

3. Deciding whether to provide a new in-house records management store

This section is based on a document created by Chris Johnson (Lincolnshire County Council) and the discussions held in the group. The factors included in this section are based largely on BS5454 recommendations.

3.1 Local authorities, who do not currently operate an in-house records management system will need to consider the different options open to them. This section deals with the issues which need to be considered for an in-house records management service and the following section covers the use of external storage providers.

3.2 Finance

The sources of financing an in-house records management service need to be carefully considered. It may be appropriate to undertake preliminary desk exercises to scope out issues, costs and long term implications/benefits. Some of the information required might have been created during the information audit process (e.g. the volume of records which might need housing and the projected growth of the service).

The authority will need to cost the provision of the service over a number of years and be

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assured that the project is sustainable. PFI funding or grants may be available to set the service up but funding of the service on an annual basis may need to be covered by recharging users. Sources of funding will need to be identified and agreed before the project can proceed.

Any procurement costs need to be identified at this stage (e.g. the cost of using the corporate procurement unit).

3.3 Project Team

A project team should be identified to assess all the different options and work through the issues which may present themselves. There may be stakeholders inside and outside the organisation.

The following people are likely to be involved: Records Manager; Property; Legal; Finance; Directorate reps; IT; TNA; Risk Manager; Project Sponsor and Manager

The project team needs to identify who will be responsible for which aspects of the project, the timetable and how progress is to be reported.

It may be appropriate to talk to other people who have set up similar schemes to benefit from their experience. It is also important to weigh up the other options which may be available to the authority (see section 4 below).

The project team may decide to go ahead and recommend the creation of an in-house records management service then they will need to work through all the different issues outlined in the sections below.

3.4 Considering Sites

When considering sites the project team will need to consider the following points:

- Freehold or leasehold; cheap industrial or purpose-built
- Security of building and perimeter; number and location of key-holders
- Avoidance of hazard (external)
- Height above water table etc.
- Availability of main services
- Sole use of building

- Drainage

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- Access and access times; access for staff of other authorities/organisations
- Staff facilities
- Risk assessment

3.5 Building construction and protection

The project team will need to consider the following issues relating to building construction and protection

- Size and expansion factor re contents
- Internal security and protection
- Thermal efficiency/inertia
- Environment and climate
- Floor construction and loading requirements
- Fire related issues: resistance levels, doors, ceilings and floors, exits
- Waterproofing and drainage
- Lighting
- Acclimatisation of building before moving records
- Dust/pollutants/pests
- Plant for heating cooling and ventilation
- Fixtures and Equipment
- Shelving (mobile/static)
- Mechanical aids
- Monitoring of the environment
- Pallets or shelves

3.6 Other considerations

Other considerations which the project team will need to take into account are:

- Manpower and possible use of agency for managing the site; staff of four seen as minimum work team; training vital
- Good infrastructure
- Removals: planning and cost
- Operational routine, incl. recharge, access, transport
- Storage of outsized or different packages
- Accurate finding aids and tracking arrangements
- Disposals: efficient usage of schedules
- Materials: boxes, packaging, stationery
- Telephone and computer connections

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- Accountability in case of missing documents
- Insurance and liability
- Regular risk analysis
- Exit strategies: finding alternative uses for redundant buildings or phasing out depot
- Digitisation and record storage seen as complementary strategy
- Ascertaining (and contributing to) higher policy aspirations of parent organisation
- Keeping top management onside/aware of developments