

# Records and Information Management Policy

Version 5.0, 03 May 2023

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# Document control

<b>Title</b>	Records and Information Management Policy		
<b>Governance group</b>	Data Governance Board		
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## Revision history

Version	Originator	Review start date	Revision description and record of change
5.0	Fiona Hughes	03 May 2023	Biennial review.
4.0	Fiona Hughes	26 March 2021	Full review.
3.0	Fiona Hughes	15 January 2019	Biennial review.
2.0	Fiona Hughes	15 November 2016	Biennial review process. Revised in line with Records Management Plan.
1.0	Marcia Jarnell	25 July 2014	Combination of Record Management and Information Management policies.

## Document approvals

Version	Governance group	Date approved	Date approval to be requested (if document still in draft)
5.0	Policy and Strategy Committee		8 June 2023
4.0	Policy and Strategy Committee	03 June 2021	
3.0	Policy and Strategy Committee	10 June 2020	
2.0	Policy and Resources Committee	21 June 2017	
1.0	Policy and Resources Committee	18 September 2014	

## Consultation record (for most recent update)

<b>Consultation status</b>	Stakeholders consulted between 15 March 2023 and 12 April 2023	
<b>Stakeholders consulted and dates</b>	Business and Digital Management Team	21 March 2023
	Data Management Team	15 March 2023
	Data Governance Group	29 March 2023
	Technical Design Authority	21 March 2023

## Strategic alignment

### Plan for North Lanarkshire

Improving the Council's Resource Base – A Workforce Strategy that is built around the needs of the council (as a single resource base) to deliver the priority outcomes, ensuring future workforce requirements, new skills and innovative approaches, and succession planning are recognised.

### Digital and IT Strategy

The Digital and IT Strategy brings together separate but related plans and policies that contribute to the development and delivery of our digital vision. The Records and Information Management Policy is one of these. It supports the strategy by providing a framework for good record keeping practices making sure records are managed effectively and efficiently, and the council complies with its statutory and regulatory obligations.

## Next review date

<b>Review Date</b>	
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# 1. Introduction

Information and records are a valuable corporate asset without which we would be unable to carry out our functions, activities and transactions, meet the needs of our stakeholders, and ensure legislative compliance.

**Records management** is the systematic control of an organisation's records, throughout their lifecycle, in order to meet operational business needs, statutory and fiscal requirements and community expectations.

The benefits of implementing records management systems and processes include:

1. Improved business efficiency through reduced time spent searching for information.
2. Demonstration of transparency and accountability for all actions.
3. The maintenance of corporate memory.
4. The creation of modern working environments and identification of opportunities for office rationalisation and hybrid working.
5. Risk management in terms of ensuring and demonstrating compliance with all legal, regulatory and statutory obligations.
6. The meeting of stakeholder expectations through the provision of good quality services.

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**North Lanarkshire Council recognises the importance of effective records management in supporting its core functions, providing authentic and reliable evidence of council business, and documenting historical and cultural activity within North Lanarkshire.**

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## 2. Purpose

This policy demonstrates that the council considers records and information to be a vital corporate asset and is committed to managing them lawfully and in compliance with current standards of professional practice. It acts as a mandate for the support and delivery of records management guidance, training, procedures and initiatives across the organisation.

The [Public Records \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#) requires the council to produce a [Records Management Plan](#) which sets out its proper arrangements for the effective management of all records. Having a records management policy statement fulfils one of the mandatory elements of this plan.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all records created or managed by North Lanarkshire Council and North Lanarkshire Licensing Board and applies to all staff and elected members when working on council business. It also applies to records managed by the council on behalf of the North Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board.

External bodies, ALEOs and contractors are expected to adopt this policy or a records management policy of an equivalent standard while carrying out functions on behalf of the council.

