



Argyll and Bute Council
Records Management

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Document Control Sheet

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Approvals

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Contents

1. Policy Statement	4
Scope	5
2. Objectives	5
2.1 Policy Objectives	5
2.2 Corporate Priorities:	5
3. Definitions	6
4. Principles of good Records Management.....	6
Records Management Framework	7
5. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance.....	8
6. Roles and Responsibilities	8
6.1 Senior Management.....	8
6.2 Governance Risk and Safety Manager	8
6.3 Compliance & Regulatory Team	8
6.4 Information Management Project Board	9
6.5 Archivist.....	9
6.6 Employees of Argyll and Bute Council	9
6.7 Elected Members.....	9
6.8 Third Parties	9
7. Compliance	9
8. Review	10
9. References.....	10

1. Policy Statement

Records Management describes the way in which information is gathered, presented, stored, shared and then disposed of to ensure it remains valuable to an organisation. As the Senior Responsible Officer for Records Management within Argyll and Bute Council, I note that the effective and efficient management of information is essential in order to support our legal, fiscal, business and administrative requirements.

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 highlights the importance of effective Records Management, and Argyll and Bute Council is committed to the continuous improvement of this function. This is delivered through the implementation of the Records Management Plan and Information Management Strategy and progressing with the activities identified in the Records Management Development Plan. Argyll and Bute Council will manage its records in accordance with good Records Management practices, standards and guidance issued by Government, The National Records of Scotland, the Information and Records Management Society, Archives and Records Association, the Scottish Council on Archives and British and International standards.

This policy should be followed by all employees of Argyll and Bute Council and any third parties carrying out functions on behalf of the council.

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All records which are created, received, managed and used in the delivery of Council business, regardless of format or location
- All Council staff, including temporary staff, students and volunteers who access and use Council information and the information systems that store them.
- All third parties that manage and process information on the organisation's behalf when supporting delivery of Council statutory or business functions.

2. Objectives

2.1 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To create awareness of Records Management principles and responsibilities throughout the Council
- To comply with the Public Records Scotland Act 2011 and other relevant legislation
- To promote a consistent approach to Records Management across all service areas
- To ensure information is being managed in the most efficient and effective way
- To provide guidance to all staff to allow them to adopt more efficient ways of working
- To provide Best Practice guidance in respect of Records Management

2.2 Corporate Priorities:

The council focuses on seven corporate priorities within the Corporate Plan 2025 - 2027 for delivering excellent services to the citizens of Argyll and Bute. All seven objectives focus on the collaboration of effort, expertise and resources to deliver the very best services we can. Reliable and available information lies at the heart of any collaborative effort, and as custodians of this information, we are entrusted to value and manage this information correctly.

The Records Management Policy contributes directly to the outcomes of Corporate Priorities:4. “**Transport, Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity**” and 6: “**Sustainable Service Delivery**”.

3. Definitions

Record	Information in any medium, created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.
Document	Information that has been produced in any written form. Some of these documents will be ephemeral and will never end up in a Records Management system.
Records Management	Records Management is the control of an organisation's records, from when they were created, to how they are stored and retained, and finally to how they are archived or destroyed.

4. Principles of good Records Management

The National Records of Scotland advise that the guiding principle of Records Management is to ensure information is available when and where it is needed, is organised in an effective manner, and in a well-maintained environment. To achieve this, records should be:

- Authentic** The record keeping system should operate so that the records derived from it are credible and authoritative.
- Accurate** Records must accurately reflect the transactions that they document.
- Accessible** Records must be readily available when needed.
- Complete** Records must be sufficient in content, context and structure to reconstruct the relevant activities and transactions.
- Comprehensive** Records must document the complete range of the Council's business.
- Compliant** Records must comply with any record keeping requirements resulting from legislation, audit rules and other relevant regulations.
- Effective** Records must be maintained for specific purposes and the information contained in them must meet those purposes. Records will be identified and linked to the business process to which they are related.
- Secure** Records must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, damage or removal. They must be stored in a secure environment, the degree of security reflecting the sensitivity and importance of the contents and any specific legislative requirement for particular types of records. Where records are migrated across changes in technology, the council

must ensure that the evidence preserved remains authentic and accurate.

