

# St. Helens Archive Service

## Appraisal and Disposal Policy

### 1. Introduction

St Helens Archive Service gathers Archive collections and local history resources to ensure they are kept secure and available for research. St Helens Archive Service is recognised as a Place of Deposit for public records relating to the borough of St Helens.

This policy states how and why St Helens Archive Service appraises deposits and collections and disposes of unwanted material promptly and securely to enable the best use of resources for preserving its collections. This Appraisal and Disposal Policy has been drawn up in accordance with best practice as exemplified in The National Archives Appraisal Policy (2012) and Deaccessioning and Disposal (2015). It should be read alongside related Archive Service policy, in particular, the Collection Development Policy.

### 2. Scope

The policy applies to all records managed by St Helens Archive Service – both non-current records of St Helens Council and records offered as potential Archives by other organisations or individuals. It also applies to other resources; family and local history that may be offered for the collections.

### 3. Definitions

The key definitions according to The National Archives, 'Deaccessioning and disposal: Guidance for Archive services' (2015) are:

- **Appraisal** – the process of deciding whether an item or group of items has continuing value in accordance with the collecting organisation's mission statement.
- **Deaccessioning** - the formal, documented removal of a collection or item from the accession register or custody of the Archive Service.
- **Reappraisal** – a renewed process of appraisal for collections or items which have previously been appraised.
- **Retrospective appraisal** – appraisal of collections or items where evidence of previous appraisal to an approved standard is not apparent.
- **Disposal** – the physical act of transferring the collection or item from the Archive Service to another destination. This covers transfer to another repository, return to depositor or donor and as a last resort, destruction. Also called removal.

### 4. Method of Appraisal

- 4.1. The appraisal method generally used by St Helens Archive Service is macro-appraisal based on functional analysis. Macro-appraisal entails the decision to retain, destroy or sample records at series level (or above) rather than assessing

individual documents. Functional analysis identifies the functions of organisations and is used to select series of records of high informational value for permanent preservation.

- 4.2. It may also be appropriate to make a more detailed check to weed out duplicates, ephemeral or non-archival records.
- 4.3. St Helens Archive Service will follow current archival legislation and any other related legislation which impacts upon record keeping. The Archive Service will ensure that staff training includes legislative changes.
- 4.4. The agreement of depositors in relation to the appraisal and destruction of records is sought at the time of deposit where possible but there will always be occasions when the Archive Service does not have the permission to dispose of records in a deposited collection, particularly for collections deposited some years previously.

## **5. Implementation**

- 5.1. Decisions about a collection are generally taken at deposit stage. On first cataloguing a collection, whether soon or several years later, it may become apparent that further appraisal is required. Appraisal and disposal decisions should be taken by the Archivist in accordance with this policy and the Disposal destination decision tree (p24 National Archives Deaccessioning and Disposal (2015)). Member approval for disposal is not required as this represents standard professional practice.
- 5.2. Some collections are known to not reflect the St Helens Archive Service collecting policy. It is probable that these collections were not fully appraised on deposit or cataloguing. The Archive Service will undertake a review of existing holdings and identify collections that require re-appraisal or retrospective appraisal.
- 5.3. St Helens Archive Service aim to carry out re-appraisal or retrospective appraisal of collections in accordance with the regulatory framework and principles for deaccessioning and disposal set out in The National Archives' Deaccessioning and Disposal, guidance for Archives (2015). The aim will be to weed duplicates, ephemera and records outside the Archive Service's current collecting criteria. Following re-appraisal or retrospective appraisal a summary list of records proposed for disposal will be compiled for approval level prior to deaccessioning and disposal as a Delegated Decision and will be approved by senior managers.
- 5.4. Appraisal decisions and disposal methods must be documented to leave an audit trail and retained as a permanent record in the Deposit folders. This is a requirement under the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

## **6. Disposal**

Appropriate disposal options for unwanted material are as follows:

- 6.1. Return to owner  
Any items which fall outside the St Helens Archive Service Collection Policy may be collected by the owner (items not collected within an agreed time will be disposed of as appropriate).
- 6.2. Transfer to a more appropriate Archive, Library or Museum

This option may be offered to the owner if it is determined that the item is more appropriate to another public repository. In the first instance, the owner will be expected to make these arrangements. If the Archive Service makes the arrangements, the repository will be contacted and if they agree to the acceptance of the item(s), these will be processed and delivered at the cost.

#### 6.3. Use for training, teaching and outreach purposes

Unwanted, non-confidential material may be used to demonstrate conservation techniques to staff and the public or as part of Emergency Salvage exercises. These items may also be used for display, educational visits or as part of reminiscence sessions.

#### 6.4. Physically destroy as waste

The Archive Service uses the St. Helens Council approved waste paper removal contractor to destroy unwanted paper material. It is pulped and recycled as to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Where appropriate, items will be destroyed as confidential waste

## 7. Review

<b>Version date</b>	March 2021
<b>Approved by</b>	Bill Renshaw
<b>Date of review</b>	March 2023