## 4. Governance

This policy forms part of a suite of documents that form part of the [Digital and IT Strategy](#)

The **Policy and Strategy Committee** has **approval** authority for, and oversight of, this policy. The **Data Management Team** then the **Data Governance Board** – as **key stakeholders** – oversee its review and consider its contents before referring it on for approval. The **Chief Officer of Business and Digital** – as the council's Senior Information Risk Owner – is **accountable** for its governance. The **Records and Archives team** is **responsible** for the following activities.

1. Produce, publish and promote this policy. Provide guidance on how to apply and comply with this policy through standards, procedures and guidance notes as referred to within the policy.
2. Review every two years, with other reviews when needed. For example, following new legislation, new guidance, an audit action.
3. Report to management teams, governance and working groups, committees and scrutiny panels.

## 5. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a **framework** for good record keeping practices within the council, ensuring that records are managed effectively and efficiently, and that the council complies with its statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Develop and encourage a **working culture** that recognises and acknowledges the benefits of effective records management.
- Ensure a **corporate approach** to the management of the council's records as a corporate resource.
- Define **responsibilities** for records management throughout the council.
- Ensure that council records are **reliable, authentic** and have **integrity**.
- Ensure that records are **retrievable** as required but also **secure** so as to prevent unauthorised access, alteration or destruction.
- Ensure **lawful management** of records that include **personal data**.

- Support **public rights of access** to information.
- Ensure that **records of long-term value are identified and preserved as archives** within the collections of the council.

## 6. Records and information lifecycle management

The lifecycle of a record comprises the following:

- initial creation by the council or receipt from a third party;
- maintenance and use including sharing and audit; and
- disposal through confidential destruction or preservation in the council's archive.

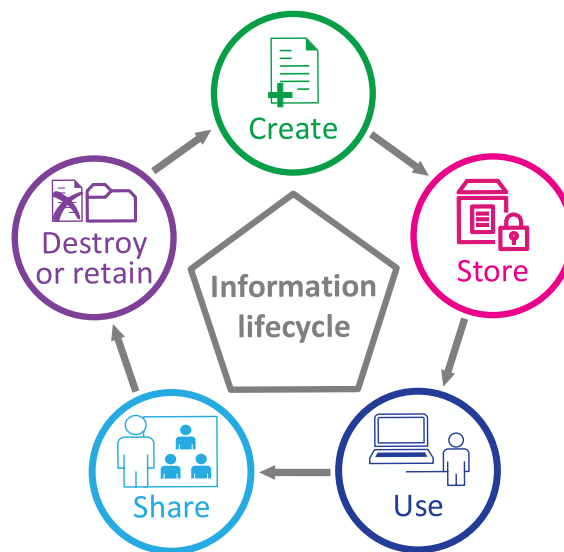


Figure 1: Information lifecycle

## 7. Capture and control of records

The council uses a variety of systems to manage its records. These systems, regardless of the format of the records, must be designed to ensure that records are saved, stored, organised and managed effectively and efficiently.

The council is committed to using appropriate systems to manage its records. Unstructured records will primarily be stored within M365 and managed with records management software (cloud records). This supports appropriate information sharing, aids search and retrieval processes and reduces the unnecessary duplication of records.

The corporate file plan and [retention schedule](#) will be applied to records when they are stored, created, or documented in M365. All documents and folders should be given names and metadata that facilitate meaningful use according to the council's [Naming Convention Guidance](#).

## 8. Storage of records

Staff are encouraged to save in **electronic format** where appropriate for reasons of improved security, functionality and efficiency. Records should be stored on media that ensures that they can be retained for as long as they are required. **Paper records** held locally in offices should be locked away securely when not in use.

The council has adopted the use of **M365**, particularly **MS Teams** and **MS SharePoint** for storing unstructured records. All Teams and SharePoint sites are allocated a function in the council's file plan and staff should use the allocated sites for these records. Using unofficial storage areas, such as OneDrive, for records that should be managed under a file plan and retention schedule, will undermine efforts to effectively manage this corporate asset and puts the council at risk of non-compliance with relevant legislation.

