



ARCHIVE APPRAISAL POLICY STATEMENT

A. Introduction

This policy statement has been formulated to define the principles by which Northumberland Archives (Woodhorn and Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office) appraises and disposes of archive material relating to the county of Northumberland that is taken in as an accession.

B. Background

1. The provision of the service is governed by the following Acts of Parliament:

Local Government Act, 1888.
Public Records Acts, 1958, 1967
Local Government (Records) Act, 1972
Local Government Act, 1972
Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978

2. Appraisal of archive material must be carried out within the following legal framework:

Data Protection Act, 1998
Freedom of Information Act, 2000
Public Records Acts, 1958, 1967
Financial Regulations
Contract Law

C. Aims

1. Service Aims

- 1.1 To ensure that the archives of Northumberland County Council and records relating to the historical county of Northumberland are preserved for present and

future audiences. The principles by which we acquire and collect material are set out in our Archive Collections Policy Statement.

- 1.2 To make these records accessible for public consultation in our public searchrooms and in some instances online. We want as many people as possible to have access to the collections in our care – the methods that we use to achieve this are set out in our Access Policy.
- 1.3 To build partnerships with individuals, members of the academic community, local community groups and organisations, national organisations etc. that will promote the use of our collections and encourage the deposit of further collections.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 To ensure that appraisal practice is informed by current archival legislation and wider legislation relating to the keeping of records.
- 2.2 To ensure that appraisal practice supports the aim of Northumberland Archives to reflect the broadest range of the life and work of the people and communities of Northumberland, past and present, through its Archives.
- 2.3 To assist Archivists in selecting records of the highest value in terms of their evidential, administrative or historical importance.
- 2.4 To assist Northumberland Archives (Woodhorn and Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office) in managing its available storage capacity and financial resources.
- 2.5 To promote objective and structured decision-making about appraisal.

D. Appraisal

1. Methodology

- 1.1 Appraisal for archival purposes concentrates largely on the historical value of a record, any value for business purposes having been superseded when the collection was deposited in the archive. Records selected for permanent preservation in the archive should be those which show the significance of the functions and activities of organisations.
- 1.2 The general methodology accepted by Northumberland Archives (Woodhorn and Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office) is macro-appraisal, which entails the decision to retain, destroy, or sample records at series level (or above) rather than assessing individual documents.
- 1.3 Where it is felt that there are circumstances that warrant the appraisal of individual files or documents this methodology will be accepted with approval of the Head of Archives.

1.4 Where it is felt that there are circumstances that warrant the sampling of collections or part collections this methodology will be accepted with approval of the Head of Archives.

1.5 Appraisal guidelines will be developed to support Archivists in this work.

2. Implementation

2.1 Appraisal will be undertaken by professionally qualified archivists or by para-professional staff under the supervision of Archivists, in accordance with this policy and with the assistance of appraisal guidelines where appropriate.

2.2 The Head of Archives will liaise with the Head of Information Governance to ensure that archival appraisal procedures are integrated with wider records management processes within Northumberland Archives (Woodhorn and Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office).

2.3 All routine or duplicated material will be systematically removed from collections.

2.4 Random or other sampling methods will be used pragmatically, with appropriate methodologies implemented that are applicable to the collection under review.

2.5 Appraisal decisions will be documented to leave an audit trail in compliance with section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

2.6 Any records identified as not warranting permanent preservation via the appraisal process will be offered back to depositor. If not required records will be confidentially destroyed on-site.

E. Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years, and if appropriate, amended to maintain its relevance. It is a working document and depending on local circumstances, may be subject to modification before a formal review.

Sept. 2016

Reviewed: Nov. 2019

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