

**Report of the Corporate Governance Officer**

**Report to the Head of Governance Services**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Subject: Governance Services document retention and disposal framework –  
Transfer of documents to West Yorkshire Archive Service**

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|--|------------------------------|--|
| Are specific electoral Wards affected?<br>If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): n/a   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?<br>If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: n/a<br>Appendix number: n/a | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

**Summary of main issues**

1. This report seeks approval from the Head of Governance Services for the transfer of certain records from storage areas in Civic Hall to the West Yorkshire Archive Service. These records are listed in Appendix A to this report.
2. A document detailing the retention and disposal arrangements for the records kept within Governance Services has been approved.
3. The policy specifies that certain items which are of historical value should be transferred to the West Yorkshire Archive Service once a specific time period has elapsed.

**Recommendations**

4. The Head of Governance Services is asked to approve the transfer of the records listed in Appendix A to the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

1.1 This report seeks approval from the Head of Governance Services for the transfer of certain records from storage areas in Civic Hall to the West Yorkshire Archive Service. These records are listed in Appendix A to this report.

## **2 Background information**

2.1 The framework specifies that certain items which are of historical value should be transferred to the West Yorkshire Archive Service once a specific time period has elapsed.

2.2 West Yorkshire Archive Service collects and preserves historical records of all kinds dating from the twelfth century to the present day. The Service is funded by the five Metropolitan District Councils in West Yorkshire (including Leeds City Council), and forms part of West Yorkshire Joint Services.

## **3 Main issues**

3.1 The framework specifies that certain documents should be transferred to the West Yorkshire Archive Service after a certain time period. These documents are:

- Committee meeting files (including agendas and reports) (after six years);
- Delegated decision notices (after six years).

3.2 The West Yorkshire Archive Service have agreed to collect the records listed in Appendix A on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

3.3 The total quantity of records that are being transferred is 50 boxes.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Principal Officers have been consulted.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 There are no issues in relation to equality and diversity or cohesion and integration associated with this report. The documents transferred by Leeds City Council will be available for inspection by members of the public with mobility difficulties as all buildings except two (in Leeds and Wakefield) provide easy access. If members of the public with mobility difficulties wish to inspect records kept at either Leeds or Wakefield, alternative arrangements can be made, such as providing photocopies of documents, or the temporary transfer of a document to another building.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The Code of Corporate Governance (within Part 5 of the Constitution) states that the Council will ensure that it collects, uses and stores information and data appropriately. It will do this by establishing and keeping under review policies relation to records management, and an electronic document and records management system. Therefore

compliance with the approved framework will contribute towards principle four of the Code of Corporate Governance, which is taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 There is no financial cost associated in transferring the relevant records to the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

4.4.2 West Yorkshire Joint Services operates under a joint agreement between the five Metropolitan District Councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield (the Constituent Authorities). The joint arrangements are administered through the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee providing an Archive Service, Archaeology Service, Grants to Voluntary Bodies, Trading Standards and Scientific Services. Providing value for money is a priority for West Yorkshire Joint Services and they produce an annual statement on their progress.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 The Head of Governance Services has the authority to approve the transfer of these documents through the sub-delegation scheme of the City Solicitor. The scheme gives the Head of Governance Services delegated authority for the management of corporate governance. This function is one of the specific delegations to the City Solicitor under the Executive delegation scheme within Part 3 Section 3E of the Council's Constitution.

4.5.2 The retention period of the majority of documents listed in Appendix A is informed by relevant legislation. The records which relate to Committee meetings must be retained at the offices of the Council for six years so that they can be available to public inspection. This is also the case for records of delegated decisions taken by officers. As the six year retention period for these documents has now passed it is acceptable for them to be transferred to the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

4.5.3 No documents which are the subject of ongoing access to information requests, or are likely to be referred to in ongoing complaints or legal processes, have been identified for transfer. Should documents that have been transferred subsequently need to be accessed, arrangements will be made with West Yorkshire Archive Service to return those records to the Council.

4.5.4 The list of items which are being transferred to the archive service does contain some items which were identified as confidential or exempt information at the time of the relevant Committee meeting or decision. Arrangements have therefore been made with the archive service that if someone wishes to inspect these records, staff members at the archive service will contact the Head of Governance Services to seek permission before allowing a member of the public to inspect the record. In the majority of cases it is anticipated that due to the amount of time which has elapsed since the relevant Committee meeting or decision, the records will no longer contain information which could be classified as confidential or exempt.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are various risks associated with the transfer of records to the West Yorkshire Archive Service, including that if records are requested in future it may not be possible to trace their location, that confidential or exempt information may be inadvertently made available for public inspection, and that some documents may be transferred in error. Steps have been taken to mitigate all of these risks.

4.6.2 All the individual documents which are being transferred to the West Yorkshire Archive Service have been catalogued and are listed in Appendix A. When these documents are collected, a representative from the archive service will sign a receipt to show that they have received them. This will ensure that Governance Services have records to show that these documents are now the responsibility of the archive service. As previously stated, Governance Services will be notified about any documents which the archive service subsequently wish to destroy and can add this information to the records.

4.6.3 The steps that have been taken to mitigate the risk of confidential or exempt information becoming available for public inspection are outlined in the previous section.

4.6.4 Finally, given the quantity of documents being transferred, it is possible that some documents may be transferred to the archive service in error. This risk has been minimised by the detailed cataloguing process that has taken place. It is also anticipated that if any items are transferred which are not listed in Appendix A, staff from the archive service will notify Governance Services so that steps can be taken to recover those documents.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 This report requests permission to transfer 50 boxes of documents from the Civic Hall to the West Yorkshire Archive Service. These are documents which have been identified in the Governance Services document retention and disposal framework.

5.2 The full list of documents ready for transfer is attached as Appendix A to this report.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Head of Governance Services is asked to approve the transfer of the records listed in Appendix A to the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

## **7 Background documents**

7.1 Governance Services Document Retention and Disposal Framework.