



## ***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services***

***Monday, 22 June 2015 at 12.00 pm  
County Hall, New Road, Oxford***

### ***Items for Decision***

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 30 June 2015 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

**These proceedings are open to the public**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter G. Clark." with a horizontal line underneath.

Peter G. Clark  
County Solicitor

June 2015

**Contact Officer:** **Deborah Miller**  
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**Note:** *Date of next meeting: 13 July 2015*

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

## Items for Decision

### 1. **Declarations of Interest**

### 2. **Questions from County Councillors**

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

### 3. **Petitions and Public Address**

### 4. **Archive Service Forward Plan and Policies for Collections Management & Development; Collection Care & Conservation; and Access (Pages 1 - 78)**

*Forward Plan Ref: 2015/003*

*Contact: Mark Priddey, History Service Manager Tel: (01865) 398205*

Report by Head of Law & Culture (**CMDCCS4**).

The Oxfordshire History Centre is currently applying for accreditation under The National Archives Accreditation Scheme which is the UK standard for archives. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. In order to gain Accreditation, the Service's Forward Plan, and policies for Collections Management & Development; Collection Care & Conservation; and Access must be approved by its governing body. This report seeks that approval.

***The Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services is RECOMMENDED to:***

- (a) approve the Oxfordshire History Centre's Forward Plan 2015- 2018 at Annex 1;***
- (b) approve Collections Management Policy Documents at Annex 2 – Annex 10.***



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Division(s): N/A

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES -  
22 JUNE 2015**

**OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE FORWARD PLAN 2015 – 2018 AND  
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

**Report by Head of Law and Culture**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Oxfordshire History Centre provides an archive and local studies service which acts as the corporate and social memory of the county of Oxfordshire, ensuring a legacy for future generations. It is currently applying for accreditation under The National Archives Accreditation Scheme which is the UK standard for archives. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. In order to gain Accreditation, the Service's Forward Plan, and its policies for Collections Management & Development; Collection Care & Conservation; and Access must be approved by its governing body. This report seeks that approval.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN**

2. There is a clear set of eligibility criteria that archive services must meet to be eligible for participation in the Accreditation scheme. It is a requirement that a service must plan effectively for sustainable, long-term achievement of its mission. The forward plan is concerned with execution and delivery. It links the mission of the service to the practical management of the service. Although no standard format is issued for forward plans, the guidance does specify the areas to be covered. In content and approach the Oxfordshire History Centre Forward Plan 2015-18 follows the approach recommended in the detailed guidance issued by The National Archives in June 2014.
3. The Draft Forward Plan 2015-18 (Annex 1) provides a review of the Forward Plan 2014-15 and the current service provision, including the scope of the collections in its care, the nature and extent of services it provides and sets the direction for the Oxfordshire History Centre for the period 2015 -18. It describes the aims and objectives of the Service during this period set against areas of government policy, together with initiatives in the public library, museum and archives sector which impact on the Centre's service.
4. It reaffirms the aim of the service as being to protect, promote, celebrate and make accessible the written and pictorial heritage of Oxfordshire for researchers worldwide.

## **KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE SERVICE 2015-18**

5. The key objectives for the Oxfordshire History Centre service, as set out in the Forward Plan, are to
  - Build and maintain collections of archives and local studies material
  - House and conserve collections of archives and local studies material
  - Provide a customer focused research facility
  - Provide opportunities for remote customers
  - Encourage wider use and understanding of Local and Family History sources held by the service
  - Provide financial, administrative and staffing stability for the service
6. By implementing the Oxfordshire History Centre Forward Plan 2015-18 the service will be better able to ensure relevant collections are acquired and made accessible; that collections are preserved and conserved for access now and for future generations; selected services are made accessible off-site; electronic and online facilities are exploited for faster interactive transactions; the service is widely known, used and respected; productive relationships are forged with partners; and the service is administered efficiently and effectively.

## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

7. The Accreditation process looks at the systems that are in place to continuously improve: collections development, collections information and collections care and conservation and access. The service needs to demonstrate its policy approach to these core areas of collections management activity. The draft policies (Annexes 2 – 10) state the guiding principles and the practice of these activities within the Oxfordshire History Centre and have been drafted in accordance with the guidelines provided by The National Archives.

## **ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

8. The Oxfordshire History Centre's application for Accreditation will be submitted in early July 2015 for consideration by a National Archives Accreditation Panel on 5 November 2015. We would expect to receive a decision on the award of accredited status in December 2015.

## **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

9. There are no direct financial or staffing implications arising directly from this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10. The Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services is RECOMMENDED to:**

- (a) approve the Oxfordshire History Centre's Forward Plan 2015- 2018 at Annex 1;**
- (b) approve Collections Management Policy Documents at Annex 2 – Annex 10.**

**PETER CLARK**

Head of Law and Culture

Background papers: Nil.

Contact Officer: Mark Priddey, Oxfordshire History Centre Manager

June 2015

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## **Oxfordshire History Centre Forward Plan 2015 – 2018**

### **Function of service**

Oxfordshire History Centre provides an archive and local studies service which acts as the corporate and social memory of the county of Oxfordshire, ensuring a legacy for future generations. The Centre houses unique council and court records, church and estate records, business and personal papers, together with a photographic, oral history and video archive, local newspapers, maps, printed books and pamphlets, ephemera and digital content.

The Centre protects, promotes, celebrates and makes accessible the written and pictorial heritage of Oxfordshire for researchers worldwide. Stakeholders include the Centre's customers, local history and family history societies, depositors and donors, the learning community (both formal and informal), museums and related heritage bodies, The National Archives, Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Diocese of Oxford and Oxford City Council.

The Centre was created in 2011 through the merger of Oxfordshire Record Office, Oxfordshire Studies (from Oxford Central Library), and has made the process of local and family history research easier through the combination of related collections and staff expertise on a single site. Bringing these services together has also avoided unnecessary duplication and established greater clarity on where to access material for historical research.

The Centre works with the Library Service to support the provision of Local and Family History content throughout the county. In particular the Reference, Local and Family History section of Oxford Central Library introduces customers to basic collections of Oxfordshire local and family history sources, and refers them to the advanced collections and greater expertise of Oxfordshire History Centre. The Centre works with the Library Service to increase the impact of Local and Family History across the library network and to raise the profile of the Centre.

Under a contract of 16 October 2012 concluded between Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and its successors, Oxfordshire History Centre works in partnership to provide office accommodation for the use of Oxfordshire Health Archives staff, strongroom accommodation for the storage of 350 linear metres of Health Archives records, and access to the documents in its searchroom.

### **Statutory duties and legal obligations**

- Oxfordshire County Council is obliged to run an archives service under the Public Records Act (1958) and the Local Government Acts (1962, 1972). These Acts require the care of and provision of public access to public records (records of public bodies, health records and court records), the records of local authorities (county, district and parish councils), and tithe and manorial records. Oxfordshire History Centre is the designated Diocesan Record Office for Oxfordshire under the Parochial Records and Registers Measure (1978), and has an explicit legal agreement with the Diocese to preserve and make available Church records. These ecclesiastical records (parish, archdeaconry and diocesan) represent about 25% of the History Centre's archival holdings. The office has also taken in records deposited or donated by individuals,

organisations, businesses etc. as well as official records, so there is a public expectation that such archives can be safely deposited and accessed here.

- The Council is obliged to run a “comprehensive and efficient” library service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964); this has always been held to include the provision of a professionally managed local studies service.

## Standards and trends

*This section outlines areas of government policy, together with initiatives in the Library, Museums and Archives sector, which impact on Oxfordshire History Centre's service, and which suggest themes for priority treatment or further development.*

*After each point are noted actions we are taking to address these requirements.*

### **OHC = Oxfordshire History Centre**

#### **General**

- Oxfordshire History Centre has been identified and appointed by the Lord Chancellor (under the Public Records Act 1958) as the appropriate repository for holding the public records of Oxfordshire, and is regularly inspected to assess whether it is meeting its obligations.
  - Archive Service Accreditation (devised in 2012 by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and The National Archives) is the standard for defining good practice within the sector. It helps archive services to demonstrate their value by externally validating and accrediting achievement and supporting improvement. It enables archive services to review and develop their policies, plans and procedures against a countrywide standard, identifying strengths of the service and providing a framework to improve areas of weakness. OHC will prepare and submit an application to The National Archives to be accredited during 2015.
- The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (Cilip, formerly the Library Association) is the professional body which provides accreditation for librarians and works to promote good practice and develop skills and excellence throughout its membership.
  - The *Guidelines* of Cilip's Local Studies Group inform the professional management and exploitation of the local studies collections at OHC – (LA 2002).
- Government policy for archives is promulgated through The National Archives (TNA). TNA has made recommendations supporting the development of better services in partnership, strengthened leadership and a responsive, skilled workforce, a coordinated response to the challenges of managing and making accessible digital information, comprehensive online access of catalogues, and active participation in cultural and learning partnerships promoting a sense of identity and place within the community – (TNA 2009, 2012).
  - OHC aims to meet these recommendations by (for example) applying for archive service accreditation, working with other local authorities and private organisations on digitisation, cataloguing and other projects, linking to events and venues (such as libraries) with potential to achieve wider impact

- Government policy for libraries is promulgated through Arts Council England (ACE). Among the key outcomes of public libraries are their capacity to “help us understand ourselves, our place in the world, and the heritage of the communities in which we live” – (ACE 2013).
  - Right across its collections, services and ethos, OHC plays a fundamental role in delivering this outcome.
- The Government commissioned the Sieghart independent panel in 2014 to investigate how the public library system could best work in the future, taking into account the sustained and severe financial climate and the rapid pace of change. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is yet to declare any change in Government policy as a result, but relevant recommendations from the Sieghart report have been incorporated into the sections below on: *Sustainability, Staff Skills* and *Digital Technology*. (Sieghart, 2014).
- The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL, 2014) has promoted four Universal Offers which should be regarded as integral elements of a relevant and accessible public library service: the Health offer, Information offer, Digital offer, and Reading offer. OHC is well placed to support Oxfordshire Library Service in delivering particularly the Digital offer and Information offer.

### **Partnership and economies of scale**

- “There are opportunities to achieve economies of scale and greater impact where museums and libraries innovate in digital media or share assets with partners” – (ACE 2011).
  - The 2011 merger to create OHC, although not a purpose-built enterprise to ideal standards, reflects a national trend for Local Studies, Archives and Museums professionals to work alongside each other, with potential savings to service budgets and better outcomes for customers.

### **Customers**

- OHC’s participation in the 2014 CIPFA *Survey of Visitors to UK Archives* (the most recent survey of its type), and in-house data-gathering, show that:
  - While visitor numbers are decreasing (by about 10% in the past year, similar to several other local authority repositories in our region), the average length of stay is almost 3.5 hours, and 20-25% of users are first-time visitors.
  - Enquiries from remote users and website use continue at the levels of the past few years.
  - Comparative statistics with neighbouring, benchmarking counties are difficult to interpret with certainty due to varying nature of the services: for example, Berkshire Record Office is an archive repository only, and the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies combines a local studies and archives service (like Oxfordshire), but with a separate searchroom for local studies and one for archives users.
- “Differences in people’s socio-economic status do not affect their likelihood of using a library; nor does illness or having a disability” – (ACE 2011)
  - OHC will underpin and support the provision of Local and Family History content through the branch library network in Oxfordshire.

- There is an ever growing public appetite and expectation for digital content, delivered in the most convenient ways possible. There is also increasing commercial control of digital content for local and family history.
  - Competition has the potential to diminish OHC's influence over its target market of users. Whether digital content is delivered directly by OHC and its partners, or by alternative suppliers, the result is an accelerating shift towards online delivery and away from personal visits.
- OHC's potential audience includes customers of Local and Family History content across the breadth of the Library Service. The Universal Offers promoted by the Society of Chief Librarians underline how stakeholders and customers require library services to address Health, Reading, Digital and Information needs if they are to remain relevant and accessible; these requirements also impact on the services delivered by OHC. (SCL 2014).
  - The Information Offer focuses largely on life-critical issues, but – with its unique offering of Oxfordshire local and family history resources – OHC can supplement the Library Service's delivery of academic research material under the Access to Research scheme.
  - The Digital Offer emphasises the development of digital services, skills and access as core elements of a 21<sup>st</sup> century library service. OHC offers extensive specialised content in digital format, together with trained staff who can help customers to access it, thus extending the range and quality of digital services provided by the Library Service, and helping fulfil the purpose of digital technology in making libraries gateways to knowledge.

### **Collections**

- The proper storage of OHC's holdings is required by *PD5454 (2012): Guide for the storage and exhibition of archive materials*.
- The limited representation of locally published material in the British Library's collections, despite its right to automatic legal deposit of printed material has been noted – (BL 2000).
  - The energy and effort of individual local authorities – here, OHC supported by Oxfordshire Library Service – in the coordinated collection and preservation of local publications continues to ensure the security of Oxfordshire's printed heritage.
- The British Library (BL) has the collection of digital content at the heart of its '2020 vision', including liberating access to public-domain content such as historic newspapers through retrospective digitisation, but the BL no longer envisages a cooperative role with local authorities in this task.
  - Since local authorities do not enjoy the same privilege as the BL in the automatic legal deposit of electronic publications, OHC must find its own solutions to preserving vulnerable print collections digitally and for growing its born-digital collections to ensure they are representative of the county of Oxfordshire – (BL 2010).

### **Digital technology**

- “Communities increasingly want to access knowledge and collections online as well as on-site” – (ACE 2011). “Make the most of digital technology and creative media” – (ACE 2013).
- “Comprehensive online access for archive discovery through catalogues and to digitised archive content by citizens at a time and place that suits them” – (TNA recommendation, 2012).
- “Reinvigoration of the library network ... starts with a marked increase and improvement in digital technology, rolling Wi-Fi out to every library in the country” – (Sieghart, 2014, p.6).
- Sieghart advocates the creation of a national digital library network, on a socially inclusive 21<sup>st</sup> century model that is fit for purpose – “reinvigorat[ing] the library offer, reach[ing] new customers, and increas[ing] the visibility of libraries in the community at large” – (Sieghart, 2014, p.13).
- “A national network ... would also give users access to reference, specialist collections and local archives as these become available online. It could allow libraries to build stronger links with the National Archives, the British Library, universities and other specialist libraries.” – (Sieghart, 2014, p.13).
- “There is a need to develop and have access to high quality content to help inspire and encourage creativity, leisure and engagement across the digital world ... The public library space can ... give the public access to an unprecedented range of digital content.” p.12-13
  - OHC is engaged in projects to digitise and / or publish popular historical sources, in cooperation with local stakeholders or commercial partners, thus widening public access to useful content – e.g. Picture Oxon project to publish 100,000 historic photographs online, parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials.
  - OHC will take advantage of the Oxfordshire library network to provide wider public access to local and family history digital content at selected sites, seeking a new online solution to manage that provision.
  - As part of the government-supported *Super-Connected Cities* project, OHC is engaged with Oxford City Council to provide a Wi-Fi broadband connection in both its public Searchroom and Reception / Café, from 2015 onwards.
- Despite the rise in digital demand, one in four people (usually older and poorer) still do not use the internet and the digital divide continues to be a reality for them – (Ipsos MORI 2012).
  - OHC will take advantage of the Oxfordshire library network to provide access to local and family history digital content, as well as using commercial online providers.
- “31% of visits to council websites are made on mobile devices” – (Socitm 2014). This includes smartphones and tablets. Oxfordshire County Council’s website (in 2014) is optimised for mobile access, making it more effective for users to search or browse. However, OCC’s Heritage Search catalogue is not mobile-optimised, and such discrepancy is common between the online catalogues of cultural heritage organisations and their parent body websites.

- OHC should consider how mobile technology can be used in a sustainable way to improve its users' experience. The improvement of the user experience of Heritage Search could form the first step towards this goal.

