

Rotherham Heritage Services

Archives and Local Studies

Collections Information Policy

2018 - 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is part of a suite of policies relating to the management, preservation, documentation and access of the archives and local studies collections to ensure their long-term survival and usability. It should be read in conjunction with the Archives and Local Studies Collections Development and Access Policies, which set out the principles for acquiring and making archives and local studies material accessible.
- 1.2 It is vital that adequate accurate information about the collections is collected, recorded, kept securely and made available, where appropriate. This ensures a high level of transparency and accountability is upheld, standards of collections management are improved, succession planning is secure and the integrity of the collections is maintained.
- 1.3 This policy examines in more detail Rotherham Archives and Local Studies' approach to maintaining and providing accurate documentation of collections, ensuring an integrated approach with other collection management activities.
- 1.4 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies operates within the legislative framework of the Public Libraries Act, Public Records Acts, Local Government Act, General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information Act, Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, Representation of the People Act and Environmental Information Regulations, together with the Parochial Registers and Records Measure. All material in the care of the Service will be documented and made available for research in strict accordance with these Acts and Regulations. This includes archives:
 - By designation of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, public and presentation records relating exclusively to the areas of Rotherham Metropolitan District to be placed in a local place of deposit under the Public Records Act 1958, s. 4(1) (3) and 3(6);
 - By designation of the Master of Rolls through the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts/The National Archives, manorial and tithe documents as indicated by various legislation including the Law of Property Act, 1922 and the Tithe Act, 1936.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy focuses on the provision of intellectual access to collections both by users and by staff. It describes how Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will aim to maintain and provide accurate documentation of its collections for the purpose of their improved control and access.

- 2.2 PAS197:2009 defines collection information as ‘information an organisation collects, holds and maintains about its collections and/or collected items.’
- 2.3 The policy will assist in decision making and prioritising work relating to:
- Access to the collections balanced with their long-term preservation;
 - Meet legislative requirements;
 - Guide cataloguing work by staff and volunteers and
 - Support submission of relevant funding bids.
- 2.4 It will outline the framework within which collections information is collected, recorded and kept, which include:
- Entry of items and collections, appraisal and accessioning;
 - Cataloguing and indexing;
 - Location and movement control;
 - Withdrawal or disposal.
- 2.5 The policy covers Archives and broadly Local Studies collections, which are processed by the Library Service. It does not cover museum objects, which are covered by a separate Museum Documentation Policy or semi-current records of the Council held by the Records Management section, unless they have been identified as archives and transferred to the Service.
- 2.6 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies has not actively acquired born digital records and will amend its approach to accommodate this area of work. Further information can be found in its Digital Preservation Policy.

3. Collections Information

- 3.1 Archives have been collected by Rotherham Libraries since in the 1930s, and possibly earlier.
- 3.2 In 1986, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies was established, combining with the existing Local Studies section of the library. It inherited approximately 255 completely uncatalogued archive collections. Progress has been made against this backlog but this has slowed in recent years as pressure on resources increase.
- 3.3 It captures information at various stages during the processing of a collection or item, from its point of entry through to appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing and indexing, location and movement control and withdrawal or disposal if necessary.

- 3.4 This information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats. These include but are not limited to:
- Potential acquisitions forms (PAF)
 - Accession receipt forms
 - Accession entries within the Rotherham Archives and Local Studies collections management database, along with depositor details
 - Accession correspondence files (paper)
 - Collections entries within collections management database
 - Electronic catalogue log
 - Electronic scoring assessment forms
 - Cataloguing action plan
 - Electronic locations index
 - Manual card index
- 3.5 In 2005, Rotherham Archive and Local Studies introduced its first collection management database (Axiell Calm¹). The database covers archives and local studies material.
- 3.6 In 2009, the database covering catalogued items was made available online. This can be accessed here: <http://archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview/>
- 3.7 All collections information, where required is held securely and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. Where electronic records are held, access is restricted to Rotherham Heritage Services staff. These records are backed up daily through the Council's IT systems.

4. Entry, Appraisal and Accessioning

- 4.1 Rotherham Heritage Service's Acquisition and Disposal Panel oversees the management of the acquisition and disposal of all items (objects and archives).
- 4.2 As much information as possible is recorded about the item or collection at the point of entry to maintain its integrity and to ensure its provenance is fully understood. This determines ownership and legal status, along with any intellectual property rights, as well as preserving its administrative and custodial history.
- 4.3 PAFs are then completed and submitted with a recommendation to the Acquisition and Disposal Panel.

¹ All known accessions are recorded on Calm at least at Fonds level.

