

ARCHIVES POLICY: APPRAISAL

Preserving the Archival and Historic Memory of Glasgow

FOREWORD

Appraisal is a process that identifies the need for records. All staff must comply with legislation, standards and accountability requirements for the creation, capture, maintenance and disposal of records. This policy addresses the issues concerning which records should be regarded as part of the City Archives – those records we most need to preserve and to safeguard the archival and historic memory of Glasgow.

‘A civilized society, concerned to uphold the rights of the citizen, to encourage efficient administration and to ensure that its history is accessible to all, should make provision for its archives to be preserved and made available for public consultation.’¹

We do *not* need to keep every individual record and for policies and procedures regarding the disposal of records, you should consult Glasgow City Council’s Disposal Policy.

We do need to identify and preserve as archives records which:

- Document the rights of the citizen
- Document the principal actions of the Council and its officials
- Document the community experience

This policy sets out the strategic framework, objectives, and guidelines which will be used to determine whether Council records have archival value. It also provides more specific guidelines for appraising certain categories of records.

All staff have a vital role to play in preserving the archival and historic memory of the City, enabling citizens both now and in the future to access their history and their stories.

¹ Scottish National Archives Policy (1999)

ARCHIVE POLICY: APPRAISAL

PRESERVING THE ARCHIVAL AND HISTORICAL MEMORY OF GLASGOW

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Each day the Council and its partner organisations create or receive an enormous number of records. These records are an important, unique source of evidence and information about the nature of the Council and its activities. All staff must pay careful attention to recordkeeping and ensure the creation, maintenance and accessibility of full and accurate records of Council activities and decisions, for as long as they are required. Good recordkeeping substantially enhances the value of records as evidence to help meet:

- **business needs**
- **requirements of current and future organisational accountability and transparency**
- **community expectations**

Good recordkeeping is also essential if we are to preserve the city's archival heritage as a resource for future evidence and research.

- 1.2 Appraisal is a process that identifies the need for records. All staff have to comply with legislation, standards and accountability requirements for the:

- **creation**
- **capture**
- **maintenance, and**
- **disposal of records**

Effective appraisal especially in the digital environment is dependent on good systems of records creation and business classification of records. Appraisal involves deciding which records are retained permanently as archives, and which are destroyed once the organisation's business and accountability requirements have been met.

- 1.3 Only a very small proportion of all records created will be retained indefinitely. The Archivist is responsible for ascertaining which records are to be kept permanently after liaising with the appropriate business areas. Archival

appraisal is perhaps the most important – and certainly the most final – decision-making function that an archive service makes. A decision not to keep records as archives is forever: once the records are gone, they cannot be brought back. A decision to keep records as archives involves an explicit commitment to apply the resources needed to preserve them - and to keep providing resources for as long as the archives survive.

- 1.4 It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that we do *not* need to keep every individual record. However, we need to identify and preserve as archives those records which:

- **assist the Council and the public to scrutinise the decisions and activities of the Council and its partner services**
- **help satisfy the public interest in the decisions and actions of the Council and its partner services, which affected their lives and those of previous generations or shaped the development of Glasgow and areas of the former Strathclyde Region**
- **allow the community to retain and transfer knowledge, learn from past experience, and protect the interests of citizens collectively and individually**

- 1.5 This policy sets out the strategic framework, objectives, and guidelines which will be used to determine whether Council records have archival value. It also provides more specific guidelines for appraising certain categories of records.

2 Authority

- 2.1 The authority and responsibility of the Council Archivist to determine the appraisal and disposal of Council records stem from the Glasgow City Council Policy on Records Management and Preservation of Archival Records, 1999. This includes the responsibility to liaise with services to select, preserve and manage records of historic value, ensuring these are preserved as part of the city's written heritage. This also provides for the transfer of records with archival value to the Council Archives when they are no longer needed for the conduct of business.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to *all* public records created by GCC, its predecessor

authorities, and its extended arms-length organisations (ALEOs). Public records are defined by statute in Section 3 of the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 2011. In the main, public records are the official records created by or on behalf of the Council in carrying out its functions, or created by and on behalf of a contractor in carrying out the authority's functions.

3.2 This policy applies to public records *in all media* including paper, digital formats, microforms, sound recordings, film and 3-D models. It is essential for business delivery that appropriate procedures for appraisal and disposal are applied **from the outset and consistently thereafter** so as to ensure the protection of records of archival value, whatever their format, including:

- **legacy records, including those retained in Council and other premises, current records, and those records yet to be created**
- **digital records, which will be the keystone for archives and records over the next decades. A clear process for the migration of digital records will need to be established to ensure the permanent retention of those of archival value**

These guidelines will be also be applied to:

- **appraisal of private records, where these appraisal objectives may be applicable**
- **re-appraisal of both public and private records, when there is compelling evidence that earlier appraisal decisions require review**

4 Definitions

As employed in this policy, the terms below are defined as follows:

Appraisal - the process of determining the value and thus the final disposition of records, making them either temporary or permanent.

