

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE Finance, Policy and Resources  
DATE 4 December 2014  
DIRECTOR Ewan Sutherland (Acting)  
TITLE OF REPORT Corporate Archival Transfer and Acquisition Policy  
REPORT NUMBER CG/14/167  
CHECKLIST COMPLETED Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Committee with the Archival Transfer and Acquisition Policy which defines the scope of the records that Aberdeen City Archive aims to collect and make accessible to the public and how those records should be transferred to it, both from within the Council and from individuals, businesses and organisations outside it.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Committee note the detail of and approve the Archival Transfer and Acquisition Policy (Appendix 1);

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any requirements will be met from the existing budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The policy is related to and supports the Council's Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy as well as compliance with legislation such as the Public Records (Scotland) Act, Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Council has a statutory duty under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA) to ensure that all of our information and records, including those deemed worthy of permanent preservation, are managed appropriately. Given the ease with which modern records can be created and the variety of media on which they are stored, the ability to identify and transfer to the Archive those with an enduring historical value in a systematic and timely fashion is key to ensuring continuous documentation of the Council's activities through

time, which in turn will support its future decision-making process, promote openness and transparency and stimulate engagement with the public through research and learning.

The basis for identifying records for permanent retention in the City Archive will be the Corporate Records Retention and Disposals Schedule. By safeguarding the orderly transfer of records of long-term importance to the authority, the policy further supports the Councils Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy and compliance with legislation such as Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

The Archive also has a remit to collect records from individuals, businesses and organisations outside the Council. This policy similarly defines the scope of what should be collected to ensure a complete historical picture of the City while at the same time making best use of resources.

## 6. IMPACT

This policy will ensure that a full and complete record of the Council's activities continues to accrue in the City Archive. In doing so, it recognises that the effective management of records throughout their lifecycle requires a coordinated approach. Consequently, this will be achieved through joint working with the Council's Records Manager and in accordance with the Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy in order to help the Council meet its wider strategic objectives.

The policy will help the Council fulfil its Smarter City vision in terms of promoting good governance and by maintaining and ensuring access to the Council's historical records, it also fulfils the objective of creating 'Smarter People' by facilitating education and research.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Management of risk will be monitored and reported by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Corporate management Team on a quarterly basis

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Public Records \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#)  
[Corporate Information Management Strategy](#)

## 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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# **CORPORATE POLICY**

## **ARCHIVAL TRANSFER and ACQUISITION**

Date Created:	October 2014
Version:	0.1
Author (s) of Document:	Phil Astley, City Archivist
Review:	December 2015
Changes:	Created – October 2014 Submitted to Corporate Policy and Performance Committee 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2014

## **Introduction**

Aberdeen has the oldest and most complete archive of any Scottish city or town. Indeed, its oldest records are recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as being of outstanding cultural importance to the nation. Given the ease with which modern records can now be created and the different media on which they are stored, an Archival Transfer and Acquisition Policy will help ensure the continuity of this archive for the future and will enable the Council to:

- Provide evidence for its actions.
- Support openness and transparency.
- Promote community engagement through learning and research.

The Archive will not seek to represent any particular historical, political, religious or other viewpoint in its acquisition of records, but to reflect as objectively as possible all aspects of the City's past and present.

## **Why Do We Need A Policy?**

The Council has a statutory obligation under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 to ensure that all of its information and records are managed appropriately. This includes making proper arrangements for the archiving of the authority's public records.

By linking this policy to the Corporate Information & Records Lifecycle Management Policy and by defining the records which the Archive seeks to collect, an integrated approach to the management of information from creation through to transfer to the Archives will be achieved.

## **What Does This Policy Cover?**

This policy applies to records in all formats. It defines the scope of the records that Aberdeen City Archive aims to preserve and make accessible to the public, in accordance with current legislation, directives and national guidelines, as follows:

- Those records of Aberdeen City Council and its predecessors, relating to its core functions and statutory duties.
- Records received by gift, purchase, temporary or indefinite loan of individuals, families, estates, societies, organisations, institutions, industry and business which are of legal, historical or cultural significance and which relate to the City of Aberdeen.
- Records deposited by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland under his charge and superintendence.

