Archives Policy

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Control schedule

Approved by	Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee
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Senior Responsible Officer	Kevin Wilbraham , Information Governance Manager
Author	Henry Sullivan, Information Asset Manager
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Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	15-07-2016	Henry Sullivan	Original Draft – combining existing draft policies for Collections Development and Collections Information
0.2	15-08-2016	Henry Sullivan	Substantial re-write
0.3	15-08-2016	Kevin Wilbraham	Minor revisions and additions made
0.4	03-09-2016	Kevin Wilbraham	Revised draft agreed with Head of Strategy (Interim)
1.0	04-10-2016	Kevin Wilbraham	Agreed by CP&S

Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
30-09-2014	Corporate Policy & Strategy	[Information Governance Policies](#)	[Minute](#)
04-10-2016	Corporate Policy & Strategy	[Information Governance Policies](#)	[Minute](#)

Archives Policy

Policy statement

1.1   The City of Edinburgh's archives form a core part of the documented heritage of the city that stretches back to the 12th century to the present day. The archives illuminate our past, chronicle our present and inform our future.

1.2   When properly managed and made accessible, the Council archives will enhance civic and community identity, support long term accountability, and document and protect the rights of citizens.

1.3   To be effective, the Council archives need to evolve over time to capture and represent the changing nature of the organisation and city, as well as the changing ways we create records in the ongoing digital revolution.

1.4   This policy sets out the Council's responsibilities and activities in regard to its archives. It governs the collection, management, preservation and access of all archives, both physical and digital, created or acquired by the Council

1.5   This policy will:

1.5.1   define managerial and professional responsibilities for the Council archives;

1.5.2   support the Council in complying with its statutory, regulatory and policy obligations around archives,

1.5.3   acknowledge the value and benefits of an archive service for the Council as a custodian of the city's culture and history, for our citizens as its inheritors and continuators and for our visitors who come to experience and contribute to it.

Scope

2.1   This policy covers:

2.1.1   All records which are created or received and then managed by the Council in the course of its business.

2.1.2   All records which were created or kept by the Council's predecessor bodies.

2.1.3   Any archives purchased by any service area in the Council

2.1.4   Any archives donated or deposited with any service area in the Council by third parties

2.2   This policy applies to:

2.2.1   All permanent and temporary Council employees, volunteers, people on work placements and elected members when acting as officers of the Council

2.2.2   All third parties and contractors performing a statutory Council function or service

Definitions

3.1 **Appraisal:** is the assessment of records for their enduring business, evidential or historical value to the Council or communities it serves.

3.1.1 Records that are assessed to have value are retained as **Archives**.

3.1.2 Records that do not have sufficient value are either disposed of or returned to their depositor.

3.2 **Conservation:** is the active repair or restoration of damaged archives.

3.3 **Council Records:** are defined as;

3.3.1 recorded information in any format (including paper, microform, electronic and audio-visual formats); and

3.3.2 which are created, collected, processed, and/or used by City of Edinburgh Council employees, Elected Members when undertaking Council business, predecessor bodies (e.g. Lothian Region Council, Edinburgh District Council, Edinburgh Corporation) or contractors performing a statutory Council function or service.

3.3.3 and which are then kept as evidence of that business.

3.4 **Depositor:** the person or organisation that transfers custody of records to an archive institution. These **deposits** fall under one of five types:

3.4.1 **Charge and Superintendence:** records that have been transferred to the Council from the National Records of Scotland as part of a national scheme to support local archive services. These records are still owned by their depositors but the National Records of Scotland maintains a supervisory role on how they are accessed and managed locally.

3.4.2 **Gift***:* a permanent transfer of ownership of records. Legal ownership, responsibility and rights, both physical and intellectual, are entirely consigned to the Council.

3.4.3 **Loan**: the Council is the custodian for the records but is not the legal owner. This is usually the Depositor but may be another nominated individual or official of a business or institution. Some loans are **indefinite** where the records are managed by the Council until the depositor wishes to withdraw them. Other loans are **temporary**, where the Council has the records for a fixed period of time, often for exhibition purposes.

3.4.4 **Purchase:** the Council has acquired the records through sale directly or indirectly from the legal owners. Some intellectual rights may not be acquired as a result of the purchase.

3.4.5 **Transfer:** records that have been created by the Council and which have been moved to the Council archives after being appraised as having enduring business, evidential or historical value.