Archival value - the enduring historical or other value, that warrants the continued preservation of records beyond the period required to transact the business of their originating service or its successor in function. Records determined to have archival value are designated on records disposition schedules as "permanent records."

Council – Glasgow City Council, its partner services (ALEOs) and predecessor authorities, e.g. Glasgow Corporation, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Disposal - the destruction or transfer to the Archives.

Originating service - the service or ALEOs in which records are created, received, and accumulated in the conduct of business.

Permanent records - records appraised as having archival value.

Sample records - the selection of file units or items from a body of records made in such a way that, taken together, the items selected are representative of the whole.

Temporary records - records approved for destruction, either immediately or after a specified event or period of time.

5 Policy Principles

- 5.1 The appraisal of Council records and the identification of archives are critical in ensuring that citizens – both now and in the future - have the capacity to know, study and understand the history of the local public administration over time through access to its recorded memory.
- 5.2 The aim of this policy is to facilitate the application of consistent selection decisions for records held in a variety of media across Council services, to help to ensure records are managed in ways compliant with statutory or other legal obligations for the creation, maintenance and disposal of records, and to assist access under information legislation.
- 5.3 The appraisal of Council records and the identification of the city's archives are

critical in ensuring that the needs of the citizen and the Council are met for now and the future. The Archivist acknowledges that appraisal is a process that includes a series of evaluative judgements and these principles have been established to guide those helping to make appraisal decisions. These principles also outline some fundamental rules that underpin appraisal decision-making.

- 5.4** The principles can be applied successfully only through partnership working between the different business areas and the Archives. The approach by the archives service is primarily shaped by its role in maintaining a record of the authority, functions and activities of the Councils within Glasgow and the former Strathclyde Region. The significance of the functions and activities, the interest and expectation of stakeholders and resource implications must all be evaluated as part of the appraisal process to identify the best possible records to retain as part of the City Archives.
- 5.5** With the broad scope of functions and activities throughout the Council and its partner organisations, the responsibility for appraisal and disposal decisions will require a blend of archival expertise with the expertise existing within individual business areas. To help us preserve the Council's historical memory, we need service departments to identify key functions and activities within their service and recommend those which have archival value. This will help support the professional judgement of the Archivist when making the final appraisal and disposal decisions.
- 5.6** A variety of stakeholder interests needs to be considered as part of the decision-making process. The ability to predict, foresee and meet all the possible future interests cannot be guaranteed. The feasibility and long-term costs of storage, preservation and accessibility must be considered and assessed as part of the appraisal process. Resource costs involved in the provision of appropriate storage, preservation and access can be significant. Even in an electronic environment, the full cost of cataloguing, maintenance, migration and accessibility makes it impossible to keep all Council records forever.

6 Selection of Archives

While the Council creates large quantities of records required to be retained as evidence of activity, only a very small percentage of records need to be retained permanently as archives. The following 3 categories will be used to provide an overall high-level framework to analyse records in order to determine whether they fall within a permanent category or not. These categories are not mutually exclusive: some records that warrant permanent retention may fit into multiple categories, while others may relate to a single category.

6.1 Records Documenting the Rights of the Citizen

Many Council records provide evidence of the legal status, rights, and obligations of individuals, groups, organisations, the Council itself and other public bodies. In most cases, the legal rights implications of records eventually expire. In a few instances, however, the importance of records for protecting legal rights endures despite the passage of time. Records falling into this category are preserved permanently.

6.2 Records Documenting the Actions of Council Officials

Most records document the actions of the Council. The Archivist seeks to retain that portion containing significant documentation of Council activities and which are essential to understanding and evaluating Council actions. For example, the Archives retains permanently those records that document the basic organisational structure of the Council and its services and major organisational changes over time, policies and procedures that pertain to a department's core functions, and key decisions and actions.

6.3 Records Documenting the Community Experience

Some records document the impact of Council actions on individuals, communities or the natural and man-made environment. The Council also creates and acquires much information about people, places, material objects, and environmental conditions, as well as about social conditions, political and economic activities, and events in the City and other parts of the country. Much of this information has no archival value. However, some is essential to understanding the role of the Council, the history of this area, its people, and the environment.

7 Appraisal Objectives

Within the high-level strategic **framework of rights, actions of Council officials, and the community experience** outlined above, records selected as archives should relate to one or more of the following broad objectives, and meet the appropriate level of significance described in them:

Objective 1: Machinery of local government

- 7.1 To identify, create and capture records of the source of authority, foundation and machinery of the Council and Council institutions**

We are looking for records which document the **establishment, structure and functions** of the Council and that establish **the nature and extent of their jurisdictions, obligations, responsibilities and powers**.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include: -

EXAMPLES

- Promotion and promulgation of legislation
- Formal instruments or authorities establishing functions, jurisdictions, powers, and operations of all levels of the Council and its partners
- Formal instruments or authorisation establishing changes to the functions or operations of, or the cessation of a Council, Council Department or major service
- Records delegating legal authority to perform duties and functions; and making judgments or rulings in relation to jurisdiction or powers

Objective 2: Decision making

- 7.2 To identify, create and capture records providing the Council and the public with best evidence of the deliberations, decisions and actions of Council and Council institutions relating to key functions, programmes and significant issues**

We are looking for records which provide the best evidence of the means and manner of implementation of major decisions, e.g. through the formulation of policies, procedures and strategies.