### **Population changes**

- Ipsos MORI comments that the UK's population is growing, ageing and becoming more diverse, and so it expects to see from service providers a drive towards localism, co-production and development of new and diverging forms of service delivery – (Ipsos MORI 2012).
  - OHC will constantly review its use of existing resources to meet the challenge of diversity – by working with libraries, external partners, and employing the most appropriate technology.
- “Museums and libraries should continue to innovate in their engagement with people, making more effective use of volunteers. “Museums and libraries continue to play an important role in lifelong learning, particularly for older people” – (ACE 2011).
  - OHC will cultivate and maintain its current band of volunteers, in adding value and capacity to its cataloguing and indexing effort, thus improving public access to collections and providing skills for lifelong learning.
- “Deeper and more innovative opportunities for digital engagement are needed at a personal level for the next creative generation” – (ACE 2011).
  - OHC will continue to increase its impact through the publication of digital content, and through the use of appropriate technologies, including social media, mobile platforms and locational targeting.

### **Sustainability / adaptability**

- “The pace of change in society and individuals requires resilience and adaptability from museums and libraries” – (ACE 2011). “Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable” – (ACE 2013)
  - OHC continues to work on streamlining or standardising its systems, reduce unnecessary duplication in its collections, and uses opportunities presented by new technology to improve public access, aid understanding and reduce harm to vulnerable original material.
- “Libraries are among the most valued of civic spaces ... and are a gateway to information. Libraries are most likely to be viable when they can demonstrate their value to the widest possible group of users” – (Sieghart, 2014, p.25).
  - OHC can support the 'library offer' in Oxfordshire by improving access to digitised local and family history content in selected local libraries.

### **Staff skills**

- “Deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries” – (ACE 2013)
- Sieghart's ambition is for the promotion of “digital literacy – and in an ideal world – digital fluency ... helped by the professionalism and experience of the library workforce ... [and] augmented by the recruitment and training of equally high calibre personnel for the future” – (Sieghart, 2014, p.6).

- Through training and active dialogue OHC can play its part in ensuring that both its own staff and relevant Library Service staff have sufficient knowledge and experience to help customers exploit newly digitised content.
- “Continue to facilitate self-improvement, peer support and share best practice” – (TNA 2009, 2012)
  - OHC, through the staff appraisal system, supports the continuing professional development of all team members, as librarians, archivists, conservators or as support staff. OHC will offer carefully targeted support to help extend the (local and family history) skills and knowledge of library staff in appropriate service points.

### References

- **ACE 2011** = Arts Council England, *Culture, knowledge and understanding: great museums and libraries for everyone* (2011). This document presents ACE’s framework of ambition, revised to reflect its wider responsibilities for museums and libraries.
- **ACE 2013** = Arts Council England, *The library of the future* (2013). This report acknowledges ACE’s role in supporting local authorities in their statutory responsibility to provide and fund library services, and it identifies.
- **BL 2000** = *The people’s heritage: a new partnership for a national resource: proceedings of a Seminar held at the British Library Conference Centre in London, 13 November 1998* (2000).
- **BL 2010** = *British Library 2020 Vision* (2010). This report presents our national library’s prediction of trends and opportunities over a decade and its plan for developing its organisation and its response to users.
- **Ipsos MORI 2012** = *Envisioning the library of the future* (2012).
- **LA 2002** = Library Association Local Studies Group, *Local studies libraries: guidelines for local studies provision in public libraries* (2002).
- **Sieghart 2014** = *Independent library report for England, 18 December 2014* (Dept for Culture, Media & Sport, 2014) [report of an independent advisory panel commissioned by the DCMS and led by William Sieghart].
- **SCL 2014** = Society of Chief Librarians , *Universal offers* (2014) - <http://www.goscl.com/universal-offers/about-universal-offers/> ; and: Society of Chief Librarians, *Digital leadership skills – overview. A report by Shared Intelligence, July 2014*.
- **Socitm 2014** = *Better connected 2014* (2014). Socitm’s 16th annual survey of all local authority websites.
- **TNA 2009, 2012** = *Archives for the 21st Century* (National Archives, 2009, refreshed 2012).

## Oxfordshire County Council's ambitions and values

Oxfordshire County Council's corporate plan for 2015/16 – 2017/18 sets out its vision for a "Thriving Oxfordshire," which includes ambitions to achieve:

- a) **A Thriving economy** – Oxfordshire History Centre plays a role in supporting cultural tourism in the county, for residents exploring the history of their community, for personal visitors looking for a more fulfilling experience, and for family historians worldwide building connections to their past.
- b) **Thriving people and communities** – through the delivery of resources for local and family history research, Oxfordshire History Centre can provide the individuals who use them with a sense of belonging and respect for the community they are investigating. The Centre's local history resources can help members of local communities better understand, appreciate and protect the landscape and environment in which they live, providing the information they need to exercise a more effective role in local democracy. The Centre's use of volunteers in the service encourages active participation from members of local communities and helps keep minds active and skills fresh.

### The Council aims to deliver its ambitions by:

- **Meeting the financial challenge**

Oxfordshire History Centre continues to deliver efficiencies:

- By merging into a single service Oxfordshire History Centre has already helped to rationalise the Council's assets and continues to deliver a joined-up service across the Archive and Local Studies professions
- Oxfordshire History Centre, through the merger of separate and partly duplicated services, has become a leaner and more efficient organisation, and continues to place its focus on defining and delivering the core public service.
- Oxfordshire History Centre is maximising the benefits of new technology, through the procurement of G-Cloud approved digital storage and the creation of increasing amounts of digital content for local and family history.
- Oxfordshire History Centre continues to pursue ways of working more efficiently – by streamlining processes, by reducing duplication and confusion between Archive and Local Studies collections, and by improving direct citizen access to digitised content.

- **Commission and support partners**

- With a leaner organisation, the role of stakeholders and partners is increasingly important to Oxfordshire History Centre in helping to achieve its aims.
- The Centre continues to work jointly with key stakeholders in the planning of services (Oxfordshire Family History Society, Oxfordshire Local History Association).
- Oxfordshire History Centre collaborates with these commercial and academic partners:
  - Find My Past (digitisation and online publication of wills and probate records)
  - House of Images (online delivery of its photographic archive collections)
  - Oxford University Images (selected online delivery of its photographic archive collections)
  - Bodleian Libraries (contributions to union catalogue for Oxford University's libraries)



- **Enable people and communities to help themselves**

- Oxfordshire History Centre will maximise its relationship with Oxfordshire Library Service and use the countywide reach of the branch network to increase the impact of the History Centre.
- Oxfordshire History Centre will create and promote digital content to enable more remote online access and encourage more self-help by customers.

### **CHOICE values**

Oxfordshire County Council has adopted these values as underpinning the delivery of all its services:

- **Customer focus** – Oxfordshire History Centre’s primary focus is the direct delivery of a research facility to customers both in person and remotely; through the use of technology it is also committed to improve the quality and ease of services delivered remotely.
- **Honesty** – Oxfordshire History Centre encourages customer comments, includes customer suggestions in the planning of services, is happy to explain where particular needs cannot be met, and to apologise and make amends when it gets something wrong.
- **One team** – Oxfordshire History Centre works as one team, encouraging contribution and participation from all its staff and, in accordance with council-wide targets and policies, encourages and develops its staff to perform to the best of their abilities.
- **Innovation** – Oxfordshire History Centre is open to new ways of doing things – staff ideas, customer suggestions, and participation by stakeholders all assist in the constant review of service delivery.
- **Commercial** – Oxfordshire History Centre currently operates or is developing added-value services with three commercial partners which will help improve the range and quality of our online services.
- **Enthusiasm** – Oxfordshire History Centre is committed to channelling its energy into achievable, realistic and customer-focused projects, especially through the expansion of digital resources. It will continue to make best use of staff skills and knowledge and reduced financial resources, while looking for opportunities to improve the experience for customers.

## Key objectives for Oxfordshire History Centre

*(these are further developed in the Service Priorities below)*

- 1. Build and maintain collections of archives and local studies material**
  - a. Acquire new items or collections in line with established collection policy
  - b. Provide a robust and accessible storage system for digital resources
  - c. Create and maintain catalogues, indexes, location lists and other finding aids to give access to the content of collections
- 2. House and conserve collections of archives and local studies material**
  - a. Maintain the building and historic fabric of St Luke's Church so that it is fit for purpose as an operational history centre
  - b. Maintain collections in secure strongrooms under approved environmental controls (PD5454)
  - c. Intervene to preserve vulnerable collections
- 3. Provide customer focused research facility**
  - a. Provide an efficient and welcoming Reception area for the use of personal visitors
  - b. Provide a comfortable and effective Searchroom for public consultation of unique original material, consultation of digital or online resources, and access to staff help, information and advice
- 4. Provide opportunities for remote customers**
  - a. Provide an efficient and responsive enquiry and reprographics service to customers unable to visit the Centre in person, exploiting electronic and online facilities for faster interactive transactions
- 5. Encourage wider use and understanding of Local and Family History sources held by the service**
  - a. Work with stakeholders and partners to improve or enhance the profile of the service and its reputation
  - b. Work with Library Service colleagues to explain and promote the role of the History Centre and encourage the graduation of customers from Library to Centre
  - c. Employ promotional tools to increase customer use
  - d. Extend the reach, impact and accessibility of the service through the provision of wider range of digital and online content
- 6. Provide financial, administrative and staffing stability for the service**
  - a. Manage, train and encourage staff to perform to the best of their ability
  - b. Ensure the finances of the service are robust
  - c. Maintain or improve office procedures

## Longer term challenges

*The following issues may not be fully realised within the term of this plan, but must be considered if the History Centre is to ensure a sustainable future and remain relevant to customers and stakeholders*

- The capacity of History Centre strongrooms is sufficient only to take incoming material for approximately 10 years (*OCC Heritage Assets Survey, Jan. 2015*)
- The cataloguing, storage and conservation of Oxford City Archives (largely inaccessible at Oxford Town Hall) and public access to one of the most important archive collections

in the County is the subject of a working partnership with Oxford City Council and other parties.

- New and existing partnerships with all those concerned in the county with the management of archives and local studies material will need to be fostered if an opportunity to improve research facilities and public access to collections is ever to be brought forward.
- The relationship with the Oxfordshire Health Archive will need to be defined and developed in light of staff changes and any potential expansion.

DRAFT

### Review of 2014/2015 Service Plan

The History Centre was able to deliver a full service each week during its Tuesday to Saturday opening hours and to maintain the fabric and environmental conditions within the building for safe archive storage and public use.

The service achieved a variety of its aims and obligations during the year:

- Archive collections were received from a range of official and private depositors (over 80 in total) and were all accessioned promptly and packaged and stored appropriately
- Re-organisation of the contents of the strongrooms enabled us to rationalise the storage of our archive collections, for more efficient use of space and document retrieval
- Action plan established for managing merged Local Studies collections and priorities set for bibliographic cataloguing.
- Management of Local Studies bookstock:
  - Duplicate material identified and removed; storage simplified.
  - Outstore holdings (partially) removed to more suitable and accessible storage.
  - Content and presentation of open-access Family History books improved.
- Remnant of (manual) bibliographic card catalogue further reduced and replaced by digital records online.
- New standards and workflow established for scanning and cataloguing photographic materials. Processes rolled out to staff and volunteers and new content produced.
- New photographic catalogue data and digital images prepared and published online through Picture Oxon website.
- Outstore of catalogued but physically vulnerable audio tapes removed to Wessex Film and Sound Archive for safer storage.
- Archive cataloguing: over 8,000 items were catalogued and the catalogues made available on the County Council's website via Heritage Search
- Conservation and preservation: over 700 hours' work was done on a variety of short-term and longer projects, informed by the revised reporting system, used by all staff
- Competitive process completed for the procurement of G-Cloud approved digital storage.
- Health & Safety: the office incident and business continuity plans, risk assessments, and policy documents were reviewed, updated, and tested through staff training sessions.
- Building issues: a maintenance programme for the air handling units was established and monitored
- Reception and Cafe area refurbished, extending the ability of the service to welcome customers.
- Over 4,000 visitors used the service: this figure was lower than anticipated partly due to the office's three-week closure for refurbishment
- 3,500 remote enquiries were answered
- Volunteers: 15 volunteers spent over 1,000 hours working on archive, photographic and document preservation projects
- Oxford City Archives: an archivist from the History Centre was seconded part-time for 9 months to continue listing and cataloguing archive material in the Town hall basement
- Digitisation of Oxfordshire tithe maps completed, affording a reduction in handling of physical originals and better preservation.

- Pilot project completed to provide a solution for preservation of and access to some newspapers, in lieu of microfilming. Project involved the digitisation of selected recent Oxfordshire newspaper content.
- Interactive order forms refined and extended to all reprographic processes.
- Impact of 2014 Copyright legislation assessed and new staff Copyright Manual drafted.
- Closer working relationship established with Oxfordshire Library Service, and Oxford Central Library in particular, to improve the exposure and reach of Oxfordshire History Centre.
- Website content rewritten and published to improve the public face of the service and improve the experience of remote customers.
- Promotional leaflets written and published on popular topics - family history, house history
- Staffing: all appraisals and mid-term reviews were carried out on time and fully documented. All staff were involved in team meetings and in contributing to the development of the service

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## Service Priorities 2015 - 2018

<b>Priority 1. Build and maintain collections of archives and local studies material</b>
<i>Outcome / Impact: Relevant collections acquired and made accessible</i>
<i>Target / measure of achievement: accessions received, catalogues / records created, closed access listings up to date</i>

<b>High level action 1.a.</b>			
Acquire new items or collections in line with established collection policy			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Acquire Archive materials	Encourage deposit or donation of a full range of collections to the Centre. Accession new material within 7 days of receipt. Review Acquisition Policy at least annually	Ongoing
2	Acquire Local Studies materials	Select and purchase, or encourage donation of, a full range of collections to the Centre, in accordance with established Acquisition Policy. Accession new material within 7 days of receipt.	Ongoing
3	Acquire electronic publications	Establish nature and extent of electronic publications in Oxfordshire; determine target sources for priority work. Transfer digital material to cloud storage. Identify and select websites for archiving.	Apr 2015 onwards
4	City Conservation Team photographic collections	Continue negotiations to procure photographic collections from City Council. Identify storage and systems for access, cataloguing and digitisation	Apr 2015 onwards

<b>High level action 1.b.</b>			
Provide a robust and accessible storage system for digital resources			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Implement G-cloud storage for digital collections	Implement rollout of access to Preservica cloud storage. Establish structure for data organisation. Arrange transfer of existing data.	Apr 2015 onwards
2	Make digital storage accessible to public on site	Plan and implement design for Preservica public access module. Ensure best-fit with either new-build or existing public PCs	Sep 2015 onwards
3	Investigate extending digital storage to History Centre partners and stakeholders	Consider potential wider use of digital storage and opportunities for partner cooperation and community support.	Sep 2015 onwards

<b>High level action 1.c.</b>			
Create and maintain catalogues, indexes, location lists and other finding aids to give access to the content of collections			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
	Catalogue Archive collections	Catalogue at least 5,000 items. Spend 2,500 hours on cataloguing each year. Catalogue a larger volume of material than we accession. Maintain a relevant cataloguing priorities' list, including re-cataloguing projects. Survey and appraise existing uncatalogued collections and de-accession where appropriate Review/update cataloguing manual annually	Ongoing
2	Location list Archive collections	Annual (or more frequent, if necessary) update of archives' location list	Annually
3	CALM cataloguing and accessioning software	Manage the upgrade to CALM v.9.3 in conjunction with the ICT and Information management Services' teams. Oversee the effective working of the system and liaise with Axiell re its maintenance	2015
4	Re-organise Archive collections in strongrooms	Review archive storage space and re-allocate shelving as appropriate	Ongoing
5	Catalogue Local Studies collections	Spend 700 staff hours per year on bibliographic cataloguing. Spend 500 staff and volunteer hours on photographic cataloguing. Catalogue 2000 images.	Ongoing
6	Address bibliographic cataloguing priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue conversion of remnant of Oxon Studies card catalogue and create new electronic records</li> <li>• Identify OLIS problems from 2009-2010 retrocon project and amend records.</li> <li>• Continue absorption of required bookstock from Davenport Library inheritance, create new catalogue records; discard duplicate material</li> </ul>	<p>Apr 2015 – Mar 2017</p> <p>Apr 2016 – Mar 2017</p> <p>Apr 2015 – Mar 2016</p>
7	Review bibliographic cataloguing processes	Identify any weaknesses in OHC's current usage of OLIS (e.g. Analytical, Antiquarian, Serials). Consider choices available. Commission Bodleian Library intervention where appropriate	Apr – Sep 2015
8	Location list Local Studies collections	Annual (or more frequent, if necessary) review and update of Local Studies location list	Annually

