

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul Crossley, Cabinet Member for Communities	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 21 November 2020 (for single Member decision)	
TITLE:	Bath Record Office Collections Management Policies	E3243
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
Attachment to this report: Bath Record Office Collections Management Policies		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Government agency overseeing record offices, The National Archives (TNA), requires collections management policies to be adopted by governing bodies every five years as an essential criterion for achieving Accredited status. Accreditation demonstrates governing body commitment to upholding standards of best practice in the management, care and accessibility of public records. Without Accreditation TNA may review Bath Record Office's status as a Place of Deposit.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

2.1 Adopt the Bath Record Office (BRO) collections management policies attached.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The Council holds important archive collections which are used to deliver much-valued services to other Council services, businesses, residents and visitors. BRO's archive collections enjoy Designated status because of their importance in documenting the history of the City of Bath World Heritage Site. Designation is the Government's way of recognising regional museum and archive collections of national and international importance held by non-national institutions. Bath is the only unitary authority record office whose entire collections enjoy this status.

3.2 This authority has always observed best practice in the management and development of its museum and archive collections. Museum and record office governing bodies are required to meet minimum standards of collections care and development in order to qualify for the Government's Accreditation standard administered by The National Archives (TNA).

3.3 Accreditation marks governing bodies as worthy guardians of unique public collections of historic, artistic and archival material which they hold in trust for the

public good. It is also a criterion required by many grant-giving bodies including the National Lottery Heritage Fund as evidence of sound stewardship of the collections.

- 3.4 Collections Management Policies are required to be updated every five years although this has slipped; the current policies were last updated and approved in December 2013. Without approved policies BRO cannot apply for Accreditation and failure to achieve Accreditation may trigger a review of BRO's Place of deposit status by TNA.
- 3.5 The rationale for the recommendation is that BRO is currently not Accredited. Updating these policies is a way of ensuring that they remain in line with national best practice and are fit for purpose.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 An archives service within a local authority is statutory under the Local Government Act 1972. BRO is the authorised archive service for the custody of the official records of Bath & North East Somerset Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act, 1972. It is an approved 'Place of Deposit' under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 for a number of classes of Central Government records held locally (Public Records).
- 4.2 BRO has been empowered to acquire archives by deposit, gift or purchase and to preserve and make them available under The Local Government (Records) Act, 1962 (c.56). Section 4 of this Act also permits the allocation of resources to persons looking after such archives.
- 4.3 Access to the collections operates within a legislative framework which includes the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Representation of the People Act 2002 and Data Protection Act 2018. These Acts apply to the collections we hold and place restrictions and requirements on the access we can provide. We operate within the Council's policies and procedures for Data Protection and Freedom of Information enquiries.
- 4.4 The collections management policies have been drawn up to comply with the Archives Accreditation Standard (2018, TNA) and the Standard for Access to Archives (Public Services Quality Group for Archives, 2008).

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 No addition cost arises from adopting these policies, other than potential loss of access to grant-aid.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 The Volunteering Policy and Access & Engagement Policy describe BRO's mission to provide learning opportunities for local communities and to widen participation in its collections. The Access and Engagement Policy sets out how

its archive collections can be freely accessed and how the Office aims to engage diverse audiences with the archives and local studies collections.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 BRO Access and Engagement Policy sets out how the Record Office can provide a variety of means of access to the collections which will reduce the need for customers to travel.

8.2 BRO is currently investigating digital preservation opportunities in discussion with other Council services. Digital preservation would enable the management of and access to born-digital records thereby reducing the need to retain paper records. This would in turn inform BFO's Information Policy and Access & Engagement Policy when they are next reviewed.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 To do nothing. This would risk loss of the authority's reputation for good practice and loss of access to grant-aid. This course of action is not recommended.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 These policies have been created in consultation with Record Office stakeholders which include The National Archives, Archives South West, Heritage Services' Learning & Participation Manager, service users, BRO volunteers, as well as with reference to user data and Public Services Quality Group surveys.

10.2 This report and the policies attached have been seen and approved by the s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Contact person	Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services 01225 477750 or x7750.
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Bath Record Office: Archives and Local Studies (BRO)

Collections Management Policies

November 2020

1. Collections Management Policy

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Council Corporate Strategy

1.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy priorities aim to Improve People's Lives by:

- Addressing the climate emergency
- Preparing for the future
- Delivering for local residents
- Focusing on prevention
- Giving people a bigger say

1.2 BRO seeks to align all of its activities with these priorities.

Heritage Services' Service and Business Aims

1.3 BRO forms part of Heritage Services under the Economy & Growth Directorate of Bath & North East Somerset Council. The Heritage Services' Service Aims are to:

- Enhance the quality of life for residents of Bath & North East Somerset
- Maximise public enjoyment of the Council's world class heritage
- Enable people to learn from the activities and achievements of past and present societies
- Promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures
- Contribute to the district's economic prosperity through our Business Plan

1.4 To achieve these Service Aims we:

- Protect and develop the Council's unique historic collections and public buildings
- Plan for and invest in their sustainability
- Interpret them through displays, study facilities, learning programmes and special events
- Mount the best available exhibitions from other regional and national collections
- Sell high quality merchandise to complement our services
- Hire out historic venues for a wide range of events and activities

- Train and develop our staff to realise their full potential
- Consult widely with users and stakeholders on an ongoing basis
- Use information technology in accessible and imaginative ways
- Work in partnership with others wherever appropriate

1.5 Heritage Services' Business Aims are for ongoing sustainability in three equally important and inter-dependent activities:

- Conservation: preserving our heritage for present and future generations to enjoy
- Customer Care: meeting the needs of all our audiences, customers and guests
- Commercial Success: – maintaining our positive contribution to the Council's budget

1.6 To achieve these Business Aims, equal attention is devoted to these three core activities.

The BRO Mission Statement and Purpose

1.7 Mission Statement: Bath Record Office: Archives and Local Studies collects and keeps safe archives and local studies collections relating to Bath & North East Somerset and its people, it provides access to archives and local studies materials, promoting them for the benefit of the community, and it is the permanent home of the Council's archive.

1.8 Purpose: the purpose of the Collections Management Policy is to outline how BRO currently fulfil its Mission Statement through its management of collections, and how it aims to improve their management in the future. The Policy is supported by complementary policies for Collections Development, Care and Conservation, Access and Engagement, Collections Information, and Volunteering.

Statutory and Legal Status

1.9 BRO is the authorised archive service for the custody of the official records of Bath & North East Somerset Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act, 1972. It is an approved 'Place of Deposit' under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 for a number of classes of Central Government records held locally (Public Records).