3.5 **Format** is the medium from which records are created; most electronic formats are capable of being edited and changed continually (e.g. MS Word), 'fixed formats' do not allow this (e.g. PDF).

3.6 **Preservation:** is a set of processes that prolong the life of archives through identifying risks to their continued access and use and then mitigating them through management action.

3.7 **Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011:** requires public authorities to detail their records management policies, procedures and responsibilities in a Records Management Plan, which is subject to review by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

3.8 **Records management:** are the processes and practices that ensure Council records are systematically controlled and maintained, covering the creation, storage, management, access, and disposal of records, in compliance with best practice, statutory requirements and policy obligations.

3.9 **Records management manual** – a document that details how records are created, maintained and disposed of within a business unit, service area, project or working group.

3.10 **Recordkeeping systems:** are physical filing systems or IT business systems that hold and manage Council records.

3.11 **Retention Rules:** identify when closed records or files can be disposed of and what should happen to them at that point. They can be broken down into four parts;

3.11.1 **Activity / Record Description** – provides the context on what is covered by the retention rule.

3.11.2 **Trigger** – indicates the moment that the retention period starts applying; usually around the event or date that "closes" a record.

3.11.3 **Retention Period** – how long you hold onto a record beyond the trigger point.

3.11.4 **Disposal Action** – the action required once a record has reached the end of its retention period.

Policy content

4.1 The Council has the duty and powers to manage, preserve and provide access to any records of local or general historic interest that have been created or received by it, or otherwise placed in its custody by way of gift, purchase, loan or transfer.

4.2 The Council's Records Management Plan, under the Public Records Scotland Act of 2011, recognises that the Council's Archives Service (Edinburgh City Archives) is the main place of deposit for these records, though other Council services have and maintain historic records of their own to support their own

collections and services. Collectively these are all regarded as the Council's archives.

4.3   The Council's Information Asset Manager is responsible for the Council's archives under Element 7 of the Council's Records Management Plan.

4.4   Edinburgh City Archives is also the custodian of all archives deposited under Charge and Superintendence by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

4.5   A five year Archive Development Plan for the Council will be developed by the Information Asset Manager, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and presented to and approved by the Information Council.

4.5.1   Its purpose will be to assess, consult on, and set out how the Council's archives can be developed to better meet the needs of existing and potential stakeholders and communities.

4.5.2   It will cover the Council archives' acquisition and appraisal priorities, as well as access, engagement and management arrangements across the organisation.

Acquisitions

4.6   The Council will seek to add its archives by:

4.6.1   Responding to offers of material from institutions, businesses and individuals, including additional deposits from existing depositors.

4.6.2   Identifying and pursuing material that fills gaps in its archives or falls within the Council's Archives Development Plan.

4.7   This will be done in liaison with other Council service areas (as appropriate) and external bodies, including the National Records of Scotland, the other Lothian local authorities, and other relevant national and local repositories.

4.8   The Council will not seek to represent any particular historical, sectarian or other viewpoint in its acquisition of archives, but shall reflect, as accurately as possible, all aspects of Edinburgh's past and present.

4.9   In acquiring archives, the Council will adhere to the following priorities:

4.9.1   Records of the City of Edinburgh Council and its predecessors which relate to their core functions and statutory duties.

4.9.2   Records of Arms Length External Organisations created or contracted by the Council

4.9.3   Archives of the Burghs of Leith, Portobello, South Queensferry and all related Parish Councils, Parochial Boards, District Councils, School Boards etc.

4.9.4   Archives of Edinburgh institutions and businesses and those of religious, sporting, political or cultural organisations and families or individuals which merit preservation.

4.9.5 Archives of regional bodies which have or did have their headquarters in Edinburgh except where provision has already been made or agreed with another repository.

4.10 Archives that fall within the above criteria but are in danger of neglect or destruction should be particularly sought after and secured.

4.11 The Council will always seek the return into Council custody of any archives of the City of Edinburgh Council and its predecessor and associated bodies currently held in other institutions and agencies where appropriate.

4.12 Where an acquisition seems likely to result in significant financial implications in respect of storage, conservation or access then the matter should be referred to Council committee.

4.13 The Council will not acquire archive material relating to places outside the Council's geographical area, unless they are part of a wider archive collection that has relevance to Edinburgh.