9	Reform photographic cataloguing	Maintain new standard for photographic cataloguing and train appropriate staff and volunteers. Roll-out use of HPAC cataloguing software to appropriate staff and volunteers. Extend photographic workflow to include transparency and negative scanning. Promote adoption of standards and workflow by partners. Incorporate use of Preservica cloud storage into workflow for image file creation and storage.	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
10	Address photographic cataloguing priorities	Catalogue prioritised image collections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Heritage listed buildings</li> <li>• Alfred Carpenter, Vale of white Horse</li> <li>• Selected other collections appropriate to volunteer capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apr 2015 – Mar 2016</li> <li>• Apr 2015 – Mar 2018</li> <li>• Ongoing, as capacity allows</li> </ul>
11	Catalogue video collections (1)	Establish extent of uncatalogued AYNIE digitised video; make a cataloguing priority. Target uncatalogued DVDs.	Sep 2015 – Apr 2016
12	Catalogue video collections (2)	Enhance and transfer existing video catalogue records from restricted Modes format to MARC21 format	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017
13	Maintain public access to online catalogues	Ensure continued ICT support for Heritage Search and manage any potential transfer to new technology platform. Continue to develop Picture Oxon database and respond to public feedback.	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
14	Manage photographic / oral history collections storage	Survey collections stored in Strongroom D: identify materials housed in vulnerable storage; enhance and extend Location List to reduce staff time spent searching for materials.	Apr 2015 – Mar 2018
15	Manage Local Studies printed material storage	Location listing and tidying of uncatalogued oversize material.	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017
16	Reduce size of outstore at Library HQ, Holton	Transfer target Holton material to Westgate strongroom. Re-organise Westgate strongroom.	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
16	Rationalise newspaper storage	Examine extent of duplication of newspaper volumes between OHC and Westgate. Remove post-2010 Newsquest hard-copy newspapers, provided digital surrogate is sufficient	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016



17	Manage BBC Radio Oxford collections	<p>Register interest with British Library's <i>Save our Sounds</i> project (to preserve the nation's sound heritage) to raise awareness of the digitisation and cataloguing requirement for 2014 acquisition of BBC Radio Oxford tapes.</p> <p>Identify and catalogue 2014 acquisition of Radio Oxford tapes.</p> <p>Consider removal of original audio tapes to Wessex Film and Sound Archive after cataloguing and digitisation and supply them with digital files and metadata.</p>	<p>Apr 2015 – Mar 2016</p> <p>Apr 2016 – Mar 2018</p> <p>Sep 2017 – Mar 2018</p>
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<b>Priority 2. Preserve and conserve collections of archives and local studies material</b>
<b>Outcome / Impact:</b> Collections preserved and conserved for access and future access
<b>Target / measure of achievement:</b> more collections available for consultation

<b>High level action 2.a.</b>			
Manage the preservation of the collections so that activity is focused where most required.			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Report damaged documents	Staff effectively use spreadsheet for recording items required preservation or conservation work allowing priorities to be clearly identified.	Ongoing
2	Plan for major incidents	Maintain/review office's incident plans and business continuity plans	Annually (at least)

<b>High level action 2.b.</b>			
Intervene to preserve vulnerable collections			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Conserve and preserve archives and local studies materials	Spend 400 hours annually on this work, to be determined by a mixture of the damaged documents' spreadsheet and projects as they arise.	Ongoing
2	Repackage C19th Railway Plans	Create improved packaging created for the plans so that they can more easily be handled.	Apr 2015– Mar 2016

<b>High level action 2.c.</b>			
Ensure that collections are stored in the best possible conditions and packaging			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Maintain strongrooms to professional standards (PD5454)	Create an environmental monitoring system that is independent of the Building Management System to record the conditions in strongrooms.	2015
2	Box, package and rehouse materials	Survey collections to identify those most in need of improved storage	2015
3	Ensure proper packaging of all newly acquired material	As part of accessioning process, new material will not enter strongrooms in inappropriate packaging or condition. Update systems' document for staff	Ongoing  Annually

<b>Priority 3. Provide a customer focused research facility</b>			
<b>Outcome / Impact:</b> <i>Delivery of customer-centred service</i>			
<b>Target / measure of achievement:</b> <i>Number of visitors, length of stay, positive comments on We Ask You forms</i>			

<b>High level action 3.a.</b>			
Maintain the building and historic fabric of St Luke’s Church so that it is fit for purpose as an operational history centre			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Ensure the maintenance of air handling units	Emphasise to Carillion and their sub-contractors the importance of environment to the collections, of replacing the obsolete air-handling units, and of a regular maintenance programme	2015 - 2016
2	Report building defects promptly	Liaise with Carillion for works to rectify the building defects to make it a safe place to work and visit.	2015- 2016
3	Organise the cleaning of the premises	Ensure daily, monthly and annual cleaning programme is carried out. Plan for larger cleans when financially practical.	Ongoing
4	Fulfil Health & Safety responsibilities	Carry out regular inspections and keep paperwork up to date, as required	Ongoing

<b>High level action 3.b.</b>			
Provide an efficient and welcoming Reception area for the use of personal visitors			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Run Reception	Supervise Reception area for 39 hours per week, welcoming visitors, providing refreshments and book sales, and monitoring security	Ongoing
2	Mange the café shop	Review and improve what stock is sold and stored, and remove items no longer required	2015-2016
3	Provide Wi-Fi access	As part of the government-supported <i>Super-Connected Cities</i> project, provide and maintain a Wi-Fi broadband connection in Reception / Café.	Apr 2015 onwards

<b>High level action 3.c.</b>			
Provide a comfortable and effective Searchroom for public consultation of unique original material, consultation of digital or online resources, and access to staff help, information and advice			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Number of visitors	5,000 visitors, including 1,000 first-timers, to the office	Annually

2	Number of personal enquiries	11,000 enquiries at the Searchroom and Reception desks	Annually
3	Number of items produced from strongrooms	11,000 Archive and Local Studies items retrieved on request for use in the Searchroom	Annually
4	Lighting	Improvements to Searchroom bookshelf lighting, via Carillion	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
5	Continue to improve Searchroom layout and furniture	Review Searchroom to reflect user requirements and fitness for purpose	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
6	Provide Wi-Fi access	As part of the government-supported <i>Super-Connected Cities</i> project, provide and maintain a Wi-Fi broadband connection in public Searchroom.	Apr 2015 onwards
7	Maintain public computers	Upgrade and maintain currency of existing navigation system for local and family history content on public PCs at OHC and Central Library.  Contribute to project to investigate technical requirements for an online solution to deliver local and family history content on public PCs at OHC and Central Library. Ensure current service levels for delivery of digital content are maintained beyond the planned countywide refresh of public PCs.	Apr 2015 - Sep 2015  Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
8	Establish viewing facilities for digital video	Installation of video playback PC and screen for public Searchroom. Provide system for navigating and accessing video content.	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017
9	Establish listening facilities for digital oral history sound files	Provide system for navigating and accessing sound file content in public Searchroom, based on Preservica cloud storage.	Sep 2015 – Mar 2016
10	Adjust Searchroom processes and policies to fit revised copyright legislation	Following June 2014 enactment of copyright law changes, affecting preservation and library / archives regulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete copyright manual, after taking legal advice.</li> <li>• Train staff and implement changes. Consider wider effects on Local &amp; Family History content in Library Service.</li> </ul>	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016

<b>Priority 4. Provide opportunities for remote customers</b>
<b>Outcome / Impact:</b> <i>Selected services made accessible off-site. Electronic and online facilities exploited for faster interactive transactions</i>
<b>Target / measure of achievement:</b> <i>Transactions concluded successfully; customer comments</i>

<b>High level action 4.a.</b>			
Provide an efficient and responsive enquiry and reprographics service to customers unable to visit the Centre in person			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Provide an efficient remote enquiry service	Answer all letters and e-mails fully within 7 days of receipt. Update systems' document to reflect changes	Ongoing
2	Reply to remote enquiries	Answer 3,500 letters and e-mails each year	Ongoing
3	Refine interactive forms for reprographic and orders	Investigate technical requirements for PDF forms interactivity on tablet and smartphone platforms. Revise forms for any annual revision on charges.	Sep – Dec 2015  Annually, Jan – Feb
4	Adjust reprographic processes and policies to fit revised copyright legislation	Following June 2014 enactment of copyright law changes, affecting preservation and library / archives regulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete copyright manual, after taking legal advice.</li> <li>• Train staff and implement changes to reprographic processes.</li> </ul>	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
5	Develop access through mobile technology	Investigate opportunities for the application of mobile technology to improve remote users' experience. Investigate options for improvements to Heritage Search as first step towards mobile fluency. <i>(See also 1.c.13 on maintaining public online catalogue)</i>	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016

<p><b>Priority 5. Encourage wider use and understanding of collections held by the service</b></p> <p><b>Outcome / Impact:</b> Service widely known, used and respected. Productive relationships forged with partners.</p> <p><b>Target / measure of achievement:</b> Personal visits; Volunteer hours; Number of stakeholders and groups involved; Website hits; Items digitised / published</p>
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<p><b>High level action 5.a.</b></p> <p>Work with stakeholders and partners to improve or enhance the profile of the service and its reputation</p>			
	Task	Measure / target	Timespan / completion
1	Work with volunteers	Manage 20 volunteers spending 2,000 hours annually on archive, local studies and conservation projects.	Ongoing
2	Local Studies volunteers	Recruit new volunteers to increase capacity for photographic cataloguing and scanning.	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
3	Liaise with Oxfordshire Family History Society	Hold quarterly liaison meetings with OFHS. Share OFHS research data output for public consumption at Centre. Provide public helpdesk provided at Centre. Sell OFHS publications at Centre.	Ongoing
4	Liaise with Oxfordshire Local History Association	Hold quarterly liaison meetings with OLHA.	Ongoing
5	Work with Oxford City Council	Continue to liaise with and support archive provision at the Town Hall	Ongoing
6	Work with professional bodies to improve and validate the service	Archives & Records Association Committee work. Six-monthly benchmarking meetings with Berks & Bucks record offices. Contact with Cilip Local Studies Group.	Ongoing
7.	Work with local archive groups	Foster relationships with organisations holding archives, local studies and photographic material, and offer help as appropriate	Ongoing
8.	Work with commercial partners to increase leverage and impact	Maintain working relationship with commercial partners to maximise worldwide access to service: House of Images, Oxford University Images, DC Thomson.	Ongoing

<p><b>High level action 5.b.</b></p> <p>Work with Library Service colleagues to explain and promote the role of the History Centre and encourage the graduation of customers from Library to Centre</p>			
	Task	Measure / target	Timespan / completion
1	Support Local and Family History provision in Libraries	Support Local and Family History activity across the library service network	Ongoing

2	Assist with Library service delivery	Involve History Centre in service delivery at Central Library and branches	Ongoing
3	Work with Bicester Library	Assist Library Service with planning of Local and family history resources at new Bicester Library	Apr 2015 – Mar 2017
4	Promote the most appropriate routes for library customer enquiries	Work with Library Service colleagues to revise the Local Studies Manual	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016

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<b>High level action 5.c.</b>			
Employ promotional tools to increase customer use			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Maintain public website	Promote service and improve customer experience by providing up to date descriptive content on History service and collections	Ongoing
2	Create, review and revise printed service leaflets	Create Picture Oxon leaflet Create Preservation leaflet Review and revise all leaflets	2015 2015 Ongoing
3	Extend reach of service through social media	Establish and maintain OHC Facebook and Twitter accounts, with support from Marketing Unit	Apr 2015 onwards

<b>High level action 5.d.</b>			
Extend the reach, impact and accessibility of the service through the provision of wider range of digital and online content			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Parish registers digitisation	Make finished digital files available on-site for public access; review impact.	Feb 2015 onwards
2	District Valuation records digitisation	Make maps and survey books accessible digitally and on OCC website	2015
3	Tithe maps digitisation	Make images available digitally for on-site users and via remote-enquiry service	Apr 2015 – Sep 2015
4	Newspapers digitisation	Secure access to Newsquest's replacement digital archive software, 'Knowledge'. Procure PDF copies of Newsquest published output, as successor to microfilm holdings	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016
5	Wills and probate records digital delivery	Continue commercial relationship with DC Thomson (Findmypast) in provision of Oxfordshire probate records online	Ongoing
6	Photographic images online delivery	Maintain Picture Oxon website with partner House of Images. Create or revise and publish catalogue data and digital images. Add Thomas Photos images.	Ongoing Ongoing Apr-May 2015
7	Photographic digitisation	Maintain volunteer programme to extend access to photographic collections – 1000 items per year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taunt</li> <li>• Thomas</li> <li>• English Heritage</li> <li>• Carpenter</li> <li>• Selected other collections appropriate to volunteer capacity</li> </ul>	Ongoing



8	Oral history digitisation (1)	Continue volunteer programme to digitise vulnerable analogue audio tape – 100 items per year	Ongoing
10	Audit Local Studies digitisation priorities	Review outstanding tasks for digitisation of video and audio collections; establish priorities. Clarify contribution from Wessex Film Archive and All You Need Is Ears.	Sep 2015 – Mar 2016
11	PowerPoint / online exhibitions	Create presentations for use in History Centre 'gallery' and via Council website and social media channels.	Ongoing

**Priority 6. Provide financial, administrative and staffing stability for the service**

**Outcome / Impact:** Service administered efficiently and within OCC rules and guidelines. Staff resource used effectively.

**Target / measure of achievement:** budget on target; staff performance ; staff skills

**High level action 6.a.**

Manage, train and encourage staff to perform to the best of their ability

	Task	Measure / target	Timespan / completion
1	Staff appraisals	Conduct annual appraisals, mid-term reviews and 1:1s in full and within OCC timetables	Ongoing
2	Management Team meetings	Hold monthly meetings of OHC managers to establish and maintain office priorities.	Monthly / quarterly
3	Weekly staff meetings	All staff contribute ideas, share information, and help with decisions	Weekly
4	Staff training	All staff participate in training opportunities, whether in-house, external or self-learning, to enable them to perform to the best of their ability	Ongoing
5	Reports and statistics	Compile monthly, quarterly and annual reports on the service for OCC and national requirements	Ongoing

**High level action 6.b.**

Ensure the finances of the service are robust

	Task	Measure / target	Timespan / completion
1	Budget management	Carry out monthly budget profiling, ensure procurement of goods and services follows OCC guidelines	Ongoing
2	Cash handling and banking of income	Carry out cash and banking weekly on a rota basis	Weekly
3	Petty cash processing	Keep thorough records and process claims monthly	Monthly
4	Procurement	Purchase goods and services via SRM or procurement card according to OCC guidelines	Ongoing

<b>High level action 6.c.</b>			
Maintain or improve office procedures			
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Measure / target</b>	<b>Timespan / completion</b>
1	Maintain policies and systems	Check or update existing office policy and systems documents at least once a year, and create new ones as required	Ongoing
2	Forward planning	Create and maintain an annual forward plan	Annually in Feb
3	Staff rotas	Create staff rotas for delivery of public service duties	Every two months
4	Use of ICT	Ensure correct use of ICT equipment and services within OCC guidelines, oversee functionality of ICT systems, report issues promptly	Ongoing
5	Feedback from users	Monitor and respond to comments on 'We Ask You' cards and via other channels when asked	Ongoing
6	Filing systems	Review and update the office's hard-copy and electronic filing systems	Annual

**Mark Priddey, History Centre Manager (Archives)**  
**Mark Lawrence, History Centre Manager (Local Studies)**  
**Rosemary Hamilton, Conservation Manager**

**March 2015** (Review date: February 2016)

# OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT PD003

## Access Policy

As a public and publicly funded facility, Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) has as one of its major objectives the provision of straightforward and unhindered access to historical records for all members of the community (whether direct or indirect users). However, there are other considerations which have to be taken into account. Preservation and security of the documents themselves must be paramount, and the rights of **all** users of the records must be taken into consideration.

