The consultation

Our engagement with the sector started in Summer 2016. We heard from people from across the archives sector, a range of funders and partners from the wider culture, heritage and information world, and archive users.

Our consultation was in two stages:

Sector and partner engagement on the priorities and challenges facing archives (April-October 2016)

- Roundtables in Wiltshire, London, Manchester and Birmingham attended by 179 people from across the archives sector.
- An online survey which received 235 responses. The results of the online survey helped refine the ideas and views emerging from the roundtables.

Public consultation on the draft vision (October 2016-January 2017)

- Publication of a draft vision on our website and call for views
- An online survey which received 100 responses
- Six expert panels which were attended by over 100 strategic partners to explore the emerging themes.

Throughout our consultation we were supported by a reference group from across the archives sector.

Responses

A number of key messages emerged from the roundtables, workshops and in response to the public consultation:

- The vision should be ambitious and make an engaging and compelling case for funders and decision makers
- The vision should be underpinned by an action plan, supported by a wide range of partners to build a coordinated approach
• The vision should address the needs and opportunities of the whole of the archives sector, including large and very small archives, as well as those in a wide range of parent bodies including local government, businesses, charities and higher education
• The vision should stress the vital societal role archives play as sources of information and evidence, as well as their cultural and heritage value
• The vision needs to set out a future where archives confidently manage digital as well as paper records and where access is expanded to new fields of research and a diverse audience
• The vision must address the financial challenges archives face.

Next steps

This feedback formed the basis of a strategic vision for archives underpinned by a four year action plan, both of which will be published in Spring 2017.