

Scope of the Policy

This policy provides a background to the history of the service and then sets out a co-ordinated approach to Collection Management, including acquisition, accessioning, cataloguing, preservation, conservation and repository management.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Collections Development Policy and Collections Information Policy as well as the Acquisitions Policy, Collections Care and Preservation Policy, Digital Preservation Policy, Deposit Agreement Form, Access Policy and Engagement Policy

Mission Statement

Highland Archive Service, as part of High Life Highland, enables The Highland Council to fulfil its legal responsibility to preserve and provide access to its public records. Alongside this core function, we are dedicated to collecting, conserving, and making accessible, records that reflect the history and diversity of the Scottish Highlands and its inhabitants. We strive to make these collections as widely accessible as possible in our Archive Centres, through a variety of digital channels, and via an active community engagement programme.

Our mission is to benefit present and future generations, promoting the use of these records in:

- informing local decision-making
- strengthening community and cultural identity
- engaging with communities in ways that enhance learning, representation, inclusion, and equity
- improving health and wellbeing through the study and enjoyment of history
- **Making Life Better** for everyone, across Highland communities and beyond

History of the Service

Highland Archive Service (HAS) was established in 1990 by Highland Regional Council with the appointment of a professionally qualified Archivist based in Inverness. The collections held covered the historic counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness-shire and Nairnshire. In 1992 a public searchroom opened at Inverness Library. In 2009 we relocated to a purpose-built archive facility including conservation studio, supported by The Highland Council (THC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In 1995 the Caithness Archives was opened in Wick Library to hold records relating to the former County of Caithness including the burghs of Wick and Thurso. In 2017 Caithness Archives relocated to Nucleus and became part of Nucleus: The Nuclear and Caithness Archives which also houses the national archive of the British Civil Nuclear Industry. HAS is responsible for the operation of the public searchroom and supports the community engagement programme.

Lochaber Archives was established in 2007 at the West Highland College, Fort William to hold records relating to Lochaber, the parishes of Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig, the Small Isles, the Argyllshire parishes of Ardnamurchan, Morven and Sunart and the burgh of Fort William. In 2018 it relocated to a purpose-built strongroom and searchroom in Alexander Ross House, Fort William.

Skye and Lochalsh Archives was established in 2009 in the Elgin Hostel, Portree to hold records relating to Skye and Lochalsh, including the parishes of Brackadale, Duirinish, Kilmuir, Portree, Sleat, Snizort, Strath, Glenshiel, Kintail and Lochalsh.

In 2011 HAS became part of High Life Highland (HLH), a charity formed and registered in Scotland by The Highland Council (THC) to develop and promote opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing throughout the whole of the Highlands, for both residents and visitors.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) identifies the services, including archives, which are provided by HLH and archive service functions are set out in the Collections Agreement between THC and HLH. A Client Manager within THC is responsible for overseeing the SLA, with regular meetings being held between the Client Manager and HLH Senior Management. In addition, operational records management responsibilities are delivered by HLH through a Service Delivery Schedule overseen by THC's Performance and Information Governance Manager.

In 2024 HAS was awarded [Record Keeping Service of the Year](#) by the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland).

Statutory and Legal Status

HAS operates within the parameters of:

- Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994
- The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (s.1)
- Data Protection Act 2018 including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004

Three of the four Archive Centres (Highland, Nucleus and Lochaber) hold records under Charge and Superintendence Agreements with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and Nucleus also hold a collection under a similar agreement with Historic Environment Scotland.

Standards

The following standards are relevant to this policy:

- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections
- BS 16790:2016 Conservation of cultural heritage. Integrated pest management (IPM) for protection of cultural heritage
- BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- PAS 197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management
- PAS 198:2012 Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections
- BS EN 16095:2012 Conservation of cultural property. Condition recording for movable cultural heritage
- ISAD(G) General International Standard of Archival Description

Collections Management

This Policy outlines the inter-relationships between all areas of the service:

- Acquisition of the documentary heritage of the Highlands, and thereafter preserving, cataloguing, publicising and celebrating its use
- Developing and promoting access to and use of collections enabling engagement with the culture and heritage of the Highlands
- Providing opportunities for staff and volunteers through work-based learning and training
- Developing commercial opportunities to support the overall Archive Service

Inter-relationships

- New archive accessions are regularly received passively and through routine accrual. Analysis of the collections and the pattern of accessions has identified gaps, and we will work to target collecting around these areas
- On receipt all accessions are assessed for preservation and conservation needs

- All accessions are cleaned and packaged in archive quality materials before being allocated a location in the repositories
- All accessions are recorded on CALM (a specialist archive software system) with collection level descriptions as a minimum
- Digital archives are treated in accordance with the Digital Preservation Policy
- Funding for cataloguing, conservation and digitisation will be sought out from record owners and external grant-giving bodies as appropriate according to local priorities
- Volunteers add value to catalogues by creating indexes and item level descriptions which are added to the catalogue following review by archive staff
- Catalogues are added to the online catalogue on completion

Service Objectives

Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of Highland archives
- To promote and provide opportunities to use and engage with the archives that increase representation, inclusion, and equity for everyone
- To facilitate opportunities that benefit health and wellbeing and encourage a connection to the rich heritage of the Highlands
- To develop and promote best practice in preservation and conservation through provision of professional advice and training
- To develop and support sustainable partnerships which enable communities and people to engage, explore and enjoy the archives
- To develop commercial opportunities to support the overall service including external conservation, research and family history consultation service
- To consider and develop integrated environmental sustainability practices that reduce the carbon impact of service activities and support THC and HLH's broader sustainability goals.

Records Management

- To ensure that information and records sources are retained only for as long as is necessary for legal compliance and administrative needs across HLH and THC
- To facilitate the selection and transfer of records from THC into the custody of HAS, contributing to the Council's corporate memory
- To manage records stores across the authority's area containing HLH and THC semi-current records and provide a retrieval service in respect of those records
- To work with THC's Information Governance Board and HLH's Management Team to ensure compliance with legislation relating to information and record keeping
- To develop and promote best practice and legal compliance in the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of information and records
- To provide professional input into the development and review of THC's Records Management Plan (RMP) required under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

Policy Review Schedule

This policy is issued in February 2025 and will be reviewed and updated as necessary every three years or earlier if a response is needed to any changes in legislation