4.14 Where the Council is offered archives that do not match its acquisition criteria, the potential depositor must be advised so by the liaising Council officer and provided with details of appropriate alternative institutions to consider.

4.15 The Council will, in exceptional circumstances, act to rescue and secure archives for other archival institutions before arranging for their transfer to the most appropriate custodian.

Deposits by gift, loan, purchase or transfer

4.16 Current Council records of archival merit will be transferred over time to the secure custody of Edinburgh City Archives in accordance with the Council's Record Retention Schedule and Archive Transfer Procedure.

4.17 Archives from third parties must always be first sought as gifts in order to provide the citizens of Edinburgh with maximum and enduring value.

4.18 Indefinite loans of archives can be accepted where the depositor wishes to maintain ownership while allowing public access and use.

4.19 Acquisitions by purchases will only be considered by the Council if the material is of outstanding importance to Edinburgh's archival heritage.

4.20 The Council will not accept any archives which have been collected or acquired in any country in violation of that country's laws.

4.21 Archives gained by gift or purchase should have clear title of ownership and these should be transferred to the Council upon acquisition.

4.22 All deposits by loan to the Council will have formal documentation setting out the arrangements and will be signed by all relevant parties.

4.23 Any identified conservation issues of potential loans will remain the liability of the depositor, subject to agreement concerning such matters as payment, withdrawal from access, application for funding etc.

4.24 All archive deposits in the Council's custody will eventually be made available for public consultation, either immediately or at the expiry of specified closure periods agreed with the depositor.

4.25 The Council will not accept any archive deposit with an indefinite or unclear closure period requirement set by a depositor.

Appraisal

4.26 All archive acquisitions will be appraised against the Archives Development Plan in accordance with the Council's Archive Appraisal Procedure before they are formally accepted by the Council. In some cases archives may be returned to the donor or depositor after appraisal, in full or in part.

4.27 All archive deposits must be appraised for compliance with the current legislative regime; e.g. Statute of Limitations, the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, Scottish Public Records Acts.

Accession

4.28 All deposits will be documented within a Council Archives Accessions Register. This will be maintained by the Information Asset Manager.

4.29 Additional acquisition paperwork should be permanently retained by the collecting Council service as appropriate.

4.30 All major accessions to the Council archives will be reported to the National Register of Archives for Scotland and listed in an annual report to the Information Council.

Loans, de-accessions and disposal

4.31 Any Council service that loans out archives in the Council's custody to a third party for exhibition, conservation, or other appropriate purposes, must follow the Council's Archives Loans Procedure.

4.32 The Council will not transfer (except in case of disaster/emergency), loan, sell or otherwise dispose of any archives under deposit by loan without the owner's written consent.

4.33 Any possible sale, destruction or transfer to a third party of the Council's archives will require authorisation from the Information Asset Manager.

4.34 Whilst depositors may withdraw their deposited or loaned archives from Council custody, the Council reserves the right to:

4.34.1 Claim reimbursement for the time and materials spent in cataloguing and preserving the archive

4.34.2 Retain any catalogues and other finding aids of the archive, as well as any copies made from the archive

4.35   All depositors removing their deposited or loaned archives from Council custody shall receive and sign de-accession documentation.

Preservation and conservation

4.36   All Council archives will be stored in secure and environmentally stable conditions and kept in appropriate low acid packaging, as far as resources will allow.

4.37   All Council archives will be managed as part of a preservation programme to ensure their continued access and use.

4.38   The Information Asset Manager will, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, issue and maintain guidance on the appropriate storage, care and preservation of the Council's archival records.

4.39   This guidance will meet professional archive standards and will cover the continual monitoring of environmental conditions, pest management and control, security and general housekeeping within storage areas.

4.40   Council archives that require external conservation treatment will be repaired in accordance with the Council's archive conservation guidance, issued and maintained by the Information Asset Manager.

4.41   A disaster plan for the Council archives will be maintained by the Information Asset Manager.

Access

4.42   The Council will provide as wide an access to its archives as possible, for both citizen and visitor alike, and for a diverse range of interests and research needs.

4.43   The Council will do this by:

4.43.1   Committing to making all archive material publically accessible as soon as practically possible after their accession.

