# LBBD Archive Collections Information Policy

This policy was approved on 21 July 2015.
It is due for review in July 2020.

**Name of the repository:** Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre

**Address:** Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 3HT

**Governing body:** London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** 21 July 2015

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** July 2020

# 1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and practices that guide the creation and maintenance of information on the archive collections held by the Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre (hereafter referred to as LBBD Archive).

# 2. Context

2.1. The archive service was established when the first Borough Archivist was employed by Heritage Services in 2003. Although the archive is relatively new, its holdings are substantial, due to the intake of records via Valence House Museum, which was founded in 1937.

2.2. Information about collections acquired before 2003, can be found within the bound accessions registers held by Valence House Museum. From 2003 onwards, collections information has been recorded during the accessioning and cataloguing process on the specialist library and archive database, Adlib.

2.3. Unfortunately much information about the ownership and legal status of the archive collection was lost, when it was decided that archival material should be managed separately, both intellectually and physically, from the objects held by Valence House Museum. On top of this it appears that creating and maintaining collections information has been considered a low priority over the years, which resulted in a significant cataloguing backlog.

2.4. LBBD Archive now recognises that collecting, maintaining and safeguarding information about its collections and associated intellectual property is key to enabling access, proving the integrity and legal ownership of records, as well as being integral to good collections management.

2.5. The redevelopment of the site meant that the archive collections were to be moved into a purpose built strongroom located in the Visitor's Centre in 2012. The move was seen as an opportunity to improve intellectual and physical control over the collection, and involved an intensive programme of cataloguing and repackaging. As a result the cataloguing backlog, which was a barrier to making the collection accessible, has been significantly reduced.

2.4. A cataloguing audit was subsequently carried out in 2013. This audit identified what types of records, as well as specific collections, which should be regarded as being a high, medium and low priority when it comes to cataloguing going forward. This has resulted in a more managed and sustainable approach to creating new and improving information about collections held by LBBD Archive.

2.3. This policy has been developed in accordance with existing collections information policies used by other repositories, namely the London Metropolitan Archives. For a full list of policies used see **Appendix A**.

2.4. The terms used in this document are specific to this policy and are defined in **Appendix B**.


# 3. Aims

3.1. The aims of this collections information policy are as follows:

- To ensure that information about the collections is effectively collected, maintained and safeguarded, and made available to the widest possible audience to promote an understanding of and pride in the heritage of Barking and Dagenham.
- To protect the integrity and evidential value of records held by LBBD Archive.
- To make sure the principles of provenance and original order are upheld at LBBD Archive.
- To guide the development of collections information plans, procedures and guidelines consistent with the value and goals of LBBD Archive.


# 4. Policy Statements

### 4.1. Standards

4.1.2. LBBD Archive is committed to creating and maintaining good quality and up to date information about the archive and local studies collections, through accessioning and cataloguing, which conforms to appropriate national and international standards wherever possible.

4.1.3. LBBD Archive uses the following standards when creating and maintaining collections information:

- ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, International Council on Archives (2007)
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names (1997)
- UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT)


4.1.4. Accessioning and cataloguing manuals have been developed in-house to ensure that collections are accessioned and catalogued appropriately on to our specialist archive and library software system, Adlib. These guides should be used in conjuncture with national and international cataloguing standard, such as ISAD(G).


### 4.2. Software

4.2.1. LBBD Archive is committed to ensuring that the specialist archive and library software system is the primary tool for creating and maintaining collections information.

4.2.2. The specialist archive and library software system is also the primary way that we control the location of archive and local studies collections at LBBD Archive.

4.2.3. All staff responsible for creating and editing collections information must receive training in the relevant data standards and on how to use the specialist archive and library software system, Adlin. Data inputted in this specialist software system shall be traceable through an audit trail as to who created or edited it.

## 4.3. Accessioning

4.3.1. An accession record must be created on the specialist software system for all collections deposited at LBBD Archive. Each accession record must include the following essential information:

- Unique reference number.
- Accession date.
- Accession title.
- Content description.
- Date of content.
- Extent.
- Contact details of the source of acquisition.
- Access conditions.
- Reproduction conditions.
- Location.

4.3.2. A printed accessions record will be produced and kept with the forms completed and signed as part of the acquisition process, together with any correspondence relating to the acquisition of the material as part of the collections held at LBBD Archive. For further details see our **Acquisitions and Disposal Procedure**.

