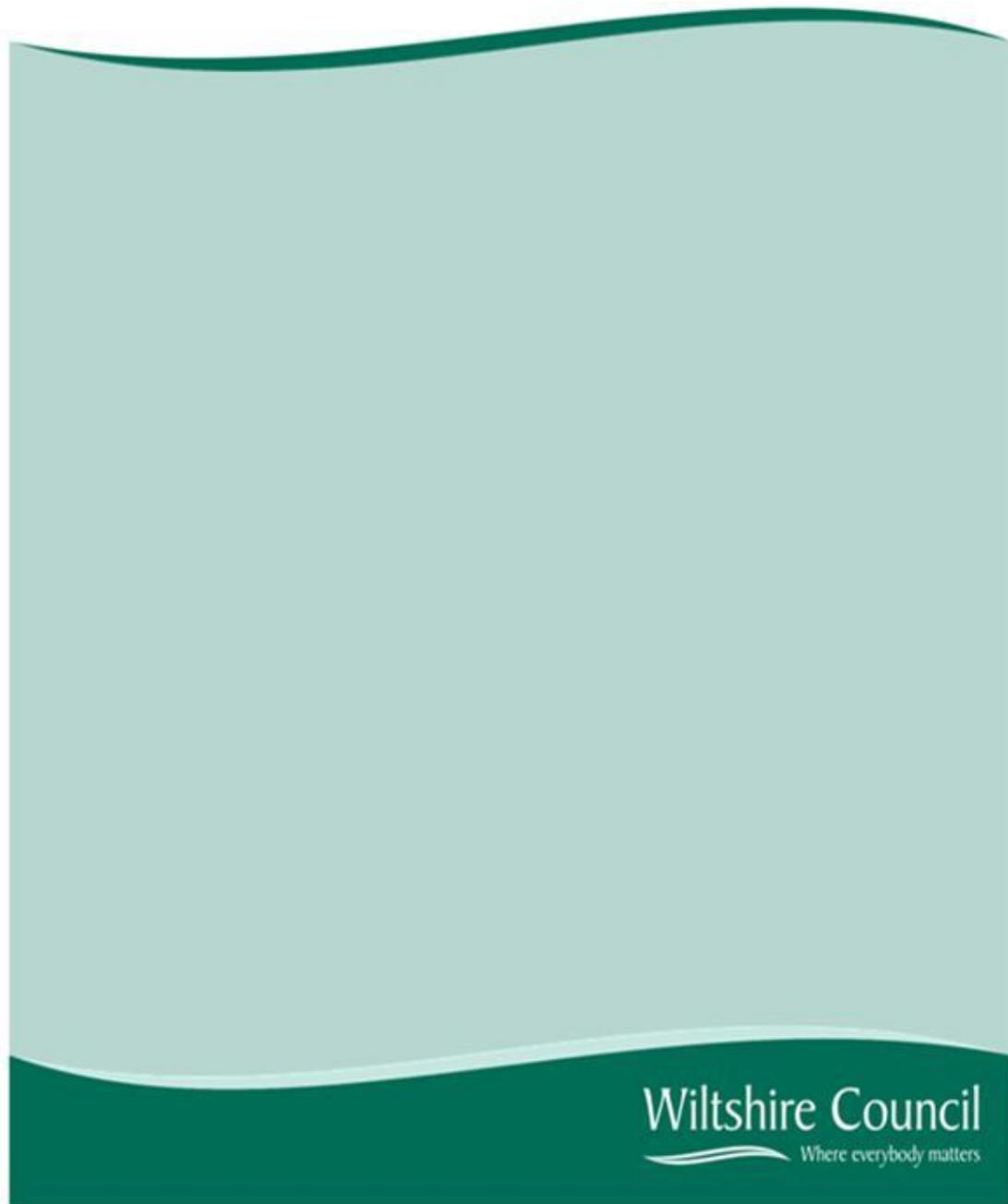


Records Management Policy



Document Control

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Amendments	Re-structured to aid readability and clarity. Added a requirement for Information Asset Owners to ensure their records are maintained in accordance with the council's retention schedule		
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Associated Documentation

Policies

Wiltshire Council controlled documents

- Information Governance Management Framework
- Information Governance Policy
- Information Incident Management Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Data Protection and Subject Access Policy
- Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations Policy

Legal framework

- Data Protection Act 1998 (and subsequent Special Information Notices)
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Section 46, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Code of Practice for the Management of Records. (Department of Constitutional Affairs)
- International Standard on Records Management (ISO 15489-1: 2001 Part 1)

Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Scope and Definitions	5
3. Aims of our Records Management System.....	6
4. Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
5. Legal and Professional Obligations	7
6. Registration of Record Collections	8
7. Retention and Disposal Schedules	8
8. Records Management Systems Audit	8
9. Training.....	9
10. Review.....	9

1. Introduction

The council's records are its corporate memory, containing information that provides evidence of actions and decisions and representing a vital asset to support daily functions and operations as well as to ensuring that the council can demonstrate the reasons for its actions and decisions when held accountable as well as meet its obligations under information legislation.

Records support policy formation and managerial decision-making, protect the interests of the council and the rights of clients, staff and members of the public. They support consistency, continuity, efficiency and productivity and help deliver services in consistent and equitable ways.

Records Management is the process by which an organisation manages all the aspects of records whether internally or externally generated and in any format or media type, from their creation, all the way through their lifecycle to their eventual disposition.

