

Somerset Archive Service Acquisition and Disposal Policy

1. Purpose of the archive service

- 1.1 The purpose of the Archive Service is to find, protect and make available for research documents relating to the historic [pre 1974] county of Somerset.

2. Geographical Area

- 2.1 The Archive Service collects documents relating to the historic county of Somerset, an area comprising the post-1974 county, and the area administered by the unitary authority of North Somerset and the unitary authority of Bath and North East Somerset.
- 2.2 As the designated Diocesan Record Office, the Archive Service collects diocesan records from the whole of the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

3. Acquisitions

- 3.1 The Archive Service seeks to acquire items worthy of permanent preservation in the following categories:
- 3.1.1 Records of Somerset County Council and its predecessors.
- 3.1.2 Records of other local authorities and statutory bodies operating within Somerset.
- 3.1.3 Public Records offered for deposit under the terms of the Public Records Acts.
- 3.1.4 Records of the Diocese of Bath and Wells and its constituent archdeaconries, rural deaneries and parishes.
- 3.1.5 Records of businesses, estates, individuals, societies, organisations, public and private institutions, and other organisations or activities relevant to the life and history of the county of Somerset.
- 3.2 Records may be acquired by gift, transfer, deposit on long-term loan or purchase. Records will be held in accordance with the Service's standard

terms and conditions for the deposit of records, unless other conditions are agreed in writing between the Service and the depositor.

- 3.3 Physical formats accepted include paper, parchment, printed material, drawings, photographs, prints, audio and video tape recordings, newspapers, microform, and electronic records.
- 3.4 The acquisition of published material is not a primary aim of the Archive Service, and falls chiefly within the collecting policy of the Somerset Studies Library.
- 3.5 The Archive Service will be responsible for deciding whether items offered for deposit comply with the criteria set out in 3.1.1 to 3.1.5.

4. Exclusions

- 4.1 The Archive Service will not normally accept:
 - 4.1.1 Artefacts, specimens and other three-dimensional objects falling within the collecting policies of the Somerset Museums Service or other recognised museums.
 - 4.1.2 Frames, tin trunks, deed chests, other containers and archivally unsuitable items.
 - 4.1.3 Published or unpublished books and studies not meeting the criteria set out in 3.1.4 to 3.1.5 above.
 - 4.1.4 Works of art which fall within the collecting policies of museums or art galleries.
 - 4.1.5 Material which does not relate to the county of Somerset, unless that material is integral to a collection whose greater part relates to Somerset or the dividing of a collection would result in loss of archival value.
 - 4.1.6 Material judged by the Archive Service not to be of permanent historical value.

5. Disposal and Transfer

- 5.1 The Archive Service will aim to maintain the archival integrity of collections, but where it is considered appropriate may divide collections, with the consent of all relevant parties, and transfer material to another recognised record office.
- 5.2 The Archive Service will not seek to collect items or artefacts which fall outside the acquisitions criteria listed above (3.1.1 to 3.1.5).

5.3 Material previously accepted, but which does not fall within the present acquisition criteria of the Archive Service, may be considered for re-appraisal and de-accessioning. De-accessioning will only take place after obtaining, where necessary, the written permission of the depositor or the depositor's successor in title, and subject to Good Collections Practice.

6. Review

6.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.