



## **Stirling Council Archives - Preservation Protocols**

### **Introduction**

The primary aim of the Archives Service is to make sure that the records under its care, which date from the C14th to the present day, are kept safe and secure for present and future generations of users. These records are retained permanently because of their continuing evidential and historical value. As they are unique, fragile and largely organic they require specialist storage, handling and care to ensure their continued survival. The processes and procedures involved in protecting and maintaining archival documents is known as preservation which informs all aspects of archival work from acquisition to access. This protocol is a statement of the Archive Service's commitment to preserving the archival heritage of the Stirling Council area and outlines the preservation activities and initiatives employed by the service.

### **Assessing preservation needs – acquisition**

The preservation needs of newly deposited records are assessed during the accessioning process. Records are checked for mould, dirt, general wear and tear, insect infestation and damp. Appropriate action is then taken which may involve cleaning the records; infestation treatment; remedial repair work; placing records in protective acid free boxes, envelopes, pockets and folders; or with outsize records wrapping them in acid free materials.

### **Assessing preservation needs – further measures**

The Archives service aims to regularly carry out preservation surveys as part of the work plan to gain an overview of the current physical state of the holdings. The results will inform further preservation and conservation work.

### **Conservation**

Conservation is a process that aims to stabilise and preserve an archive through various physical and chemical treatments. The Archives Service identifies, assesses and prioritises items in need of treatment and repair through survey work. Priorities for treatment are based on various criteria, including historic value, level of use and physical condition. Conservation work is subject to financial constraints and is carried out by professional conservation units.

### **Accommodation and storage**

The Archives Service provides appropriate accommodation for its record holdings. Records are stored in a secure designated area in environmental conditions that broadly conform to BS5454: 2000 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents. Environmental conditions are monitored at all times through the use of thermohygrographs. The Keeper of the Records of Scotland has approved the repository as a place for the deposit of records held under charge and superintendence, such as presbytery and kirk session records.

### **Public users**

Users are always supervised and expected to comply with searchroom procedures to ensure record security and safety. Handling guidelines and searchroom rules are made available and further instruction is given if required. Appropriate preservation equipment and aids are provided for use in the searchroom, such as cushions and supports, to ensure that records are properly supported.

## **Disaster prevention and management**

The Archives Service is developing a disaster plan and appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of emergencies and disasters. This will cover events such as fire, flood, infestation, vandalism, mould growth and vandalism.

## **Surrogates**

The Service aims to provide surrogate copies for records that have a high usage rate or are deemed unsuitable for production.

## **Guidance and staff training**

All members of staff receive training and guidance in handling techniques and preservation matters as part of their induction. Further training and guidance is provided when required.

## **Digital preservation**

Digital records require appropriate software and hardware to make them intelligible. The Archives Service is committed to working with other services within Stirling Council and the wider information community in developing preservation methodologies and solutions that will ensure the long-term preservation of digital records.

## **Reprographics**

The heat and light generated by a photocopier can be damaging to documents. The Archives Service reserves the right to determine the most appropriate format for reproducing documents in order to reduce the damage to original documents. Surrogate copies will always be used for reprographic purposes where the condition of the original record is poor.

## **Exhibitions**

The condition of records and preservation considerations will always be of primary concern when any material is requested for exhibition purposes. Surrogates will be provided where possible.