The council operates a **records management service** for semi-current and non-current records allowing services to store and access records off-site when they are not required for business use on a daily or weekly basis. This service manages destructions and transfers to archive in line with the corporate retention schedule.

Service managers should ensure that they have a **contingency or business continuity plan** to provide protection for records which are vital to the continued functioning of the council. The requirements are outlined in more detail in the [Vital Records Guidance](#).

## 9. Access to records

Appropriate procedures and processes should be put in place to ensure the physical, electronic and intellectual security of council records. This facilitates the council's ability to respond to requests for information under, for example, data protection and freedom of information legislation.

Access to information is governed by the statutory and regulatory framework within which the council operates, and the business needs and requirements of the council. Staff must comply with the relevant information policies, processes and procedures to protect records from unauthorised access.

## 10. Audit trail

An audit trail allows records to be tracked effectively, deters unauthorised access and can provide a method of monitoring changes to a document.

- The council has demonstrated its commitment to tracking and monitoring records by migrating its unstructured records away from on-premises network drives onto M365 which track all interactions with records automatically.

- Paper records held in the records management store and archive repository and in offices by Social Work are tracked using a proprietary records management tool within M365.

## 11.Retention and disposal

There are substantial financial, legislative, and reputational risks associated with keeping records for too short or too long a time period. Retaining records for the correct period ensures compliance with a range of legislative requirements and promotes efficient information management. This is of particular significance for records containing personal data.

A corporate **retention schedule** enables staff to make informed decisions about retention and disposal of records across the council and its partner organisations. The [retention schedule](#) is maintained and updated regularly by the Corporate Records Manager and the most up-to-date version is on the council's website.

At the end of a record's disposal period, the **disposal actions** will be to:

- destroy,
- review for business value, or
- transfer to the archive.

The **retention schedule only applies to master records**. Duplicate or local copies should be destroyed as soon as they are no longer required. Short-lived documents such as telephone messages, meeting notes etc. should be transferred to a more formal document and saved as a record if they contain business critical information.

The council acknowledges that there will be occasions when records cannot be destroyed in-line with the retention schedule because of legal proceedings or information requests.

## 12.Transfer to archive

North Lanarkshire Archives exists to collect, preserve and make available to the public the historical records of North Lanarkshire Council and its predecessor administrations.

Its role is to maintain a traceable and uninterrupted line of care, control and possession of the council's records from creation to preservation that serves as a means of protecting the authenticity of the records.

Arrangements for transfer of records to [North Lanarkshire Archives](#) are governed by the [retention schedule](#) and can take place on a regular basis or as one-off transfers. At the disposal date the archivist should be contacted regarding records identified in the retention schedule as for permanent preservation, as being of historical value or to be offered to the archivist.



In some cases, only a sample of the records will be selected for permanent preservation and the archivist will work with the service to select the most appropriate sampling method.

North Lanarkshire Archives are governed by procedures and [guidance](#) in the following areas:

- Collection Development
- Accessioning
- Appraisal
- Transfer Arrangements
- Access and Enquiry Procedures
- Document Delivery and Handling
- Preservation
- Listing and Cataloguing

Currently only physical records are being transferred to North Lanarkshire Archives however in future appropriate measures will be put in place to preserve digital records identified for permanent preservation as outlined in the Digital Preservation Framework.

## 13. Destructions

**Electronic records** that are due for destruction should be deleted from council systems where records will be backed up for 30 days and then destroyed beyond the possibility of restoration, according to council policies.

**Physical records** that contain council information should be securely destroyed by the council's preferred third-party provider or shredded so that they cannot be reproduced.