- As a service jointly funded by Aberdeenshire Council, the Archive also has a parallel duty to collect, preserve and make publicly available the records of the City's neighbouring authority and its preceding bodies.

In some cases, records held by Aberdeen City Archive may fall outside this policy. Such records may be de-accessioned to ensure the most appropriate use of space and resources.

Where records are de-accessioned, appropriate arrangements will be made for their disposal: they may be transferred to a more suitable repository, sold, returned to the original owner, or destroyed. For deposited material, the owner's consent will be obtained before any action is taken.

### **Acquisition Priorities**

Our acquisition priorities are to:

- Ensure the systematic and timely transfer to the Archive of those non-current records held by Council services considered suitable for permanent preservation. The primary tool for identifying these records will be the Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- Acquire records from private individuals and organizations that will increase the range and depth of the collections held by Aberdeen City Archive.
- Acquire those records of Aberdeen City Council's predecessor authorities that are currently held in other archive services.

### **Transfer and Acquisition Criteria For Records From Within Aberdeen City Council**

Before acquiring records from services within Aberdeen City Council, the Archive requires that:

- All records must be non-current and relate to Aberdeen City Council, its partner organisations, or preceding bodies.
- The records must be covered by the Corporate Records Retention and Disposals Schedule or otherwise be judged by the City Archives to have archival value.
- The physical condition of the records will be such that it will not result in the Archives incurring excessive conservation costs.
- The Archive has the facilities to be able to care for the records properly in terms of storage in suitable environmental conditions and with regard to the ability to access the media on which the records are stored.

- Services transferring records to the City Archives shall assist the Archive staff as far as possible in terms of providing background information about the records and their subject matter.
- The depositor is authorized to transfer the records and signs a deposit agreement.
- The Archive will not normally accept three-dimensional artifacts, and will usually advise that they be referred to Aberdeen Museums and Galleries.

### **Transfer and Acquisition Criteria For Records From Bodies External To Aberdeen City Council**

Before acquiring records from individuals or organisations external to Aberdeen City Council, the Archive requires that:

- The records must relate to the City of Aberdeen. The Archive does not collect records that relate to areas outside the City and unless there is a local connection, such records will be transferred to the appropriate repository.
- When advising potential depositors, the Archive will draw attention to the existence of other repositories with similar or overlapping interests, to ensure that material is offered to the most appropriate institution.
- All records be non-current.
- The depositor is authorized to transfer title to material and signs a deposit or gift agreement.
- The Archive has the facilities to be able to care for the records properly in terms of storage in suitable environmental conditions and with regard to the ability to access the media on which the records are stored.
- Its authenticity and archival value can be demonstrated.
- The physical condition of the records will be such that it will not result in the Archives incurring excessive conservation costs.
- The Archive will accept records in all media, although film and video may be more appropriately stored at the Scottish Screen Archive.
- The Archive has the facilities to be able to care for the records properly.
- The Archive will not normally accept three-dimensional artifacts, and will usually advise that they be referred to Aberdeen Museums and Galleries.
- The records should be free of legal burdens or excessive access restrictions, (such as lengthy closure periods during which the records cannot be made available to the public) and which would diminish their research potential.

- The records either become the property of the Archive by gift or purchase or its responsibility as an indefinite loan.

### **How will we make this happen?**

Overall governance and strategic responsibilities for this policy are assigned to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. All activity relating to this policy and related improvement programme will be monitored, actioned and reported on to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Information Management Governance Group Policy. Information Asset Owners and Administrators will be responsible for ensuring all staff understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities outlined in this policy by completing a statement of internal control as part of the annual update to the Corporate Risk Register.

### **Approval of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the Corporate Information Management Strategy and Information and records Lifecycle Management Policy to ensure that it meets business and accountability requirements and measurable standards of good practice.