### Access to the searchroom

- Access to the searchroom will be available to all in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).
- All visitors to the searchroom must fill in a signing-in slip, which will be deemed to constitute assent to the rules of the History Centre. These are available for consultation at the reception desk and on our website.
- Access to the searchroom is free of charge. However, a charge may be made for certain services provided within it.
- Access will be provided at the times stated on the noticeboards outside the building, in service leaflets, and on the History Centre pages of the county council website. However, it may be necessary for the service to close without notice due to unforeseen circumstances, and the Centre cannot be held responsible for this. Every effort will be made to publicise anticipated closures by notices in the building and through the website.
- Children are welcome in the searchroom provided they are accompanied by an adult,. The county council cannot accept responsibility for the wellbeing of children, and may ask them to leave if they are causing disruption. No animals except guide and hearing dogs are allowed.
- The History Centre cannot accept responsibility for visitors' personal possessions; lockers are provided free of charge in the Reception area for any valuables. Visitors are welcome to use laptops and tablets, and plug sockets are provided under the desks. While carrying out regular electrical testing, the county council accepts no responsibility for the power supply or anything else which may disrupt or damage equipment belonging to a searcher.

### Access to documents

- Oxfordshire History Centre is a member of the CARN ticket system. Access will not be granted to original material for anyone without a ticket, unless they are the owner or depositor of that material, although if someone forgets their ticket they can sign an agreement form to the effect that this is a one-off and hand over another form of security while looking at documents. If they are the owner or depositor, they must produce reasonable proof of the fact. Children under 16 without the requisite ID can provide a letter signed by their teacher and evidence of identity which includes name and photograph, e.g. a passport

- Access to documents within the History Centre is determined within the framework of the following legislation:
  - Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964)
  - Public Records Acts (1958) and (1967)
  - Local Government Acts (1962) and (1972)
  - Parochial Records and Registers Measure (1978, revised 1992)
  - Law of Property Acts (1922) and (1924)
  - Tithe Act (1936)
  - Data Protection Act (1998)
  - Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Certain classes of document and individual documents are closed under Data Protection legislation. Where possible, such closure will be noted in the catalogues, but we cannot guarantee that this will be the case, and there may be instances in which the member of staff on duty feels it necessary to close a document on the spot where Data Protection is clearly going to be breached.
- The History Centre does not accept documents which are permanently closed to public inspection. However, documents may be deposited with a limited closure on them, and these documents will not be available until the closure period has terminated.
- Access to uncatalogued material is subject to its deposit status, and further permission from the depositor may be required before access can be granted, in order to ensure that document security and information sensitivity are not compromised.
- Where, in the opinion of the Conservation Manager or duty staff, a document will be damaged by being produced for inspection, the centre reserves the right to close it to public access.
- In such cases an identical copy of a document (such as a photograph or digital image) will be considered an adequate substitute for the original.

### **Provision of copies**

- Copies of items are made under the stipulations of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988) and subsequent legislation. Users requiring copies will be asked to fill in the appropriate forms and agree to any restrictions placed by law on the use of the copies. Copies will not be provided of any item which, in the opinion of staff, will be damaged by the process, or of any document where the owner has forbidden copying.
- Photography, including the use of digital cameras, is permitted providing a photographic permit has been purchased from searchroom staff.
- The publication of any material or a transcript of it requires permission from the History Centre.

### **Remote access to OHC collections**

Access to our resources and collections is also available to external users through a variety of sources. Users who are unable to visit OHC in person can contact us by email or letter, and telephone during office hours.

- OHC offers a research and copying service for external researchers, as detailed in PD027 'Policy on Answering Remote Enquiries'. Research may be subject to a fee, dependent on the nature and complexity of the enquiry.
- Requests for copies of documents will be fulfilled wherever possible but document preservation is paramount and OHC reserves the right to refuse to

make copies, or to recommend an alternative copying method, should the copying process prove likely to cause damage to a document. As noted above, provision of copies is subject to the stipulations of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988) and subsequent legislation

- All remote enquiries are subject to the same terms and conditions of Data Protection legislation as detailed above.
- Researchers can use our website to access details of our opening hours, location, visitor information, contact details, guides to our main classes of holdings, and links to our online resources.
- Access to a range of our catalogues is provided through our online search portal Heritage Search, although it should be noted that not all of our collections are accessible in this way and researchers may still need to contact OHC by email, letter, or telephone in order to clarify details of our holdings.
- Access to digitised copies of some of our collections is currently provided by a range of external providers including House of Images, and Find My Past. While free access to these sites may be available through computers located onsite at OHC, remote users may still be expected to pay a subscription fee to access individual services.
- OHC utilises dedicated accounts on Twitter and Facebook in order to publicise and promote its services, but not as a means of answering research enquiries. Any such enquirers should be directed to contact OHC by email, letter or telephone instead.

Complete revision, and amalgamation with the former policy documents PD004 and PD009, March 2012 - Linda Haynes, Joyce Brown, Mark Priddey

Revised July 2013 and in December 2013 by Mark Priddey.

Checked July 2014 by Mark Priddey

Revised March 2015 by Hannah Jones and Mark Priddey

Review date: March 2016



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# OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE

## POLICY DOCUMENT PD005

### Conservation & Preservation Policy

#### Purpose, Scope and Standards

The purpose of this policy is to state the guiding principles and the practice of all preservation activities within the Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC). Conservation and preservation are fundamental responsibilities of the History Centre and should underlie all activities undertaken by it. Preservation issues govern how we acquire, store, handle, access and exhibit the collections and all members of staff are involved.

#### Definition of Terms

Preservation is defined as all actions intended to ensure the current and long term survival of the physical holdings of OHC. Preventive preservation refers to all activities undertaken for the preventative care of the archives and local studies materials without any active, interventive treatment.

Conservation is defined as all interventive actions, whether physical or chemical, designed to improve or maintain the physical condition of individual archives and local studies materials.

#### Standards

Oxfordshire History Centre aims to conform to the following national standards in its preservation work:

- PD5454: Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials
- BS4971: Repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents.
- The National Archives Standard for Records Repositories, 2004
- PAS 198: Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections, 2012

#### Management and Resourcing

- OHC maintains a Conservation Unit managed by a professional conservator who undertakes to maintain links with the professional community and maintain professional standards. The Conservation Manager is an active member of the OHC Management Team.
- The conservation and preservation implications of all OHC policies must be considered at the highest level via the Management Team. The preservation impact of any project must be included in the planning process and consultation with the proper staff must be ongoing
- The Conservation Unit via the management team will decide on work priorities which are incorporated into the OHC service plan. This will

enable resources to be properly allocated and to ensure that care is focused on those collections most requiring it.

- OHC will commit dedicated resources and funding to preservation and conservation activities as well as seeking sources of external funding as appropriate for individual projects.

### **Staffing**

- All conservation work will be carried out by professionally-trained and accredited conservation staff.
- Preservation work will routinely be undertaken by all staff and on occasion by volunteers. Volunteers undertaking such work will first be trained as appropriate and will work under the direction and supervision of Conservation staff.
- All new members of staff will be given preservation training and appropriate refresher training should be provided as appropriate and when required.

### **Storage, Security and Environment**

- All material will be housed in appropriate accommodation that adheres to PD5454 and national standards as closely as possible. OHC was designed to conform to the standards laid out in the British Standard for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents
- The History Centre building is regularly maintained and environmentally controlled and monitored. Regular monitoring of the environment and for pests and infestations should take place.
- All plant and equipment is regularly maintained by authorised personnel. The fabric of the building itself should also be checked on a regular basis to ensure its stability.
- Access to the storage areas is carefully controlled. All storage areas will be kept locked and are electrically isolated at the end of each day.
- Periodic cleaning of the strongrooms is carried out to maintain the conditions and as part of pest control.
- Materials requiring different or special environmental conditions are grouped together as much as possible with separately controlled storage areas for digital material, tape and photographic collections, maintained to suitable conditions as far as is possible within the constraints of the building.



- Volatile materials such as particularly flammable material or infested or mouldy material should be isolated on arrival and treated until it is safe to be stored with the other collections. Highly flammable material will not be stored inside the building.
- Any collections stored remotely, either at Westgate, Holton or the Town Hall should be periodically monitored for condition and environmental stability.

### **Preservation and Conservation Work**

- OHC aims to protect every document in its custody so that it is not at risk from harm whilst being stored, exhibited or produced for public use. All conservation and preservation treatment is taken in accordance with nationally recognised and agreed ethical and technical standards, with particular reference to BS 4971, the British Standard for Archive Conservation.
- Conservation staff should be kept aware and trained as to current practice, and this knowledge and understanding should be spread throughout OHC as appropriate through management team, meetings or other cascaded training.
- Items requiring either preventive or interventive treatments may be identified in a number of ways: during accessioning, cataloguing processes and use in the Searchroom. Need is reported and recorded on an electronic reporting system.
- All new material is assessed to determine its physical condition and basic cleaning and packaging will be undertaken where necessary as part of the accessioning process before the material enters the strongrooms (see systems' document SD011 Dealing with Dirty or Unpackaged Archival Material). This may also include removal of metal clips, unsuitable packaging materials and basic stabilisation. When required, the Conservation Unit may provide assistance or more specific or specialised packaging or treatment at this accessioning stage.
- During cataloguing, the cataloguer should consult with the conservator to ensure that any or all material requiring special, individual packaging, whether a single local studies volume or a whole archive collection, is properly protected. Packaging and wrapping will be performed by cataloguing staff, where possible simple tasks will be done as soon as possible by conservation staff but items requiring lengthier, more specialized treatment will be reported and assessed...
- A programme of repackaging older archive and local studies collections to conform to new standards is incorporated into the office's forward plan. This work may also be carried out by volunteers. This material is identified by both frequency of use and periodic survey.

- Every two months, the Conservation Manager and Archives Manager will agree upon items requiring interventive treatment. Input from OHC staff will assist in determining priorities.
- Material is assessed for its suitability for treatment based on established criteria of condition, use, importance, whether a surrogate is available, as well as the workflow within the Conservation Unit.
- All treatment should be sympathetic to the needs of the item and its end purpose. Treatment is documented on the Damaged Documents' spreadsheet and records kept including those for materials used in processes.
- Where possible, all material is packaged in containers appropriate to their format and physical needs and which are constructed from the best archival quality materials available.
- Materials used for interventive treatments should be of appropriate suitability.

### **Access and Handling**

- Access should be given to as much documentation as possible however consideration will always be made as to the potential damage to an item before production. OHC will provide surrogates rather than original material unless there is a positive reason for using the originals (such as visual impairment or the need to study something not visible on the copy). Preservation of original material must always be a priority.
- When original material is too damaged to produce, staff will explain the reasons without delay and OHC will take what action it can to make the material available as soon as possible. For fuller details, see policy document PD018 Use of surrogates of original material,
- All staff are trained in handling techniques as part of their induction and supplementary training on safe handling and lifting should be given when available.
- Researchers must agree to abide by the searchroom regulations controlling all aspects of searchroom conduct, from the number of documents that may be consulted at a time to the use of pencils rather than pens. A copy of the regulations is freely available.
- Guidelines on how to handle archival material are placed in the searchroom and researchers are informed of them and a copy available for them to take. Searchroom staff will supervise researchers' use of the archives.
- Staff will actively promote good handling techniques both in the searchroom and in lectures and tours to external groups.

- Handling aids, such as gloves, cushions, weights, polyester sleeves etc. are made available in the searchroom.
- While fewer handling requirements are applied to local studies material, the use of cushions and gloves is still encouraged where it is considered appropriate for the safe handling of particularly vulnerable or delicate items.
- All material should be properly handled and moved within OHC making use of boxes, trolleys and using an appropriate number of staff as required.
- Material must be transported correctly when taken outside OHC. Archives must be packaged in a manner suitable for the journey they are to make, to give them proper protection from the environment and possible accident.

### **Exhibition and Loans**

- Exhibited material must be displayed in a way that will not cause damage.
- Depositors withdrawing material for exhibition elsewhere must be made aware of the preservation and security issues involved and must undertake to keep the documents in suitable and secure conditions. Conservation advice may be offered in such circumstances. Withdrawn material will be examined before and after loan for evidence of damage.
- Exhibition duration cannot be indefinite as light damage, even in rooms that meet the levels required in PD5454, is incremental and prolonged exposure can be detrimental to the condition of documents.

### **Copying**

- All photocopying or scanning of original, archival material must be carried out by staff.
- No archival material may be copied if it risks damage. Photocopying or scanning in particular may cause significant damage and guidelines are freely available as to what may and may not be copied. All staff should be conversant with what may be copied. When in doubt they should always refer to a member of the office's Management Team
- Researchers may copy local studies material themselves but searchroom staff should check the material researchers intend to copy when supplying them with copier cards and, if necessary, suggest the most careful method of photocopying.
- Researchers may copy microform directly using the facilities in the searchroom; staff should be trained to assist in this when necessary.

- Digital photographs may be provided when photocopying or scanning is not possible.
- After purchasing a permit, researchers may take their own digital photographs, using their own camera but the use of flash is not permissible.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- OHC will maintain its plan for use in the event of a major incident. This plan should include procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency and information such as staff out-of-hours contact details. There should be a scheduled programme of updating the plan to ensure that the information it contains is accurate and relevant and an external authority should validate the plan.
- Staff should be made aware of the plan and a regular programme of training events should be held to help all staff familiarise themselves with the plan as well as the equipment and materials available to deal with such an incident as well as a chance to run through possible scenarios and reactions.

Copies of the plan will be stored externally with the Fire Brigade and the Emergency Planning Unit as well as at other departmental sites.

- A system is in place to enable out-of-hours contact with a responsible member of staff at all times.

### **Preservation of Records Held Elsewhere Within Oxfordshire**

- OHC will encourage good practice to owners of private archives and provide advice on the physical care of their documents.

Updated by Rosemary Hamilton (Conservation Manager) & Mark Priddey (Archives Manager), March 2015:

Review date: March 2016

## OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT PD006

### Updating the Archive Cataloguing Priorities' List

Every month, the Archives Manager assesses the collections of archive material which have come into the History Centre and have been accessioned, to determine which ones should be added to the Cataloguing Priorities' list (Word document) on the S drive.