4.43.2   Providing free physical access to the Council's archives to those who can visit the Council's designated access points

4.43.3   Responding to remote enquiries about the Council's archives.

4.43.4   Publishing catalogues and other finding aids online.

4.43.5   Creating and putting on physical and online exhibitions of material from the Council archives.

4.43.6   Providing a charged research service that takes into account the complexity of research required, and the needs of the enquirer

4.43.7   Digitising archival materials (within budgetary constraints) to provide on-line access to archival collections

4.44   While the Council archives fall under the exemption on research, history and statistics within section 33 of the Data Protection 1998, the Council reserves the

right to refuse access to specific archive material due to conservation or privacy concerns. These restrictions will be highlighted in published catalogues and finding aids where ever possible.

Documentation

4.45　All archives acquired by the Council will be catalogued according to the Council's Archive Cataloguing Guidelines.

4.46　These guidelines will be routinely reviewed by the Information Asset Manager, in consultation with other stakeholder services in the Council, and updated in accordance with current professional archives best practice and standards.

Digital Preservation

4.47　The Council commits to developing and maintaining a digital repository to capture, manage and provide long term access to the Council's digital archives.

4.48　Digital Council records that are required for long term (ten years or more) or permanent retention should be kept in robust file formats identified and recommended by the Information Asset Manager.

4.49　Each Council record keeping system that contains information required for long term or permanent retention should have a digital continuity plan

Implementation

5.1　This policy will be implemented through the Information Council's annual plan under the records management stream and coordinated by the Information Asset Manager.

5.2　The Information Asset Manager will undertake assessments of the Council archives throughout the organisation for compliance against this policy and related procedures and guidance.

5.3　Key measurements of success will be:

5.3.1　Number of archive collections accessioned and catalogued

5.3.2　Percentage of uncatalogued archive collections

5.3.3　Number of users of the Council archives

5.3.4　Number of item productions from the Council archives

5.3.5　Number of exhibitions and other outreach activities undertaken to promote the Council archives

5.3.6　User feedback through annual customer surveys

5.3.7　Development of a digital archive repository for the Council – including relevant processes, skill sets, guidance and technical infrastructure

5.4 An annual report to the Information Council by the Information Asset Manager will detail progress and developments in complying with this policy and wider professional archival best practice. It will cover:

5.4.1 Annual performance statistics for the above key measurements of success

5.4.2 Collated assessment of the access, management and preservation arrangements for the Council's archives across the organisation

5.4.3 Disaster plan testing and review

5.5 Achieving and maintaining the UK National Archives' Archive Services Accreditation standard will be the benchmark for the Council in complying with this policy. This accreditation will be managed by the Information Asset Manager and overseen by the Information Council.

Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Information Governance Policy provides a detailed explanation concerning overall roles and responsibilities around information governance. This section provides a summary of those responsibilities, but also outlines specific responsibilities in relation to acquiring, managing, preserving and providing access to the Council's archives.

6.2 The **Chief Executive** has overall executive responsibility for the Council's archives as the senior manager responsible for the Council's Records Management Plan under the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 2011.

6.3 **Directors** have a general responsibility to ensure that records of enduring business, evidential or historical value within their Directorate are identified and eventually transferred to the Archives Service. They must do this by ensuring that;

6.3.1 there is an up to date, authorised, comprehensive and relevant retention schedule for their directorate

6.3.2 there are routine transfer arrangements to the Council archives for all activities that have permanent retention rules

6.3.3 digital records that require long term or permanent retention are kept in robust file formats

6.3.4 record keeping systems that require long term or permanent retention of information are identified and digital continuity plans are created and maintained

6.4 The **Head of Strategy & Insight** as the **Senior Information Risk Owner** (SIRO) has the delegated responsibility for information risk management in the Council, including risks to the permanent preservation and ongoing access to the Council's archives.

6.5 All **Managers** must;

6.5.1   ensure that this policy and any associated procedures and guidance are understood by all relevant staff within their business units

6.5.2   undertake routine transfers to the City archives of any Council records in their custody that have a permanent retention rule

6.5.3   manage the file formats of the Council records in their custody that require long term or permanent retention

6.5.4   consult the Information Governance Unit and their Directorate Records Officer when they believe records due for destruction may have enduring business, evidential or historical value to the Council or communities it serves

6.5.5   not destroy Council records that are being actively considered for appraisal and transfer into the Council archives until given notification by the Information Asset Manager

6.6   **Employees** must;

6.6.1   read, understand and follow this policy and any associated archive procedures and guidance that are relevant to their work

6.6.2   read, understand and follow any records management manuals that are relevant to their work

6.6.3   Identify and report any risks to the long term preservation and use of Council records to their line manager

6.6.4   Report to their manager any Council records due for destruction that might have enduring business, evidential or historical value

6.7   **Elected Members** have the same responsibility to manage records created in their role as representatives of the Council in accordance with relevant policies and procedures. However, as members of the governing body of the Council, they have a greater duty to ensure that the Council archives remain relevant in terms of content and management – especially in meeting the civic need for accountability and documenting the rights and responsibilities of both the Council and its citizens.