1.10 BRO has been empowered to acquire archives by deposit, gift or purchase and to preserve and make them available under The Local Government (Records) Act, 1962 (c.56). Section 4 of this Act also permits the allocation of resources to persons looking after such archives.

1.11 Access to the collections operates within a legislative framework which includes the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Representation of the People Act 2002 and Data Protection Act 2018. These Acts apply to the collections we hold and place restrictions and requirements on the access we can provide. We operate within the Council's policies and procedures for Data Protection and Freedom of Information enquiries.

National Standards

1.12 This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Archives Accreditation Standard (2018, TNA) and the Standard for Access to Archives (Public Services Quality Group for Archives, 2008).

Definitions

1.13 **Archives** are the record of everyday activities of, organisations and individuals and may be in any format. They are preserved permanently because of their evidential and historical value.

1.14 **Local studies resources** comprise mainly published information about the history of local areas, their communities, and their contexts which may include books, newspapers, maps, pamphlets, images, ephemera and journals covering a wide range of topics.

1.15 **Public Records** are defined by the Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967. They include records created by coroners, magistrates' and other courts, prisons and health authorities.

SCOPE AND SUMMARY OF COLLECTIONS

1.16 **The Collections Management Policy** covers both the archives and local studies collections which were managed separately until 2017. The policy covers all aspects of collections management and aims to determine how the combined collections are integrated in order to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to the management of collections. For further details relating to specific areas of collections management, please refer to the relevant policy section below.

1.17 **The Archives Collections** chiefly comprise the records of Bath City Council and, since 1996, Bath & North East Somerset Council, from 1189 to the present day. As a Place of Deposit, BRO holds Public Records which include records of courts, hospitals, approved schools and a number of other classes of records. In addition, many collections are held on deposit from businesses, charities, clubs and societies, and parish councils. Additionally, many collections are donated by private individuals and organisations if they fall within the collecting policy. Since 2005, the Archives have held the status of Designated Collection of outstanding national / international importance with Arts Council England (ACE).

1.18 The Archives collections are cited as the bedrock of knowledge about the City of Bath UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) in the WHS Management Plan.

1.19 **The Local Studies Collections** originated with donations of material to Bath City Council in the nineteenth century and have grown, mainly through private donations or purchasing, to incorporate a wide range of material. The core of this material is printed books on various subjects of local interest to the City of Bath and its hinterland, and its context within the wider scope of national and international history. Manuscripts, maps, newspapers, scrapbooks, ephemera, pamphlets and images are also well-represented. The collection incorporates special collections material covering specific subjects, often gifted by local residents which are important to the general history of publishing and book production and enhance the context and understanding of the collections in general. These include early modern books; bindings and special presses of local, national and international significance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.20 BRO is managed by the **Principal Archivist** (1.0FTE), reporting to the Head of Heritage Services. The Principal Archivist sits on the Heritage Services Management Team and the Public Services Team within Heritage Services. There are 5 FTE staff in the team, not including project staff and volunteers. Overall accountability for archives and

local studies lies with the Head of Heritage Services who reports to the Director of Economy and Growth.

1.21 The Principal Archivist is supported by **Collections Managers** (1.5FTE) who have responsibility for a wide range of collections management duties, volunteer coordination and supervision, as well as providing professional support in the search room on a rota basis. Collections Managers also play a vital role in acquisitions and disposals and the development of digital preservation for the service.

1.22 The **Local Studies Librarian** (1.0FTE) has a large degree of autonomy in the management of the local studies collections in terms of priorities and projects and line manages the **Assistant Local Studies Librarian** (0.5FTE) as well as supervising a number of volunteers. Both members of staff provide support in the search room on a rota basis, including responding to remote enquiries.

1.23 The **Archives Assistant** (1.0FTE) delivers the public search room service, advising visitors on the collections and their relevance to their research, and producing archives as required. They also answer written enquiries and provide copies of documents requested by researchers. When closed to the public on Mondays, the Archives Assistant carries out basic listing of collections and strong room cleaning/inspections.

1.24 Outreach and engagement are mainly managed by the Principal Archivist and Local Studies Librarian with support from all other staff in its delivery. Heritage Services' Learning and Participation Team also provide valuable support.

1.25 BRO is supported by a team of c.25 **Volunteers** who work on both archives and local studies projects as well as some grant-funded projects. Our volunteers can vary from people with an interest in history, a desire to help BRO in its work or an interest in pursuing a career in archives. BRO will ensure that established internal procedures are used in terms of recruitment of and support to those volunteers.

1.26 Facilities management is the responsibility of Heritage Services Facilities Manager with onsite security provided by Guildhall Maintenance Team.

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT

1.27 BRO will maintain a Collections Development Policy which includes:

- The basis on which archives and local studies are acquired and disposed of.
- The rationale for the appraisal of collections either at the time of acquisition or retrospectively.
- Details of the legal framework within which Bath Record Office operates.
- The methods by which we will continue to actively develop our collecting strategy through partnerships, relationship-building and liaison.

1.28 BRO will only accept material which it has the resources to care for in the long term.

1.29 A robust and transparent criterion for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the collections. Items for disposal will be offered in the first instance to other Accredited repositories or libraries.

1.30 There is a strong presumption against later disposal or deaccessioning of material that has been accessioned by the Service. However, it is noted that the service holds a number of legacy collections which were not subject to current appraisal principles and

processes. BRO reserves the right to conduct a retrospective appraisal exercise, including consultation with relevant third parties or depositors, to determine whether these collections meet the principles identified in the Collections Development Policy.

1.31 BRO will maintain close and active relationships with official bodies and internal Council departments, particularly Records Management and Bath Central Library to ensure the timely transfer of records.

1.32 The Collections Development Policy and Deposit Agreement will be reviewed every 5 years in consultation with stakeholders and Heritage Services Public Services Team.

COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

1.33 BRO maintains a **Collections Information Policy**, with particular focus on rationalising procedures and workflows between the archives and local studies collections.

1.34 BRO uses both the CALM archival management system (Archives), and Symphony cataloguing software (Local Studies).

1.35 Procedures for accessioning and cataloguing archives collections are devised and maintained by the Principal Archivist and Collections Managers. These follow the principles of current archival standards for cataloguing and indexing: ISAD(G), NCA Name Authority Guidelines, ISAAR (CPF) and the UNESCO subject thesaurus.

1.36 Procedures for accessioning and cataloguing the local studies collections are devised and maintained by the Local Studies Librarian and Assistant Local Studies Librarian. These follow the principles in the standards for library cataloguing in AACR2, MARC21, DCRM(B), DCRM(M), Library of Congress Name Authorities and Subject Headings.

1.37 All accessions (deposits, donations, purchases and transfers) will be recorded and given a unique number on the accessions database on CALM or catalogued directly into Symphony Workflows. The accession will be recorded in the hard-copy accessions register and given a location reference. Accession records should contain a good level of detail so that they are accessible to researchers before they are fully catalogued.