## 4.4. Cataloguing

4.4.1. LBBD Archive recognises that uncatalogued collections are a barrier to access, and in turn strives to take a managed and sustainable approach when it comes to creating new and improving information about collections, and to make this information available to the widest possible audience.

4.4.2. A cataloguing audit has been carried out in order to identify what types of records, as well as specific collections, which should be regarded as being a high, medium and low priority when it comes to cataloguing. This cataloguing audit, which should be updated as new collections are accessioned, and cataloguing work is completed, has been used to inform LBBD Archive's **Collections Information Plan.**

4.4.3. Catalogue records created on the specialist software system must include the following essential information in accordance with ISAD(G):

- Unique reference number.
- Title.
- Date.
- Extent.
- Level of description.
- Creator.
- Location.

4.4.5. In addition to the above essential fields required by ISAD(G), were possible, the following information should be included when cataloguing collections at LBBD Archive:

- Administrative history.
- Archive history.
- Source and date of acquisition.
- Scope and content.
- Appraisal.
- Conditions of access.
- Reproduction conditions.

4.4.6. LBBD Archive is committed to arranging records on the specialist software system in a structured series of levels, according to provenance and original order. If it is not possible to arrange by provenance, a functional approach to archival arrangement will be taken. Likewise if the provenance of material within a collection cannot be established and the original order has been lost, material will be arranged according to format. For definitions of archival arrangement, provenance and original order see **Appendix B**.

4.4.7. For further information on how collection information is recorded through the cataloguing process see the relevant **Cataloguing Manuals**.

### 4.5. Access

4.5.1. LBBD Archive understands that the creation of finding aids is key to making the collections accessible to the widest possible audience. As mentioned above, the specialist software system is the primary tool for collecting and maintaining information about the collections held at LBBD Archive. This catalogue is to be made available online by 2016.

4.5.2. In addition to collecting and maintaining collections information on the specialist archive software, LBBD Archive is committed to producing a range of other finding aids, including information sheets, collection lists and research guides organised by subject, which are made available online, as well as in hardcopy in the Reading Room.

4.5.3. The service understands the importance of, and will continue to contribute information about the collections on the council website and to other online gateways, notably the Archives Hub, Aim25, Access to Archives as well as social media sites, such as Facebook, Historypin and Flickr. Printed catalogues, research guides and information sheets are also made available in the Reading Room.

## 5. Implementation

5.1. This policy is to be made available to staff, volunteers and users online.

5.2. This policy should be used together with related policies, plans and procedures that make up LBBD Archive's Collections Management Framework.

## 6. Evaluation

6.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years to make sure it remains relevant to the work and services provided by LBBD Archive.

6.2. This policy will next be reviewed July 2020.

## 7. Feedback

7.1. If you wish to give us feedback on this policy, please email localstudies@lbbd.gov.uk.

## Appendix A
## Standards and Policies

**Birmingham Archives and Heritage Collection:** Access Policy (2011)

**Cumbria Archive Service:** Access Policy (2012)

**Cumbria Archive Service:** Collections Information (2014)

**London Metropolitan Archives:** Collections Access Policy (2014)

**Nottinghamshire Archives:** Access Policy (2009)

**Somerset Heritage Service:** Archives Statement and Public Access Policy (2004)

**Wellcome Library:** Access to Archives Policy (2010)

**V&A:** Collections Information and Access Policy (2012)

# Appendix B
# Definitions

**Access:** right, opportunity or means of finding, using or approaching items and/or information about items.

**Accession:** materials physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time, also often referred to as an acquisition.

**Accessioning:** to document the transfer of records or materials, physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time, in a register, database, or other log of the repository's holdings.

**Archival arrangement:** the process of grouping documents into meaningful units, and of groupings of units in meaningful relation to one another

**Cataloguing:** the process of providing access to materials by creating formal descriptions to represent the materials and then organising those descriptions through headings that will connect user queries with relevant materials, plus additional work to prepare the materials for use, such as labelling, marking, and maintenance of authority files.

**Document:** any content whatever its medium (written on paper or stored in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audiovisual recording).

**Finding aid:** a tool that facilitates discovery of information within a collection of records, or description of records that gives the repository physical and intellectual control over the materials and that assists users to gain access to and understand the materials.

**Provenance:** information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection.

**Original order:** the organisation and sequence of records established by the creator of the records.

**Records:** defined as including not only written records, but records conveying information by any means whatsoever. The information conveyed in records was created, received and maintained as documentation in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.