Birmingham City Council

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Records Management Policy

If you have any enquiries about this Policy please contact Records Management Service on records.management@birmingham.gov.uk

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CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW AND PUBLICATION PARTICULARS

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Draft 0.2	23/11/2009	Lynda Bennett	Revised following comments from EIM Programme Board 19/11/2009
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Document Reviewers

Name	Organisation	Role
CIGG members	BCC	Reviewer
CISG members	BCC	Reviewer

Document Approval by Birmingham City Council

Version	Date	Name	Role
Final 1.0	04/03/2010	EIM Programme Board	Part of Busines Transformation Programmes
Final 1.0	19/04/2010	BTAG	Authorising Body
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Contacts

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Business Area	Records Management Service

Review Period

This document will be reviewed at least once a year.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Scope

The policy covers the management of all records of the Council regardless of medium or format, including electronic records and it is applicable to all employees of the Council as well as Elected Members, volunteers, consultants and partner organisations.

Records shared with other organisations or held on behalf of the Council by other organisations should be managed in accordance with Council policy.

A record can be defined as recorded information (irrespective of medium or format) which is created, received or maintained by an organisation or individual in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of its business. Records are a means of providing evidence of activities which support the business and operating decisions of the Council.

2.2 Overview & Purpose

Birmingham City Council recognises that having accurate and relevant information is essential to effective decision making and quality customer service. As an important public asset, records require careful management and accordingly the management of records has to be considered within the context of the Council's overall Information Strategy.

Records management is a corporate function responsible for the systematic and comprehensive control of the creation, capture, maintenance, filing, use and disposal of records.

Good records management is essential to ensure that the Council can comply with its legislative responsibilities and can act as a driver for business efficiency. Effective management of records and information brings the following benefits. It:
- increases efficiency by enabling better use of resources;
- improves openness and accountability;
- helps achieve and demonstrate compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements;
- enables the protection of the rights and interests of the Council, its employees and citizens;
- supports joint working with partners and the exchange of information across the Council;
- provides institutional memory.

Poor records and information management create risks for the Council, such as:
- poor decisions based on inaccurate or incomplete information;
- inconsistent or poor levels of service;
- financial or legal loss if information required as evidence is not available or cannot be relied upon;
- non-compliance with statutory or other regulatory requirements;
- failure to handle confidential information with an appropriate level of security and the possibility of unauthorised access or disposal taking place;
- failure to protect information that is vital to the continued functioning of the Council, leading to inadequate business continuity planning;
- unnecessary costs caused by storing records and other information for longer than they are needed;
- staff time wasted searching for records;
- staff time wasted considering issues that have previously been addressed and resolved;
- loss of reputation as a result of all of the above, with damaging effects on public trust.

The purpose of this policy is to define a framework, for the management of records across the Council, which meets the requirements of relevant legislation, codes of practice and standards, and acts as a driver for business efficiency.

The full policy framework for Records Management within Birmingham City Council is:
- The Records Management Policy which sets out the Council's commitment to managing records and high level objectives and responsibilities within the Council for managing records.
- The Records Management Standard which sets out the minimum expectations for management of records within the Council and against which compliance may be monitored.
- Corporate Retention Schedule which outlines the minimum retention periods for all records within the Council. It is the responsibility for the Directorates to inform the Records Management Service of any records which are not covered on the schedule.
- Records Management Manual which provides more detailed guidance on how to implement best practice with regard to records management and meet the Records Management Standard.

2.3   Roles and Responsibilities

Corporate
- The Council has a corporate responsibility for maintaining its records and record-keeping systems.
- Directorate representatives on the Corporate Information Governance Group act as Records Management contacts for their Directorate and are responsible for providing quarterly updates on records management progress to the Records Management Service.
- The Records Management Service based within Performance & Information Division is responsible for the delivery of a records management service to the Council including:
  - definition of corporate records management policy and standards;
  - promotion of compliance with corporate records management policy and standards;
  - development of retention schedules;
  - development of file plans in line with relevant national standards;
  - provision of records management advice and the development of best practice guidelines;
  - identification and reporting on information risks through a programme of information audits;
  - provision of relevant training and central administration of the corporate storage contract;
  - development of strategies for permanent preservation of selected records in conjunction with the Archives & Heritage service.
- The Archives & Heritage service is responsible for the management of records no longer required for business purposes, which have been identified as being of historical significance, once they have been transferred to Archives & Heritage in line with negotiated terms of deposit.

Directorate
- Strategic Directors are responsible for supporting the application of the records management policy and standards throughout their Directorate. This includes ensuring that line managers know their responsibilities and those procedures which comply with corporate policy and standards are in place.

Service unit
- Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, Senior Managers, Departmental Heads are responsible for:
  o developing and operating records management procedures, covering both electronic and hard copy records, that comply with the records management policy and standards;
  o ensuring employees, including contractors, consultants and volunteers employed to undertake Council business follow procedures for the management and storage of electronic and hard copy records including the development of verification procedures for monitoring compliance with procedures;
  o ensuring appropriate resources are in place to enable compliance with the records management policy and standards;
  o communicating records management procedures.