6.8   **Third parties (e.g. contractors, voluntary and not for profit organisations) performing a public function for the City of Edinburgh Council** must also adhere to the requirements set out in this policy where they create records that require permanent retention.

6.8.1   They must transfer these records to Council custody either through an agreed schedule or at the termination of contract.

6.8.2   They must also comply with requests by the Council to transfer other material created under their contract that have been deemed of enduring business, evidential or historical value to the Council and the communities it serves.

6.9   **Directorate Records Officers** will;

6.9.1   have delegated authority to transfer Council records within their directorate to the Council archives.

6.9.2   act as a liaison with the Information Governance Unit on archive and digital preservation related projects and issues.

6.10   The **Council Information Asset Manager** is part of the **Information Governance Unit** within the Strategy & Insight division of the Chief Executive's Office. The position has responsibility for the day to day operation of **Edinburgh City Archives** and for the delivery of the Council's Records Management Plan. In relation to archives this officer will:

6.10.1   provide professional advice, guidance, support and training on the management of the Council archives across the organisation

6.10.2   Develop, maintain and report on the Council's Archive Development Plan;

6.10.3   develop and maintain the Council's Archives Accession Register;

6.10.4   maintain and review the Council's Retention Schedules;

6.10.5   promote and provide assurance by review of preservation programmes for the Council archives by custodial Council service areas;

6.10.6   Review and authorise sales, destructions or transfers of any part the Council archives

6.10.7   Develop, test, review and report on a disaster plan for the Council archives

6.10.8   Lead on and promote digital preservation of Council records and archives, specifically in developing a digital archives repository.

6.11   **ICT Solutions** has a role to support the digital preservation of Council records and record keeping systems required for long term or permanent retention, as well as helping to ensure that digital preservation requirements are properly considered as part of the ICT procurement process.

Related documents

Council Policy

7.1   Data Quality Policy

7.2   [Edinburgh Museums and Galleries: Collections Development Policy 2013-2017](#)

7.3   Information Governance Policy

7.4   Information Rights Policy

7.5   Information Security Policy

7.6   Managing Personal Data Policy

7.7   Records Management Policy

7.8   Re-use of Public Sector Information Policy

Codes, Guidance, Procedures and Strategy

7.9   Council Archives Transfer Procedure

7.10   Open Data Strategy

Legislation & Statutory Codes of Practice

7.11   [Local Government (Scotland) Act,1994](#)

7.12   [Public Records Scotland Act, 2011](#)

Standards

7.13   [Archives Service Accreditation Standard of the UK National Archives](#)

7.14   [International Standards for Archival Description and Archive Authority Files](#)

7.15   PD5454: 2012 - *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*

7.16   ISO 14721:2012 - *Open archival information system (OAIS)*

Equalities impact

8.1   There are no equalities issues arising from this policy.

Sustainability impact

9.1   There are no sustainability issues arising from this policy.

Risk assessment

10.1   Risk of reputational damage and audit complications as a result of non-compliance with the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 2011 and the Council's own Records Management Plan.

10.2   Risk of civil and criminal penalties, as well as reputational damage, as a result poor decision making through a failure to raise and maintain the awareness amongst staff of the evidential value of the Council archives to its current and future business.

10.3   Risk of civil and criminal penalties as well as reputational damage and business continuity issues through an inability to evidence past Council decisions due to inadequate and poorly managed long term access and preservation of Council records.

10.4   Risk of excessive physical and IT storage costs through a failure to identify and make separate provision for Council records that must be retained permanently.

10.5   Risk to citizens and clients that the Council will be unable to evidence any decision making and service provision that have affected them in the long term due to inadequate and poorly managed Council records.

Review

11.1 In line with the Council's Policy Framework, this policy will be reviewed annually or when required by significant changes to the Council's Records Management Plan or with legislation, regulation or business practice.