Priority is given to collections which contain the following types of material:

- **Records which the History Centre is required by law to make available:** these include parish registers of baptism, marriage and burial, parish council minutes, manorial records and electoral registers. REASON: to ensure the security of records which we have no option but to produce.
- **Records which are listed** (and therefore potentially already known to and used by researchers), but not in sufficient degree of detail to ensure security of those records when they are produced: these include such as records in the Stockton & Fortescue collection. REASON: to maintain existing accessibility and also ensure security.
- **Popular records**, i.e. records of a type which are regularly used for research in the searchroom or specific uncatalogued records which are relatively frequently requested by searchers: examples include school and criminal records. REASON: to satisfy demand for the most frequently requested documents.
- **Records which have been uncatalogued at the History Centre for many years.** REASON: to ensure that the general principle of 'first in, first catalogued' is maintained in the absence of any overriding considerations discussed above.
- **Under-represented classes of record** among our more recently catalogued collections. REASON: to ensure the range of material accessible is as diverse as possible
- **Large collections potentially containing sizeable quantities of material suitable for weeding.** REASON: to create storage space and facilitate access to the remainder of the collection.
- **Collections which were catalogued on cards (i.e. non-ISAD(G) compliant)** and require enhancement, particularly where further documents from the same depositor have been accessioned subsequently . REASON: to make them more accessible and searchable online

At the Archivists' quarterly meetings, these priorities will be reviewed and the highest-priority collections added to the Cataloguing Priorities' spreadsheet on the S drive: this sheet serves as the guide for the most immediate cataloguing projects (i.e. those agreed and assigned at appraisals). Listing projects appropriate for History Assistants or Volunteers, and smaller collections (i.e. less than a box) for cataloguing will also be identified and apportioned at these meetings.

Mark Priddey  
February 2015

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## OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT PD015

### Archives Acquisition Policy

The objective of this policy is to define what archive material Oxfordshire History Centre will accept for its holdings, the terms on which that material may be held, and any requirements to be observed before material is accepted. While no policy can cover all the possible eventualities of material offered, this policy should be consulted before collections are accepted, and only in exceptional cases should the Archives Manager be consulted with a view to taking in material not covered by it. The acquisition of Local Studies material, photographs and oral history recordings is defined in OHC PD029 (Local Studies Acquisition Policy)

#### Geographical area

1] The fundamental requirement of records acquired is that they must relate to Oxfordshire and its inhabitants, unless there is a special prior agreement. Such records may originate anywhere, and there is therefore no geographical limitation on the catchment area from which records may be acquired. However

- (a) records relating to Oxfordshire which are part of a document class belonging elsewhere (an example would be Assize records, which belong with the classes at the National Archives) will not be acquired
- (b) records which are part of a single collection, where the majority of that collection relates to an area outside Oxfordshire, will not be acquired

2] The boundaries of Oxfordshire have changed over the centuries, most drastically when the Vale of White Horse transferred from Berkshire to Oxfordshire in 1974, as a result of the Local Government Act (1972). Provenance dictates that official records should follow the authorities to which they belonged. Thus:

- County Council records covering the Vale of White Horse pre-April 1974 belong in the Berkshire Record Office; those post-March 1974 in the Oxfordshire History Centre.
- Vale of White Horse area District Council records pre-April 1974 belong in the Berkshire Record Office; those post-March 1974 in the Oxfordshire History Centre
- The records of boroughs in the Vale of White Horse (e.g. Abingdon) belong in Berkshire Record Office; borough status vanished in 1974.
- Technically records of Parish Councils in the Vale of the White Horse area should go to Berkshire Record Office pre-April 1974 and to Oxfordshire History Centre post-March 1974. However, individual Councils do not recognise that pre- and post-1974 authorities are not continuous, and may insist on all their records being kept together. If the post-1974 authorities are regarded as the legitimate successors to the functions and records of the pre-1974 authorities, then all the records should be deposited in Oxfordshire History Centre; the Office therefore accepts all Parish Council records within the Vale of White Horse, but does not insist they be deposited with the Oxfordshire History Centre. Jurisdiction for Vale of White Horse state-run schools passed to Oxfordshire County Council in 1974, and such school

records for that area are now a subdivision of County Council records. They should therefore be accepted into this Office. However, (a) this does not apply to school records among parish papers, and (b) if a school has already deposited with Berkshire Record Office they must be given the choice between continuing to deposit there or moving all the records to this Office

3] Coroner's and court records covering the jurisdiction of the Vale of White Horse belong in the Berkshire Record Office pre-April 1974 and in the Oxfordshire History Centre post-March 1974.

4] The ecclesiastical jurisdictions which determine the provenance of Church records were not altered by the Local Government Act (1972). Therefore the Oxfordshire History Centre accepts:

- Diocesan records relating to the whole of Oxford Diocese as it was constituted at the time of the records' being created.
- Archdeaconry records relating to Oxford Archdeaconry, including those parts recently transferred to the newly established Dorchester Archdeaconry, but not Berkshire or Buckingham Archdeaconries.
- Parish records of parishes within Oxford Archdeaconry.

5] For the purposes of privately deposited material, the Vale of White Horse may be regarded as either Oxfordshire or Berkshire. Even where a fonds of material has reference exclusively to the pre- or post-1974 period, it may still prove the prerequisite for understanding something which occurred later, or be the outcome of something which occurred earlier. The situation is further complicated by the fact that private individuals have no obligation to deposit, and may refuse to do so unless in the office of their choice. It is therefore impossible to establish a date before which material should go to Berkshire Record Office and after which to Oxfordshire History Centre. Oxfordshire History Centre therefore accepts all private material from the Vale of White Horse area, provided:

- (a) that the material is not an additional part of a collection already held in Berkshire Record Office
- (b) that it is established as a term of deposit that the existence of the deposit will be made known to Berkshire Record Office, a copy of any finding aid made available to Berkshire Record Office, and a copy of the material supplied to Berkshire Record Office if requested and funded

### Record Types

6] No records will be accepted which do not provide valid information on Oxfordshire or its inhabitants. To be valid, the information must be original in the sense of being a first generation record creation and not a later gloss or précis. It must not exist in the same form, or giving the same information, as material already held in an environment easily accessible to researchers who use Oxfordshire History Centre.

7] Items not relating to Oxfordshire which are integrally bound up with an archive collection may be accepted if they constitute a small part of an overall collection, and then only on the understanding that we may choose to transfer them to another institution if we believe that the collection is valid without them, in line with our deaccessioning and disposal policy (PD033).



8] Original archives are no longer exclusively letter forms on paper or parchment. It is possible for a videotape, CD, DVD or electronic-format record to constitute a valid archive, and Oxfordshire History Centre will accept them. A Digital Deposit form must be completed by anyone depositing or donating such records.

9] There are very few records which the Office has a legal obligation to accept. County Council minutes would fall under this head, but not supporting files or documentation. The Office has an obligation to accept the Diocesan Archives, but only those items which contain significant information for the history of the county. Parish records must be accepted, but the obligation is for the major classes only: registers, minutes, accounts, poor law papers. There is no obligation to accept the records of the District Councils, schools, parish councils, or private records, although any of these categories may contain material which is highly desirable. Oxfordshire History Centre is authorised to accept Public Records and manorial records, but is not the only Oxfordshire repository which can do so.

10] The Bodleian Library does not take in material of exclusively local interest, although it does possess dedicated collections (notably Top Oxon) of this sort. It does accept material of national and international interest, and therefore may take papers of an Oxfordshire individual considered to have wider than purely local significance. It is authorised to accept manorial records.

11] Oxfordshire Health Archives is responsible for the records of the former Health Authority, the NHS Trusts, and individual hospitals, many of which are Public Records. Oxfordshire History Centre does not accept this material except by arrangement with the Health Archivist.

12] Oxford City Council is a separate record-creating body, and nominally holds its own archive in Oxford Town Hall. However, as there are no searchroom facilities or permanent archive staff based at the Town Hall, the core, catalogued collection is held and made available for consultation at OHC.

#### Legal Stipulations

13] Archive material may not be accepted by Oxfordshire History Centre without a formal accession agreement signed by the depositor/donor and, if appropriate, a completed Data Protection Questionnaire. County Council records will be accepted by internal transfer with control transferred or withheld and Church of England records by deposit. The terms of all other record types must be agreed individually with the depositor/donor from the standard form categories listed on the accession receipt form.

14] Records may be kept closed throughout the period that they remain uncatalogued (see PD016), although Oxfordshire History Centre may agree additional closure periods at the time of accessioning. Closure requests on Data Protection grounds will be accepted without question if the depositor retains ownership of the documents and, therefore, remains Data Controller. However, if ownership has passed to the Office, closure under data protection will be decided by the Office, with due consideration given to any comments made by the donor/depositor at any time. If the depositor wishes to close records on non-legal grounds:

- (a) They should be asked why they want them closed.
- (b) They should be asked what proportion of the records they want closed.
- (c) They should be asked how long they want them closed for; this must be stated in years, not “for my lifetime” or a similarly uncertain period.

Any closure can be accepted only if it is fair; a collection cannot be closed to particular individuals or groups of individuals unless those individuals can be clearly shown to be working against the interests of the depositor.

15] Depositors may place reasonable conditions on the deposit. However:

- (a) This must not include stipulations on what research the material can be used for, except where this is enjoined by legislation (e.g. Data Protection).
- (b) Where such conditions are likely to place additional work or obligations on the office, they must be agreed by the Archives Manager.

16] No cataloguing deadlines for material deposited may be given unless agreed by the Archives Manager. Offering to pay to have the material catalogued ahead of other deposits can only be negotiated if the collection is deemed a high priority (according to the office’s criteria) and the sum is sufficient to bring in additional cataloguing staff so that the existing cataloguing programme is not disturbed. Depositors who withdraw material after it has been catalogued will be expected to indemnify the Office for the time taken in that cataloguing, as detailed in section 3 of our Terms of Deposit.

17] Any individual depositing C20th or C21st material which mentions named individuals who may still be alive must be asked whether, to the best of their knowledge or understanding, the collection contains anything which is caught by Data Protection legislation. If it does, a Data Protection Questionnaire should be signed by the depositor and kept with the accession form.

#### Possible bars to acceptance

18] To ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation, Oxfordshire History Centre may choose to reject any individual record or collection of records containing personal data, where it is believed that a data subject mentioned in that record or collection of records did not consent to the compilation of the data and/or personal data therein is believed to be inaccurate/unreliable and/or unnecessarily detailed

19] To ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation, Oxfordshire History Centre may choose to reject any record or collection of records containing personal data of a sensitive nature (as defined by the Data Protection Act, s.2 – see Definition 7 of DPA Definitions in folder 1.4.1.4 on the shared drive), where it is not considered to be in the substantial public interest to keep them.

20] Oxfordshire History Centre will not accept unnecessary material or material of no or limited value. Potential depositors are expected to compile a boxlist detailing the nature and extent of the material, and await confirmation of the Office’s willingness to accept the material before arranging delivery. Depositors are expected to weed out anything which is clearly of limited interest before deposit. Further guidance can be found in our Guidelines for Depositors (Archives) and Terms of Deposit. If material is brought in without weeding, it should normally be accepted only on the understanding that the Office may wish to return or destroy some of the material.

Under no circumstances should material be unconditionally accepted without a knowledge of its contents; depositors must be informed that we may contact them again after assessing the collection to return or destroy part of it. In addition to an initial assessment, further material may be weeded out at a later date, including at the point of cataloguing, as specified in our De-accessioning policy (PD033).

21] Space in the History Centre is limited and the space which can be made available for a collection is directly proportional to the assessed importance of the collection. As specified in 20 above, potential depositors will be required to provide a boxlist detailing the content and extent of the collection before arranging delivery

22] As stated in our de-accessioning policy (PD033), material will not be accepted if it has suffered damage which reduces its value as historical evidence, or would require a disproportionate amount of conservation work to make it usable. Material which is illegible will not be accepted. Material of this nature discovered after the collection has been deposited will be assessed by the Conservation Unit, and if found unacceptable will be returned to the depositor or destroyed. No material will be accepted which poses a threat to other holdings of the Office through infestation or similar. Any documents accepted which are framed or mounted may have the frames and mounts removed to protect the original material and for ease of storage. Digital material which has deteriorated to such an extent that it is unusable, or which is in a format or operating system which OHC cannot access, will not be accepted. Once deposited, OHC retains the right to migrate and re-arrange digital files as necessary in order to ensure their continued accessibility whenever possible. However, potential depositors must note that financial and other considerations may prevent this being done, and the Office cannot take responsibility for the original media eventually being unreadable.

23] No material will be accepted which in any way endangers the health or safety of members of staff, or the collection of which does so.

24] Oxfordshire History Centre cannot undertake to collect records offered within a particular timeframe. Particularly in the case of large collections, it may be some time before the necessary numbers of staff are available simultaneously to organize a pickup. If there are external pressures on depositors (e.g. anticipated loss of the storage area for the records) the Office will do whatever is possible, but the core activities of the service will not be disrupted for document collection.

25] Oxfordshire History Centre will not accept material which has legal liabilities attached to it, or where there is any form of doubt about the status of the collection. In particular no material will be accepted where the ownership is unclear.

26] Oxfordshire History Centre will not accept any material which renders it subject to financial liability. Records with current administrative applications will not be accepted; records must have ceased to be valid for current administrative purposes before the Office will take them on. The only exceptions to this are records of ongoing administrative validity from Oxfordshire County Council, the parent organization, where custody of records may be accepted while responsibility remains with the depositor. If records are offered to the Office for sale, the matter must be referred to the Archives Manager for decision.

Outreach for archive material

27] Oxfordshire History Centre has a commitment to searching out material of value for the history of the county and its inhabitants. However, this cannot override the core functions of cataloguing and public service, and may be put in abeyance if resources are inadequate to pursue it.

28] The following types of material will be sought out as a priority:

- Material which the office has a legal responsibility to hold
- Material from areas which are inadequately represented in the current collections and which will provide a fuller picture of Oxfordshire and the communities within it

Material of types which review shows are already heavily used within the Office, or for which stakeholders have made requests

29] Every month, requests for collections to be catalogued will be reviewed and specific priorities determined for material which is to be targeted for acquisition. Criteria for OHC's cataloguing priorities are detailed in PD006

30] Oxfordshire History Centre will maintain and update guidelines for depositors, to ensure that depositors carry out preliminary sorting and disposal of unsuitable material.

31] In certain cases, Oxfordshire History Centre may work with external community groups to enable them to maintain archival material which cannot be taken into the custody of the Office. In such cases, the Office will hold catalogues/images of this material, so that its informational content can be made available to researchers in the public searchroom.

32] Purchase of archival collections is not normally an option, as no budget exists for that purpose. No commitment to purchase material may be entered into by any member of staff except the Archives Manager.

Practical stipulations

33] The rota designates an archivist to be on accession duty each week. When an accession is brought into the Office, that archivist must be summoned to deal with it, unless for some reason s/he is unavailable, in which case the professional on duty in the searchroom should deal with it.

Carl Boardman  
6 August 2003

(amended for purposes of Data Protection Act by Giles Morris, January 2004)

Revised October 2008 and February 2012  
Mark Priddey & Carl Boardman

Revised July 2014 by Mark Priddey, and March 2015 by Hannah Jones and Mark Priddey

Review date: March 2016

## OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT PD028

### Cataloguing archives

#### 1. Scope

1. This policy is deemed to cover all archive catalogues, indexes and finding aids held in Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. An archive catalogue is defined as a multilevel set of descriptions which cover the contents of an individual collection (fonds) of documents and relate its component parts to one another, enabling users to locate information within the collection and understand its context. The catalogue further enables users to identify individual items in a collection for the purpose of requesting access to them in the public searchroom.
3. An index is defined as a list of personal names, place names, or subject terms, enabling identification of documents within a collection containing them or having relevance to them.
4. A finding aid is defined as any other document, list or database allowing any form of physical or intellectual access to a collection.

#### 2. Standards

1. All archive catalogues created in Oxfordshire History Centre will conform to the International Standard on Archival Description (General) [ISAD(G)].
2. All catalogues created in Oxfordshire History Centre will use CALM cataloguing software.
3. Best practice in cataloguing and indexing will be monitored and followed subject to financial and staffing constraints. This will include benchmarking with other archival bodies.
4. Formal professional issues' meetings will be convened as necessary within Oxfordshire History Centre in which all professional cataloguing staff will participate, to review cataloguing issues and make strategic decisions relating to them.