Partnership working
- Where records are created as a result of partnership working there needs to be clearly defined responsibilities between BCC and the partner organisation for the creation and management of records.
- Where the Council is the lead partner:
  o the Council's records management policy will be applicable;
  o the Council will be responsible for the custody and ownership of the records;
  o the Council's records management procedures including retention policy will be followed.
- Where another organisation is the lead partner:
  o the records management policy and procedures of the lead organisation are applicable;
  o the lead partner organisation will be responsible for custody and ownership of records;
  o the Council should identify and retain records relating to its role in partnership required for it own business purposes. They should be retained in line with the Council's records management policy.
- Where there is no identified lead partner the Council should ensure that provisions are made for one of the partners to assume responsibility for the management of the records.

Commissioned services and suppliers
- There has been an increase in the commissioning of services from external suppliers. It is important to ensure contracts place clear obligations on suppliers to manage records, created or held by external agencies, on behalf of the Council, in accordance with the records management policy.

Project records
- Where records, such as project records, are created as a result of an activity of a temporary nature the senior manager with responsibility for the activity, usually the Senior Responsible Officer or equivalent, is responsible for:
  o ensuring appropriate records are created and managed in accordance with the records management policy;
  o ensuring there are appropriate resources assigned to fulfil the responsibility for managing records;
  o ensuring ownership for the records transfer(s) to BCC once the activity has ended.

Individuals
- Council employees, including Elected Members, contractors, consultants and volunteers employed to undertake Council business, have a responsibility to document actions and decisions by creating and filing appropriate records and subsequently to maintain and dispose of those records in accordance with records management procedures.

2.4   Related Documents

Regulatory Environment
The regulatory environment of the Council is influenced by many factors including statute, case law, regulations, mandatory standards of practice, voluntary codes of practice and the expectations of our stakeholders and citizens. The regulatory environment and the subsequent requirements for the management of records will be very much dependent on the nature of the business of the service area. The following list of archive and record-keeping legislation and standards is therefore not exhaustive.

Examples of legislation
- Public Records Act 1958 & 1967
- Local Government Act 1972
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Environmental Information Regulations 1992 & Environmental Information (Amendment) Regulations 1998

Voluntary codes of best practice
- Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Freedom of Information
- Caldicott Report (1997) and Implementing the Caldicott Standard into Social Care (HSC 2002/003)

Examples of British and International standards related to records management
- BS ISO15489-1:2001 – Information and documentation – Records Management (Part 1 – General)
- BS ISO15489-2:2001 – Information and documentation – Records Management (Part 2 – Guidelines)
- BS ISO/IEC27001:2005 – Information technology. Security techniques. Information Security management systems. Requirements.
- BS ISO/IEC27002:2005 – Information technology. Security techniques. Information Security management systems. Code of practice.
- BS 10008 Evidential weight and legal admissibility of electronic information – specification
- BIP 0008:2004 Code of Practice for legal admissibility and evidential weight of information stored electronically
- BS 8470:2006 Secure destruction of confidential material. Code of practice

Related Council policies and codes of practice
- Corporate IS/IT Strategy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disposal of Information Processing Equipment Standard
- Freedom of Information Code of Practice
- Information Security Classification Standard
- Information Security General Standard
- Information Security Labelling and Handling Code of Practice
- Information Security Labelling and Handling Standard
- Password Control Standard

2.5 Performance Management

The Records Management Service will monitor performance with regard to the management of records. Key performance indicators will be used to monitor the performance of the service and departmental records management performance including:
- customer satisfaction surveys;
- response times in responding to enquiries;
- records retrieval and return;
- timely destruction for eligible records.

3. THE POLICY

Records Management at the Council should achieve the following objectives:
- records necessary for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes should be identified and retained;
- records should be managed in a cost effective manner that ensures value for money for the Council;
- records should be captured into systems, manual or electronic, which enable them to be stored, retrieved and destroyed as necessary;
- records potentially required as evidence in a legal or regulatory process should be subject to controls to ensure that their evidential value can be demonstrated, if required;
- business continuity plans should identify and safeguard vital records of the Council and make provision for records and records management processes which are essential to the continued function and protection of the Council in the event of a disaster;
- records should be stored in an appropriate, safe and secure physical or electronic environment which protects against accidental loss or destruction;
- inactive records, which cannot be held safely or securely onsite should be transferred to the Council's corporate offsite records storage service;
- access to records should be controlled and monitored in accordance with the nature and sensitivity of the records and with regard to relevant legislation;
- records should be accessible to staff who are authorised to use them;
- records should be arranged and described in a manner which facilitates fast, accurate and comprehensive retrieval;
- provision should be made for the preservation of records to ensure they are complete, available and usable for as long as they are required;
- time expired records should be destroyed consistently in accordance with Council retention schedules;
- records should be destroyed in a secure a manner as is necessary for the level of confidentiality;
- records of historical and administrative importance should be identified as archives and transferred to the Archives & Heritage section for permanent retention.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The Records Management Service will work with Directorate representatives to establish a programme of work and priorities for records management and devise an annual action plan.

Compliance with the policy will be periodically monitored and failure to comply will be reported to the Information Assurance Board.

The approved document will be put on the Council's PSPG database and made available via RMS Inline site at http://inline/rms.