1.38 Cataloguing priorities will be decided by the Principal Archivist, Local Studies Librarian and Collections Managers and will feed into strategic planning for future grant applications.

1.39 Collections Information plans are constantly reviewed by the Principal Archivist, Local Studies Librarian and Collections Managers and are in the form of spreadsheets which identify quantities, complexity and resourcing.

1.40 Catalogues will be made publicly available via the Somerset Archives online catalogue hosted by South West Heritage Trust, and LibrariesWest catalogue. Indices and catalogues in hard-copy format are also accessible in the search room.

1.41 Collections information is also available via The National Archives Discovery database and we also host a number of extensive databases including Bath Ancestors, Bath Burial Index and Georgian Newspaper Project.

1.42 Partnership opportunities which may enable new ways to share knowledge of the collections will be developed (from within Heritage Services, the Archives South West

network, nationally and internationally), with a particular focus on born-digital and digitised collections.

ACCESS

1.43 Intellectual and physical access to the collections should be balanced with issues of security, copyright, data protection, and preservation of material.

1.44 Access to collections is primarily provided in the search room. Exhibitions (both physical and online), publications, strong room tours, events, talks, and learning and engagement activities are other examples of how we provide a variety of ways to access the collections.

1.45 BRO strives to widen access as much as possible through its Access & Engagement Policy and plans. It works closely with Heritage Services' Learning and Participation Team to achieve this.

COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION

1.46 Conservation is one of three core Business Plan aims for Heritage Services. We aim to preserve our heritage for present and future generations to enjoy.

1.47 BRO maintains a Collections Care and Conservation policy which outlines how our collections are cared for.

1.48 Collections Care and Conservation plans are constantly reviewed by the Principal Archivist, Local Studies Librarian and Collections Managers and are in the form of spreadsheets which identify priorities and resourcing.

1.49 Staff and volunteers will follow strict preventative conservation procedures which will be regularly reviewed by the Principal Archivist in consultation with conservation professionals.

DIGITAL PRESERVATION

1.50 Heritage Services is developing a Digital Preservation Policy which affirms its commitment to address the challenges surrounding the management, preservation and accessibility of its digital assets.

1.51 BRO acquires born-digital records and digital surrogates provided that these complement existing holdings and provided that the original document is unavailable for acquisition.

1.52 Digital records are subject to the same principles and procedures regarding accessioning, access restrictions, and collecting priorities as analogue records.

1.53 BRO seeks to work collaboratively with partners (both internal and external) with similar aims in order to develop an infrastructure, policies and procedures in this area of expertise.

1.54 BRO encourages and enables staff to undertake training and development so that its service has the necessary skills and expertise in order to increase our understanding of digital preservation tools and techniques.

LOANS

1.55 Lending material to other archives, libraries and museums and galleries is an important way to widen access to the BRO collections. However, this must be balanced with robust loan agreements and conditions in order to ensure the safety of collections.

1.56 Requests to loan items for exhibition by a third party are considered on a case by case basis and will only be agreed provided satisfactory arrangements are in place with respect to security, environmental conditions, insurance and transport.

1.57 Third parties requesting loans from BRO must sign a loans agreement and complete the necessary paperwork.

1.58 Depositors requesting to loan their own material from BRO must abide by the deposit agreement.

SECURITY

1.59 Overall physical security of the public search rooms and strong rooms in the Guildhall is largely the responsibility of the Principal Archivist. The Principal Archivist regularly liaises with the Guildhall Maintenance team to ensure procedures are in place and adhered to. The overall security of the Guildhall is managed by Property Services.

1.60 Security of off-site stores at Haydon and Pixash Lane, where Local Studies material is held, is the responsibility of the Principal Archivist and Local Studies Librarian in liaison with One West and Waste Services respectively.

1.61 Systems such as intruder alarms, CCTV, fire and flood detection will be subject to a regular programme of maintenance.

1.62 Staff and volunteers must adhere to relevant procedures when accessing strong rooms and restricted areas.

1.63 Access to strong rooms, including keys and security codes, will be restricted to BRO staff, volunteers under supervision and other authorised personnel only. Arrangements are in place for managing external contractors whilst working in restricted areas.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

1.64 BRO maintains a Disaster Plan which is regularly updated by the Principal Archivist in consultation with Heritage Services staff and other relevant contacts. The plan recognises the archive collections as core assets of the service and sets out procedures to minimise damage to the collections and buildings, and to maintain security at times of emergency.

1.65 Stock to be used in times of emergency is maintained at the Guildhall which includes conservation resources and materials. Additional stock is maintained at other Heritage Services sites.

REVIEW

1.66 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	24/04/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Collections Management Policy drafted in 2018

2. Collections Development Policy

BACKGROUND

2.1 Since the creation of the Record Office in 1967 many substantial and historically important archive collections have been received from private sources. In common with every other local authority record office, many important collections are received on deposit as a means of providing public access to unique historical sources. Many smaller collections received on loan or as a gift from private sources demonstrate the richness of the area's character and illustrate the lives of its people: business records from shopkeepers, tradespeople and solicitors; records and registers of the many non-conformist churches; charities, clubs and societies; photographs and prints; and family papers including diaries and correspondence of private individuals. Since 2005, the Archives have held the status of Designated Collection of outstanding national / international importance with Arts Council England (ACE).

2.2 Since 1996 there has been an agreement with Somerset Archives and Local Studies that newly discovered material relating to Bath & North East Somerset directly related to or forming part of an existing collection already housed at Somerset should be offered there in the first instance, and this policy continues that agreement. An exception to the geographical limit boundary may be made where a collection includes material relating to areas other than Bath & North East Somerset, but the division of the collection would involve the breaking-up of an archival entity. In this case, the relevant other record offices will be advised and agreement sought on the most appropriate repository for the collection.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.3 The aim of this policy is to define how and why BRO develops its collections. It will also indicate the type of records that are under-represented within its holdings and describe the methods and strategies by which this situation is being addressed. This policy relates to all material (archives and local studies) pertaining to Bath & North East Somerset.

COLLECTING STRATEGY

2.4 BRO collects archives and local studies material representing all aspects of life in Bath & North East Somerset. These include:

- Records of Bath & North East Somerset Council, both paper and digital.
- Records of national government (public records of local significance deposited under Section 4(1) of the Public Records Act 1958, (the Act) such as those of coroners, courts and hospitals; and records presented under Section 3(6) of the Act).
- Archives generated by community groups, businesses, charities, societies, families, estates, individuals and other organisations (The Local Government (Records) Act, 1962).