Managing our records effectively will achieve many positive outcomes for the council, including:

- Reduction in storage space, which will reduce operational costs
- Staff will save time when searching for information as documents will be easily located
- Provides confidence that the correct version of a document is being used
- Prevents duplication which in turn could save resources
- Compliance with legislation

Records Management Framework

Argyll and Bute Council will deliver this commitment in practice by establishing and maintaining the following record keeping standards, tools and controls, proportionate to the records risk and value of their related business activity or transaction.

- A business classification scheme to reflect the functions, activities and transactions of the Council
- An information retention and disposal schedule providing authoritative rules on how long we need to retain each series of records.
- Destruction arrangements detailing the correct procedures to follow when disposing of business information.
- Information asset registers documenting the management requirements of all our information and records assets, based on their value and risk to the organisation.
- Metadata schema, data quality standards and controlled vocabularies to aid information search and retrieval and an understanding of business context.
- Incorporation of records and other information assets vital to the continuity of Argyll and Bute Council operations and service delivery in business continuity policy and plans.
- Digital preservation arrangements in place for records required for long term or permanent retention to maintain their authenticity, accessibility, integrity and usability over time
- Adequate processes and controls in place to meet the records management requirements of existing physical and IT systems.
- Clearly documented records management requirements specified and delivered as part of any major change to IT systems and business processes.
- Information security controls in place to protect records and systems from unauthorised access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction.
- Processes and procedures in place to ensure preservation of, and access to, our historic archives.

5. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

Compliance with this policy will help the Council meet the statutory and regulatory requirements and obligations of all Council functions.

There are several pieces of legislation which place obligations on the council relating to Records Management and Information Governance, including:

- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2016
- Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard 3.1
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005
- Local Government (Scotland) Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Senior Management

For this guidance to be successful, it must be agreed, implemented and supported at a senior management level to ensure it reaches its full potential. This guide was endorsed by the Strategic Management Team, and the progress of the development plan will be reported to SMT on an ongoing basis.

6.2 Governance Risk and Safety Manager

The Governance, Risk and Safety Manager is the manager with operational responsibility for Records Management. It is the role of the Governance, Risk and Safety Manager to gain the support of Senior Management and report back to them when appropriate. The Governance, Risk and Safety Manager will direct and support the departmental contacts that have responsibility for Records Management within their department. The Information Management Working Group formed as part of the Information Management Project, will be used to drive good Records Management practices throughout the council, this will be chaired by the Governance, Risk and Safety Manager.

6.3 Compliance & Regulatory Team

The Compliance & Regulatory team will be used when required to support the work of the Governance, Risk and Safety Manager in relation to Records Management. They will provide administrative support and help with any amendments to this guidance and similar documents.

6.4 Information Management Project Board

The forum is responsible for the scrutiny and review of the Records Management Plan and associated Policies and procedural and guidance documents during the Information Management Project. Following the conclusion of this, an Information Management Steering Group will be formed to take on this role.

6.5 Archivist

The Archivist is responsible for preserving the records that are held in the LiveArgyll Archives.

6.6 Employees of Argyll and Bute Council

All employees of Argyll and Bute Council have a responsibility to ensure all records are created, maintained, stored, retained and disposed of in accordance with the Records Management guidance. All employees will be provided with training as to how they should be managing records.

6.7 Elected Members

When acting on behalf of the council, Elected Members share the same responsibility as Employees for Records Management. Training will be provided at an Elected Members seminar to ensure they are aware of the policies and procedures they should be following.

6.8 Third Parties

Any third parties carrying out functions on behalf of the council are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures as set out in relation to Records Management by Argyll and Bute Council. This will be made clear to third parties prior to them agreeing to carry out the task. It will also be included in any future contracts to third parties.

7. Compliance

Any violations of this policy should be reported to the Council's Compliance & Regulatory Team. Failure to comply with the policy may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and updated as necessary to ensure continued compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and organisational policies.

9. References

The following documents are all relevant to this policy, and it is recommended that all employees should be familiar with them:

- Information Management Strategy
- Records Management Guidance – Managing our records effectively
- Records Management Guidance - Disposal of Records
- Records Management Guidance – Version Control and Naming Conventions Guidance
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Managing and Archiving Email and Messages Policy
- Central Archive Procedures
- Tracking Physical Records