East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office Selection, Appraisal and Disposal Policy

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Document summary

This document sets out the policies by which East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office makes decisions about which records to retain permanently as archives.

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East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office Selection, Appraisal and Disposal Policy

Key points

- This policy has been drawn up in accordance with best practice as defined by The National Archives. It operates in conjunction with the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office Collections Development Policy, and should be read alongside East Sussex County Council's and The Keep's other service policies and plans. It is supported by in-house appraisal guidelines.

1. Definitions

1.1. **Selection** is the process by which archive groups or series within those groups are assigned criteria for retention or disposal. This is done by means of a Retention Schedule.

1.2. **Appraisal** is the process by which records of potential historical value are identified and separated from material not deemed worthy of permanent preservation as archives.

1.3. **Disposal** can result either from the application of a Retention Schedule, appraisal at the point of accession or from the retrospective appraisal of existing holdings. Records selected for disposal are either returned to the depositor, offered to another suitable repository or destroyed confidentially.

2. Policy aims

2.1 To ensure that selection, appraisal and disposal practice is informed by current legislation relating to the keeping of records.

2.2 To ensure that selection, appraisal and disposal practice supports the aims of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office as laid out in the Collections Development Policy.

2.3 To ensure that East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council efficiently manage the preservation of archives which serve the administrative needs of the authorities and provide an historical record of their past activities in line with the resources available to do so.

2.4 To assist archivists in selecting records of the highest value in terms of their evidential, administrative or historical value.

2.5 To assist users of the service by directing their attention to material of high evidential value.

2.6 To assist East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office in managing its

available storage capacity and financial resources.

2.7 To promote objective, structured and open decision-making about appraisal and disposal.

3. Regulatory guidelines

3.1 This policy is based on the Appraisal Values set out in Appendix 2 of The National Archives Appraisal Policy (2012) and the regulatory framework and principles for deaccessioning and disposal set out in The National Archives' Deaccessioning and Disposal, guidance for archives (2015).

4. Selection

4.1. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office's selection criteria for records is set out in section 4 (Scope) of the Collections Development Policy.

4.2. Records from ESCC will be selected in line with the current Records Retention Schedule. Records will principally come from the Record Centre, but departments may contact East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office directly regarding their records that may be stored elsewhere.

4.3. Other than East Sussex County Council, there are three distinct types of official record which pass to East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office:
4.3.1. As the appointed Local Place of Deposit for Public Records under s.4(1) of the Public Records Act 1958, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office accepts the deposit of defined categories of public record.
4.3.2. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office provides an archive service for Brighton & Hove City Council, which however undertakes its own Records Management.
4.3.3. The District, Borough and Parish Councils of East Sussex will make use of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office as a place of deposit for their archives.

4.4. It is the responsibility of each Local Authority body (of all tiers) to offer their records to East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office for appraisal.

4.5. When approached by potential depositors of private records and other non-statutory (or discretionary) material, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office will review the resources available to catalogue such records as part of the selection process. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office reserves the right to return to the potential depositor or destroy confidentially any material not selected for permanent preservation, including ephemera and duplicates.

4.6. Non-statutory deposits will only be selected for preservation if they are found to be of significant historical value. Agreement to take the records may be subject to the payment of charges to cover cataloguing, preservation (if required), packaging, and storage.

5. Appraisal

5.1 East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office's method of appraisal is based on decisions to retain, destroy or sample records at series level (or above) rather than assessing individual documents. This is the most appropriate approach given the available resources. Functional analysis identifies the functions of organisations and is used to select series of records of high informational value for permanent preservation.

5.2 There will be occasions when this method is inappropriate, for example records of individuals or small organisations. It will also be appropriate on occasions to make a more detailed check to separate out duplicate, ephemeral or non-archival records. Archivists should use their professional judgment at all times.

5.3 Archivists must be aware of current archival legislation and any other statutory provisions with a bearing on record keeping. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office will ensure that staff training includes awareness of legislative changes and developments.

5.4 The appraisal of records created by East Sussex County Council is governed by a Retention Schedule tailored to the output, in both paper and electronic format, of all sections within each department of the authority.

5.5 In the retention schedule, records are identified as:
5.5.1 **Transfer to archive:** records preselected for permanent preservation that can be transferred to the archive as soon as their current administrative life has expired.
5.5.2 **Offer to archive:** records that *may* have historical value so will be considered for permanent preservation by an archivist at East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office after a period of retention at the Record Centre which is determined by the retention schedule. Any records not selected for permanent preservation as archives will be confidentially destroyed.
5.5.3 **Destruction:** records held at the Record Centre before being confidentially destroyed in accordance with their retention schedule.

6. Re-appraisal, Retrospective appraisal and Deaccessioning

6.1. Appraisal of records is carried out before deposit and on accessioning according to the Collections Development Policy. As much selection as possible takes place at the point of deposit, either by leaving unwanted elements in the hands of the depositor, or destroying obviously ephemeral material immediately. Although smaller accessions may be fully catalogued at the point of receipt, larger or more complex accessions may be added to the collections development plan for full or more detailed cataloguing at a later date. It is usually the case that on cataloguing a collection, it becomes apparent that further appraisal is needed.

6.2. Such re-appraisal, or retrospective appraisal, of collections will be carried out by East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office in accordance with the regulatory framework and principles for deaccessioning and disposal set out in The National Archives' Deaccessioning and Disposal, guidance for archives (2015).

6.3. Appraisal decisions and disposal methods will be documented to leave an audit trail and retained as a permanent record in the collection deposit file, or Accesion record in CALM.

7. Disposal of collections

7.1 East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office reserves the right to refuse, return or recommend the destruction of any material not deemed to be appropriate for permanent preservation. Such decisions will be made in accordance with the Collections Development Policy.

7.2 East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office may also, with the agreement of the depositor, transfer material to other more appropriate repositories.

7.3 East Sussex County Council accepts the principle that collections in its ownership selected for permanent preservation will not be sold.