- Records created by churches and faith groups, apart from records created by Church of England parishes which under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure of 1978 are collected by the Somerset Heritage Centre.
- Local studies resources of importance to the interpretation and understanding of Bath & North East Somerset and its relevance in the artistic, social, cultural, architectural, scientific and historic heritage of the region, nation and the world in general.

2.5 Bath Record Office acquires material by the following methods:

- Deposit: collections may be held on deposit for organizations or individuals which retain ownership
- Donation: where ownership is passed to Bath Record Office
- Transfer from Bath & North East Somerset Council departments and services
- Purchase.

2.6 The development of the collection may encompass records in any form and include, but are not limited to, manuscripts, topographical prints and drawings, maps, printed and machine-readable texts, images, film, digital records, and all communication media.

2.7 BRO will not usually accept artefacts, objects or major works of art. When offered such material, BRO shall refer depositors to local museums and galleries. In exceptional circumstances, where such artefacts form an integral part of an archive collection, they may be accepted.

2.8 Records are appraised for their evidential, informational and/or cultural significance before being accepted for permanent preservation. All records within collections will be appraised at the time of accessioning and may also be appraised later at the time of cataloguing.

2.9 With the agreement of depositors and donors, those records not deemed worthy of permanent preservation will be confidentially destroyed or returned to the depositor or donor, while any records which do not meet the collections policy criteria, but which are worthy of permanent preservation, may be transferred to a more appropriate repository.

2.10 Periodic reviews are undertaken of the collections to ensure that they contain material that is worthy of permanent preservation in accordance with transfer and depositor agreements. During this process we may consider that records in our custody would be better transferred to the collections of a more relevant repository. We may also decide to remove duplicate items or material not worthy of permanent preservation.

2.11 Depositors of records retain the right to withdraw them subject to the terms & conditions of the deposit agreement.

2.12 In accordance with the Council's records retention schedule, and in conjunction with the Records Manager, regular archival review of records held by the Records Management service of Bath & North East Somerset is undertaken so that relevant Council records are transferred for permanent preservation.

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT

2.13 BRO will continue to develop its collections by:

- Liaising with local museums and archives so that our respective collecting activities are complementary.

- Identifying and consulting with communities (past and present) who are under-represented as users of, and donors to, the Record Office, in order to raise awareness of archives and to identify potential new collections.
- Building relationships and working in partnership with diverse communities such as BAME groups to support the development of collections which reflect the nature and diversity of local communities within Bath & North East Somerset.
- Identifying gaps in the historic record created by the collections and seeking to fill those gaps where possible.
- Liaising with The National Archives, stakeholders and the South West Regional Archives Network to identify and secure significant archive material that may be at risk of dispersal by sale.
- Liaising with creators of Public Records so that we can ensure they are transferred regularly and efficiently.
- Monitoring and purchasing new publications and other relevant materials relating to local and family history, and the special collections to add to the local studies collection at Bath Record Office.
- Researching, developing and sharing strategies and tools to acquire and preserve digital records.
- Taking a proactive approach to acquiring records from within Bath & North East Somerset Council by working closely with Records Management and other Council departments and services, particularly with regards to digital records.
- Working in partnership with a variety of groups and organisations to support projects relating to the history of the area. This will enable us to raise our profile amongst community groups and the education sector, for example, and thereby attracting a wider range of archives and local studies material for deposit.
- The marketing activities of Heritage Services raises awareness of the Record Office and signposts potential depositors to useful information on our collections.

STANDARDS AND LEGISLATION

2.14 The following standard apply to this policy:

- for records of local government: Local Government Act 1972, which requires local authorities to ‘make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the council of any of their officers’ (s.224) and Local Government (Records) Act 1962 which empowers local authorities to provide certain archives services (s1.1).
- for the records of courts, coroners, prisons, hospitals and other government bodies: the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967; and the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.
- for manorial records the Manorial Documents Rules 1959 (amended 1963 and 1967).

2.15 Access to all collections complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018, and Environmental Information Regulations 2005.

2.16 For the Local Studies collection the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires local authorities to maintain a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service”.

REVIEW

2.17 The policy will be reviewed in consultation with interested organisations, stakeholders and individuals every 5 years.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	26/06/2020	Partly succeeds sections of the Heritage Services Collections Development Policy 2013 relevant to Bath Record Office

3. Access and Engagement Policy

PURPOSE

3.1 BRO aims to provide wide access to collections, by a variety of means, whilst ensuring that records are preserved for future generations.

3.2 This policy sets out how collections can be accessed and how we aim to engage diverse audiences with the archives and local studies collections.

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

On-site access

3.3 We provide free access to the public search room at the Record Office, located within the Guildhall in central Bath. Our opening hours are Tuesday – Friday, 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm (closing at 4.30pm on Fridays). No appointment is required to visit the search room. We ask that visitors apply for a membership card, if they have not already done so, or to verify their membership card at the enquiries desk. We will issue membership cards on production of proof of ID and address such as a recent utility bill, driving licence or bank statement.

3.4 The Record Office is located in the Guildhall, which has steps up to the main entrance door. There is a level-access entrance to the left of the steps, just inside the entrance to the covered market. Inside the Guildhall, the Record Office is situated in the basement, and access is via stairs. For users who require level access, we have the facility to use a ground floor room if contacted in advance.

3.5 There is a lift which visitors who find stairs difficult may use, but in the event of a fire alarm the lift cannot be used, and all visitors need to leave the building by a short flight of stairs. An accessible toilet is available on the ground floor of the Guildhall.

3.6 All public areas are covered by CCTV, which is clearly stated with signage, and lockers are available to use. Further details regarding access and locating the Record Office are available on our website.

3.7 We make our collections available unless:

- there is a statutory exemption prohibiting access
- the depositor of the collection has placed a restriction on access
- access is likely to cause physical harm to the item
- there is a surrogate or other alternative copy available

3.8 The BRO collections hold Arts Council England Designated status. They are unique and irreplaceable and need to be handled carefully by both staff and visitors to safeguard them for future generations. Use of original material is always supervised by Record Office staff. Search room rules and handling guidelines are provided on our website and in the search room. New visitors must agree to the guidelines before being issued with a membership card.

3.9 BRO provides surrogate copies which are considered to be fragile or significant or may become technologically inaccessible. These surrogates may be provided as microform or digital copies.

3.10 Visitors can request copies of material for a fee unless copying is restricted. They are permitted to photograph items, with permission, and on completion of requisite documentation. Any reproduction of copies of our records must be agreed in advance by completion of the appropriate request form. A reproduction fee may be charged.

3.11 BRO provides access to microform viewer/scanner/printers and PC points. This enables free on-site access to subscription websites such as Ancestry, Find My Past and the British Newspaper Archive. Documents on microform may be printed or scanned for a fee.

