Records and Information Management Policy

Version 4.0, 26 March 2021

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Title	Records and Information Management Policy
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Subject	Records and Information Management Policy
Classification	OFFICIAL
Identifier	20210326 Records and Information Management Policy Version 4.0
Date Issued	4 June 2021

Document Amendment History

Revision	Originator	Date of Revision	Revision Description
1.0	Marcia Jarnell	25.07.2014	Combination of Record Management and Information Management policies
2.0	Fiona Hughes	15.11.2016	Bi-annual review process. Revised in line with Records Management Plan.
3.0	Fiona Hughes	15.01.2019	Bi-annual review
4.0	Fiona Hughes	26.03.2021	Full review

Document Approvals

Sponsor Approval	Revision No.	Date
Policy and Resources	1.0	18.09.2014
Policy and Resources Committee	2.0	21/06/2017
Policy and Strategy Committee	3.0	10/06/2020
Policy and Strategy Committee	4.0	03.06.2021

Document distribution and communication

This document will be made available to all users. It will be published on the corporate intranet. Staff will be informed by periodic staff notices and induction information.

1. Introduction

Records Management is the process used by an organisation to manage the information it holds, regardless of the format it is recorded in, throughout its lifecycle.

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.

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, procedures and initiatives across the organisation.

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 requires the council to prepare and implement a Records Management Plan setting out proper arrangements for the management of its public 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. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

a) 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.
b) Develop and encourage a working culture that recognises and acknowledges the benefits of effective records management.
c) Secure a co-ordinated approach to the management of the council's records as a corporate resource.
d) Define responsibilities for records management throughout the council.
e) Ensure that council records are reliable, authentic and have integrity.
f) Ensure that records are retrievable as required but also secure so as to prevent unauthorised access, alteration or destruction.
g) Ensure lawful management of records that include personal data.
h) Support public rights of access to information.
i) Ensure that records of long-term value are identified and preserved as archives within the collections of the council.

5. 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 distribution and audit
- disposal through confidential destruction or preservation in the Council's archive.

6. Capture and Control of Records

The council uses a variety of recordkeeping 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 unstructured records effectively. Unstructured records will primarily be stored within O365 and managed with records management software (Cloud Records). This supports effective information sharing, aids search and retrieval processes and reduces the unnecessary duplication of records.

The corporate file plan and retention schedules will be applied to records when they are stored, created, or documented in O365. All documents and folders should be given names and metadata that facilitate meaningful use according to the council's Naming Convention Guidance.

7. Storage of Records

Staff are encouraged to save in electronic format where appropriate. Records should be stored on media that ensures that they are 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 operates a records management storage service for semi-current and non-current records allowing services to store records off-site when they are not required for business use on a daily or weekly basis.

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.

8. Access to Records

Appropriate procedures and processes should be put in place to ensure the physical, electronic and intellectual security of council records.

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 policies, processes and procedures to protect records from unauthorised access.

9. Audit Trail

An audit trail allows records to be tracked effectively, deters unauthorised access and can provide an effective method of monitoring changes to a document. The council is aware of its responsibility to track and monitor records effectively. The council's systems should generate audit trails automatically to the council's records and the council is moving records away from shared drives onto systems such as O365 which track records automatically.

Paper records held in the records management store and archive repository and in offices by Social Work are tracked effectively using a corporate EDRMS and/or O365.

10. Retention and Disposal

There are substantial financial, legislative, and reputational risks associated with keeping records too long as well as not long enough. Ensuring that records are kept for the correct period ensures compliance with a range of legislative requirements and promotes efficient information management. This is of particular relevance 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 by the Corporate Records Manager and is made available on the council's intranet and website.

At the end of a record's disposal period, the disposal actions will normally 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 according to the retention schedule because of legal proceedings or information requests.

11. Responsibilities

a) The SIRO is responsible for ensuring that all council records are managed according to this policy.
b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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.

e) All members of staff 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.

12. Policy and Legislative Framework

- Compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and contracts (legislation is listed in the Information Governance Policy Framework)

13. Review and Self-assessment

This policy will be reviewed whenever guidance or the law is changed but at a minimum every 24 months. Policy review will be undertaken by the Data Governance Board under the guidance of the SIRO.

The council is committed to periodically reviewing its records management performance by means of review and self-assessment as required.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Records	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.
Archive	Contains records of any age and any format which are identified by the archivist as having long-term historical, evidential, or legal value.
The Council	North Lanarkshire Council and North Lanarkshire Licensing Board
SIRO	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.
Disposal	Action taken at the end of the retention period. This can be a decision to retain longer, transfer to the archive or secure destruction.
Semi-current records	Records that are still referred to on occasion for business purposes on an irregular basis.
Non-current records	Records no longer required for the work of the Council but retained for evidential purposes.
ALEO	Arms-length and External Organisation