**

Report on feasibility commissioned from the Resources Committee of the Network Implementation Committee

### **Programme:**

1999: National survey of current level of preparedness  
Report of Resources Committee

1999-2004: Programme of implementation and data migration

### **External funding requirements:**

It is suggested that HLF allocates 15% of its archive budget to this over the next five years.

## 7.3 **Focus III: Preservation**

**Target:** The replacement of those archive premises which fall furthest below accepted international standards and the encouragement of a focused programme of minor capital works to bring repositories closer to acceptable international standards

### **Progress to date:**

- Appointment of Lottery Adviser to assist archives in formulating well focused approaches to seeking external funds
- Publication of *Our shared past* and other mapping projects, designed to provide objective criteria for assessing need
- Regional Archive Councils established to refine and decide local priorities

**Programme:**

1999: Agreement to be sought with external funding agencies to focus assistance on priority areas

**External funding requirements:**

It is suggested that the HLF allocates 30% of its archive budget in support of projects to rehouse archives in the areas of greatest need and a further 10% in support of small-scale improvements to bring accommodation up to accepted objective standards.

**7.4 Focus IV: Conservation and innovation**

**Target:** to provide support for innovative work in the archive sector, essential conservation work and in-depth cataloguing to agreed standards of collections of major importance

**Programme:**

1999: Regional Archive Councils established to define local priorities and encourage collaborative projects.

**External funding requirements:**

It is suggested to the HLF that support for one-off schemes of this sort is drawn from an allocation of 15% of the overall archive budget.