3.12 There is free wi-fi coverage in the search room where visitors can use their own devices.

Remote access

3.13 BRO responds to enquiries received in a variety of ways, including by email, telephone, letter and social media. Staff aim to answer enquiries within 10 working days and may spend up to 30 minutes on each enquiry.

3.14 For longer enquiries, BRO provides a paid research service. Staff will search the records to look for specific information and provide a written report of all findings. Details of this service are published on the BRO website.

3.15 BRO shares information and collections online for the benefit of local and remote audiences. Information about collections, service and facilities is available on the website. Catalogues for the archives and local studies are currently hosted on separate websites, which are clearly linked to via the BRO website.

3.16 BRO also provides access to a number of databases which have been compiled and indexed from the collections. These include Bath Ancestors, Bath Burial Index and Georgian Newspapers.

3.17 Catalogues and accession records are available on The National Archives' Discovery database (Archives and Local Studies manuscripts collections only). Local Studies printed collections are available on the LibrariesWest website.

3.18 BRO publishes research guides in both print and downloadable formats including subjects such as Family History, House History and Public Health sources, as well as collections guides.

3.19 Digitised material is available via external websites such as Know Your Place and Bath in Time or at the Record Office. Some of the maps collection can be accessed by ordering copies either in person or remotely.

Restrictions to access

3.20 BRO endeavours to balance the needs of access against the needs of the preservation of the collections.

3.21 BRO is committed to making its collections accessible to as wide an audience as possible. However, some records may be subject to restricted access for a variety of reasons, including legislation or their physical condition. For further information, please refer to the Collections Management Policy.

3.22 Records subject to access restrictions are clearly stated on the online catalogue. Researchers wishing to access a restricted record should contact us for further information and advice.

3.23 Access to the collections is also subject to statutory or legal requirements, notably the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and copyright legislation.

3.24 Depositors may request restrictions on public access to their collections. These restrictions will be clearly indicated on the online catalogue.

3.25 Access to uncatalogued material is facilitated wherever possible but is not guaranteed.

USER FEEDBACK

3.26 BRO encourages feedback from its users with regards to all aspects of access to its collections.

3.27 BRO takes part in annual PSQG (Public Services Quality Group) surveys and analyses this data along with other feedback received in person, by email, phone or social media.

3.28 Where possible BRO uses this feedback to improve the service it offers.

ENGAGEMENT

3.29 BRO aims to reach not only existing service users but also non-users and non-traditional users. This forms the basis of an ongoing outreach and engagement strategy and plan. Please refer to the Collections Development Policy which relates to this policy. BRO is committed to engaging a diverse range of audiences in its collections through a variety of activities:

3.30 Engagement activities and events

- Giving talks, running tours, workshops and other events either at the Guildhall or at other venues to the general public and stakeholder groups.
- Running training sessions for colleagues within Bath & North East Somerset Council and external groups.
- Providing lectures and workshops for schools, college and universities and lifelong learning groups.
- Taking part in larger events such as Family History fairs, World Heritage Days, Heritage Open Days, Genealogy Days and other similar events.
- Working with partners to develop education and community history projects.

3.31 Working with communities

- BRO supports and works with Local History Societies in developing their collections and encouraging their deposit at the Record Office.
- BRO develops relationships with community groups including those which are under-represented within its collections in order to raise awareness of the collections which in turn encourages the preservation, deposit and use of the archives and local studies collections.
- BRO work with Heritage Services Learning and Participation team to develop a wide range of learning resources using its collections.
- BRO provides work placements and volunteering opportunities for young people and those in higher education to discover the rich potential of archives and heritage for their current studies or future career pathways.
- BRO contributes to the wellbeing of the local community by providing a wide range of opportunities for people to volunteer here as part of the volunteering programme.
- BRO actively seeks external funding for specific projects that will improve access to archive collections and at the same time provide imaginative opportunities for community involvement in volunteering and other activities.

3.32 Online communication

- BRO uses social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram), the BRO website and other digital platforms to reach new audiences and to share news about its events and projects.
- BRO works with internal and external partners (Heritage Services, Library Services, South West Heritage Trust and others) to widen communication channels.

3.33 Exhibitions and displays

- BRO produces temporary displays for special events.
- BRO works with local, national and international museums and galleries to facilitate loans of original documents from its collections for exhibitions in order to extend its reach as much as possible.
- BRO creates online exhibitions which are available on the BRO website.

3.34 Promotion

- BRO works closely with Heritage Services Marketing team to promote the collections through press releases, improvements to its digital platforms and through print and digital literature.
- BRO invites interest from the press and media where this promotes its collections in a positive light.

EVALUATION

3.35 BRO considers evaluation and impact assessment to be vital towards improving its access and engagement activities and reaching wider and more diverse audiences. It does this through:

- Quarterly meetings with Heritage Services Learning & Participation Team
- Collecting data on those who took part or attended engagement events
- Studying analytics from our websites and social media channels
- Encouraging feedback at all events we hold or participate in
- Monitor new acquisitions in terms of which communities are represented and identify gaps in our collecting.

CUSTOMER CARE

3.36 BRO aims to meet the Standard for Access to Archives, (Public Services Quality Group for Archives, 2008).

3.37 BRO considers its customers to include everyone who uses or participates in the archives service, and future users on whose behalf it preserves the archives.

3.38 BRO encourages and welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions about the service. It participates in the annual PSQG surveys and analyse these results and identify areas in which it can improve or develop the service.

3.39 BRO is committed to the development of policies and activities which promote equal opportunities in the delivery of services regardless of race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation or age. It is committed to removing barriers and social exclusion and support the use of our collections by everyone for research, learning and enjoyment.

REVIEW

3.40 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years in consultation with Heritage Services Public Services Team, stakeholders and Bath & North East Somerset Equality Team.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	28/04/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Access Policy drafted in 2018

4. Collections Care & Conservation Policy

PURPOSE

4.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the holdings of BRO are cared for and managed in a consistent and safe way.

4.2 BRO has a responsibility to ensure that the documents in its care can be used and enjoyed by future generations. It aims to deliver its collections care programme in cooperation with staff and users. It intends to protect and prolong the life of both physical and digital collections by addressing the risks in a consistent, efficient, cost effective and safe way.

SCOPE

4.3 This policy set outs a framework for mitigating the main risks and threats to the long-term survival and accessibility of the Archives and Local Studies Collections. It should be read in conjunction with the BRO Forward Plan, Collections Management Policy and Collections Care & Conservation Plan. It has written following a Benchmarks in Collections Care exercise overseen by the National Conservation Service.