#### 3. Staffing

1. Cataloguing in its entirety (i.e. cataloguing a collection from the initial sort to the production of the final structured catalogue) will be undertaken only by those members of staff professionally qualified as archivists or studying for the qualification.
2. The initial stages of a catalogue (sorting and rough listing) may be carried out by volunteer assistants within Oxfordshire History Centre. Every such volunteer will be interviewed to determine their suitability for such work before being allowed to proceed, and will be allocated a mentor from among the

professional archivists to oversee their work. All volunteers will be subject to the guidelines laid down in the Volunteer Policy.

#### **4. Support of Cataloguing**

1. A list of cataloguing priorities will be kept, from which new cataloguing initiatives will be drawn (see policy document PD006). These priorities will be determined by:
  - Legal requirements on cataloguing collections
  - Searcher usage of existing collections of particular types
  - Searcher requests for material to be catalogued
  - Length of time a collection has been in the office
  - Lack of representation of a type of collection in our catalogued holdings
  - Whether collections are listed, but not to a sufficient degree of detail to ensure security of those records when they are produced
  - Whether the current catalogue is recent enough to be ISAD(G) compliant
2. Funding may be accepted from depositors or interested parties to underwrite the cataloguing of an individual collection, but not if this leads to work being concentrated on a collection which does not meet the criteria in 1 above.
3. External funding strands may be sought to support cataloguing, but not if the fundraising process will take a length of time disproportionate to the outcome of the cataloguing process, and not if the outcome of the cataloguing process will be a minor spinoff of unsought outreach or other work.

#### **5. Cataloguing Process**

1. All cataloguing will be carried out in accordance with the Oxfordshire History Centre Cataloguing Manual. This Manual will be reviewed every 12 months at an archivists' meeting to ensure it conforms with best practice.

#### **6. Availability of Catalogues**

1. A hard copy of newly-created catalogues will be maintained in the public searchroom in an appropriate binder, labelled on the spine and colour-coded for ease of access. Exceptions to this will be catalogues of post-1830 Quarter Sessions rolls, and some planning records from RDC and UDC collections both of which produce a high volume of paper catalogues.
2. An electronic copy of every newly-created catalogue will be made available through the Heritage Search facility on the Oxfordshire County Council website. Access to Heritage Search will be available free of charge through any PC with internet access, and will be available on all the public PCs in the Oxfordshire History Centre searchroom. A copy of all new catalogues will be sent to The National Archives.
3. Until all electronic catalogues are available on Heritage Search, hard copy card indexes for all collections will be made available in the Oxfordshire History Centre searchroom. Thereafter, hard copy indexes will be discontinued for future catalogues.

4. Oxfordshire History Centre will seek to retro-convert existing hard copy catalogues into electronic format in order to disseminate them more widely, and will seek to upgrade them to ISAD(G) standard as part of the process. Advantage will be taken of any national programmes and funding strands which support this aim, subject to financial and staffing constraints.

Carl Boardman & Mark Priddey, January 2009  
Revised by Mark Priddey, March 2012, July 2014, March 2015

Review date: March 2016

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# OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE

## POLICY DOCUMENT PD029

### Local Studies Acquisition Policy

#### Objective

- The objective of this policy is to define what material Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) is prepared to accept for its Local Studies collections. On a day-to-day basis the Local Studies Librarian will administer the policy and take responsibility for the acceptance or procurement of new items or collections. Any cases of doubt, where an item is particularly costly or lies on the margins of our normal collecting activity, should be referred to the History Centre Manager (Local Studies).
- Fundamentally, the service aims to collect, conserve, organise and exploit non-archival documentation in all forms and on all aspects of the county or region to facilitate study and research at all levels. The breadth of this aim is tempered by the real constraints of budget, storage and scope.

#### Statutory basis

- Oxfordshire County Council, under the terms of the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964), has a duty to provide and comprehensive and efficient library service. Oxfordshire History Centre, in conjunction with complementary collections and services operated by Oxfordshire Library Service, contributes to this end in the provision of a full range of 'printed' or published local studies reference material, whether in hard copy, microform or electronic format.

#### Distinction between Archival and Local Studies material

- There are certain categories of material which arguably straddle the boundary between Archival and Local Studies treatment. Before accepting an item for Local Studies collections, it may be necessary to determine not only its suitability for OHC collections, but the method and purpose for which an item of printed material was produced. This may have implications for whether an item is accessioned and catalogued archivally or by library methods.
- Definition of printed material. Printed items may be stored in the medium of hard copy, microform or electronic file. It isn't possible to provide an exclusive definition but, broadly speaking ...
  - A Local Studies item may be distinguished through being a mass-printed item for wide or general use and distribution.
  - An Archival item may be distinguished through being a single (or very limited) printed item for internal distribution.



- Potential areas of conflict between LS or Archival treatment include Church (parish or diocesan) publications and local authority council minutes and reports. These are discussed further below.

## Criteria for selection

- The fundamental principle underlying the acquisition of local studies stock is the significance of items for documenting the local or regional heritage. Thus the primary criterion for selection is local content, regardless of format or accuracy. 'Publications' may be sourced from hard copy, from microform, electronic media or computer networks.
- The service has a conservation role at local level with respect to Oxfordshire 'publications', which parallels the British Library at national level. This role implies exhaustive coverage within adopted criteria and the permanent retention of at least one copy of each item acquired. Unlike general (non-local) publications, which are disseminated more widely, there is a danger of long-term public unavailability if local items are not acquired when they first appear.
- **Electronic resources** - the service should continue to benefit from Oxfordshire County Council subscriptions to commercial online services such as Ancestry Library, Find My Past, British Newspaper Archive, The Times Digital Archive, etc., which have a significant attraction for local and family history users. Such electronic resources are likely to be shared across Oxfordshire History Service, Oxfordshire Libraries and The Oxfordshire Museum. Similarly, any electronic content provided by Oxfordshire Family History Society can be hosted on public computers available in OHC, Oxford Central Library and the Oxfordshire Museum (Woodstock).

## Constraints on selection

- **Establishment of Oxfordshire History Centre** – following the 2011 merger of Oxfordshire Studies with the Oxfordshire Record Office at St Luke's Church, Cowley, the breadth of collecting activity should be tempered by the physical limitations of the new location, and the character of the newly merged service.
- **Accommodation** - selection must take into account the current and likely use of materials, need for duplication, limited storage space, durability of materials and opportunities for microform and digital technologies to save space.
- **Budget** - some evaluation of material will be necessary to keep within budgetary constraints. Despite the ideal of comprehensive coverage, cost should be weighed against potential use, or the extent to which subject matter is covered by existing stock (e.g. see comment below on *Walkers' and general tourist guides*). Items of value up to £100 may be ordered by the Local Studies Librarian. Items above this value may only be approved by the History Centre Manager (Local Studies).

## Topographical scope

- In maintaining and adding to the Local Studies collections, the service aims at:
  - Comprehensive coverage of the county of Oxfordshire as constituted in April 1974.

- Selective or judicious coverage only of material relating to peripheral areas – namely the ancient county of Berkshire, the Cotswolds, the Chilterns and the river Thames.
- Photographic collections should observe the same topography, but may need to include the non-local work of some Oxfordshire photographers to preserve the integrity of significant collections.

## Numbers of copies

- The assumption is made that at only one reference copy of each newly published item should be acquired, and this should be the norm. With legacy holdings from Oxfordshire Studies and Davenport Library, two copies should be retained unless very obscure or peripheral.
- Where a working copy of an item is to be made available on open shelves, and is considered to be a key popular text – e.g. *Encyclopaedia of Oxford*, *Victoria history of the county of Oxford* – the purchase of a 2<sup>nd</sup> copy / retention of a 2<sup>nd</sup> legacy copy for stack storage (*or in extremis a 3<sup>rd</sup> copy*) (and thereby providing for future use) may be justified, but this decision should also respect the availability of copies within Oxfordshire Library Service and the availability of electronic surrogates.

## Material types

### 1. Books and pamphlets

- Local guidebooks, topical works, town and village histories should be acquired comprehensively.
- Walkers' and general tourist guides which do not deal with Oxfordshire alone, but with the wider regions of the Cotswolds, Chilterns or Thames Valley should be acquired selectively.
- Guides to the sources and methodology of local studies and family history research should be acquired selectively, but taking account of the increasing availability of guidance on the Internet. Without good justification, there should be no attempt to retain superseded editions of such general guides.
- In the special circumstances of Oxford and Oxfordshire, and the popular attention they receive, works of fiction and poetry by local authors and locally printed items are **not generally collected** unless they also have a substantial local setting. The service should not aim at exhaustive collection of multiple editions of local fiction. It may be justifiable to collect sample works of small-scale local printers, where their output is craft binding and printing and distinctive from the mass-produced norm.
- Oxford University is a dominant feature in the history of Oxford. Works on the history of the university, its colleges and constituent institutions should be collected comprehensively, particularly popular histories and guides (but see below for Ashmolean and Bodleian); also registers of their members and works on their libraries and archives.
- Course prospectuses for the university, faculties and colleges should be treated as ephemera and merely sampled rather than collected annually.

- Oxford University's Ashmolean Museum and Bodleian Library present a particular challenge due to the amount of publications they are likely to produce. Works on the history of those institutions and their administration should be collected comprehensively, but academic catalogues of their contents and collections should not be collected unless there is significant local content in them - e.g. *Catalogue of drawings in the Ashmolean. Volume IV, the earlier British drawings* (1982); or *Summary catalogue of post-Medieval western manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (1991). Exhibition catalogues from the Ashmolean and Bodleian should only be collected selectively.
- Biographical works and works on local celebrities may be collected, where they contain substantial information of local interest, but exhaustive collection of biographies with only an Oxford University connection is inappropriate and a sample only is sufficient for the service.
- Discretion should be exercised over reprints and re-issues in paperback, and over new editions with little or no revision.

## 2. Official publications

- These include the published output – in printed or electronic form – of central government, government agencies, local authorities, police forces, health care trusts, housing associations, and public utilities.
- Official publications, with their ever changing sources and content, and the fugitive nature of their web-based carriers, present one of the greatest challenges for bibliographic control. Where material from these bodies contains significant information relating to local communities, the county or region, it should be acquired for the collection.
- Key categories of official publications include:
  - Local authority publications, and minutes and reports of council meetings (for all tiers of government in Oxfordshire)
  - Central government publications
  - Legislative publications (local acts, statutory instruments)
  - Ofsted school inspection reports (periodic samples only)
  - Parish and community plans, appraisals or surveys
  - Plans and strategies in response to government initiatives
  - NHS publications - annual reports and accounts, performance reports, plans for reform or reorganisation, periodicals, statistics.
  - Government agency publications – e.g. Air Accident Investigation Branch, Natural England
  - UK Statistics Authority and the Office for National Statistics (see also Neighbourhood Statistics below)
  - Online collections of local statistical data, particularly where mapping or downloading of data tables and reports is possible – inc. Neighbourhood Statistics, Oxfordshire Insight, the Oxfordshire Economic Observatory, and the South East Public Health Observatory.
- **Public consultation documents.** The Local Studies element of OHC is no longer able to fulfil a substantial role in hosting published documents for public consultation, issued by official bodies, planning applicants, et al. Central and branch libraries will fulfil this role, with superseded publications being passed to OHC for its permanent reference

collections. The *Librarian, Reader and Information Services: Local and Family History* in Oxfordshire Library Service will act as the conduit for all such transferred material, to ensure that unnecessary duplication is avoided.

- **Local planning / local development framework** published plans. Hard copy versions of all such documents should be acquired from all relevant local authorities, although – depending on individual circumstances – OHC may need to source these from Oxfordshire Library Service, where it has initially received public consultation copies.
- **County and district council agenda, minutes & reports**
  - Oxfordshire Studies ceased active collection of council minutes at the end of 2006, but opportunities should be taken to acquire appropriate back files of minutes for 2007 onwards, following the guidelines below, if and when they become available.
  - Oxfordshire County Council minutes are actively acquired for Archive collections at OHC. There should be no attempt to duplicate the Archive sequences of minutes through the acquisition of new OCC minutes for Local Studies.
  - Oxford City Council minutes – the existing Archive collection stops at 1974; the possibility of receiving further signed council minutes and electoral registers (but only these and no other category of City archives) is currently being investigated [Apr 2012]. Therefore there is no need to acquire ‘secondary’ copies of these minutes for Local Studies collections. The existing Local Studies sequence of City Council minutes and reports from 1920/21 to 2005/06 should be retained, but any duplicates discarded.
  - District council minutes. The first preference should be to seek the deposit into Archive collections of the signed copy of the minutes and reports of the other four post-1974 district councils (Cherwell, South, Vale and West). Where the ‘signed’ copies are not available for deposit, ‘secondary’ copies of the minutes should be acquired for Local Studies as a gift.
  - Town and parish council minutes. These are less easily accessible, via the Internet or otherwise, so the service should continue to collect secondary copies for Local Studies, but only passively, as they are sent in from branch libraries. Where signed copies of the minutes become available, these should be treated archivally, and any ‘secondary’ copies discarded.
  - Weeding of existing duplicate sequences of council minutes in LS collections should be achieved as and when possible. Likely targets are Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, and Vale of White Horse District Council, but one set of City Council minutes and reports from 1920/21 to 2005/06 should be retained as popular core research material.
  - Websites. Where hard-copy council minutes are not held in any OHC collections, later coverage may be provided through the dedicated

websites of individual councils. This should only be seen as an interim, and not a permanent, solution for public access.

- **Oxfordshire County Council publications.** As parent authority of the service, OHC should endeavour to collect a comprehensive set of Oxfordshire County Council publications. The Council increasingly relies on its web site for access to current information about its policies, services and activities. PDF and other electronic copies of published documents should be downloaded and formally added to stock.

### 3. Non-governmental organisation publications

- Although by their nature, NGOs can be difficult to identify and trace, effort should be made to collect a wide proportion of their published output.
- NGOs can include co-operative groups, community welfare associations, religious groups, professional and scientific associations, sports and recreational bodies, and organisations devoted to issues of peace, development, environment, health, women, and human rights.

### 4. Business publications

- Much of the output of businesses and business groups is likely to be in serial [periodical] format – e.g. journals, directories and annual reports. Monographic output is harder to identify, but is often reported in the local press and should be acquired where possible.

### 5. Newspapers

- Locally published newspapers, including free newspapers, should be acquired and preserved on a permanent basis in hard copy and / or in surrogate form. The traditional surrogate format is microfilm but, following the closure of the British Library microfilm unit in 2009, a switch to digital format may prove more practical and economic.
- **Newsquest coverage.** Most Oxfordshire newspapers are published by Newsquest (Oxfordshire & Wiltshire) Ltd. Permanent backfiles of Newsquest titles have traditionally been stored and consulted in the form of microfilm, but coverage in this medium ceased at various points between Dec 2002 and Dec 2003.
  - Agreement was reached between Oxfordshire County Council and Newsquest in 2008 to provide in electronic form for 10 years the full text of all Newsquest Oxfordshire newspaper titles, from 2002 onwards.
  - *[The contract with Newsquest officially expired on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2014, but the Oxford Mail editor has agreed by email to extend this indefinitely while the company investigates a technical replacement system, thus ensuring that public access is not interrupted].*
  - Public access is achieved through Oxfordshire County Council public PCs, to include the full finished colour newspaper layout in PDF format, navigable by date or by full text searching.
- Non-Newsquest group newspapers were microfilmed by the BL until their microfilming unit closed in 2009. Microfilms for the six affected titles have been produced up to June 2010, but no more will be produced beyond this date. OHC should continue to maintain

hard copy backfiles of these newspapers, and actively pursue a digital archiving solution to succeed the existing run of microfilms.

- *[Test scanning for digital archiving was done in April 2014 of surviving newsprint copies of Banbury Guardian and Henley Standard, covering July 2010 – March 2014, but this process has proved too expensive to sustain, so OHC will be keeping hard copy non-Newsquest papers only].*
- **Newscuttings.** Files of mounted or loose newscuttings were collected by the Local History library and latterly by Oxfordshire Studies, covering the 1970s up to 2006, and – alongside selective indexing – allowed subject access to the otherwise impenetrable content of newspapers. No new news-cutting or indexing should be done by OHC; instead analysis of newspaper content should be achieved in the short term through the search engine of the existing Newsquest website, and in the medium term through the availability of searchable PDF versions supplied by newspaper publishers.