- 4.4 Where the recommendation is to acquire, all depositors are required to fill out a receipt/deposit form. One copy of this form is returned to the depositor as a receipt and the other is retained by the Service.
- 4.5 Information recorded on the receipt/deposit form is as follows:
- Date of deposit
 - Name and contact details of the depositor
 - Name and contact details of the owner
 - Accession category
 - Extent of deposit
 - Description of deposit to include approximate dates of creation
 - Any known access restrictions
 - Any known copyright restrictions
 - Any known administrative and custodial history
 - Authority to transfer or dispose
- 4.6 Each individual deposit is given a unique accession number, which is recorded on the receipt/deposit form. The item or collection is then processed following the 'Accessioning and Cataloguing Archives' procedure.
- 4.7 All accessions information (including depositor information) is added to the Accessions and depositors database on CALM using the guidelines set out in the Rotherham Archives and Local Studies CALM User Guide. It is then linked to the Catalogue database and assigned a catalogue reference number.
- 4.8 Information about new accessions is supplied to The National Archives (under the annual accessions to repositories data collection exercise).
- 4.9 Material is appraised during the accession process and any material removed from the collection as agreed with the depositor will be returned to the owner or destroyed. This process will be documented on the accession/catalogue entry in the collections management database.

5. Cataloguing and Indexing

- 5.1 Cataloguing archives and local studies material is essential in the delivery of the Service's vision and statement of purpose. Rotherham Archives and Local Studies through its collections can provide children and young people and the wider community with opportunities to explore and experience the wonder and joy of their own heritage and Rotherham's heritage.
- 5.2 The collections will bring people together to build connections, spark imaginations and create a positive and renowned Rotherham story. It is,

therefore, essential that Rotherham Archives and Local Studies manages cataloguing in a strategic and co-ordinated manner to meet these aims.

5.3 Assessing priority areas for cataloguing given its historical backlog is one approach that has been adopted. Collections are prioritised using the following criteria:

- If the collection is owned by the Council;
- How long it has been on deposit;
- If the collection has already been listed in some form;
- Size;
- Existing and potential demand;
- Significance (in line with the Service's Forward Plan and priorities laid out in the Collections Development Policy).

5.4 Each criterion is assigned a numerical value, which are then calculated together. This total score is then used to assess where on the priority scale the collections fits. Collections are high, medium or low priority.

5.5 Once a priority has been assigned, the collection is added to the Cataloguing Action Plan. This plan then serves as the basis for any cataloguing work undertaken by the Service or informs any funding applications relating to cataloguing. This plan also includes the historical cataloguing backlog. Further information can be found in the Collections Information Plan.

5.6 All cataloguing conforms to current professional standards including:

- principle and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G));
- International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families [ISAAR(CPF)];
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names.

5.7 This is guided by Rotherham Archives and Local Studies CALM User Guide.

5.8 Publically accessible catalogue data is available via the online Calm catalogue which is updated quarterly.

5.9 Accruals to existing collections are amalgamated intellectually within the catalogue.

6. Location and Movement Control

- 6.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies aims to keep an accurate and up to date record of the location of all collections in its care.
- 6.2 All entries are located in one place and once processed and allocated with a reference number; the collection is added to the locations index. This records its exact location (and the location of any oversize items).
- 6.3 All boxes and/or items (depending upon the size of the collection for the latter) are clearly labelled.
- 6.4 The capacity management spreadsheet is then amended to calculate remaining accrual space.
- 6.5 Document request slips are used for retrieval and further information can be found in the 'Retrieving and Transporting Archives and Local Studies material' procedure.

7. Withdrawal and Disposal

- 7.1 Owners of archive material under the terms of deposit can withdraw material on a temporary or permanent basis. Further details can be found in the 'Donations, Deposits, Withdrawal of Archives and Local Studies material' procedure.
- 7.2 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies may review its collections in line with its Collections Development Policy and recommend transfer, disposal or destruction.
- 7.3 At the point of deposit, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will seek permission from the owner the process to transfer or dispose of any material. Transfer or disposal will then only be carried out once all the relevant permission and consents have been obtained.
- 7.4 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies keeps a record of all disposals made, which include the rationale behind the decision. This is recorded in the collections management database.

8. Staffing and Resource

- 8.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies is directly staffed by 3.1 FTEs and supported by wider Heritage Services staff. It includes one full time qualified archivist.

- 8.2 Time each week is dedicated to generating collections information from accessioning through to cataloguing, from location and movement control to withdrawal. These tasks are delegated amongst the team in line with roles and responsibilities. Further information can be found in the Collections Information Plan.
- 8.3 Additional resource is secured, when possible, from Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Friends group, donations and funding bodies in line with the Service's priorities to progress cataloguing work.
- 8.4 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies also works with volunteers to add value to collections information, as guided by the Collections Information Plan.

9. **Review**

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed as required to take into account changes in circumstances and will be reviewed after 4 years in line with the Service's Forward Plan.