4.4 This policy will cover preventive conservation, remedial conservation, emergency planning, training and procedures. For further details concerning digital records please refer to the Digital Preservation Policy for Heritage Services below.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.5 All BRO staff are required to assist in implementing the Collection Care & Conservation Policy as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. Volunteers also play a role in certain aspects of our collections care programme.

4.6 The Collections Care & Conservation Plan is continually reviewed by the Principal Archivist with the Collections Managers and Local Studies Librarian. Advice is sought from professional conservators when necessary.

4.7 BRO does not employ a professional conservator. A project conservator has been employed on fixed-term contracts since 2018 but for work solely on grant-funded projects. It is BRO's intention to propose a business case in order to seek approval for the establishment of a full or part-time conservator who may work across Heritage Services' collections.

4.8 Conservation treatment are only undertaken by appropriately qualified conservators, or by those trained by, and under the supervision of, appropriately qualified conservators.

4.9 Preventive tasks such as providing protective enclosures may be undertaken by other staff and/or volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

4.10 **Preservation** is the retention and maintenance of material over time.

4.11 **Collections Care** is the management of all risks to the collections, including those from the collection items themselves and other collection items, physical forces, and all other agents of deterioration.

4.12 **Conservation** is the direct application of interventive remedial treatment and non-interventive preventive measures to stop deterioration and promote the physical preservation and accessibility of an item or collection.

PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION

Buildings and security

4.13 The Archives and most of the Local Studies collections are stored in the Guildhall. The public search rooms, offices and temporary conservation studio are also located there. Overall responsibility for the building lies with Bath & North East Somerset Property Services with day-to-day maintenance and security provided by the Guildhall Maintenance team. Heritage Services' Facilities Team is responsible for the areas occupied by the Record Office. The Service maintains a high level of security for the collections stored at Guildhall. Security alarms and sensors are fitted throughout all strong rooms, search rooms and offices, with CCTV and security in operation 24 hours a day.

4.14 Collections stored at Haydon (the Council's Record Management facility) and Pixash Lane are regularly inspected (on a weekly basis) and have the same degree of security systems as for the Guildhall.

Storage and housekeeping

4.15 BRO collections are maintained in secure storage areas and where these do not meet the requirements of BS 4971 (2017) they are monitored regularly to ensure that conditions are as stable as possible. BRO implements the Collections Care & Conservation Plan with the support of Property Services and Heritage Services with regard to improvements to storage areas. Regular deep cleaning is undertaken, and a pest management programme is also in place.

4.16 An ongoing repackaging programme is delivered by all staff and some volunteers. This is informed by packaging guidelines which were drawn up in consultation with professional conservators.

4.17 BRO will continue to upgrade shelving and storage units with reference to the disposition survey and work towards providing suitable storage for photographic, film and digital media.

Handling and using records

4.18 Staff and volunteers receive appropriate training in caring for records. Staff and volunteers are instructed to follow our Collections Care Procedures and Packaging Guidelines.

4.19 Customers may access records only under supervision and are expected to comply with the published research room guidelines. Staff provide advice and appropriate book and document supports to ensure safe handling of records. Customers may be required to consult surrogates to avoid damage to original records.

New acquisitions

4.20 Preliminary preventive measures are put in place as soon as a collection is acquired. Collections are checked for damp, mould, and insect infestation, in a specially designated area, and appropriate action taken. Collections are put in protective low acid/acid-free boxes, and outsize material is specially supported and/or wrapped in line with the Packaging Guidelines. Contaminated material will be placed in quarantine until conservation can be carried out. Condition reporting is carried out as part of the accessioning process as per the Collections Care Procedures.

Environmental monitoring and control

4.21 Temperature and relative humidity within all Guildhall strong rooms are continually monitored by Hanwell data loggers which report directly to an archivist's computer. Significant fluctuations in temperature or humidity can be investigated when automatic alerts are received by staff through a chain of command. Similarly, flood alarms are installed in all Guildhall strong rooms as part of the integrated Hanwell EMS system.

4.22 An air movement system is installed in most of the Guildhall strong rooms and its use is controlled with close reference to environmental data. BRO is committed to improving environmental conditions in line with the best practice set out in BS 4971 (2017).

Emergency planning

4.23 BRO has a comprehensive and up-to-date Disaster Plan. This is reviewed regularly and updated where necessary. Hard copy and digital copies are distributed to all relevant staff and the Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team.

Ongoing planning

4.24 Large collections or those in poor condition are treated as individually managed projects. BRO will seek external funding to support such projects. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to report any signs of damage to records. This is recorded on the CALM database. Surveys are also carried out to assess the current physical state of holdings. This data is used to inform preservation and conservation planning.

REMEDIAL CONSERVATION

Decision to treat

4.25 All interventive work is subject to formal approval by the Principal Archivist following a consideration of other options, risk assessments and a justification for the proposed course of action. Remedial conservation will be undertaken only when necessary, to ensure the long-term safety of vulnerable material. The decision will take into account the historical importance of the item, its condition, and the cost implications. Consideration will also be given to the needs of the researcher and the level of use which the document is expected to sustain in the future.

Practitioners

4.26 When necessary, all remedial conservation work will be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced conservator. At present, remedial conservation work is carried out by externally sourced contractors or a project conservator for records which fall under the scope of the current project.

Documentation

4.27 Before any work takes place, a mutual agreement will be reached between the Principal Archivist and the contractor with regard to the approach and the treatment of items.

4.28 A full conservation record is kept of all interventive treatment. It will be made accessible where required. It includes a description of the materials and structure of the object prior to treatment, an assessment of its condition including the results of any diagnostic tests, a consideration of the options for treatment as appropriate, and a report of all treatments carried out and all chemicals, materials, and processes used.

4.29 Project conservators record conservation treatments and link these to the CALM catalogue.

STANDARDS

4.30 The Collections Care & Conservation Policy is underpinned by the following standards and methodologies:

- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage - Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management
- PAS 198: 2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections

- Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries, A Self-assessment Checklist, The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 2002
- BS 4971:2002 Repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents-Recommendations
- European Confederation of Conservators-Restorers Organisations (ECCO) Professional Guidelines and Code of Ethics.

REVIEW

4.31 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier depending on whether circumstances change.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	04/05/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Collections Care Policy drafted in 2017

5. Collections Information Policy

PURPOSE

5.1 This policy outlines the information that BRO will gather and provide about its collections. It also describes the current cataloguing systems and professional standards used. It supports our Mission Statement and should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Collections Management Policy, Collections Development Policy, Heritage Services Research Framework and other relevant policy documents. The policy directly informs our Collections Information Plan.

OVERVIEW

5.2 BRO recognises that maintaining accurate and appropriate information about the records in its care is essential to promote efficient collections management and to improve public access.

