
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Archive Collections Management Policy 2013-2018

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1.0 Mission Statement

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service's (WAAS) priority is to ensure the proper management of Worcestershire's heritage for current and future generations. We protect, preserve, manage, record, interpret, share and promote the history and historic environment of Worcestershire. We help the modern county of Worcestershire to achieve its priorities as identified in the Corporate Plan, especially sustainable development, a strong economy, better education and skills and independent healthy living. We are developing a sustainable model for the continuance and growth of the Archive and Archaeology Service in the current financial climate.

2.0 Policy aims

The primary aim of this Policy is to demonstrate the co-ordinated approach taken by WAAS towards Archive Collection Management. The Collections Management Team operates as an entity within the Service, incorporating cataloguing, collection management, digitisation and conservation services. The Policies, Plans and procedures which drive the Service's work on collections development, collections information and collections care are inter-related with the aim of producing a holistic approach to managing Worcestershire's documentary heritage and making it accessible. Through effective planning and care of the collections, appropriate conservation and digitisation, and professional cataloguing online, the Collections Management Team works closely with the User Services and Outreach Teams to encourage and enhance access to the collections.

3.0 Statutory and legal status

WAAS is the successor organisation to the Worcestershire Record Office, established in 1948. It is a recognised Place of Deposit for Public Records, the Diocesan Record Office, and County Record Office, licensed to hold Manorial and Tithe records, and records of local government and other public and statutory bodies.

4.0 Collections management

Our Collections Management Policy brings together three important elements, reflected in the Mission Statement:

- Passive and increasingly active collection of archives of the county area, which are catalogued, preserved, managed and made available for public research
- Supporting current County Council policy towards sustainable development and improving education, learning and well being
- Developing sustainable and commercial elements which support the delivery of other aspects of WAAS

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5.0 Standards

The following standards are applicable to WAAS Collections Management policies:

BS5454:2000

PD5454:2012

PAS 197: 2009, Code of practice for cultural collections management

PAS 198:2012, Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections

6.0 Inter-relationships

Understanding the inter-relationships is the key to understanding the holistic approach to Collections Management by Worcestershire Archives.

- New deposits of records arrive through passive activity and routine accrual, sometimes due to legal requirement. However, as a result of an analysis of catalogued and uncatalogued records, the archive is developed through more active intervention in certain areas where collections are weaker in concentration.
- All new accessions are assessed for preservation and conservation needs, and prioritised for cataloguing. The catalogue backlog is actively managed, seeking opportunities for external funding, learning opportunities for existing staff and work experience volunteers. Cataloguing and preparation of finding aids is a priority in order to sustain and improve accessibility to the range of our collections and surrogates. The provision of surrogates may be considered to enhance access to certain collections or parts of collections.
- User demand and interest helps to drive cataloguing priorities. User demand, preservation assessments and cost-benefit analysis helps to drive conservation and digitisation priorities. Commercial opportunities for conservation, digitisation and optimum use of strongroom space contributes to the sustainability of the service.
- Accumulation of digital archive material is moderated through the Digital Preservation and Digitisation Strategy, a key element of which is the development of a digital archive.
- The County Council Archive Disaster Plan provides the strategy and operational management for dealing with the various risks associated with records storage and their rescue and preservation.

The individual Collections Management Policies reflect these inter-relationships.

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7.0 Links

Acquisitions and Collections Policy
Collections Development Plan
Collections Information Policy
Collections Information Plan
Preservation and Conservation Policy
Collections Care and Conservation Plan
Digital Preservation and Digitisation Strategy
Archive Disaster Plan
Collections Information Procedures

This Policy was written in August 2013 and will be reviewed in 2018 or earlier if circumstances dictate