Scrapbooks of historic newscuttings may be accepted where their compilation and selection has added value, or where they enhance access otherwise available in existing newspaper hard copy, microfilm, cuttings and indexes.

## 6. Periodicals

- Local periodicals of all types, and selected journals dealing with the techniques of local and family history and archaeology, should be collected and relevant articles should be identified and, where possible, copied from journals and newspapers not otherwise added to stock. However, consideration should be given to treating short-lived minor publications, even though issued in serial form, as ephemera, due to the service's limited resources to document and make them individually available.
- **Periodicals of corporate bodies** (but see below for Parish and Diocesan). The journals, directories and annual reports of local businesses and business groups should be collected, as well as those of the many and varied non-governmental organisations at both county and local community level.
- **Parish and diocesan periodicals.**
  - **The Oxford Diocesan magazine, *The Door***, should be treated as a Local Studies publication. Existing Archive sequences should be merged and the relevant Archive catalogue record should refer to the particular Local Studies location.
  - **Parish magazines** (i.e. church not civil) should be treated as Local Studies publications.
    - Existing sequences of parish magazines in Archive collections need not be disturbed, nor should any attempt be made retrospectively to unpick terms of deposit, unless an individual case is particularly worthwhile.
    - New acquisitions of parish magazines should be added to Local Studies collections, with appropriate references from the Archive catalogue record for that parish. *[See comment below re Periodicals accessioning backlog].*
  - **Deposit versus gift.** Local Studies collections and accessioning procedures must accommodate the status of **deposit** where required, if the acquisition of

a sequence of a particular parish magazine title is from the parish church authority itself and their preference is for deposit rather than gift. If a 'gifted' sequence of a particular parish magazine title is already held by OHC, then a subsequent offer of a deposit can reasonably be refused.

- **Record Society publications.** The published output of these active societies in Oxfordshire should be acquired: Banbury Historical Society, Berkshire Record Society, Oxford Historical Society, and Oxfordshire Record Society.

## 7. Printed Ephemera

- **Content.** Acquisitions should theoretically include such material as local trade and sale catalogues, event programmes, posters, timetables, election publicity and advertising matter.
- **Archival or Local Studies treatment.** In principle, printed ephemera should be accepted for Local Studies rather than Archive collections, but see below for special arrangements for Oxford Playhouse and New Theatre programmes.
- **Current collecting.** The collection of ephemera has been very active for the period 1970 – 2010, resulting in extensive collections of (largely) uncatalogued material. Future collecting activity at OHC should include both current material to reflect society today as well as the acquisition of older ephemera, but current collecting should be limited – for the foreseeable future – to:
  - Selective substantial and informative items worthy of individual accessioning and cataloguing
  - Political and election ephemera
  - Theatre programmes, to enhance and extend existing collections for the Oxford Playhouse and the New Theatre. Particular arrangements for these collections have been made:
    - Oxford Playhouse
      - The Archive collection of Playhouse records should be preferred as the focus for both historic and new programmes.
      - Any duplicates should be removed from the Local Studies collection and any unique programmes transferred to the Archive collection (noting where items have been gifted rather than deposited).
      - The existing Local Studies spreadsheet index up to June 2011 should be retained as a useful finding aid, but closed to any future addition of data.
    - New Theatre. The Local Studies collection of these programmes has no Archive equivalent, but we have not actively collected since 2013/14 because shows are generic across the country. The quarterly New Theatre “what’s on” guide should be collected to provide a sufficient record of theatrical events held in Oxford.
- **Older ephemera** – in the form of catalogues, tickets, posters, programmes, etc., is often advertised and available from dealers. The expense of second-hand material may be justified where a place, topic or property is otherwise poorly represented in the collections.



- **Sale catalogues** – historic and modern catalogues for the sale of property should be collected where they become available, although there is insufficient staff resource to undertake weekly trawls of the local press to acquire current catalogues. Existing sequences of historic sale catalogues in Archive and Local Studies collections need not be disturbed, and can be searched in parallel through online and manual catalogues. Any new accessions of historic sale catalogues should be added to Local Studies collections where they are isolated items, but should be added to Archive collections where they form a clear part of the archive of an organisation or individual.

## 8. Maps

- **Archival or Local Studies treatment.** Existing examples of historic printed mapping in Archive collections need not be disturbed, but action should be taken to eradicate duplicates of Ordnance Survey map sheets, thus establishing a single core collection in Local Studies. Any future unique accessions of printed maps should be added to Local Studies collections
- Local Ordnance Survey maps at all scales should be acquired in hard copy or in high quality digital format where available.

**Historic large and medium scale OS digital mapping.** Oxfordshire County Council already holds digital versions of OS large and medium scale mapping in *County Series* and *National Grid plans* series. 1:10,560 *County Series* maps have been digitised in a high quality format by the National Library of Scotland, and are accessible at: <http://maps.nls.uk>. OHC should endeavour to make digital mapping publicly accessible in the Searchroom.

- **Current or recent large and medium scale OS digital mapping.** *Landline* or equivalent seamless digital OS large scale mapping datasets have been archived by OCC for 1998, 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2011. These datasets are to be made available in addition to the current edition supplied by OS.
  - OHC should ensure the similar periodic ‘archiving’ of *Landline* datasets by OCC ICT service, once they become superseded.
  - OHC should pursue the provision of ‘archived’ *Landplan* medium scale digital datasets, in addition to the current one.
- **Small scale OS mapping.** OHC should aim to fill any gaps in coverage of superseded editions of imperial scale series of OS maps. Complete continuing coverage should be aimed for in the following current series of printed maps (some portions of smaller scale sheets may cover significant parts of neighbouring counties):
  - 1:250,000 *Travel Maps (Road)* series 2003-
  - 1:100,000 *Travel Maps (Tour)* series 2003-
  - 1:50,000 *Landranger*, 1974-
  - 1:25,000 *Explorer*, 1994-
- **Facsimile OS mapping.** With the particular aim of satisfying current public consultation, complete sets of facsimiles of historic OS maps from the following publishers should be maintained: David & Charles, Cassini Historical Maps, Alan Godfrey.
- **Geology maps.** Paper map editions, although infrequently published, should be acquired from the British Geological Survey. Small scale (1:50,000 / 1:63,360) maps are accompanied by explanatory sheet memoirs and are published for popular

consumption. Large scale (1:10,000) geological maps are only available at prohibitive cost, so sample maps for areas of intensive geological interest only should be acquired – e.g. Headington Quarry.

- **Soil Survey, Land Use and Agricultural Land Classification maps.** These various 20th century surveys achieved partial Oxfordshire coverage in printed format. Efforts should be made to conserve or provide surrogate copies of these maps to ensure long-term availability for public consultation. Providers should be monitored for any extended coverage of Oxfordshire, and realistic opportunities to acquire data in digital form should be taken, with a view to public access through PlanWeb.
- **Shopping Centre plans.** Large scale shopping centre plans of Oxford City and other Oxfordshire shopping areas have been published regularly since 1967 by Charles Goad & Co., later Experian Goad. All plans are updated either annually or biennially and should be acquired on standing order. Although expensive, the cost is justified by the current and long term historical interest in retail information.
- **Street maps and atlases.** All sheet maps and atlases of Oxfordshire streets should be acquired. The city and university of Oxford attract a greater share of the market for street maps and atlases, which encourages very frequent reprinting with minimal or no change to content, so care should be taken to ensure that a representative selection – rather than an exhaustive collection – is achieved.
- **Special interest maps.** Unique (as opposed to serial) publication of printed maps of certain villages, parishes or other local communities may be prompted by campaigns or events. Every effort should be made to acquire copies of these one-off publications. Examples include Common Ground's *Parish Maps Project* and Millennium publications such as *The parish of Radley near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, in year 2000*.
- **Manuscript maps.** Original manuscript maps should not be collected – this being the function of Archive collections of OHC. Existing surrogate copies in Local Studies collections may be appropriate for supplementing the use of originals in the Searchroom, especially where surrogates extend coverage (e.g. photographic copies of college estate maps, microfilm of Berkshire tithe maps).

## 9. Image collections

- **Archival or Local Studies treatment.** Where photographs and prints occur in existing or any future Archive collections, their archival integrity should be respected, but opportunities should be sought to digitise these and add references to Local Studies 'Images & Voices' catalogues. Any future isolated accessions of photographs and prints (i.e. without other records requiring the preservation of archival context) should be added to Local Studies 'Images & Voices' collections. The *Early Blanket Factory* images are a good example of archival collections containing photographs which can simultaneously be individually treated (scanned and catalogued) via the Images and Voices collections.
- Photographs, engravings and drawings should be acquired to illustrate the county of Oxfordshire, including people, topics and events as well as places, sites and buildings.
- Collection should include coverage of the present day scene as well as the acquisition of older material (but active survey work by members of staff may not be achievable).

Selection will always be necessary because of the sheer number of available photographs and must be based on the added value of the image content.

- Basic selection criteria should include:
  - uniqueness – is there likely to be a copy elsewhere?
  - importance to the collection – does it fill a subject or date gap?
  - potential use within the collection – has it a significant research or educational value?
  - image quality – poor quality images will rarely be worth acquiring.
- The Oxfordshire relevance of the illustrations is generally of paramount importance but photograph albums including a mixture of local and non-local subjects may be collected and the non-local work of local photographers may be included where it is judged desirable to preserve the integrity of a significant collection.
- Published picture postcards, unframed prints and drawings are collected but not framed items or watercolours.
- The extension of Image collections (to improve access, generate income, etc.), through piecemeal or project-based digitisation, to cover engravings in books, maps and archival material, should treat such new images as surrogates only and respect the fact that the originals belong properly in other collections.
- The publication in September 2014 of Oxfordshire Images and Voices through the *Picture Oxon* website, in commercial partnership with House of Images, is OHC's preferred route for improved public access and generating income.

## 10. Sound and video recordings

- Sound and visual recordings of local relevance should be collected as a valuable record of the county and its people.
- Collection should include oral history field recordings made by staff, volunteers or local groups as well as broadcast material deposited by local radio stations.
- Cine film should be actively sought but originals should be deposited with the Wessex Film & Sound Archive and copies housed in the OHC.
- Given the special circumstances of Oxfordshire (particularly Oxford colleges), commercial sound recordings, e.g. of local choirs, should only be collected very selectively and with good justification.
- Relevant commercial video recordings should be acquired but, where long-term preservation is desirable, efforts should be made to obtain copies in digital format.
- Following copyright law changes in June 2014, copying sound and video collections for preservation and public use on the same premises is now permitted. In partnership with All You Have Is Ears (Bristol), OHC has digitised vulnerable videotape and cine film. OHC aims to make digitised video publicly accessible on site to users of the Centre.

## 11. Family history

- OHC should aim at exhaustive coverage of the history, genealogy and heraldry of Oxfordshire (inc. north Berkshire) families or individuals.
- OHC should encourage the donation of copies of all published output of the **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – including transcripts and indexes of Oxfordshire records of genealogical value, in hard copy and electronic format.
- Choice of acquisition of general reference works must be informed by the increasing availability of genealogical data and reference tools online. Growing availability of web-based alternatives suggests a more limited approach to the acquisition of printed reference sources. OHC should look to Oxfordshire Library Service to maintain the county's comprehensive collection of general reference books on genealogy.
- OHC should therefore maintain only a small and selective range of general reference material to assist the research of Oxfordshire family historians. Such material should cover:
  - guides to **types of resources** (e.g. newspapers, poor law records, transportation)
  - guides to the **interpretation of records**
  - the genealogy of **particular groups** (e.g. Soldiers, Romanies, Catholics).
  - the genealogy of particular **geographical areas** in which Oxfordshire researchers may have a legitimate interest, primarily focusing on English and UK genealogy, and to a much lesser extent on Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The constant migration to and from the capital city suggests that a small range of guides to London genealogy is also helpful. A handful of guides to Australian and American genealogy may be appropriate.
- British (*and to a lesser extent foreign*) forenames and surnames – works on origins, definitions and name changes should be collected.
- Peerage, baronetage and Knightage. OHC should maintain a wide ranging (but not exhaustive) collection of dictionaries and directories of British titled or landed families by authors such as Burke, Debrett, Lodge and Walford. It should be noted that Cokayne's *Complete peerage* is available through the Ancestry Library online resource.
- Through the provision of electronic datasets of national and international family history resources, OHC should maintain its ability to support individual users' family history research, whether based in Oxfordshire or beyond. Corporate subscriptions to Ancestry Library and Find My Past should be maintained, using the cost advantages of bulk access across the Oxfordshire library network. The American bias in Ancestry Library can be counterbalanced by FMP's stronger focus on British sources.
- OHC should use OCC subscriptions to online content through Ancestry Library and FMP to give access to key British resources for building genealogical research, such as: General Register Office birth, marriage and death indexes, Principal Probate Registry calendars 1858-1957, and the UK Census 1841-1911.

## 12. Virtual resources

- The explosion of local information published in digital form suggests that the service should acquire significant material in this format. The challenge of providing robust electronic storage has previously meant that digital acquisitions can only be achieved on a selective and piecemeal basis. The procurement in 2015 of G-Cloud approved digital storage will allow OHC to begin to fulfil its role in recording and capturing the changing Oxfordshire scene through the community's published electronic output.
- Information and publications may be in portable format (DVDs, CDs, etc.), as websites, or downloadable files from websites. Web archiving will depend not only on appropriate technical resources, but also on owners' permission to copy.
- The issue of permanence of particular digital media may have a bearing on the file format and carrier in which they are accepted.
- The capacity of OHC to collect born-digital resources depends on the procurement of G-Cloud (government approved) digital storage. Cloud storage should have the capacity to store our digital content, to control access to it (including selective access via public PCs on site), to link to electronic catalogues, and to ensure the automatic onward migration of vulnerable file formats. Procurement and installation of such a system is programmed for April 2015.

## 13. Archives

- **General rule on accepting archival or manuscript material.** Original manuscript material is not generally acquired for Local Studies collections at OHC<sup>##</sup> [see below], and there should be no attempt to break up the integrity of an archive group. The Archive collections of OHC are the proper place for the deposit or gift of archival material.
- **Surrogate copies.** Surrogate copies of selected resources have previously been made for OHC's Local Studies predecessor, Oxfordshire Studies, to meet popular demand or widen access to otherwise limited-access Oxfordshire material – e.g.
  - Oxfordshire and Berkshire tithe maps (National Archives) <sup>microfilm</sup>
  - Selected Top. Oxon. manuscript papers (Bodleian Library) <sup>microfilm</sup>
  - Henry Dryden mss. topographical notes and drawings (Northamptonshire Libraries) <sup>microfilm</sup>
  - Oxfordshire and north Berkshire estate maps held in Oxfordshire Record Office or in various Oxford colleges <sup>photographic copies</sup>
  - Percy Elford photographs of schools (Oxfordshire Record Office) <sup>digitised for easier access via Oxfordshire Images & Voices</sup>
- **Exception to rule.** Henry Taunt's original manuscript topographical notes belong properly in the Oxfordshire Images & Voices collection, where the 'archive' of his photographic material is held.
- **## Manuscript material in Local Studies collections.** Further isolated examples of manuscript or unique typescript material can already be found in the Local Studies collections of OHC – (search *Heritage Search* Local Studies shelfmark field for "mss") – which in many cases will have been unsuitable or too insubstantial for acquisition by OHC – Archives (formerly Oxfordshire Record Office), for example:
  - D.H. Allport papers on the history of Ramsden. Collection 1957-1969.