5.3 BRO captures information at various stages during the processing of new records from their point of deposit through to accessioning, cataloguing and subsequent use, and in accordance with developing legislation.

5.4 This policy covers information gathered:

- at the point of deposit or transfer
- during accessioning
- during cataloguing
- through location and movement control
- about demand, usage and disposal
- through research on these or other collections
- about physical condition, preservation and conservation activities

5.5 This information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats. These include but are not limited to:

- deposit agreement or transfer documentation
- accessions correspondence files, which are used to supplement the information found in accession and catalogue records
- the accessions register
- CALM database including the accessions, depositors, and catalogue databases
- Symphony LMS database
- document request slips
- other finding aids and databases, including summary and research guides

5.6 BRO will take steps to record the information required to ensure digital materials are preserved and can be retrieved and used. The acquisition of digital records is managed through specific workflows and procedures, supported by associated plans and strategies.

ACQUISITIONS

5.7 BRO will only acquire records that fall within the terms of its Collection Development Policy.

5.8 Records may be acquired by deposit, gift, transfer or purchase.

5.9 Surrogates of records, in analogue or digital format, may be acquired if the owner does not wish to deposit or donate the original items.

5.10 Each depositor and donor is provided with a receipt signed by staff giving summary information about their deposit and a formal agreement giving the terms of deposit or gift.

5.11 Deposit agreements record the legal status of collections, including ownership and access to the collection. One copy is kept by the depositor; the other is retained permanently by BRO as evidence of title.

5.12 Depositors and donors of digital records are asked to provide supporting technical information if possible and confirm that records can be copied and migrated for preservation purposes.

5.13 Digital records, digitised copies and analogue media will be assessed for their preservation needs and migrated to a more suitable format and storage medium as required. Copies are also made for preservation purposes and public access.

5.14 Further work is required to develop plans for a digital repository and procedures for processing digital records. For further information please refer to the Digital Preservation Policy below.

5.15 BRO seeks to retain ongoing contact with depositors to ensure that information on the ownership and provenance of collections is up to date.

ACCESSIONING

5.16 Staff follow written procedures for taking in and accessioning new deposits or donations which includes administering formal documentation, retention of information, recording accessions in CALM and the accessions register.

5.17 All archives deposits, donations and transfers are allocated a unique sequential accession number. These numbers are subsequently linked to catalogue references for traceability. Accruals are allocated the same reference number as the initial deposit but with the addition of a sequential letter.

5.18 The Accessions database on CALM is used to record every archives deposit in addition to hard-copy Accessions Registers. The CALM Accessions database has been updated to include all accessions in the Accessions Register. The Accessions database runs in parallel with the Depositors database.

5.19 Information captured and recorded on the Accessions database includes:

- Date of deposit or donation
- Name and contact details of depositor(s) or donor(s)
- Accession number, title and summary description of deposit
- Extent of deposit
- Approximate creation dates of deposit
- Accession category (Donation, Deposit, Purchase, Transfer etc.)
- Access restrictions
- Administrative and custodial history where known
- Copyright information

5.20 Recording a good level of detail for every accession will enable access to collections which have not been fully catalogued.

5.21 BRO contributes to The National Archives' annual Accessions to Repositories returns, enabling up-to-date information to appear on the Discovery database.

5.22 There is a small backlog of acquisitions waiting to be accessioned. This is prioritised under core Collections Manager hours and during Collections Weeks – closure periods normally twice a year when staff are able to focus entirely on collections management tasks.

CATALOGUING AND INDEXING (including accruals)

5.23 Archives collections are catalogued on the CALM database. All cataloguing conforms to current professional standards including the principles and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description [ISAD(G)]. Most draft catalogues are compiled using MS Excel.

5.24 Detailed catalogues depart from ISAD(G) guidelines notably in a deliberate repetition of information if and when this enables each catalogue entry to be intelligible to the reader when viewed in isolation.

5.25 Local Studies published material is catalogued on the Symphony LMS database. All cataloguing conforms to the current professional standards including AACR2, MARC21, DCRM(B) and DCRM(M), and the Dewey Decimal Classification. Manuscript material and other collections which are considered to be archival will be integrated into the CALM database.

5.26 New accessions which are relatively small are catalogued within 6 months. Larger accessions are catalogued within 12 months.

5.27 Large collections under the current backlog are catalogued as part of grant-funded projects or during collections weeks. Volunteers also support our cataloguing work and carry out many projects to enhance collections information such as indexing, transcription and adding to databases.

5.28 Cataloguing priorities and resourcing forms part of the Collections Information Plan which is frequently updated and reviewed by all staff. BRO will determine cataloguing prioritization for larger collections using a methodology to calculate cataloguing time and provide a rationale for decisions, based on anticipated demand, physical condition, size and complexity and significance.

5.29 Completed catalogues are added to the online catalogue, hosted by South West Heritage Trust or to the LibrariesWest catalogue (Symphony) in the case of Local Studies collections.

5.30 Digital collections are catalogued at a minimum to series level. Records are catalogued in accordance with ISAD(G) as much as possible with some adaptation in terms of metadata description. We will continue to review our procedures for cataloguing digital collections with reference to developing national and international standards and guidelines.

SUMMARY GUIDES AND DATABASES

5.31 BRO produces detailed summary guides for distinct collections, subject-based resource guides and research guides which are produced in print and downloadable PDF formats. These greatly enhance accessibility to uncatalogued collections.

5.32 BRO maintains a number of databases and resources which enable and support access to collections. These include Bath Ancestors, Bath Burial Index and Georgian Newspaper Project, as well as Bath in Time. These are constantly updated and promoted.

MOVEMENT CONTROL, INCLUDING LOANS

5.33 The production of a document is recorded on an Item Request Slip, which records when the item was produced and the name of the researcher or member of staff who was consulting it.

5.34 Item Request Slips are used to inform those retrieving documents that the item(s) has been temporarily withdrawn. They are also used to compile monthly statistics which record how many items have been requested and consulted.

5.35 BRO allows depositors to withdraw their records and a record is kept via the loans database and additional paperwork if necessary.

5.36 External loans are documented using a loan request form and are added to the loans database. Internal loans are tracked using databases specific to each department. Item Request Slips are used for all loans.

APPRAISAL, DISPOSALS AND PERMANENT WITHDRAWALS

5.37 At the point of deposit, BRO captures any permission given by the depositor for records to be destroyed or transferred to another archive if the records fall outside the

Collection Development Policy. BRO also offers to return to the depositor any records falling outside the Collection Development Policy.

5.38 BRO reserves the right to review archives in its custody and to recommend their transfer, disposal or destruction provided that this complies with the Collections Development Policy and that all relevant consents have been obtained.