## 14. Responsibilities

1. The **SIRO** is responsible for ensuring that all council records are managed according to this policy.
2. The **Corporate Records Manager** is responsible for maintaining the council's [Records Management Plan](#), providing procedures, advice and guidance on good records management practice, and ensuring that all service areas are supported by retention schedules and file plans.
3. The **archives** are the designated place of deposit for council records of continuing evidential and historical value, and the archivist is responsible for identifying, preserving, promoting and making accessible these records and other historical records that may be acquired by the council.
4. All **managers** have day to day responsibility for records management and should ensure that systems are in place to enable compliance and that staff are familiar with and adhere to this policy and any related procedures, standards and guidance.
5. All **members of staff** must complete an introductory online training course in records management and are accountable to their supervisors for documenting their actions and decisions and for maintaining records and information systems in accordance with this policy and any related procedures, standards and guidance.

# 15.Product set

The table below lists documents in the Records and Information Management Policy product set and other related products. This may include links to other file types, websites and IT systems.

- Those listed under policies, standards, procedures and guidance are the responsibility of the Records and Archives team.
- Those listed under related products are the responsibility of other teams, services or agencies.

Product type	Product
Policies and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Records Management Plan</a></li> </ul>
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Records Retention Schedule</a></li> </ul>
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Naming Convention Guidance</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">North Lanarkshire Archives</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Records and Information Management Guidance</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Vital Records Guidance</a></li> </ul>
Related products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Data Protection Policy</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Digital and IT Strategy</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Digital Preservation Framework</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Information Asset Register</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Information Security Policy</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Payment Card Data Security Policy</a></li> </ul>
Legislation, regulations, and government guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">BS 15489-1:2016 Information and Documentation - Records Management</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Data Protection Act 2018</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Guidance to the Form and Content of the Model Records Management Plan (nrscotland.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">INSPIRE (Scotland) regulations 2009</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">M365 Guidance (nrscotland.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Model Records Management Plan   National Records of Scotland (nrscotland.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011</a></li> </ul>

Product type	Product
Legislation, regulations, and government guidance (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#"><u>Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015</u></a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#"><u>Section 61 Code of Practice on Records Management under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002</u></a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#"><u>Supplementary Guidance on Proper Arrangements for Archiving Public Records</u></a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#"><u>The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020</u></a></li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Term	Description
<b>Access</b>	The right, opportunity or means of finding, using or approaching documents and/or information. Access may also be affected by the physical state of the materials, or the need to conserve them.
<b>ALEO</b>	Arm's-length and External Organisation.
<b>Authenticity</b>	The trustworthiness of a record as a record, i.e. the quality of a record that it is what it purports to be and that is free from tampering or corruption.
<b>The Council</b>	North Lanarkshire Council and North Lanarkshire Licensing Board.
<b>Disposal</b>	Action taken at the end of the retention period. This can be a decision to retain longer, transfer to the archive or secure destruction.
<b>Information</b>	Data that has been given value through analysis, interpretation, or compilation in a meaningful form.
<b>Lifecycle</b>	The life span of a record from its creation or receipt to its final disposal.
<b>Non-current records</b>	Records no longer required for the work of the Council but retained for evidential purposes.
<b>North Lanarkshire Archives</b>	Contains records of any age and any format which are identified by the archivist as having long-term historical, evidential, or legal value. Exists to maintain a traceable and uninterrupted line of care, control and possession of the council's records from creation to preservation that serves as a means of protecting the authenticity of the record.
<b>Records</b>	Information recorded, in any format or media, created, received, and maintained by the Council in the transaction of business, or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.
<b>Retention schedule</b>	A comprehensive list of records series, indicating for each the length of time it is to be maintained and its disposition.
<b>Semi-current records</b>	Records that are still referred to on occasion for business purposes on an irregular basis.

Term	Description
<b>SIRO</b>	Senior Information Risk Owner - role held by the Head of Business Solutions with senior management responsibility for records management and information risk within the Council.
<b>Structured records</b>	Electronic information created or obtained by end users where the information is stored in tables in a relational database system such as line of business systems.
<b>Unstructured records</b>	Electronic information such as emails, word processing documents, spreadsheets, presentations and graphics – documents mostly created by individual users from desktop applications that are not relational databases. Unstructured records would also include Adobe PDF files and electronic captures of facsimiles as well as other image files.