- Over Norton Scrapbook 1965 / compiled by the Women's Institute to commemorate the National Federation of Women's Institutes Golden Jubilee Year.
  - Collection of bills from Walkers Stores, Henley. Manuscript 1957.
  - W.H. Hallam. Letters about the Lockinge Trees and Scutchamore Knob 1947-1954.
- **Potential for overlap.** The potential for overlap between the 'published' and photographic collections of the service and the 'archival' collections of Oxfordshire Record Office must be understood. Specific comments and decisions are recorded above regarding such items as parish magazines, theatre programmes, printed maps, sale catalogues and photographs. For materials not specifically mentioned, a case-by-case decision may need to be made on the basis both of preserving the integrity of each collection and of respecting the needs of users of each collection.

#### 14. Relationship with Oxfordshire Library Service

- Following the removal of Oxfordshire Studies from Westgate in May 2011, and its merger with the Oxfordshire Record Office to form the Oxfordshire History Centre, Oxford Central Library has provided a free-standing Local & Family History area on its 2nd floor .
- The Central Library collections are based chiefly on duplicate and lending copies of books, and popular electronic sources. The objective is for a potential 80% of customers arriving at the Central Library to be satisfied by resources on-site 80% of the time. Central Library staff make referrals to the unique collections of OHC in all appropriate cases.
- Central Library supplies OHC with a monthly list of Local Studies acquisitions, including material which has appeared via branch libraries. OHC will also encourage branch Library Managers to inform OHC directly of any new publications of interest.
- The Local & Family History collections at Central Library are there to serve the majority of popular demand, while the printed Local Studies collections at Oxfordshire History Centre should be deemed to have a unique or 'preservation' status.
- Oxfordshire Library Service has agreed (Feb 2015) to support countywide subscriptions to online providers of family history and newspaper content, including access at OHC. OHC has begun (Dec 2014) a programme of training and tours for Library Service staff and is consulting (Feb 2015) on a programme of further promotional activities to enhance local and family history provision in Libraries and increase visits to OHC.

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Mark Lawrence

History Centre Manager (Local Studies)

Oxfordshire History Centre

December 2011; revised March-April 2012; revised October 2014 and February 2015

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# OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE

## POLICY DOCUMENT PD030

### Cataloguing Local Studies Materials

#### 1. Scope

- a) This policy applies to catalogues and indexes of printed material and publications in the Local Studies collections of OHC (Oxfordshire History Centre), whether in paper, microform or electronic format. As well as books and periodicals (including newspapers), this policy also applies to still images, sound and video recordings.
- b) Core catalogue records are produced to provide descriptions of individual items or collections, including access points under geographical subject, topical subject, or personal or proper name.
- c) Indexes provide additional or analytical access to broader collections, including runs of selected periodicals or newspapers, and collections that have been the subject of special projects and / or volunteer effort. Examples include: Oxford Playhouse programmes 1922-2011, Oxford City Engineer building plans 1875-1934, Oxford Mail & Times newspapers 1971-1984, and Oxfordshire property sale catalogues, 1982-2008.

#### 2. Standards

- a) **Bibliographic cataloguing**
  - i. MARC21 coding and RDA cataloguing rules (replacing AACR2 in 2013) provide the basic standard for the creation of bibliographic catalogue records.
  - ii. OHC catalogue records are hosted on Oxford University's OLIS online union catalogue, under an annual subscription agreement. Aleph software (Ex Libris) is used for the creation of catalogue records and holdings data, relying on a dedicated link to bibliographic databases and name authority files on Oxford University's servers.
  - iii. In addition to the MARC21 / RDA basic standards, cataloguing policies and updates formulated by the Bodleian Libraries are followed to ensure appropriate treatment of materials in specialised formats (e.g. maps, auction sale catalogue, website printouts, etc.)
  - iv. Best practice is maintained through monitoring of new records by the Bodleian Libraries. Local Studies staff meet regularly to discuss and review cataloguing issues and to make strategic decisions relating to them.

### b) Photographic, Video and Oral History cataloguing

- i. **Photographic** still images are catalogued to an agreed template on HPAC, the SQL database engine behind *Picture Oxon*, a commercial venture between OHC and House of Images.
- ii. **Oral history** recordings are also catalogued on HPAC, using a separate and dedicated record template for sound recordings.
- iii. **Legacy** photographic and oral history catalogue data up to 2013 has been cleaned and amalgamated from Modes format and multiple miscellaneous spreadsheets, to fit an agreed HPAC template to a new and higher standard.
- iv. **Amended** catalogue records (for photographs and oral history) - correction and enhancement of existing records via HPAC should be done by authorised staff and volunteers only.
- v. **New** catalogue records (for photographs and oral history) are generally created by staff and volunteers using Excel templates in strictly controlled format to match the HPAC record structure. **Place-names** in particular are under authority control, using linked look-up tables. The new content from Excel files is uploaded to HPAC at sensible intervals by authorised staff.
- vi. **Legacy video** catalogue data currently (2014) forms an adjunct to the Oral History catalogue on HPAC. As time allows, these records should be transferred into MARC21 bibliographic format on OLIS and enhanced.
- vii. **New video** productions (published or unpublished) on DVD should be catalogued in MARC21 bibliographic format.
- viii. **All You Need is Ears** project - digitised uncatalogued video material arising from this project should be catalogued, as time allows, in MARC21 bibliographic format on OLIS.
- ix. **Cloud storage** - a new DAMS (Digital Asset Management System) for the safe 'cloud' storage and retrieval of digital image, sound and video files will be implemented in April 2015. By virtue of being able to view these digital assets 'online', the process of cataloguing should be easier. Wherever possible the digital assets themselves should be associated with their respective catalogue records.

### 3. Staffing and support of cataloguing

- a) OLIS bibliographic cataloguing is only undertaken by professionally trained cataloguers, approved by the Bodleian Libraries. Appropriate training courses are attended in the event of major software or policy changes – e.g introduction of RDA cataloguing rules.
- b) Local Studies capacity for professional bibliographic cataloguing in OHC is limited, so cataloguing choices must balance the need to deal with previously uncatalogued material against the need to complete the retroconversion of the card catalogues.
- c) Priorities for bibliographic cataloguing of previously uncatalogued material are imposed on both new incoming material, and on any chosen targets from cataloguing backlogs. Prioritisation is based on the expected usefulness, popularity and subject duplication of material.
- d) Photographic cataloguing is achieved on a project basis by the Librarians,

History Assistants, Photographic and Oral History Officer (POHO) and Volunteers, working to agreed spreadsheet templates.

- e) Oral History cataloguing is currently limited to trained volunteer users of HPAC, working to an enhanced update of the original Modes template. of the . The implementation of a more accessible DAMS in 2015 should enable wider involvement in oral history cataloguing, especially of born-digital sound files (Dalet Archive) from Radio Oxford.
- f) Indexing projects, creating better and analytical access to the content of collections, are a suitable focus for volunteer work, but should also involve staff when and if capacity is available.

#### 4. Availability of Catalogues

- a) Bibliographic catalogue records created via Aleph client software are immediately published on the OLIS online catalogue at <http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. The complete content of OHC bibliographic records on OLIS is uploaded from University servers to OCC's federated Heritage Search website on a monthly basis, in the first week of the month.
- b) Photographic, Oral History and Video collections – existing records. Legacy data from existing records (220,000 records) has been cleaned and added to HPAC between 2012 and 2014, and published on Picture Oxon in September 2014.
- c) Thomas Photos image catalogue records (100,000) are only available on Heritage Search, until 2015 when they will be converted for upload to HPAC and Picture Oxon.
- d) Photographic and Oral History collections – new records. New photographic catalogue records and new oral history catalogue records (both volunteer input on spreadsheet templates for HPAC) are immediately available on the live Picture Oxon website as soon as they are uploaded to HPAC.
- e) Many other miscellaneous spreadsheet lists and register of photographic images remain accessible only to the POHO and application must be made to her for advice on collections not covered by Picture Oxon or Heritage Search.

Mark Lawrence  
History Centre Manager (Local Studies)  
May 2012; revised October 2014

Review date: October 2015

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## OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT PD033

### Archive Deaccessioning and Disposal Policy

[The National Archives guidance on Deaccessioning and Disposal](#) defines deaccessioning as 'the formal, documented removal of a collection or item from the accession register or custody of the archive service'. It defines disposal as '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'.

Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) retains the right to retain overall control of the archive collections in its custody. In accordance with its Archives Acquisition Policy (PD015), OHC may, from time to time, consider the deaccessioning of archival records for any of the following reasons

- it was not possible to conduct an extensive survey of the records at time of deposit and, at time of appraisal, their permanent retention cannot be justified
- the records do not meet the current criteria set out in OHC's Archives Acquisition Policy (OHC Policy Document 015)
- the records would be more appropriately held at another repository
- the records are too damaged or illegible to be useful as historical evidence. This includes digital material which has deteriorated to a level whereby it is unusable or which is in a format or operating system which OHC is unable to access.

As specified in OHC's Accessioning and Cataloguing guidelines, ephemeral documents, duplicate, or otherwise unsuitable material will be weeded out at time of accessioning or cataloguing. In the event of such material being identified, OHC will make all reasonable attempts to contact the owner/depositor. Depositor contact details are retained in the CALM Depositors database and in the OHC depositors correspondence files sequence. Where the depositor can be traced, options for deaccessioning (return to depositor/ transfer to alternative repository/ destruction) will be discussed with them. In the event of the owner/ depositor proving to be untraceable, OHC reserves the right to dispose of the records (transfer to alternative repository/ destruction) as it sees fit.

Deaccessioning and disposal procedures are detailed in Section 11 of the [OHC Cataloguing Procedures](#). Deaccessioning and disposal decisions are recorded in the 'CustodHist' field of the relevant accession(s) in the CALM Accessions module.

Hannah Jones  
July 2013

Checked by Mark Priddey, July 2014

Revised: March 2015

Review date: March 2016

DRAFT

# OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE

## POLICY DOCUMENT PD001

### Digital Materials Policy

#### 1. Service responsibilities

- a) Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) acquires, cares for and gives public access to archival and local studies collections relating to the county of Oxfordshire.
- b) To fulfil our statutory duties and, to provide a professional standard of service, we must increasingly accommodate council's, government's and society's shift from analogue to digital, and must reflect that change in our collections.
- c) OHC collections include the following kinds of digital assets: video files, audio files, image files of historic photographs or manuscript documents, and a variety of text files of publications or archival records.
- d) Public appetite for content served digitally, and at a time and place convenient to them, continues to grow and to shape how the History Service is delivered. OHC must continue to reflect the changing public need, while striving to establish the most sustainable methods for digital delivery.
- e) Reasonable public demand for information content requires our ability to retrieve electronic files quickly and easily.

#### 2. Storage of digital assets

- a) Digital collections should, by default, be stored on GCloud-approved digital storage.
  - *Note: Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has contracted with Preservica from 1st April 2015 to provide GCloud-approved digital storage to OHC.*
- b) GCloud storage suppliers should use the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model (ISO 14721) for the management of digital assets.
- c) GCloud storage should, for most effective use, exploit the digital preservation tools developed by the National Archives – the PRONOM technical registry of file formats, and the DROID file format identification tool.
- d) GCloud storage should be able to:
  - i. Store digital assets securely, providing control over users and roles, preventing inappropriate access, and offering the ability to retain digital files in their original quality in perpetuity.
  - ii. Synchronise directly with our CALM archive cataloguing system, containing the relevant metadata for OHC's Archive collections.

- iii. Store metadata alongside other digital files (non-Archive collections), allowing us to link our digital assets with their respective catalogue descriptions, and so enable effective searching.
- e) GCloud storage should offer 'active preservation' of all the digital assets it stores – in other words to protect against obsolescence by providing the ability to migrate vulnerable file formats to more stable and sustainable ones.
- f) Digital collections should not be stored on Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) network drives, except when that storage is being used in a temporary fashion: either as a staging area for ingest into GCloud-approved storage, or a scratch area for digitisation work which is currently in progress. OCC network storage should be used for administrative files only.
- g) Digital collections should not be stored on portable hard media, except where those media amount to duplicate copies of material already in GCloud storage, or act as staging areas for upload to GCloud storage.

### 3. Deposits and donations

- a) Digital files and collections are deposited or donated by a variety of individuals, societies or organisations. These files are increasingly replacing traditional paper versions of record series (e.g. minutes of meetings). The GCloud system must be able to store securely and facilitate access to such data, to complement hard-copy holdings.
- b) The quantity, regularity and size of digital material being transferred from external sources for archival storage is difficult to predict and may increase significantly once depositors are aware that the History Centre has a robust system in place
- c) The file formats in which the History Centre receives such records will need to be specified in advance with potential depositors to ensure such access requirements are sustainable
- d) Appropriate metadata must accompany all deposits or donations. A Digital Deposit form must be completed by anyone depositing or donating such records

### 4. Preservation and access

- a) Digitisation is the preferred method for creating surrogates of original material which can be used to satisfy demand for the most popular categories of local and family history content (e.g. photographs, parish registers, wills, maps).
- b) Digitisation can be achieved through partnership work with key stakeholders, such as Oxfordshire Family History Society, through commercial contracts (where project funding is available), or through piecemeal digitisation by staff and volunteers.



- *Note: Digitisation projects from 1999 onwards, together with piecemeal digitisation by staff and volunteers since that time, have generated over 15 terabytes of digital material. Recent projects, following the establishment of Oxfordshire History Centre in 2011, have generated digital images of key archival manuscript sources, such as parish registers, wills, tithe maps and district valuation records.*
- c) The creation of digital surrogates through digitisation should aim to:
- i. Improve the preservation of vulnerable hard copy originals through a reduction in physical handling.
  - ii. Create master preservation digital copies for GCloud storage.
  - iii. Create working digital copies which can be used to widen public access to off-site and remote users, increasing the impact OHC collections can make on potential users, particularly focusing on those sources for which there is a popular (e.g. family history) demand.
- d) Wider public access to digital content for remote users should include online solutions with commercial partners to achieve the greatest impact.
- *Note: OHC has existing agreements for online provision with these commercial partners - photographs (House of Images, Oxford University Images), wills and probate records (Find My Past).*
- e) Public access to GCloud storage should:
- i. Focus primarily on visitors to OHC, allowing them on-site access to high quality digital copies on GCloud storage, as if calling up original documents from the strongrooms.
  - ii. Respect limitations imposed by law – where access to some digital assets is restricted for licensing, data protection or copyright reasons.
  - iii. Widen off-site access by making appropriate use of OCC's network of public PCs in Libraries to allow selective and sustainable access to OHC assets on GCloud storage. (Off-site access should also respect any legal limitations and take account of the availability of support and advice to navigate and interpret the content).

## 5. Future growth

- a) We expect onward growth in our digital assets, whether project-created or born-digital publications or records, but the exact amount will depend on the rate at which new material is donated, deposited or published. An estimate of 1-2TB per annum is a likely minimum.
- b) Work with partners will also determine the rate of growth and type of data generated, and the successful completion of any potential project could see a spike in growth in a given year.
- c) The potential deposit or transfer of born-digital records, particularly from OCC's own departments and services, could mark a significant increase in required storage capacity.

## 6. Standards

- a) For the purposes of both digital storage and the creation of digital surrogates, OHC should maintain a fluency with and up to date knowledge of digital media and file formats:
  - i. *The National Archives digital preservation guidance note 1: selecting file formats for long-term preservation* (2008)
  - ii. *The National Archives digital preservation guidance note 4: graphics file formats* (2008)
  - iii. *The National Archives digital preservation guidance note 5: image compression* (2008)
- b) OHC should resort to The National Archives for information on the latest standards, trends, emerging technologies and vulnerabilities:
  - i. General guidance on digital preservation (The National Archives website) - [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/preserving-digital-records](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/preserving-digital-records).
  - ii. Latest guidance on cloud storage provision in the UK - *The National Archives guidance on cloud storage and digital preservation: how cloud storage can address the needs of public archives in the UK* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., March 2015).

Mark Lawrence, History Centre Manager (Local Studies)

Mark Priddey, History Centre Manager (Archives)

April 2015

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