5.40 All permanent disposals or withdrawals of archives are recorded in CALM and any hard-copy catalogues available for public consultation are updated. Local Studies disposals are recorded on spreadsheets and the relevant catalogue entry or index card is updated.

REVIEW

5.41 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if necessary, to take into account any changed circumstances.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	29/04/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Collections Information Policy drafted in 2017

6. Volunteering Policy

PURPOSE

6.1 Volunteers play an important role in helping BRO care for and make available its collections. BRO values its volunteers who assist, but do not replace, the paid staff in delivering the record office service. This policy outlines how it provides volunteering opportunities and manage their recruitment, supervision, training, well-being and health and safety.

6.2 Volunteering opportunities make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of individuals. They enhance community identity and promote social interaction, as well as contribute to the positive identity of the Council amongst residents of the district.

DEFINITION

6.3 A volunteer is a person who freely agrees to give their time and skills to support the activities of BRO. Volunteers work within clearly defined roles to complement and enhance the activities offered by the service and to add value to the service already provided by paid staff.

RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

6.4 BRO welcomes approaches from anyone who wishes to volunteer and will consider all those whose skills and expectations can be matched against appropriate defined tasks. However, in order to provide a meaningful experience, it will only accept volunteers for whom there are sufficient resources to provide appropriate management and support, and the facilities to ensure that their defined tasks can be undertaken effectively.

6.5 BRO may also advertise for volunteers on its website or target specific sources of potential volunteers when appropriate for specific projects with public benefit outcomes

6.6 Prospective volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and will be invited to attend an informal interview to discuss their interests and skills to ensure that they are given appropriate and rewarding tasks if accepted. This also provides the opportunity to discuss any potential access issues for which reasonable adjustments may need to be made.

6.7 BRO asks that all volunteers read and agree to the Volunteering Guidelines, Volunteering Agreement and Confidentiality forms and any other relevant documentation before they start volunteering.

6.8 The Volunteering Agreement makes clear what the volunteer and BRO can expect of each other. The Volunteering Agreement is not a contract of employment.

6.9 BRO reserves the right to decline any volunteers for whom there is no suitable role.

6.10 Volunteers at BRO undertake a month's trial period before becoming permanent volunteers, allowing them time to discover whether they feel comfortable in their role and also giving BRO the chance to assess a volunteer's suitability.

6.11 A risk assessment will be completed when recruiting volunteers below 18 years of age and made available, along with a copy of the volunteer role description, to the parent or guardian of the volunteer. Similarly, any role in which a vulnerable adult will be volunteering will be risk assessed prior to their beginning in the role.

BRO'S COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERS

BRO will:

6.12 Respect and not exploit its volunteers. It is recognised that the levels of time and commitment that individuals can provide will vary.

6.13 Attempt to match the skills, interests and expectations of individuals to defined tasks when volunteering.

6.14 Provide a volunteer role description to include a clear description of tasks associated with the role, details of skills required, and training offered to support the role including any health and safety issues, data protection and information security.

6.15 Prepare written, detailed instructions which explain to the volunteer how the tasks associated with a volunteer role should be completed.

6.16 Provide appropriate support and supervision and clear information about which member of staff to report to and seek assistance from.

6.17 Provide all volunteers with induction training on starting. This will cover:

- Emergency evacuation
- Security, Health and Safety, Grievance/Complaints Procedure and other relevant policies and procedures
- An introduction to other staff members and volunteers

- Familiarisation with the Record Office and work areas
- Specific training required to carry out the allocated tasks, as and when needed

6.18 Provide volunteers with a safe workstation with the appropriate equipment and facilities to carry out their tasks effectively.

6.19 Provide review sessions with each volunteer at appropriate intervals.

6.20 Recognise and acknowledge the work carried out by volunteers and welcome the suggestions of volunteers.

6.21 Treat volunteers in accordance with Bath and North East Somerset Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.22 Provide a safe working environment that meets the requirements relating to Health and Safety, Insurance cover, Child Protection and other relevant legislation.

6.23 Respect the confidentiality of all personal information held by BRO relating to volunteers unless there is a legal obligation of disclosure under the Data Protection Act (2018) or Freedom of Information Act (2000).

6.24 Conduct exit interviews with volunteers when they leave to learn how the volunteering experience may be improved in future.

VOLUNTEER UNDERTAKING

All volunteers will be expected to:

6.25 Agree that copyright in any material produced from voluntary work for BRO will be owned by BRO unless previously agreed otherwise.

6.26 Comply with Bath & North East Somerset Council's Equal Opportunities policy, and BRO's regulations, policies and procedures on issues such as security, health and safety, emergency evacuation, confidentiality and any others as appropriate.

6.27 Provide feedback or evaluation at the end of their work with BRO if requested.

6.28 Each volunteer will be required to wear a badge to identify them as an official volunteer with BRO. This should be worn at all times when volunteering.

6.29 Each volunteer is responsible for completing the volunteer log which records time of arrival and departure.

WORKING PATTERNS

6.30 Work will take place on site at BRO located in the basement of the Guildhall. There is an allocated volunteers' work room but some project work may need to be undertaken within the BRO strong rooms.

6.31 All volunteers must sign in at and collect a 'Visitors Pass', which should be worn at all times.

6.32 Volunteers sometimes work independently, but specific projects may require work as part of a small team, or in pairs.

EXPENSES

6.33 BRO will be able to reimburse travel expenses and other subsistence upon submission of receipts.

6.34 Appropriate refreshments are provided by BRO.

TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEERING ROLE

6.35 Both the volunteer and BRO have the right to terminate the Volunteer Agreement at the discretion of either party.

6.36 While there is no employment relationship and no contractual obligation exists, volunteers who no longer wishes to actively volunteer with BRO will be asked to give their reasons by speaking with their supervisor, in the first instance.

6.37 On occasion it may be necessary for BRO to end a volunteer's involvement with the service. This may be because the role is no longer needed or the volunteer is no longer suitable for the role. Due notice will be given and, if necessary, reasons given.

RESPONSIBILITIES

6.38 BRO does not have a dedicated volunteer coordinator. Volunteer recruitment and ongoing supervision is divided between the professional staff. Volunteers working on archives collections will be supervised by the Collections Managers whereas volunteers working with local studies collections will be supervised by the Local Studies Librarian or Assistant Local Studies Librarian.

6.39 Administrative work concerning the volunteer programme is carried out by the Collections Managers. This includes keeping volunteer details up-to-date, organising 'thank you' events and training sessions for volunteers, producing a bi-annual newsletter, compiling statistics and processing expenses claims.

6.40 Each volunteer is allocated a supervisor, although volunteers working in groups usually fall under the supervision of the Collections Managers.

REVIEW

6.41 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if any significant changes occur within the service.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	01/05/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Volunteering Policy drafted in 2017