The significance of functions, programmes and actions, should be assessed according to their actual or potential influence or impact (whether positive or negative) on the City and Scotland's affairs.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include: -

EXAMPLES

- Meeting papers, including records that reveal the background to, and reasoning behind decisions and actions, for:
 - Council and its committees (and predecessor authorities)
 - Boards and Board Committees of the various partnership organisations
 - Directors', Senior Management, Service/Function Management meetings, i.e. any meetings which are responsible for key functions, programmes and significant issues
- Formulation and determination of significant policy and business processes, especially those that signal a new or changed policy, or substantial expenditure, and more selectively their implementation, including those that document the background to, basis for and outcomes of those decisions and activities.
- Implementation of high-level policy and strategic management decisions within the Council
- Monitoring, analysis and review of policy affecting key Council functions
- Significant reforms or re-organisation of the Council's administrative structures
- Implementation and review of legislation

Objective 3: Administration

- 7.3 To identify, create and capture records that contribute to the protection and well-being of the community (including the protection of human and cultural rights) or provide substantial evidence of the administration of the Council, its people and the environment and the impact of Council activities upon them**

We are looking for records containing information essential for contributing to the **protection, physical wellbeing or social benefit** of both current and future generations.

This objective is about records that exemplify or characterise the implementation and impact of major Council functions and programmes, and those records that document the impact of Council activities on the environment and the community.

These records may embrace both routine and exceptional cases, including personal case records. Such records comprise unique, irreplaceable information that is needed by the local authority now and, probably, in perpetuity for effective planning, decision-making and transfer of knowledge. They relate to matters such as health and safety, social cohesion and environmental management.

The capacity of records to be used for these purposes should be clearly evident.

The types of records that are likely to contribute to this objective include: -

EXAMPLES

- Records which provide evidence of the significant effects of Council programmes and actions on individuals, communities, and the natural and man-made environment, e.g. city and local plans and core planning records; major building warrant applications, including plans; poor law records
- Records containing information that is considered essential for the protection and future well-being of the citizen and their environment, e.g. identifying and monitoring toxic sites; environmental observational data
- Case files – case files need to be closely assessed because of their storage implications, which involves probing consideration of their future value.

Complete runs of case records may be preserved where it is evident that the functions and programmes to which they relate were, or are, of great significance in the government or development of Glasgow, or to the community.

Whether we keep case files is likely to depend on their future research value, and therefore on the content of the record and whether it is duplicated in a more comprehensive or researchable form elsewhere.

Sampling may be appropriate in some cases.

Objective 4: Memory

- 7.4 To identify, create and capture records substantially contributing to the memory, knowledge and understanding of the Council, society and communities within the local area.**

We are looking for records which will substantially contribute to the existing body of knowledge or understanding of aspects of the **history, society, culture or people of the local area.**

The types of activities and associated records likely to meet this objective include

those relating to: -

EXAMPLES

- Records that constitute a rich, concise source of genealogical information not readily available elsewhere, e.g. valuation and voters' rolls; school admission registers, burial records
- Records that shed light on significant events, phenomena, persons, places or themes in Glasgow history and society
- The planning and management of major infrastructure or development projects and the area's economic resources
- The planning, management and staging of significant cultural and other types of events and celebrations
- The identification, development and management of sites of conservation, cultural or heritage significance, and
- The works and activities of individuals or organisations who have significantly contributed to society.

Objective 5: Rights and entitlement

7.5 To identify, create and capture records of the legal status, rights and entitlements (including human and cultural) of individuals, groups, organisations and Council bodies despite the passage of time

We are looking for records which that are essential for the **establishment and protection of fundamental rights and entitlements of individuals and groups** within the community and the **ongoing administration** of the City.

The types of activities and associated records likely to meet this objective include: -

EXAMPLES

- Records of the status of persons in relation to rights, entitlements and obligations that historically have had very long-term administrative and/or social relevance, e.g. registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths and citizenship; land or property ownership.
- The administration of titles to property, including property belonging to the Common Good; burial plots
- Records documenting the ownership of cultural collections

8 Working Together

This document is intended to reflect a simple fact, namely that by working together to our mutual benefit - i.e. the Council and its partner services together with the Archivists - we will ensure the delivery of the core objectives set out within this policy.

The Archives is a service for you, and therefore you should feel free to call on it for advice at any time.

Together we can **preserve the archival and historic memory of Glasgow.**

9 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

10 Further Information

For further information about this Policy please contact Dr Kenneth Meechan, Head of Information and Data Protection Officer, Glasgow City Council or Dr Irene O'Brien, Senior Archivist, Glasgow Life.