

## **Introduction**

Powys County Archives Office operates in line with the Statement of Policy which was adopted by Powys County Council on 18 June 1991. This statement requires the County Archives to:

1. acquire records relating to Powys' cultural and historical past, and keep and preserve them in accordance with the relevant legislation
2. provide public access to them

The Preservation Policy provides a comprehensive statement of how Powys County Archives Office intends to preserve and continue to make accessible the documents it cares for. It is a broad ranging policy dealing with all aspects of preservation and, as such, effects all areas of work.

Preservation is a responsibility of all staff. Ensuring that they have the relevant special skills, knowledge and abilities is central to this policy. To help achieve this, the Archives will maintain a commitment to staff development.

This policy will be implemented within the context of the bilingual nature of the county and in line with Powys County Council's commitment to equality and diversity. It will also be implemented in line with the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy.

## **Conservation**

Powys Archives recognises that preventative conservation is the most effective means of conserving its records. Preventative conservation will form the main focus of activity. Prioritising of conservation requirements is necessary to determine long-term preservation strategies. Decision making will take into account the needs of the user; condition of material and resource implications; importance of material (archival significance) and expected level of use. Conservation and repair of items are largely beyond the financial resources of Powys Archives, but where possible external grant funders will be sought to help with conservation and repair work.

## **Storage**

PD 5454:2012, *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*, outlines the required criteria for archival storage. In line with this:

- Temperature and relative humidity will be monitored in strongrooms at Ddole Road, and monitored and controlled in strongrooms A and B, onsite at Powys Archives.
- Where possible all records will be packaged in suitable archival quality materials before being placed in permanent storage
- all documents will be stored in secure areas

## **Document Usage & Handling**

Documents are in greatest danger when they are in use. The use of correct handling techniques by staff and searchers alike is essential to the long-term preservation of documents. It is also essential to have adequate documentation to track the location of documents at all times. To achieve this the Archives will ensure that:

- All members of staff handling documents are trained in document handling techniques
- Searchers receive information and/or instruction in the correct handling of documents
- Security of the searchroom is maintained at all times
- Documents which, if handled, would deteriorate at an unacceptable rate are declared unfit for production

- A system is in place recording levels of individual document use and information necessary for their security
- If practicable, where documents are subject to heavy usage, surrogate copies are made. These surrogate copies will be made in such a way as to be readily reproducible

## **Copying**

Whenever possible copies of documents will be supplied. Restrictions will be made in cases where there is risk of damage to the original document by the process of copying. Copying guidelines will be available to all members of staff and the public.

## **Exhibition/Loans**

Where possible surrogate copies of documents will be used. Any documents displayed or loaned for exhibition must be kept in an environment meeting PD 5454:2012 section 4.10.3. Advice on display, storage and security will be provided to depositors withdrawing their own documents.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

An emergency plan is in place. All staff are aware of this plan and are adequately trained in its implementation.

## **Strategy Formulation and Performance Measurement**

It is recognised that to be effective a strategic approach to preservation is essential. A preservation strategy will be in place and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Powys Archives will monitor and assess the impact of its activities on the preservation of the collections. To assist this and to provide a means of measuring performance the Archives has undertaken the National Preservation Office *Preservation Assessment Survey*. The Preservation Policy will be reviewed as circumstances require or within three years.

**March 2008**

**Reviewed 2014**

**For review 2017**