The Records Management Policy is based on current legal requirements and professional best practice.

The council has adopted this records management policy and is committed to ongoing improvement of its records management functions as it believes that there are significant benefits in doing so, including

- Better use of physical and server space;
- Better use of staff time;
- Improved control of valuable information resources;
- Compliance with legislation and standards; and
- Reduced costs.

The council believes that its internal management processes will be improved by the recognition of records management as a designated corporate function.

This document sets out a framework within which the staff responsible for managing the council's records can develop specific policies and procedures to ensure that records are managed and controlled effectively, and at best value, commensurate with legal, operational and information needs.

This policy document should be read in conjunction with any guidance made available to staff by the Information Governance Team, setting out how the requirements of this policy are to be delivered.

2. Scope and Definitions

This policy relates to all records held by the council in all formats, media and locations.

Documents that do not meet the definition of “a record” are not covered by this policy and guidance will be provided to staff regarding the management of this information.

Records have been defined in the International Standard on Records Management (ISO 15489-1: 2001 Part 1) as “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business”.

In addition, records should meet the standard characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability.

Records need to be properly maintained during their life cycle from creation/receipt through the period of ‘active’ use, into a period of ‘inactive’ retention (such as closed files which may still be referred to occasionally) and finally either confidential disposal or archival preservation.

Records Management is a discipline which utilises an administrative system to direct and control the creation, version control, distribution, filing, retention, storage and disposition of records, in a way that is administratively and legally sound, whilst at the same time serving the operational needs of the council and preserving an appropriate historical record.

3. Aims of the Records Management System

The aim of the council's records management system is to ensure that the council's records meet the standard characteristics of a record so that anyone accessing records whilst carrying out council business can trust and make use of them.

As such, the council's records management system should ensure that

- Records are available when needed and that those accessing the records can use them to make decisions or to understand what happened or what was decided in the past;
- Records can be accessed - records and the information within them can be located and displayed in a way consistent with its initial use, and that the current version is identified where multiple versions exist;
- Records can be understood - the context of the record can be understood: who created or added to the record and when, during which business process, and how the record is related to other records;
- Records can be trusted – the record reliably represents the information that was used in, or created by, the business process, and its integrity and authenticity can be demonstrated;
- Records can be maintained through time – the qualities of availability, accessibility, interpretation and trustworthiness can be maintained for as long as the record is needed, perhaps permanently, despite changes of format;

- Records are secure - from unauthorised or inadvertent alteration or erasure, that access and disclosure are properly controlled and audit trails will track all use and changes. To ensure that records are held in a robust format which remains readable for as long as records are required;
- Records are retained and disposed of appropriately - using consistent and documented retention and disposal procedures, which include provision for appraisal and the permanent preservation of records with archival value; and
- Staff are trained - so that all staff are made aware of their personal responsibility for records management.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)

The SIRO has overall responsibility for Information Governance in the council, including records management.

Records Lead

The Records Lead, working with the Information Governance Assurance Group, is responsible for the overall development and maintenance of records management practices throughout the council, for drawing up guidance for good records management practice and promoting compliance with this policy.

Information Asset Owners

The responsibility for records management is devolved to the relevant Directors, Associate Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Team Leaders. They are responsible for the management of records generated by their teams' activities and for ensuring that records controlled within their unit are managed in a way which meets the aims of the council's records management policies.

All Staff

All council staff have records management responsibilities and must ensure that they keep appropriate records of their work in the council and manage those records in keeping with this policy and with any guidance subsequently produced. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that records they use and create are stored in an appropriate record management system in accordance with any guidance issued to them.

5. Legal and Professional Obligations

The council will take actions as necessary to comply with the legal and professional obligations, in particular:

- The Public Records Act 1958;
- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Lord chancellors code of practice under FOIA;
- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality;
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- Local Government Act 1972;
- INSPIRE Regulations 2009;
- Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015;
- ISO 15489 Records management; and
- Any new legislation affecting records management as it arises.

6. Registration of Record Collections

The council will establish and maintain mechanisms through which departments and other units can register the records they are maintaining. The inventory of record collections will facilitate:

- The classification of records into series; and
- The recording of the responsibility of individuals creating records.

The register will be reviewed regularly.

7. Retention and Disposal Schedules

Records must be retained by the council for the period set out for the relevant record type in the council's retention schedule; once the retention period has expired the record must be either disposed of or archived in accordance with the disposition action also set out in the retention schedule for that record type.

The council's retention schedule is published on the Intranet and will be reviewed regularly with Information Asset Owners to ensure that the information within it remains current.

Information Asset Owners must ensure that their teams carry out regular retention work to ensure that their records are maintained in accordance with the council's retention schedule.

8. Records Management Systems Audit

The council will regularly audit its records management practices for compliance with this framework.

The audit will:

- Identify areas of operation that are covered by the council's policies and identify which procedures and/or guidance should comply with the policy;
- Follow a mechanism for adapting the policy to cover missing areas if these are critical to the creation and use of records, and use a subsidiary development plan if there are major changes to be made;
- Set and maintain standards by implementing new procedures, including obtaining feedback where the procedures do not match the desired levels of performance; and
- Highlight where non-conformance to the procedures is occurring and suggest a tightening of controls and adjustment to related procedures.

The Records Lead will report the results of audits to the Information Governance Assurance Group.

9. Training

All council staff will be made aware of their responsibilities for records management through generic and specific training programmes and guidance.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are to be introduced).